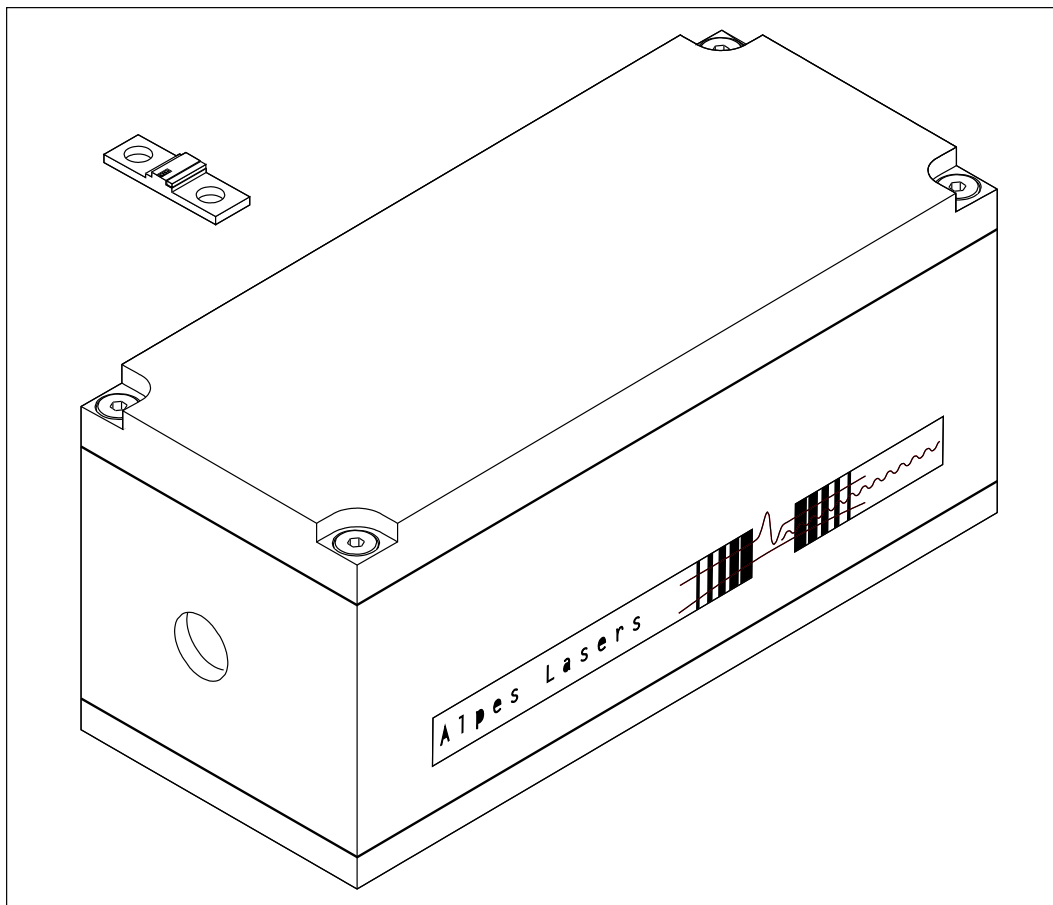




Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit

Instructions Manual (Web version)



CAUTION

Before using the Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit, read this documentation and take special note of all safety instructions

Contents

1	Identification	4
1.1	Document	4
1.2	Limited waranty	4
2	General	5
2.1	Chapter overview	5
2.2	Generalities	5
2.3	Compliance	5
2.3.1	Laser compliance	5
2.4	Glossary	6
2.4.1	Persons	6
2.4.2	Product	6
2.5	Typographic conventions	7
3	Safety Instructions	10
3.1	Chapter overview	10
3.2	Introduction	10
3.2.1	Principle	10
3.2.2	Importance of safety instructions	10
3.2.3	Non-compliance with the safety regulations	10
3.3	General safety instructions	11
3.4	Environmental conditions	11
3.5	Compliance and information	11
4	Description	12
4.1	Chapter overview	12
4.2	System Composition	12
4.3	DFB and FP Quantum Cascade Lasers	13
4.3.1	Description	13
4.3.2	Geometry of QC lasers	13
4.3.3	Specifications	14
4.3.4	Electrical model	15
4.4	Laboratory Laser Housing(LLH100)	16
4.4.1	Description	16
4.4.2	Specifications	17
4.4.3	Thermo-Electric Cooler (TEC) and PT100 connections	18
4.4.4	Measurement connection	19
4.5	QCL pulser switching unit(LDD100)	20
4.5.1	Description	20
4.5.2	Specifications	20
4.6	QCL pulse switching measuring unit	21
4.6.1	Generalities	21
4.6.2	Measured voltages	21
4.6.3	Timing data	21
4.6.4	Laser peak current	22

4.6.5	Laser peak voltage	23
4.6.6	Average dissipation	23
4.6.7	Accuracy considerations	23
4.7	QCL pulser timing unit (TPG128)	24
4.7.1	Description	24
4.7.2	Specifications	24
4.8	QCL temperature controller(TCU151)	25
4.8.1	Description	25
4.8.2	Specifications	25
4.8.3	Peltier and PT100 connections	25
5	Installation	26
5.1	Chapter overview	26
5.2	General	26
5.3	Packing list	26
5.3.1	Standard items	26
5.4	Setting the appropriate AC voltage on TCU151	27
5.4.1	Procedure	27
5.5	Installing the starter Kit	28
5.5.1	Before beginning	28
5.5.2	Procedure	28
6	Use	30
6.1	Chapter overview	30
6.2	QCL pulse timing unit command description	30
6.3	TCU151 command description	31
6.4	Laser utilisation	32
6.4.1	Overview	32
6.4.2	Proceedings	32
6.5	Interlock utilisation	34
6.5.1	Before beginning	34
6.5.2	Procedure Interlock utilisation	34
7	Troubleshooting	35
7.1	Chapter overview	35
7.2	Principle	35
8	Maintenance	37
8.1	Overview	37
8.1.1	How to remove the covers of TCU151 and TPG128	37
8.2	Replacement procedures	38
8.2.1	Quantum Cascade Laser replacement	38
8.2.2	QCL "UP" and "DN" position exchange	40
8.3	TCU151 temperature controller interlock setting	42
8.3.1	Generalities	42
8.3.2	Before beginning interlock setting	42
8.3.3	Needed material	42
8.3.4	Procedure interlock setting	42
8.4	Calibration procedures	43
8.4.1	TPG128 calibration	43
8.4.2	TCU151 temperature controller calibration	46
9	Application notes	53
9.1	Detection techniques	53
9.1.1	Direct absorption	53
9.1.2	Frequency modulation technique (TILDAS)	53
9.1.3	Photoacoustic detection	54

10 Appendix	55
10.1 Bias Circuit ("Bias-T")	55
10.1.1 General	55
10.1.2 Description	55
10.1.3 Specifications	56
10.1.4 Utilisation	56
10.2 Unpacking NS laser from its transportation box	59

Chapter 1

Identification

1.1 Document

Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit Instructions Manual.
Web Version 3.1 02.07

Manufacturer

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1.2 Limited warranty

Alpes Lasers SA will accept no responsibility for problems arising out of incorrect use of the instrument. Under no circumstances will Alpes Lasers SA be held liable for any damage, or financial loss imputable to the instrument.

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Printed in Switzerland

Chapter 2

General

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter gives basic information on system functions, specifications and documentation.

2.2 Generalities

The indications in the present Instructions Manual, in particular the safety instructions must be complied with.

2.3 Compliance

The Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit has been designed to meet all current safety at work and operating requirements.

2.3.1 Laser compliance

The system described in this manual contains a laser device. Depending of the emission power of the laser used in the Starter Kit, the classification may change.

According to the emission power, the laser product meets the following requirements:

CLASS I : Emission power < 10 mW

CLASS IIIb : Emission power > 10 mW

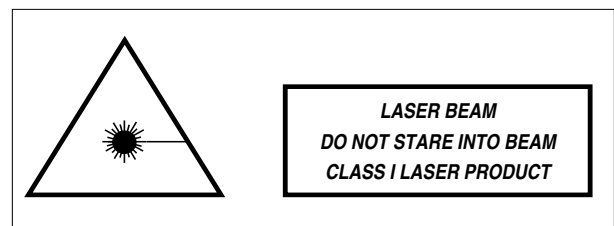


Fig.1: Class I laser compliance

2.4 Glossary

The following terms, among others, are used in this Instructions Manual.

2.4.1 Persons

Personnel

Personnel refers to all persons who carry out any activity with the instrumentation and meet the manufacturer's requirements about personnel to run those activities and have been therefore authorized.

2.4.2 Product

QCL

This is the Quantum Cascade Laser manufactured by Alpes Lasers SA, CH-2001 Neuchâtel.

2.5 Typographic conventions

The following styles are used in this manual.

Description style

This style, used in relation with a number in illustrations (figures) is preceded by the corresponding number:

Example:

- (1) First item.
 - (2) Second item.
 - (3) etc...
-

Commands style

All software commands, buttons, function keys, windows, icons, options, tabs, check boxes, select boxes, items, menus, tool bars, sections and fields used in this documentation will be shown with a bold italic font.

Example:

The ***Exit*** command permits to leave the program.

Procedure style

The steps of a procedure to be carried out ***step by step*** by the personnel are preceded with numbers placed in brackets.

Example:

- [1] Set the selector (4) to mode Real °C.
- [2] Check the power supplies +5V and -5V. The error should be within +/- 50 mV.

Procedure effects style

The procedure effects are described by using the following symbol ↔.

Example:

[1] Click on the *Delete Sample* icon.

↔ The message *Do you really want to delete the sample ?* appears.

Cross references style

This style is used to help the personnel to find other information about the current subject.

Example:

See page x-y.

Troubleshooting style

The complete description with the problem, the possible cause and the solution will be shown like described below:

Problem

- **Possible cause**

√ Solution

List of items style

This style is used to give a list of items.

Example:

- item 1
- item 2
- item 3

Note style

Used when the personnel attention must be drawn to a particular operation or information.

Example:

Note: The laboratory housing LLH100 makes available two outputs giving access to these voltage.

Caution style

Used to prevent the personnel from any danger or hazardous situation. Non-compliance with such instructions may lead to damage parts or environment.

Example:

CAUTION ! *Take care about...*

Warning style

Used to prevent the personnel from any important danger or hazardous situation. Non-compliance with such instructions may lead to death or serious injury.

Example:

! WARNING ! **Never open this cover...**

Chapter 3

Safety Instructions

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter sets out safety instructions for ensuring safe and trouble-free operation of the system described in this manual.

3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 Principle

The personnel must have read and understood this documentation before carrying out any activity whatsoever with the system described in this manual.

In case of unclear information, please contact the manufacturer or Alpes Lasers SA representative.

3.2.2 Importance of safety instructions

All the safety instructions in this manual must be carried out in order to avoid injury to persons or damage to property and the environment.

Similarly, the statutory regulations, measures for accidents prevention and protection of the environment and the recognized technical rules for safe and appropriate working practices which are in force in the country and place of use of the system must be complied with.

3.2.3 Non-compliance with the safety regulations

Non-compliance with the safety instructions, statutory and technical regulations may lead to injuries to persons, or damage to property and the environment. Moreover, this will result in loss of warranty.

3.3 General safety instructions

- Never attempt to use a system for purposes other than those detailed in this manual.
- Never attempt to use a system in conjunction with other instruments without obtaining prior information and approval from the manufacturer.
- Never attempt to use spare parts other than those supplied by the manufacturer.
- If an instrument is to be left unused for any length of time, protect the instrument against dust and/or humidity.

3.4 Environmental conditions

- Like any other electrical device, the system must not be located near a water tap.
- The instrument must be kept away from potential sources of interference.
- The system must not be exposed to direct sunlight, heat, dust or excessive humidity (use only in a clean laboratory environment).
- Take care not to spill liquid on an instrument. In the event of accidental spillage, proceed as follows:
 - [1] Switch off the instrument immediately.
 - [2] Unplug the instrument from the mains.
 - [3] Wipe the instrument down with a dry tissue.
 - [4] Check all the electrical functions.
- Ensure sufficient ventilation of the instrument to prevent overheating.

3.5 Compliance and information

In the event of operating faults or other technical incidents for which a remedy is not described in this manual, please contact the manufacturer or Alpes Lasers SA representative immediately.
(<http://www.alpeslasers.ch/contacts.htm>)

Chapter 4

Description

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter gives a basic description of the Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit system and its composition.

For operation of the system, the user must provide a stabilized DC power supply capable of delivering DC current that corresponds to the laser peak current multiplied with the specified duty cycle at the specified LDD100 voltage: refer to the datasheet of the laser.

4.2 System Composition

The Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit is made up of the following items:

- (1) Laboratory Laser Housing (LLH100)
- (2) Temperature Controller (TCU151)
- (3) QCL pulse switching unit (LDD100)
- (4) QCL pulser timing unit (TPG128)

CAUTION !

Do not lift TCU151 or TPG128 only on the top cover, since this might loosen the connection between the cover and the chassis.

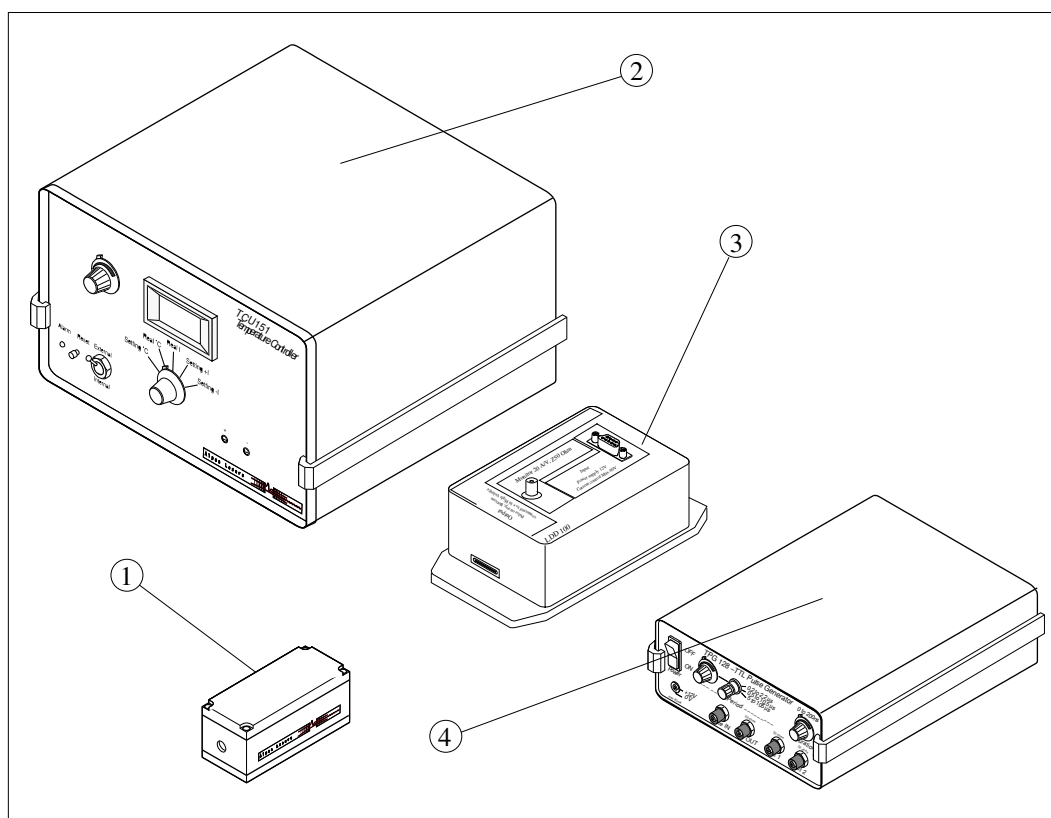


Fig.2: Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit

4.3 DFB and FP Quantum Cascade Lasers

4.3.1 Description

Quantum Cascade Lasers (QCL) are unipolar lasers emitting in the mid-infrared from 4 to 17 microns. The laser is a ridge of InGaAs and AlInAs grown on InP providing gain and a Fabry-Perot cavity in order to build the laser oscillation up. Distributed-Feedback(DFB) Quantum Cascade Lasers are then obtained by adding a grating, forcing the laser to emit at the target wavelength.

4.3.2 Geometry of QC lasers

Mountings

Lasers exist in two different packages:

- ST mounting (1)
- NS mounting (2)

Axes of QC lasers

The vertical direction is the so called growth direction.

Device are mounted on a copper carrier which has one or two ceramic pads carrying the bonding wires. The pads are yellow on top due to a layer of gold, and white around it and on the sides (colour of the ceramic). If these pads are placed upwards, the vertical for the laser is the same as the observer vertical direction.

If there are two ceramic pads present, they are named as follows:

Looking onto the front facet with the laser placed as described above, the pad left of the laser chip is called "DN" (for DOWN), the one on the right of it "UP".

If no configuration is specified, the "DN" pad is used.

Never place the laser upside-down, since this will damage the bonds connecting the pads to the laser and possibly the laser itself!

The laser chips mounted on NS submounts provided separately from a LLH100 are supplied in a round plastic box. For removing the laser from it, please follow the instructions as described in appendix (appendix 10.2, p.59)

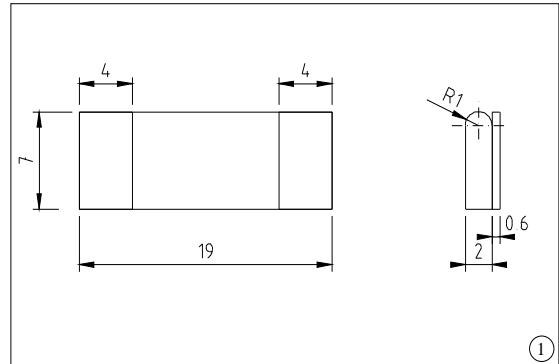


Fig.3: ST submount

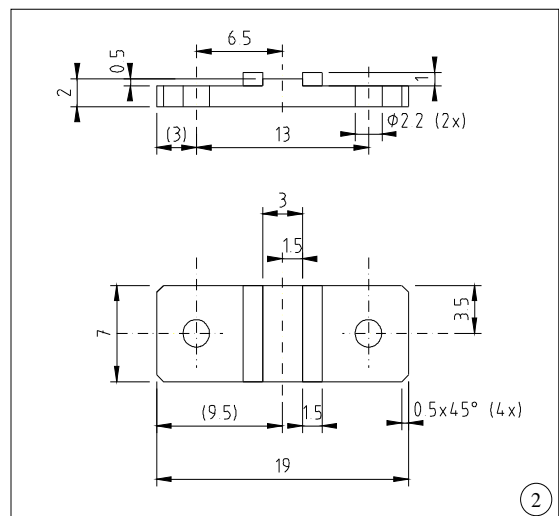


Fig.4: NS submount

4.3.3 Specifications

Far field elliptical (FWHM):

Vertical:	60°
Horizontal:	40°

Operating temperature:

Might vary for each laser, but generally located in the range from -30 °C to +30 °C

Caution !

Before operating the laser at different temperature than specified in the datasheet, please contact Alpes Lasers SA or a representative. Damages resulting from a non-respect of temperature operating range without approval from Alpes Lasers SA will led to a loss of warranty.

Submount size :

ST mounting:	19 x 7 x 2 mm ³
NS mounting:	19 x 7 x 2.5(top of the ceramic pads) mm ³

Typical laser position:

Over the submount, centered laterally:	0.2 mm
Inside the sub-mount top surface:	0.03 mm
Laser emitting facet:	0.005 - 0.030 x 0.004 mm ²

4.3.4 Electrical model

The QCL can be modelised in a RC circuit.

Electrical model characteristics

The values given below apply for a 10 μ m laser wavelength.

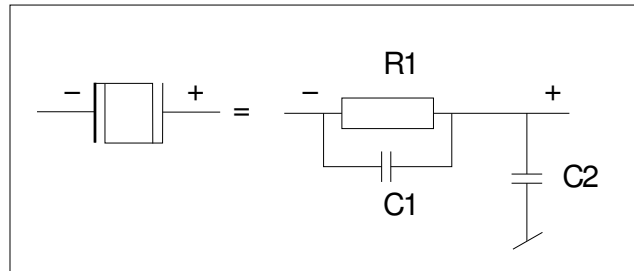


Fig.5: Electrical model of QCL

Note: Voltage and resistor values may vary according to the type of laser.

R1 : 10 to 20 Ω when a voltage of 4 to 6 Volts is applied

R1 : 2 to 4 Ω up to 10 - 12 Volts

R1 : 10 to 20 Ω over 12 Volts, after which the laser no longer operates

C1 : 100pF, capacitor between the anode and the cathode

C2 : <100pF, depending on your mounting of the laser

4.4 Laboratory Laser Housing(LLH100)

4.4.1 Description

The Laboratory Laser Housing is a Thermo-Electric cooled box which encapsulates the Quantum Cascade Laser.

The internal temperature is controlled by a PT-100 sensor and heat is dissipated by air or water. The LLH100 is designed to ease the laser installation or replacement.

LLH100 external view description

The Laboratory Laser Housing is composed of the following items:

- (1) ZnSe coated laser beam window
- (2) Peltier connector and PTC sensor
- (3) Low impedance connector
- (4) Cooling water flow fittings (recommended flow: 0.25 l/min @ 10-20 °C)
- (5) Monitoring base receptacle connector
- (6) Monitoring laser connector

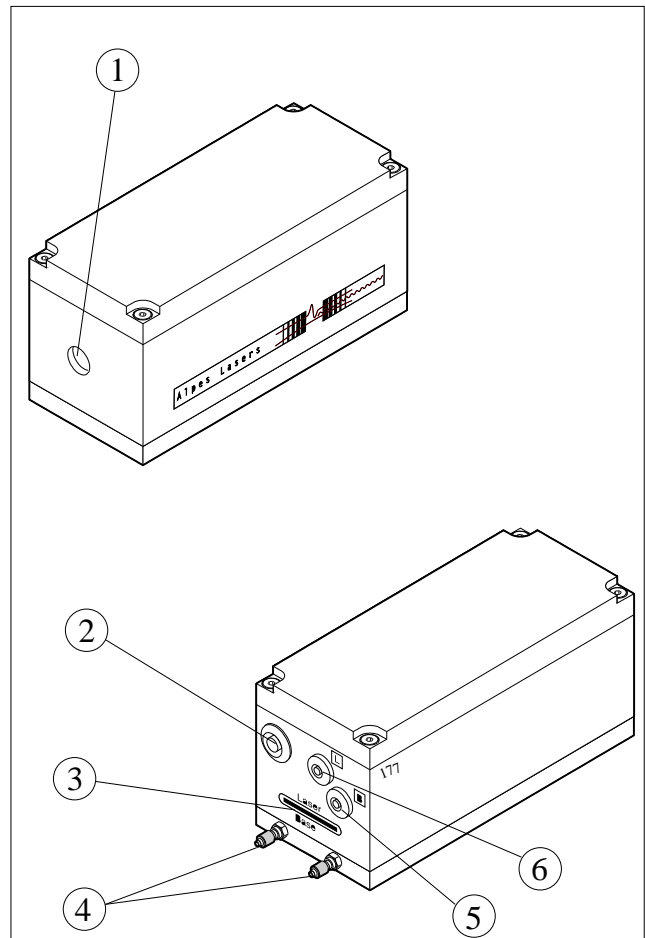


Fig.6: Laboratory Laser Housing front and rear view

LLH100 internal view

The Laboratory Laser Housing includes the following items:

- (1) LLH100 top cover
- (2) PET U-shaped holder
- (3) Gilded copper contact (UP and DN)
- (4) Laser
- (5) Laser receptacle

4.4.2 Specifications

- Maximum Peltier current
(with water cooling): 5A
- Lowest reachable temperature
(with water cooling): -40 °C
- Highest recommended temperature
(due to Peltier limitations): 80 °C
- Window:
 - Diameter : 12.7 mm
 - Clear aperture: 11 mm
 - Coating: ZnSe, 3 to 12 μm
- Temperature measurement: ... PT100 4 wires

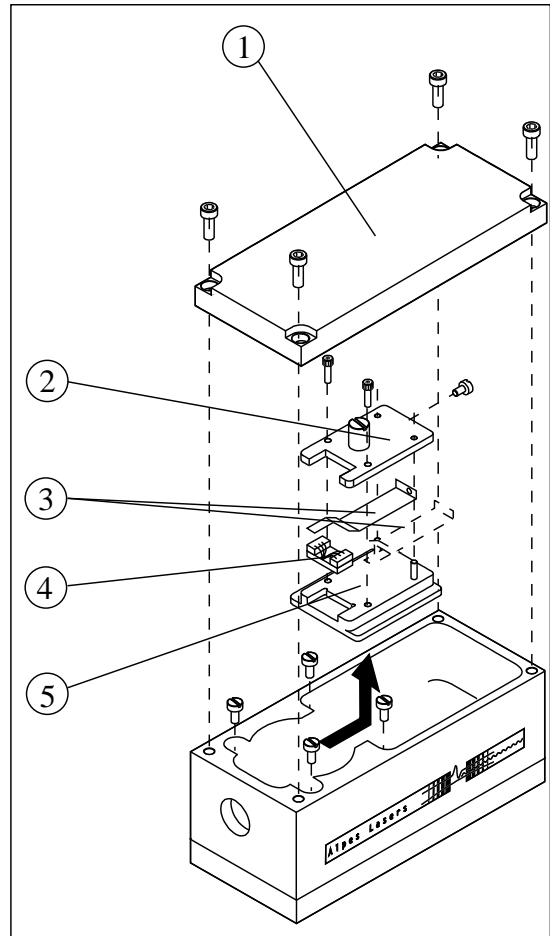


Fig.7: Laboratory Laser Housing internal view

4.4.3 Thermo-Electric Cooler (TEC) and PT100 connections

The pin 1 is recognised by a circle around it and a thin noon ended circle starts from pin one and turns around the pins until pin 6.

- (1) Pin 1: +Peltier element
- (2) Pin 2: - Peltier element
- (3) Pin 3: I+ PT100
- (4) Pin 4: Sens + PT100
- (5) Pin 5: Sens - PT100
- (6) Pin 6: I- PT100

Specifications of the Peltier connector

Vacuum case plug reference:.....LEMO # HGG.1b.306.CLLPV.

Cable plug reference:LEMO # FGG.1b.306.CLAD72Z.

Plastic protection for the cable: ...LEMO # GMA.1b.065.DG.

Cable:

Diameter : 5.8 mm
 Section : 6 x 0.25 mm (2 x 0.25 for each Peltier connections)

or

Diameter : 7.2 mm
 Section : 10 x 0.25 mm (2 x 3 x 0.25 for Peltier connections)

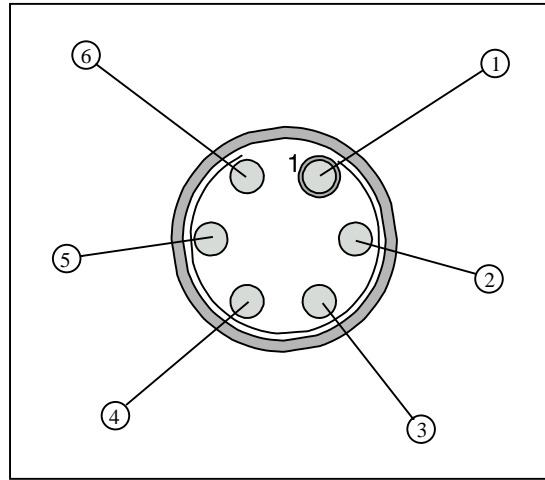


Fig.8: Front view of the Peltier connector

4.4.4 Measurement connection

These connections give access to the voltage on the laser.

The "L" connection is connected AC coupled to the cathode of the laser through a divider by ten. The end of cable **must** be 50Ω terminated for accurate measurement. The "B" is connected the same to the anode of the laser (Base Receptacle).

By using the math trace of an oscilloscope showing the "L" channel minus the "B", one can get the voltage on the laser.

This measurement is more accurate than the information obtained from the LDD100 measurement unit.

For more details, refer to LDD100 Diagram Block on page ??.

Specifications of the measurement connector

Vacuum case plug reference: LEMO #
HGP.00.250.CTLPV

Cable plug reference: LEMO #
FFS.00.250.CTCE31

Cable : RG174

4.5 QCL pulser switching unit(LDD100)

4.5.1 Description

The switching unit is based on dedicated power MOS-FETS with up to 30A current compatibilities and 60V. In addition, the circuit is limited in power dissipation by the cooling of the unit. During operation, the temperature of the case should not exceed 60C. While powering usual QC diodes, these limitations are never reached because the laser has usually much lower power ratings.

! WARNING !

An important feature of this unit is that both lines going to the laser are "HOT", i.e. have a positive voltage respective to the case. this feature should be kept in mind when designing the laser holder. This one should be insulated and have a low capacitance(< 100pF) towards the ground.

The QCL pulse switching unit is composed of the following connectors:

- (1) Low impedance connector
- (2) Drive cable connector
- (3) Monitoring BNC connector

4.5.2 Specifications

- Voltage : max 60 VDC
- Current : max 30 ADC
- Repetition rate : upto 1MHz, limited by average current
- Rising/falling edge: .. typical 8ns (max 12ns)
- Minimum pulse width: 16ns, typical 20ns
- Maximum pulse width: 1μs, limited by power supply
- Support power: given by TPG128
- Trigger IN: TTL 50Ω
- Propagation delay: typical 35ns <40 ns
- Size: 90 x 130 x 50 mm³

! WARNING !

The connection between the laser and the QCL pulse switching unit is floating. It must not be connected with the ground.

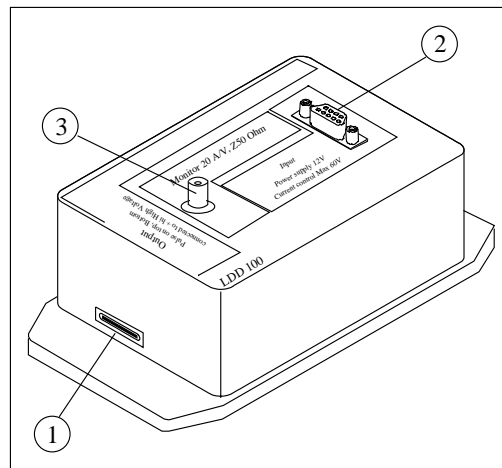


Fig.9: QCL pulser switching unit front and rear view

4.6 QCL pulse switching measuring unit

4.6.1 Generalities

The measuring circuit contained in the LDD100 provides information about various laser pulse parameters (peak voltages, supply voltages, duty cycle, frequency). They are only estimated values, since exact measurement of short and strong pulses with diodes and averaging circuitry is difficult.

Keep in mind that you should always measure the voltages on the LLH100 if you need accurate time and voltage data (see final paragraph). However, these data are useful for monitoring and surveillance purposes, and to give a rough estimation of the current parameters.

4.6.2 Measured voltages

- UHV: 1/2 of the average voltage, respective to VHT (user supplied high voltage)
- ULH: 1/2 of the average laser anode voltage, respective to VHT
- ULL: duty cycle dependent peak laser cathode voltage, respective to VHT
- UD: duty cycle dependent peak transistor drain voltage, respective to VHT
- UPI: 1/2 average internally reshaped drive voltage, respective to ground
- UPT: 1/2 average of a 37ns fixed length pulse, respective to ground

4.6.3 Timing data

Pulse frequency calculation

UPT can be used to calculate the pulse frequency as follows:

$$f = f_0 \frac{2UPT - v_{Plow}}{v_{Phigh} - v_{Plow}}$$

Where f_0 is a frequency constant, v_{Plow} and v_{Phigh} are the TTL pulser voltage limits.

Actual values: $f_0 = \frac{1}{37} \text{ns}$, $v_{Plow} = 0.01\text{V}$, $v_{Phigh} = 5\text{V}$

Duty cycle calculation

UPI can be used to calculate the duty factor as follows:

$$df = \frac{2UPI - v_{P_{Low}}}{v_{P_{High}} - v_{P_{Low}}}$$

with $v_{P_{Low}}$ and $v_{P_{High}}$ as above.

To get the real duty cycle, df must be corrected as follows:

$$dc = f_{LDD} df = f_{LDD} \frac{2UPI - v_{P_{Low}}}{v_{P_{High}} - v_{P_{Low}}}$$

to compensate for systematic errors in the LDD100.

Actual value is $f_{LDD} = 1.1$

4.6.4 Laser peak current

The laser peak current can be calculated by the measurement of the current through the series resistor R_s . This is provided by the values ULL and UD , which are rectifier outputs. To correct for the duty cycle, the rectifier values have to be taken into account with the following formula for a correction factor:

$$p = 1 + \frac{R_{ds}}{R_{cdc}}$$

where R_{ds} and R_c are resistors in the rectifier circuit, dc is the duty cycle calculated as in the preceding paragraph. Actual values are $R_{ds}=10k\Omega$ and $R_c=10M\Omega$.

The corrected values for the peak laser cathode and transistor drain voltage are then given as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} ULL_{peak} &= pULL + U_{ds} \\ UD_{peak} &= pUD + U_{ds} \end{aligned}$$

where U_{ds} is the voltage drop across the rectifier diode, actual value $U_{ds}=0.25V$.

Finally, the laser peak current is then given by:

$$I_{peak} = \frac{ULL_{peak} - UD_{peak}}{R_s}$$

where R_s is the series resistor, actual value $R_s=0.85\Omega$.

4.6.5 Laser peak voltage

The laser peak voltage is given by:

$$U_{peak} = 2ULLH - ULL_{peak}$$

where ULL_{peak} is the corrected peak value of ULL as calculated in the previous paragraph.

4.6.6 Average dissipation

The average thermal dissipation of the laser is given by:

$$P = U_{peak} I_{peak} \text{ dc}$$

where U_{peak} and I_{peak} are the peak values of laser voltage and current as calculated in the previous paragraphs, and dc is the (corrected) duty cycle.

4.6.7 Accuracy considerations

The duty cycle (corrected) is accurate to about 5% for pulse lengths in the range 50ns to 150ns and pulse periods in the range $1\mu\text{s}$ to $10\mu\text{s}$. Especially for short pulses, the accuracy can deteriorate to over 10%. These calculations and data are compared to the pulse lengths measured via the BNC connector of the LDD100. The TTL pulses generated by the TPG128 are always longer, due to losses in the LDD100.

Since the other calculations depend on the duty cycle data, they are in general even less accurate. The rectifier circuits used to measure the peak voltages show nonlinearities especially around 13V, and therefore the voltage may seem to saturate at a certain current for certain lasers. In addition, the change in laser impedance around threshold can generate remarkable nonlinearities compared to the above calculations.

If you need accurate values, proceed as follows:

- [1] Measure laser peak voltage, frequency and duty cycle using a two-channel oscilloscope (connected to the LEMO jacks of the LLH100) in differential mode.
- [2] Measure average current into the laser using the value given by the HV supply (or by an attached RMS ampermeter).
- [3] Calculate peak current by dividing average current by the duty cycle.

4.7 QCL pulser timing unit (TPG128)

4.7.1 Description

The QCL pulser timing unit is designed to control the QCL pulser switching unit.

It provides TTL pulses on 50Ω on two independent outputs. The pulse duration is adjustable from 0 to 200ns. The interval between pulses can be adjusted between 200ns and 105μs in 3 ranges.

A TTL level *Gate in* input and *Trigger out* output have also been included. The trigger precedes the output pulse by about 100ns.

The QCL pulser timing unit includes the +12VDC power supply needed by the QCL pulser switching unit by means of a Lemo 00 connector with the +12V on the centre wire.

! Warning !

Although the pulser system is capable of delivering pulses with lengths up to 200 ns, and duty cycles up to 50%, the laser may not withstand this! The laser shall only be operated under conditions as specified in the datasheet or by Alpes Lasers directly: all other operation may result in destruction of the laser and loss of warranty.

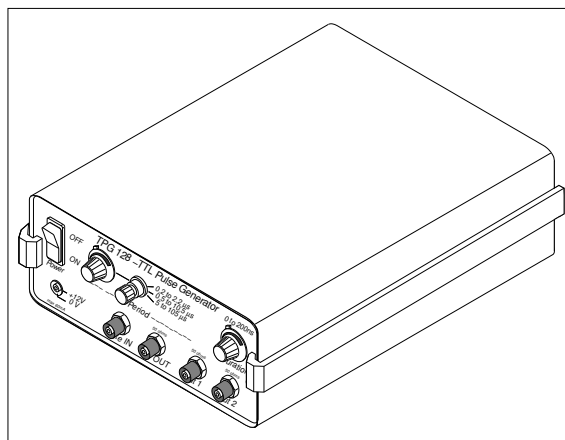


Fig.10: QCL pulser timing unit

Limitations

Caution !

The generator can not operate with a 200 ns long pulse at a 200ns repetition interval, therefore it is limited in duty factor.

The following limitations apply:

- T=400ns: t max = 200ns
- T=300ns: t max = 200ns
- T=250ns: t max = 150ns
- T=200ns: t max = 100ns

4.7.2 Specifications

Voltage : 220V-240V

Frequency : 50Hz-60Hz

Output voltage (for switching unit):+12VDC

Output max current (for switching unit):150mA

Delay between pulses:

..... 200 ns to 2.2 μs

..... 500 ns to 10.5 μs

..... 5.1μs to 105.1 μs

trigger and logic output signals: ... 50Ω TTL driver circuit (74128)

gate level : TTL

Maximum duty cycle: 50% (if larger cycles are needed, the LDD100 should be fed by an external 12V power supply, not the one provided in the TPG128, or else the fuse in the TPG128 may blow).

4.8 QCL temperature controller(TCU151)

4.8.1 Description

The TCU151 is used to control the laser's temperature inside the Laboratory Laser Housing.

It uses a PT100 sensor to measure the temperature of the cold plate and maintains a pre-set temperature either from a front panel knob or from a user supplied voltage.

4.8.2 Specifications

Voltage: 120-240V AC

Frequency: 50-60 Hz

Fuse:

..... 1.6 A T (220-240V)

..... 3.2 A T (110 -120V)

Peltier current maximum: 5A

Temperature control range: . -65 °C to 65 °C

Temperature measurement: ... PT100 4 wires

Temperature monitor: 10mV/°C, Zout = 200Ω

In addition, allow for 15 min. warm-up of TCU151 to get stable readings

External driving temperature: . -6.5V to 6.5V (-65 °C to 65 °C), Zin =1MΩ

4.8.3 Peltier and PT100 connections

The rear connector pinout is listed according to the following items:

- (1) Pin 1: +Peltier element
- (2) Pin 2: - Peltier element
- (3) Pin 3: +I PT100
- (4) Pin 4: +Sense PT100
- (5) Pin 5: -Sense PT100
- (6) Pin 6: -I PT100
- (7) Pin GND: Ground

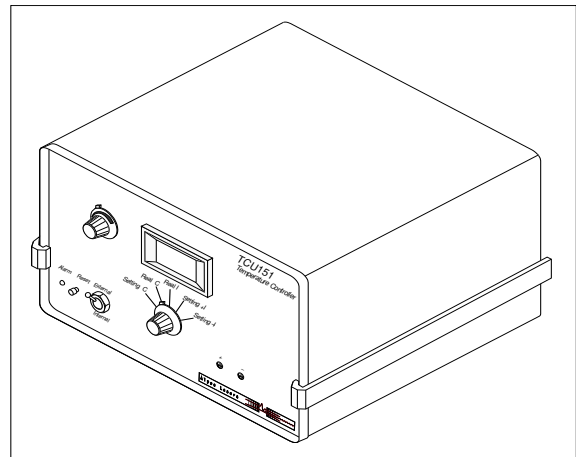


Fig.11: TCU151 temperature controller

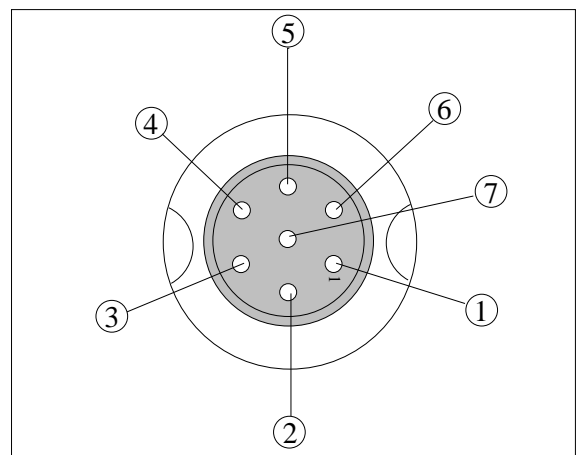


Fig.12: TCU151 Peltier Connector

Chapter 5

Installation

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes the installation and the connection of the QCL Starter Kit. It also explains the operating checks before the normal use.

5.2 General

The setup procedures outlined below must be followed meticulously to ensure that QCL Starter Kit operates correctly and safely.

5.3 Packing list

5.3.1 Standard items

The standard starter Kit is supplied with the following items:

- (1) QCL pulse timing unit (TPG128)
- (2) CPL100 cable
- (3) QCL pulse switching unit (LDD100)
- (4) Low impedance line (LBI100)
- (5) Laboratory Laser Housing (LLH100)
- (6) CTL100 cable
- (7) Temperature controller (TCU151)
- (8) Power cords
- 1 Instructions manual

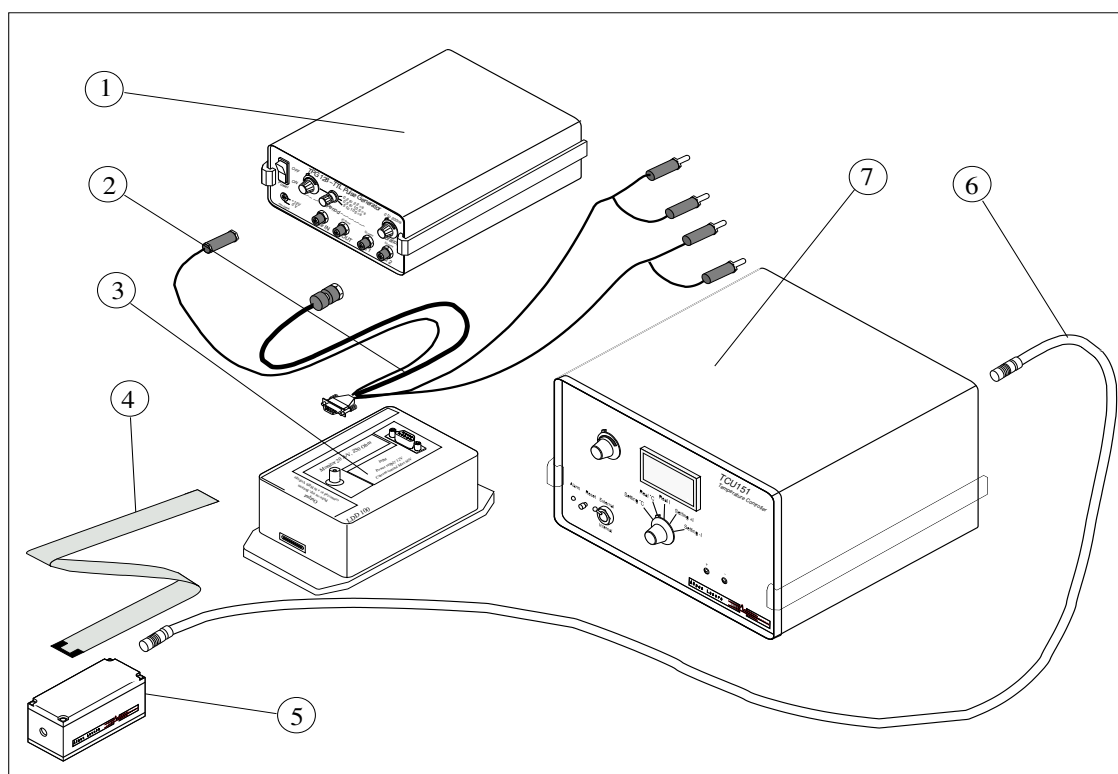


Fig.13: QCL Starter Kit packing list

5.4 Setting the appropriate AC voltage on TCU151

The TCU151 temperature controller works on 110/120V or 220/240V if the fuse holder is oriented in the appropriate position.

Note: There are two rates:

110-120V, 60Hz (USA)

220-240V, 50Hz (Europe)

5.4.1 Procedure

To set the appropriate voltage on the TCU151 temperature controller, proceed as follows:

- [1] Pull out the fuse holder (1) from the socket.
- [2] Verify the orientation of the fuse holder to get the appropriate voltage. The arrow on the fuse holder (3) should correspond to the mark on the socket (2).
- [3] Insert the fuse holder (1) into the socket.

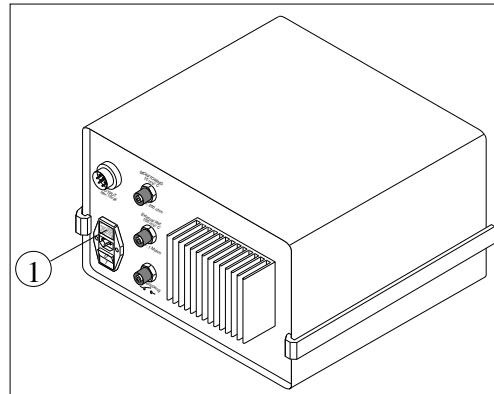


Fig.14:TCU151 rear panel

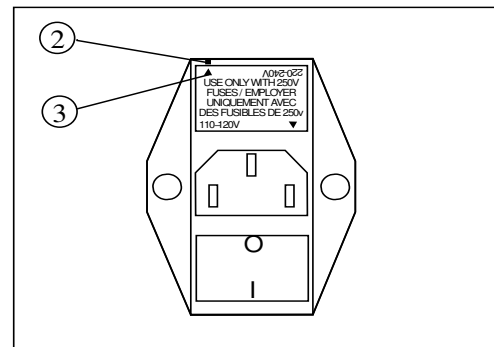


Fig.15 : Setting the appropriate AC voltage rate

5.5 Installing the starter Kit

5.5.1 Before beginning

Make sure that the following devices are turned OFF:

- TPG128
- TCU151
- User DC power supply

5.5.2 Procedure

To install the QCL Starter Kit, proceed as follows:

[1] Plug the low impedance line into the LLH100 connector (2). The line connector is coded.

CAUTION ! Pay attention about the connection's polarity. The laser must be floating from ground for both anode and cathode.

[2] Plug the low impedance line into the QCL pulser switching unit low impedance output (1) paying attention for the polarity.

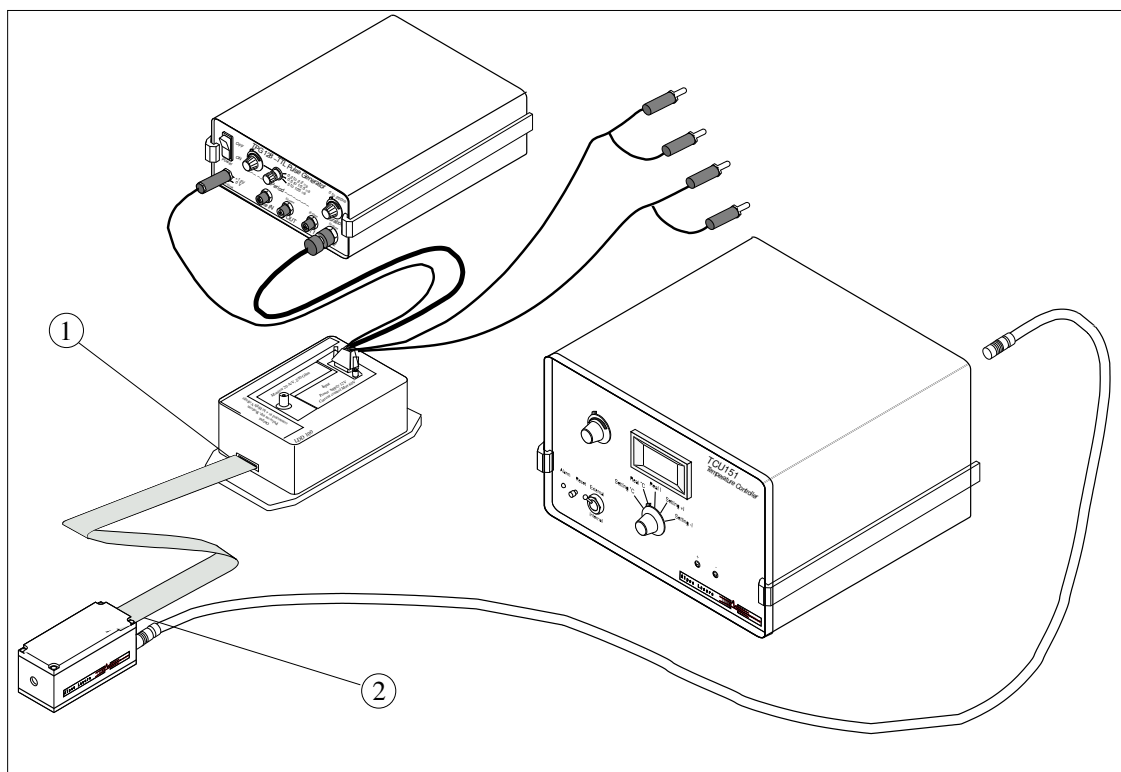


Fig.16: Installing the Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit

[3] Plug the cable (3) onto the LDD100(4).

[4] Plug the +12VDC connector (1) into the TPG128 (9).

[5] Plug the trigger BNC connector (2) into the TPG128 (9) **Out 1** or **Out 2** output.

CAUTION ! The unit **must** be floating.

[6] Plug the banana cables (8) (red and black) into the DC power supply unit.

[7] Plug the LEMO connector (6) onto the LLH100 module (5) and the connector (7) onto the TCU151 unit.

[8] Plug the cooling water tubing if available.

CAUTION ! If no water cooling is available, pay attention to the LLH100 module case temperature, and be careful of either reducing heat dissipation or providing air cooling to the unit.

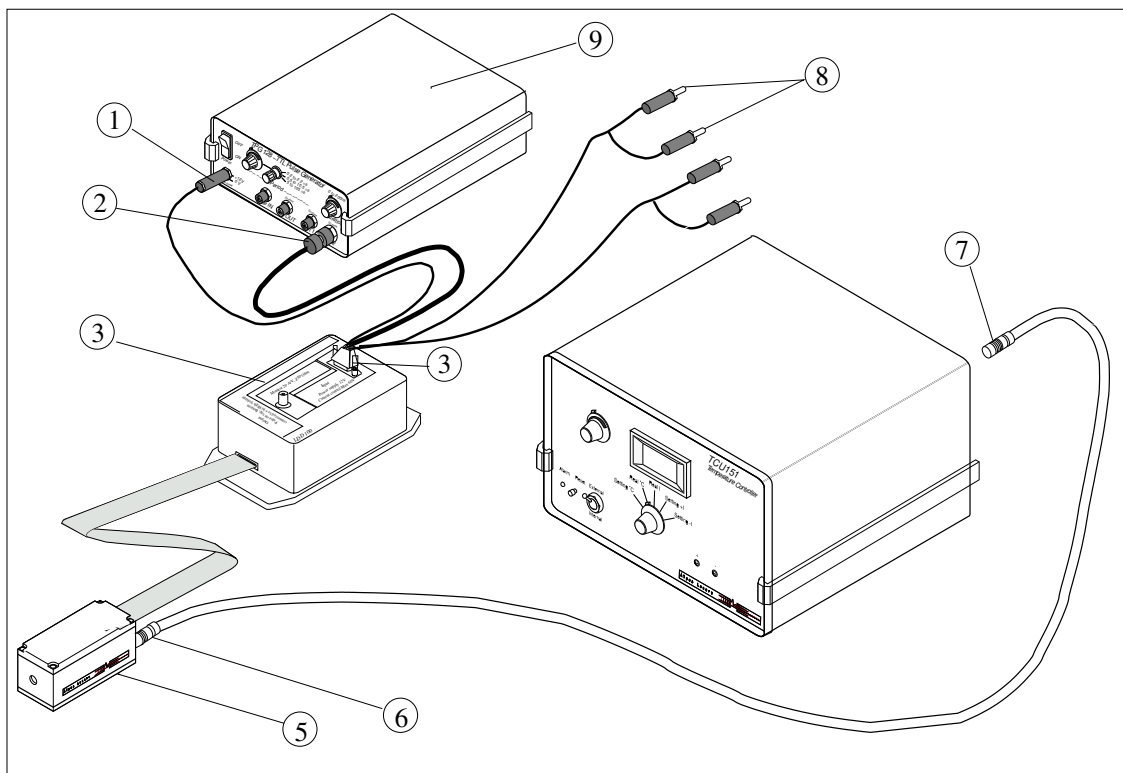


Fig.17: Connecting Starter Kit

Chapter 6

Use

6.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes how to use the QCL Starter Kit. It also explains the functionalities of the TPG128 and the Temperature Controller (TCU151).

6.2 QCL pulse timing unit command description

The Quantum Cascade Laser is controlled by the QCL pulse timing unit TPG128. The TPG128 front panel is composed of the following items:

- (1) Power ON/OFF switch.
- (2) Period fine 10 turns potentiometer.
- (3) Period range 3 positions switch.
- (4) Pulse duration 10 turns potentiometer.
- (5) BNC 50Ω TTL pulse 2 output.
- (6) BNC 50Ω TTL pulse 1 output.
- (7) BNC 50Ω TTL Trig OUT.
- (8) BNC TTL Gate IN.
- (9) LEMO 00 12VDC output (for LDD100).

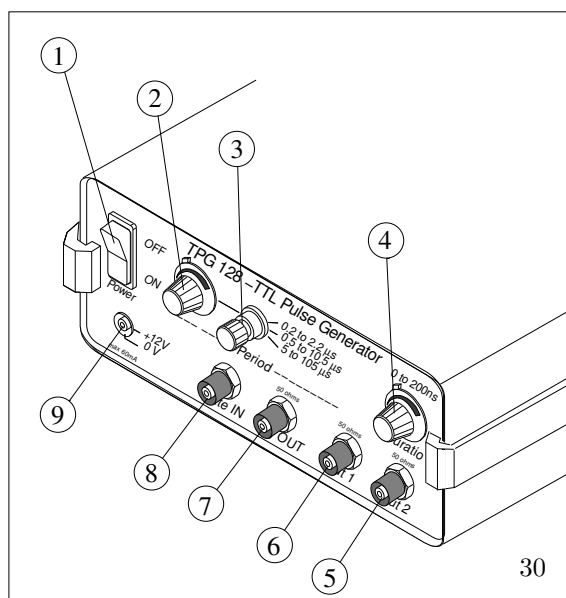


Fig.18: TPG128 front panel

6.3 TCU151 command description

The internal temperature of the LLH100 is driven by the TCU151 unit.

The Temperature Controller front and rear panels are composed of the following items:

- (1) Set Temperature 5 turns potentiometer: Allows to set the internal temperature reference.
- (2) LCD 3 digits display: Used to display either the actual sensor or reference temperature/current.
- (3) Switch to select which temperature or current signals to display.
- (4) Alarm display LED.
- (5) Alarm reset switch.
- (6) Switch which selects between the internal and the remote temperature reference.
- (7) Setting Current adjustment potentiometers.
- (8) Power ON/OFF fuse combined main switch.
- (9) To LLH100: Amphenol connector for LLH100 temperature control.
- (10) Interlock BNC connector.
- (11) External reference BNC connector.
- (12) Monitoring: BNC connector providing the temperature of the sensor as 10mV/°C signal.

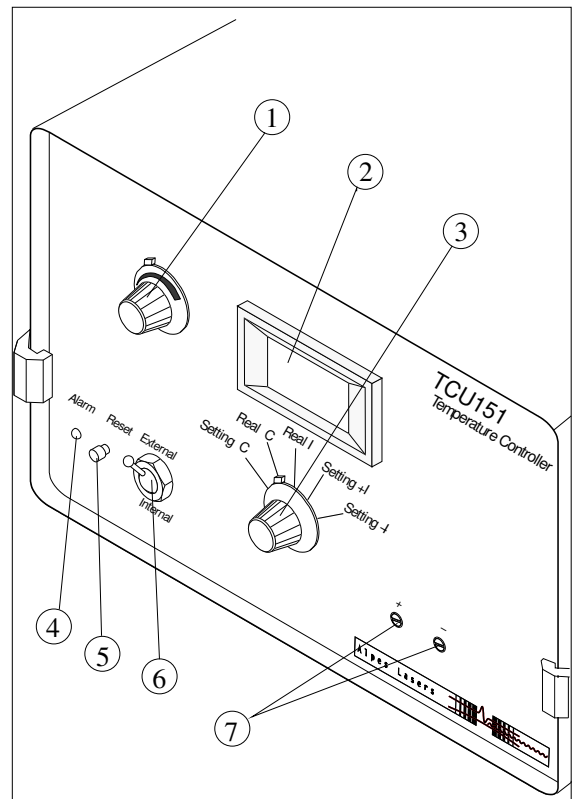


Fig.19: TCU151 temperature controller front panel

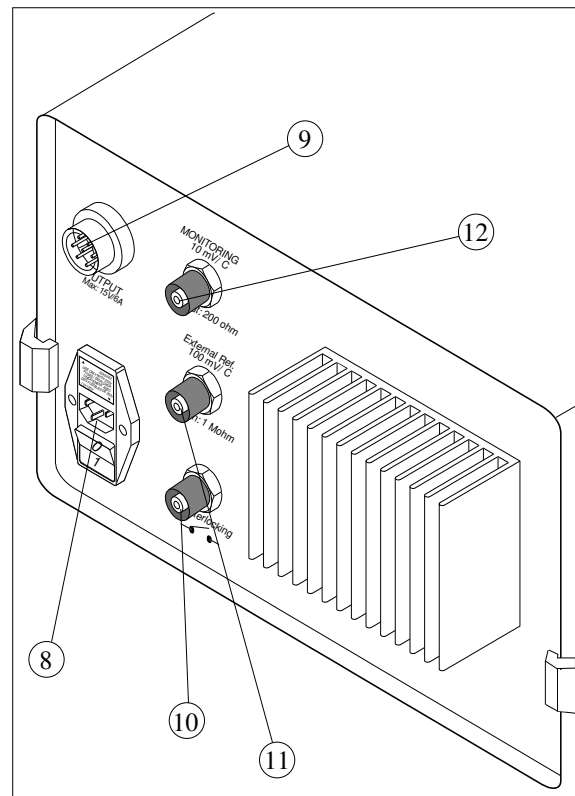


Fig.20: TCU151 temperature controller rear panel

6.4 Laser utilisation

6.4.1 Overview

In order to insure a correct use and an appropriate lifetime to the laser, it is recommended to proceed according a specific order as below:

- Start water flow to cool the LLH100.
- Turn on the temperature controller and set the desired temperature.
- Start the pulse generator.
- Switch on the power supply.

6.4.2 Proceedings

To use the Quantum Cascade Laser, proceed as follows:

[1] Make sure that the laser has been installed properly (see page 38).

[2] If available, turn on the water on the LLH100 module.

CAUTION ! If water is not available, check the LLH100 module temperature until desired operating temperature is reached. The unit has a reduced laser temperature range under reduced heat sinking conditions. The unit may become very hot, overheat and be destroyed. A radiator and possibly a fan might be necessary to increase the laser operating temperature range.

[3] Turn on the TCU151 instrument (6).

Note: Set the desired temperature by first pushing the switch (3) to **Setting** °C to display the objective temperature and turn the 5 turn knob (1) to change it. Turning the switch (3) to **Real** °C, the display shows the present temperature.

Note: To remote control the LLH100 temperature, set the switch (5) to external and provide a voltage on the External reference (7) from -6.5V (-65 °C) to + 6.5V (+65 °C).

[4] Plug the banana cables into the power supply unit and set output voltage to zero and the compliance current to 100mA if pulsing a QCL.

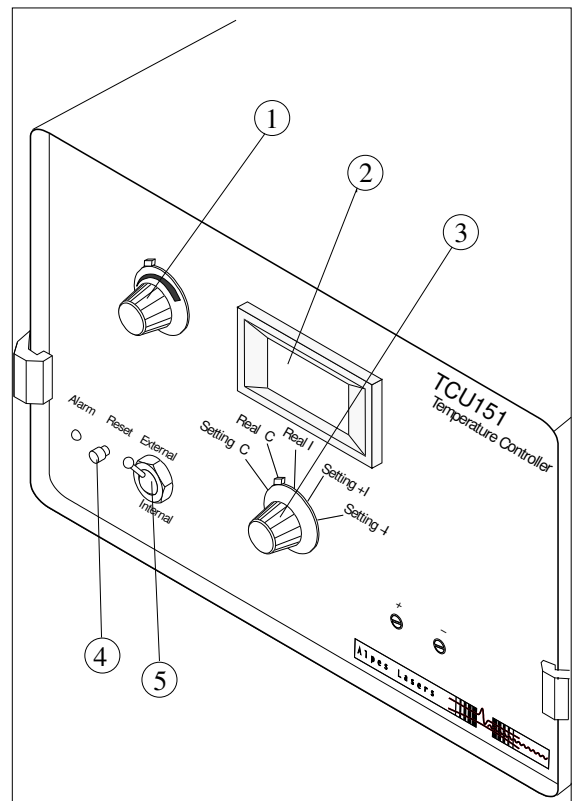


Fig.21: Starting the TCU151

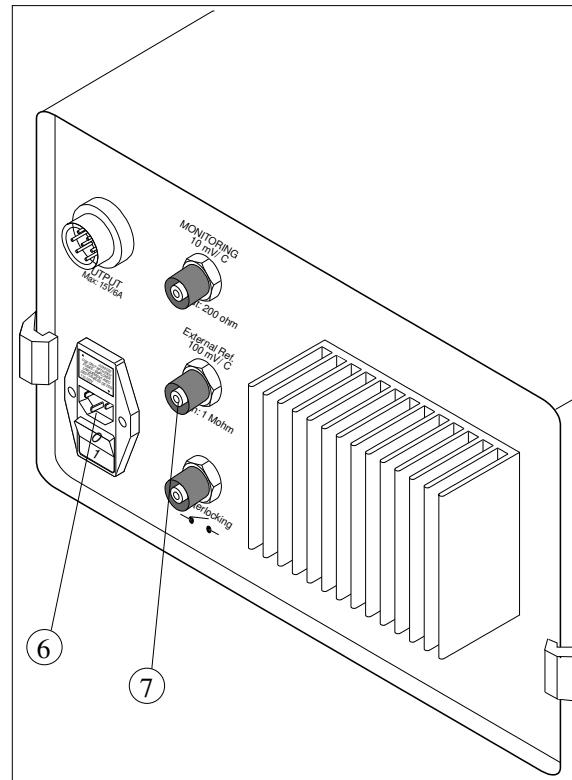


Fig.22: TCU151 remote control

[5] Turn the TPG128 ON (8) and set the pulse period to 2.0 and the range to 0.5 to 10.5 μs (medium), corresponding to a period length of about 2.5 μs , or to the values specified on the datasheet or by Alpes Lasers.

[6] Set the pulse duration (11) to 3.0, corresponding to a pulse length of about 50ns, or to the values specified on the datasheet or by Alpes Lasers.

[7] Verify laser cabling, power meter range set corresponding to the power range of the laser (specified in the datasheet), zeroed and aligned.

[8] Turn the HV power supply ON, then the TPG128 ON, and slowly increase the HV output voltage (but not higher than specified in the datasheet of the laser!)

[9] If available, monitor the averaged output to avoid overloading the laser. In any case place one probe on both the anode and the cathode of the laser and view it with an oscilloscope.

[10] Subtract the two traces and you get the voltage across the laser that should not be more than the specified max voltage.

Note: The laboratory housing LLH100 makes available two outputs giving access to these voltages (see documentation).

[11] Set the desired pulse and period length as specified in the datasheet or by special agreement with Alpes Lasers.

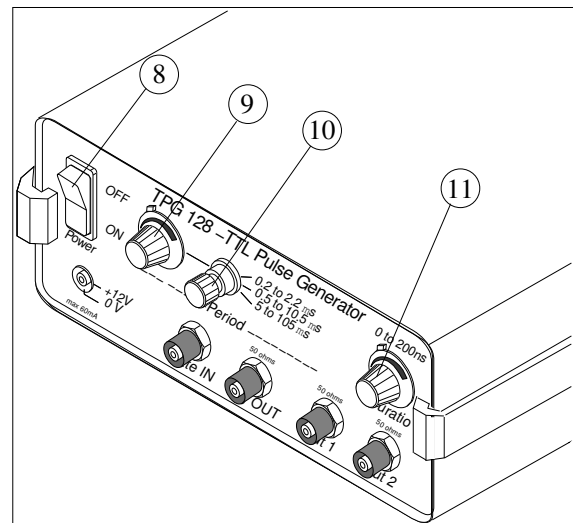


Fig.23: Starting the TPG128

6.5 Interlock utilisation

The temperature controller is designed with an built-in interlock (1). This function is activated when a fault occurs on the TCU151 controller (over-temperature, over-current, etc.).

The interlock is by default a NC (Normally Close) relay contact.

CAUTION ! It is also possible to set the Interlock as a NO (Normally Open) contact. For more details about the settings, see the procedure on page 42.

6.5.1 Before beginning

In order to recover the temperature controller from an interlock event, please pay attention about the following points:

- Locate the fault which caused the interlock and fix it.
- Wait until the temperature driven by the TCU151 is lower than the maximum.

6.5.2 Procedure Interlock utilisation

To reset the temperature controller from an interlock event, proceed as follows:

[1] Press the **RESET** button (3) on the TCU151 front panel

↔ The interlock is reset and the red LED **ALARM** (2) should be off.

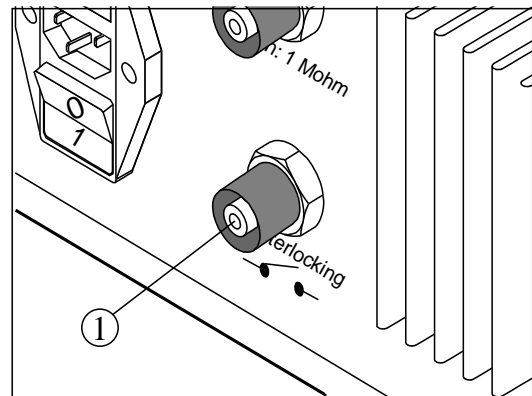


Fig.24: Interlock BNC connector

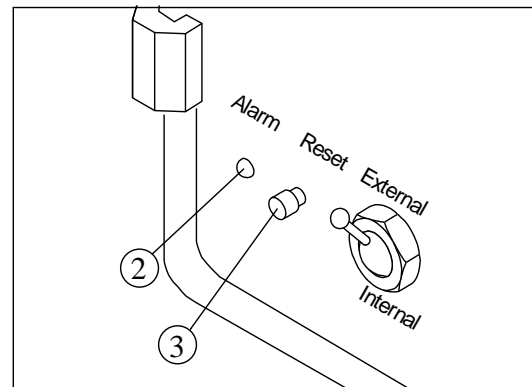


Fig.25: Resetting the interlock

Chapter 7

Troubleshooting

7.1 Chapter overview

This chapter sets out troubleshooting instructions for ensuring safe and trouble-free operation of the Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit system.

7.2 Principle

The personnel must have read and understood this documentation before carrying out any activity whatsoever with the Quantum Cascade Laser Starter Kit. In case of unclear information, please contact the distributor.

The power supply reaches max current for a very low voltage

- **The low impedance line or the QCL is shorted to ground.**
 - √ Check the cabling.
 - √ Replace the laser if necessary.
- **The DC power supply is NOT floating.**
 - √ Change the cabling in order to leave the laser floating.
- **The laser tightening device is too tightened and the QCL laser is shorted to ground.**
 - √ Loose the laser fixture device.

Laser draws current but gives no light

- **The laser may be reversed polarized (it is not a desirable situation but does generally not destroy the laser).**
 - √ Check the polarity of the connection.
- **The polarity is right. It draws too much current and the power meter is misaligned.**
 - √ Reduce the current at the maximum specified for the operating temperature.
 - √ Check power meter alignment and scale.
- **The QCL laser is not used with the LLH and is grounded.**
 - √ Check that there is no short-circuit on the circuit.

The laser does not draw current

- **There is no contact with the laser.**
 - √ Check that the gilded copper contact is present and properly mounted.
 - √ Tighten the PET U-shaped holder in order to effective the contact with the laser by means of the POM fixing screws.
 - √ Check the connections on the LLH. Measure the input resistance with an ohm-meter between the Laser connector and the Base receptacle connector.

Chapter 8

Maintenance

8.1 Overview

This chapter describes all procedures of maintenance and calibration for the QCL starter Kit. The procedures described herein must be performed by personnel trained on the electronic field, with acceptance by Alpes Lasers, otherwise the warranty will be lost.

Note: The TTL Pulse Generator (TPG128) and the Temperature Controller (TCU151) are calibrated in factory.

8.1.1 How to remove the covers of TCU151 and TPG128

Pull off the light gray plastic pieces of the side of the front and back plates. Lift off the light gray plastic shades from the side of the box, which gives access to the screws holding the top and bottom covers.

8.2 Replacement procedures

8.2.1 Quantum Cascade Laser replacement

Before beginning

- [1] Switch the QCL Starter Kit OFF

Material needed

- 1 set of Allen keys.
- 1 ohmmeter.
- 1 QCL laser.
- a pair of tweezers.

Procedure

To replace the Quantum Cascade Laser, proceed as follows:

[1] Remove the top cover (2) of the Laboratory Laser Housing (LLH100) by unscrewing the screws (1)

[2] Remove the PET U-shaped holder (5) by unscrewing the fixing screws (3)

CAUTION ! Pay attention *NOT* to drop the laser!

[3] Remove the laser (4). Hold the laser on the gilded ceramic pads with the tweezers pins along the axis of the largest length of the copper submount

! WARNING ! Take especially care not to touch the active region of the laser or the wire bonds!

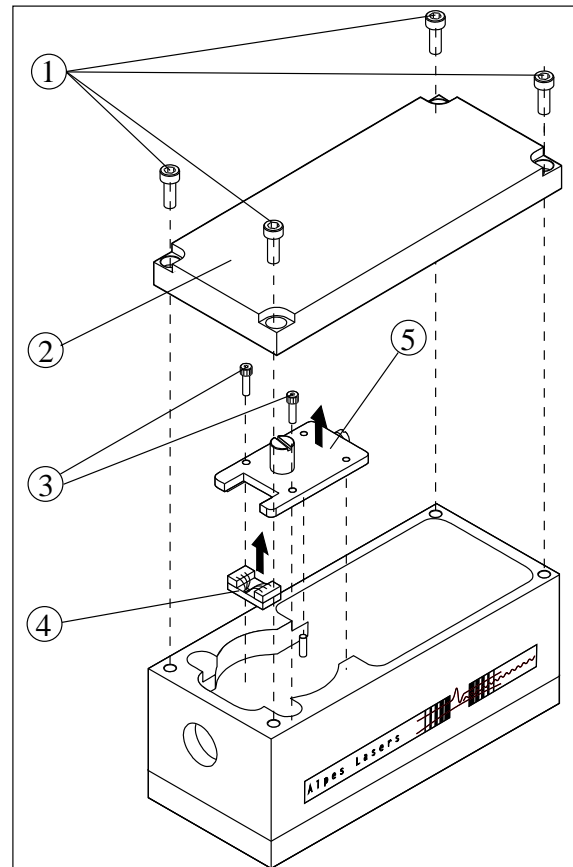


Fig.26: Removing the laser

[4] Install the new laser (4) into the holder using small tweezers (0.5cm aperture).

[5] Hold the laser (4) on the gilded ceramic pads with the tweezers pins along the axis of the largest length of the copper submount.

[6] Place it in the receptacle parallel to the window.

! Warning ! Avoid hitting the laser chip facet on the case, it is extremely fragile.

[7] Place the screws (3) in the PET holder (5).

[8] Place the PET holder (5) on the two guides (6) on the back of the laser receptacle being careful of maintaining the PET holder higher on the laser side than on the back side.

[9] Once the PET holder (5) is engaged in the guides, push it down until contact with the gilded ceramic pads is established.

[10] Screw it to the receptacle.

[11] Verify that the contact is established by measuring with an ohm meter on the LLH100 low impedance plug.

Note: For reproducible measurement be careful of measuring with the positive probe on the + LLH100 connection.

Note: If the contact is bad, adjust the plastic screws at the pressing end of the PET holder (5).

Note: If the contact is bad, clean the bottom of the submount with grinding paper, be careful of not damaging the bonding wires and the laser facet.

[12] Place the dry desiccant bag close to the low impedance line plug. Only applicable if desiccation is needed and the lasers has been shipped with a desiccant bag.

Note: This operation is preferably performed in a gloves box under dry nitrogen atmosphere if the ambient atmosphere is humid (this is not necessary under normal conditions 50-60% humidity).

[13] Close the cover (2) with the screws (1).

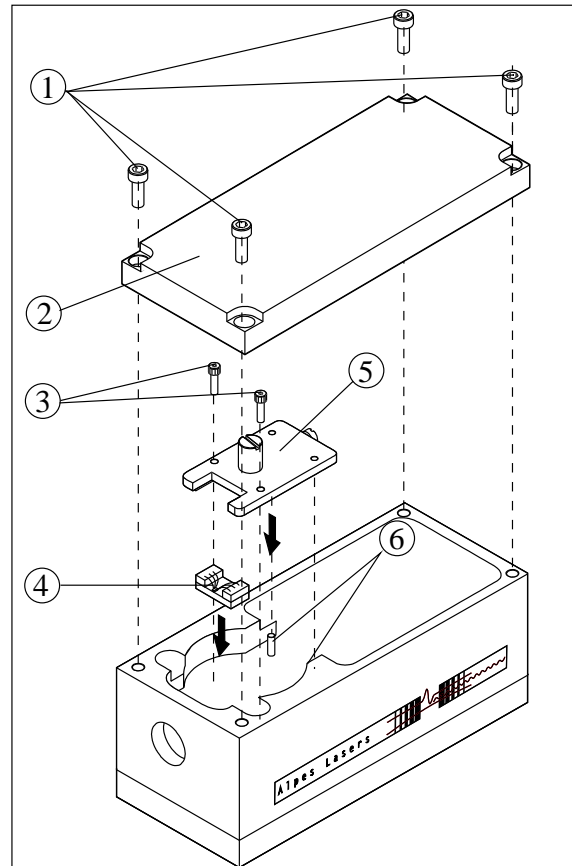


Fig.27: Replacing the laser

8.2.2 QCL "UP" and "DN" position exchange

Before beginning

[1] Switch the QCL Starter Kit OFF.

Material needed

- 1 set of Allen keys.
- 1 ohmmeter.
- 1 FP-QCL laser contact plate.
- 1 pair of tweezers.

Procedure

To exchange the beam of a Quantum Cascade Laser, proceed as follows:

[1] Remove the top cover (2) of the Laboratory Laser Housing (LLH100) by unscrewing the screws (1).

[2] Remove the PET U-shaped holder (4) by unscrewing the fixing screws (3).

Caution ! Pay attention NOT to drop the laser!

[3] Remove the gilded copper contact (6) by unscrewing the back screw (5).

[4] Install the opposite gilded copper contact (6) by screwing back the screw (5).

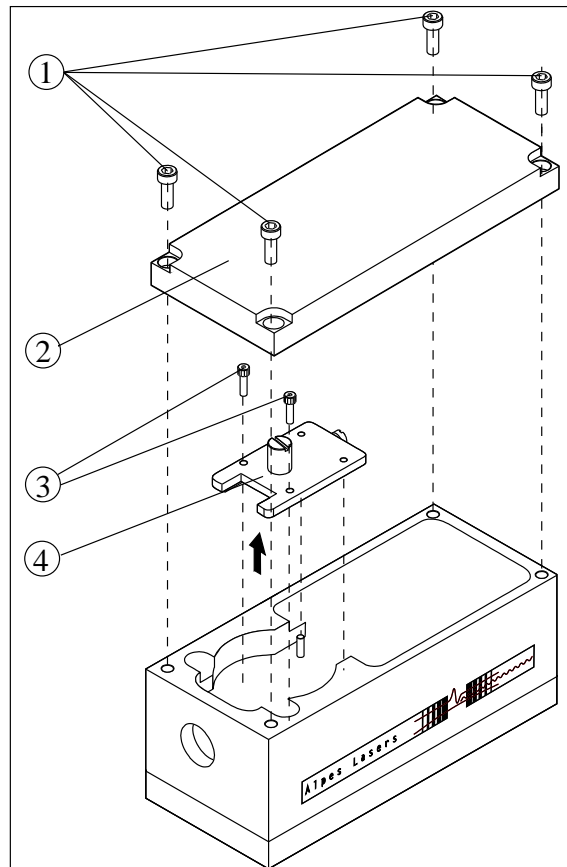


Fig.28: Removing the laser receptacle

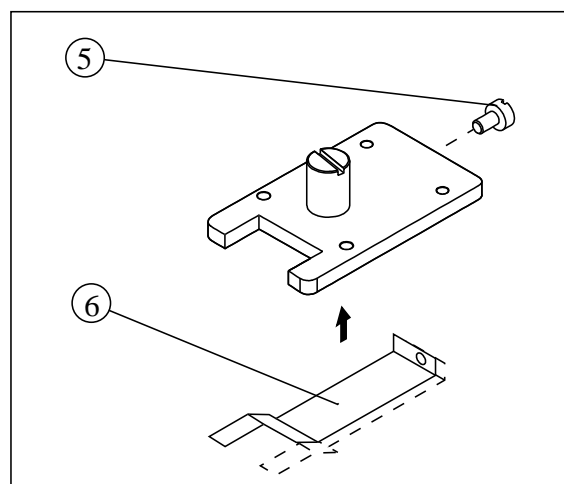


Fig.29: Exchanging the laser

[5] Place the screws (3) in the PET holder (4).

[6] Place the PET holder (4) on the two guides (5) on the back of the laser receptacle (6) being careful of maintaining the PET holder higher on the laser side than on the back side.

[7] Once the holder (4) is engaged in the guides, push it down until contact with the gilded ceramic pads of the laser is established.

[8] Screw the PET holder (4) to the receptacle (6).

[9] Verify that the contact is established by measuring with an ohm meter on the LLH100 low impedance plug.

Note: For reproducible measurement be careful of measuring with the positive probe on the + LLH100 connection.

Note: If the contact is bad, adjust the plastic screws (7) at the pressing end of the PET holder (4).

[10] Place a dry desiccant bag close to the low impedance line plug. Only applicable if desiccation is needed and the lasers has been shipped with a desiccant bag.

Note: This operation is preferably performed in a gloves box under dry nitrogen atmosphere if the ambient atmosphere is humid (this is not necessary under normal conditions 50-60% humidity).

[11] Close the cover (2) with the screws (1).

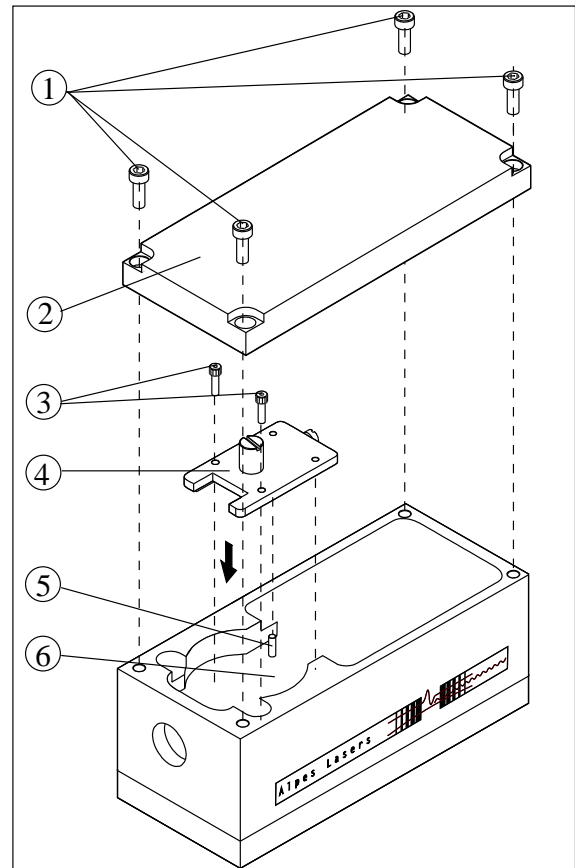


Fig.30: Placing the PET U-shaped holder

8.3 TCU151 temperature controller interlock setting

8.3.1 Generalities

The interlock is located on the main board.

Note: By default, the interlock is set to NC (Normally Close) contact.

8.3.2 Before beginning interlock setting

- [1] Switch the instrument OFF.
- [2] Unplug the power cord.
- [3] Remove the cover (1) to access the main board (2).

8.3.3 Needed material

- 1 set of screwdriver.
- 1 tweezers.

8.3.4 Procedure interlock setting

To set the type of interlock, proceed as follows:

- [1] Locate the **J9 Interlock** connector.
- [2] Place the associated jumper according to the type of desired interlock.

Note: The common pin is on the center (4) and by placing the jumper on a side defines the interlock type as:

- for a NC contact: jumper on pins (4) and (5)
- for a NO contact: jumper on pins (3) and (4)

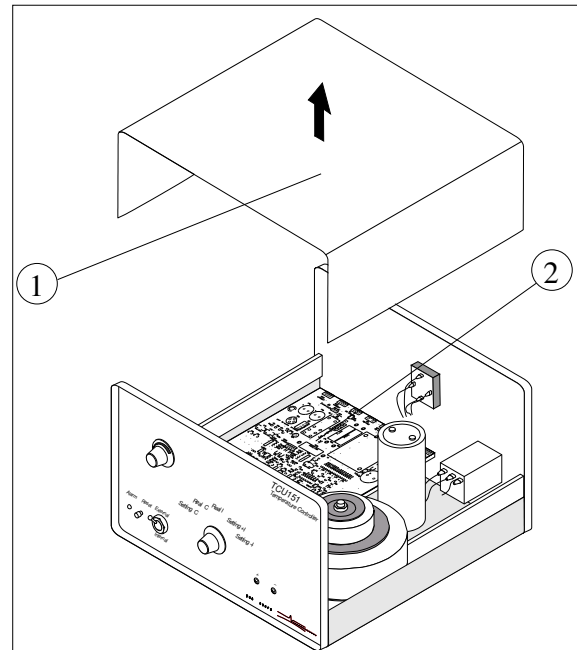


Fig.31: Opening the TCU151 cover

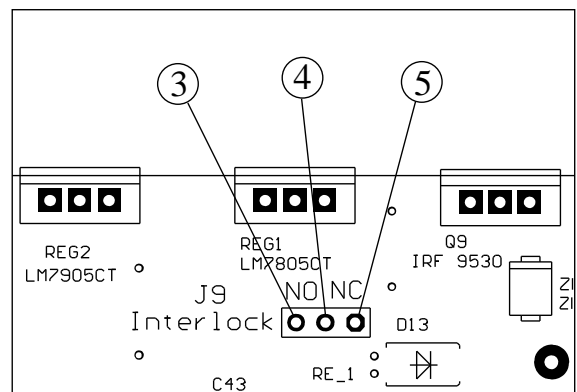


Fig.32: J9 Interlock connector

8.4 Calibration procedures

8.4.1 TPG128 calibration

Generalities

The present section describes procedure to be carried out for particular calibration of the TPG128.

Before beginning

- [1] Switch the instrument OFF.
- [2] Remove the cover (1).
- [3] Switch the instrument ON.

! WARNING ! Keep in mind that during the calibration, the instrument is alive (powered on)

Needed material

- 1 set of screwdriver.
- 1 oscilloscope.
- 1 voltmeter.

Procedure calibration

The generator should be calibrated as followed:

- [1] Verify the +5 V supply.
- [2] During the first test, set all potentiometers and adjustable capacitors to their medium values.
- [3] Adjust to the potentiometer *50 ns adj* (3) in order to obtain a 500 ns long pulse on *TP2* (2).
- [4] Connect an oscilloscope allowing the measurement of the signal's period on the output *Trig out*.

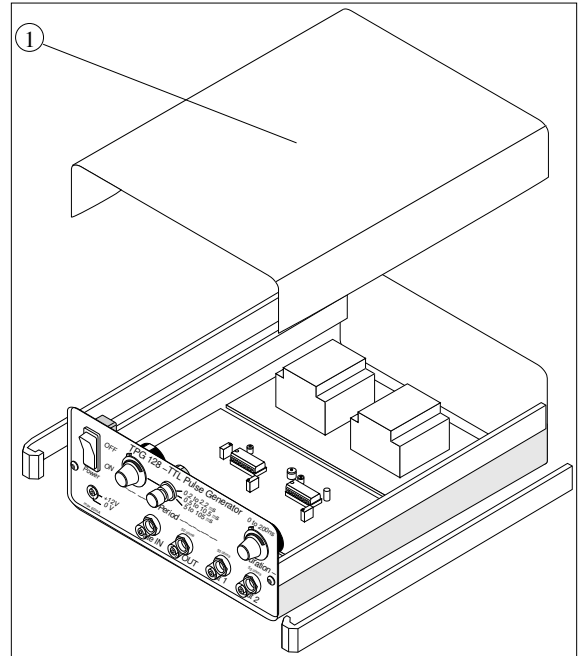


Fig.33: Removing the top cover

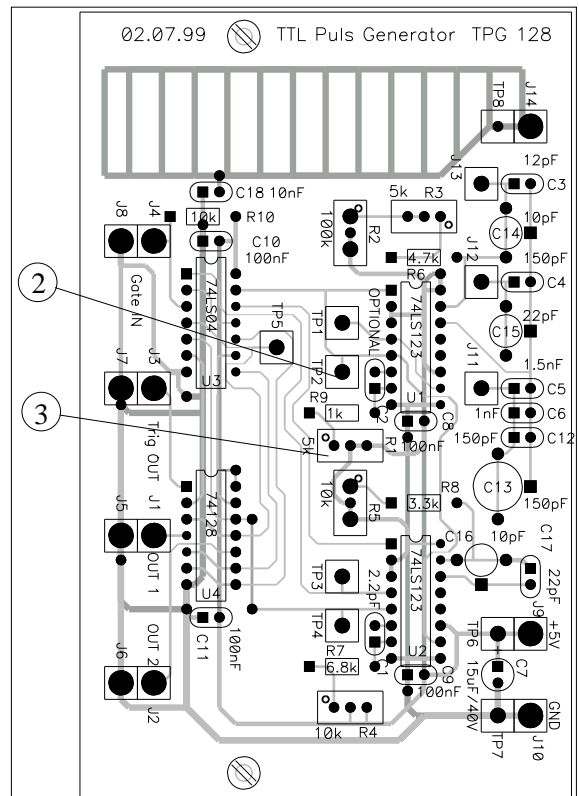


Fig.34: TPG128 main board

[5] Choose the range $5 \mu s$ to $105 \mu s$. Pot 10 turns **Period** on 10. Adjust the adjustable capacitor **max 105 μs adj** (4) in order to obtain a $105 \mu s$ long period.

[6] Pot 10 turns **Period** on 0. Adjust the pot **Period min adj** (1) in order to have a period of $5 \mu s$.

[7] Repeat steps 5) and 6) in order to obtain $105 \pm 1 \mu s$ and $5 \pm 0,1 \mu s$ for the two settings of the pot **Period**.

[8] Choose the range $0.2 \mu s$ to $2.2 \mu s$. Pot 10 turns **Period** on 10. Adjusts the capacitor **max 2,2 μs adj** (2) in order to obtain a period of $2.2 \mu s$.

[9] 10 turn pot **Period** on 0. Check that the period is 200 ns. If it is not the case, re-adjust the pot **50 ns adj** (5) in order to obtain 200 ± 20 ns. (In general, it is not possible to go below 210 ns).

[10] Choose the range $0.5 \mu s$ to $10.5 \mu s$. Pot 10 turn **Period** on 10. Adjust capacitor **max 10,5 μs adj** (3) in order to have a period of $10,5 \mu s$.

[11] Pot 10 turns **Period** on 0. Check the period is $0.6 \pm 0.1 \mu s$.

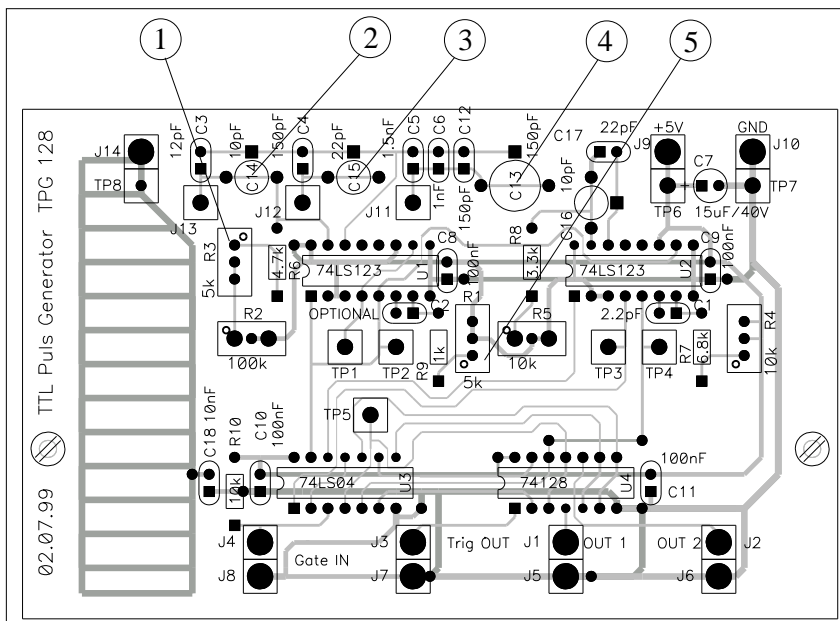


Fig.35: TPG128 main board

[12] Connect oscilloscope on the output **Out1**. Load with a 50Ω . Choose a repetition period of about $5\ \mu\text{s}$.

[13] Pot 10 turns **Duration** on 10. Adjust capacitor **Max duration** (2) to have a output pulse of $200\ \text{ns} \pm 5\ \text{ns}$.

[14] Pot 10 turns **Duration** on 0. Adjust the pot **Out Ons adj** (1) in order that the output pulse is 0ns. The pulse is 0 ns long when its shape is triangular with an 1,1 V amplitude (half of the maximum value).

[15] Repeat points [13] and [14] until the values are OK.

[16] Check the output **Out 2**, check the operation of **Gate in**. The input **Gate in** open (high TTL level) = **gate** open, the output signal is present. Input **Gate in** short-circuited (low TTL level) = **gate** closed, the output signal is zero.

[17] Check the +12 V is present on Lemo 00 (+12 V on the centre connector).

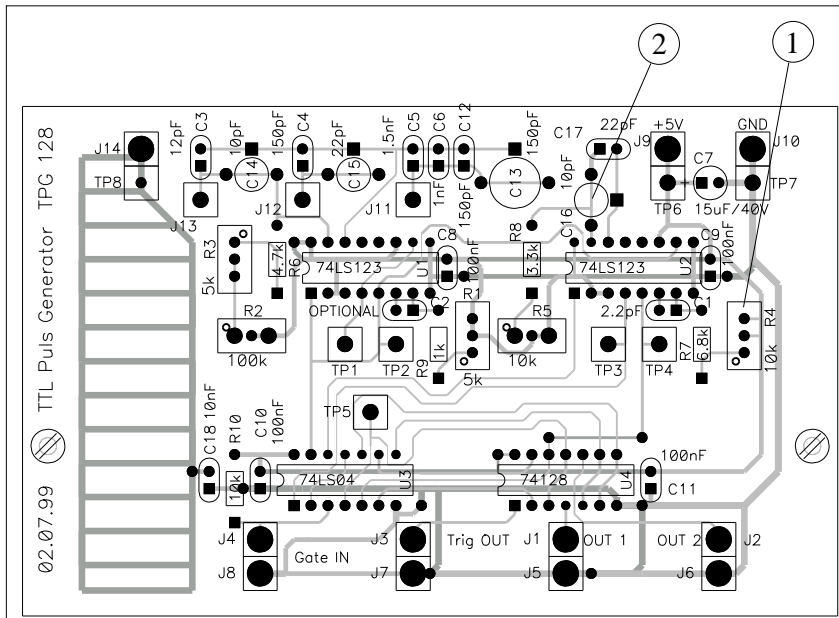


Fig.36: TPG128 main board

8.4.2 TCU151 temperature controller calibration

! WARNING ! Keep in mind that during the calibration procedure, the instrument is powered on.

Before beginning

- [1] Power off the instrument.
- [2] Open the TCU151 top cover (1) to access the TCU151 main board (2).

Material needed

- Voltmeter HP3458A or equivalent.
- Voltage source Keithley SMU237 or equivalent.
- Precision resistor 100 Ohm 1% or better.
- Cable: LEMO 6 poles female 6 bananas female (LEMO connector: LFGG.1B.306.CLAD72Z, LEMO handler GMA.1B.065.DG).

Procedure

+5V/-5V power supply check.

CAUTION ! Do not connect the signal IN-34 V DC (connector J1 (3)).

- [1] Check the input impedance between +5V/-5V and GND

note: The values should be:

- TP1 (4) - GND (5): > 5 kΩ.
- TP2 (6) - GND (5): < 4 kΩ.

- [2] Power on the instrument.

- [3] Check the +5V/-5V power supply voltage.

Note: The values should be:

- TP1 (4) - GND (5): 4.95 to 5.2 V.
- TP2 (6) - GND (5): 4.95 to 5.2 V.

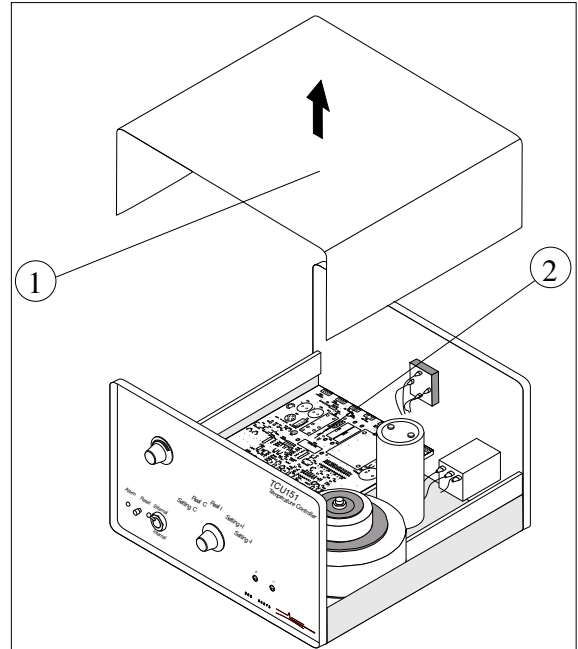


Fig.37: Removing the top cover

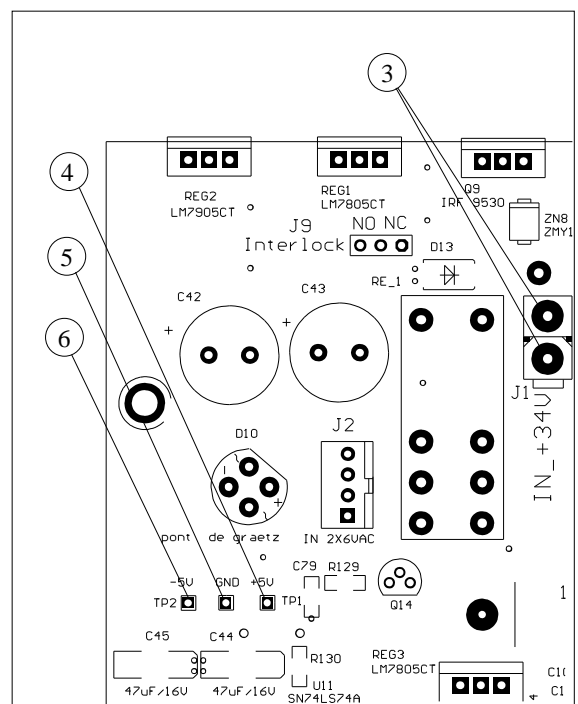


Fig.38: TCU151 main board

Sensing level and range adjustment

[4] Replace the cable connected to **J8** (4) with the 100Ω 1% reference resistor in the following way:

Connect one side of the resistors to pins 1 and 2, the other side to pins 3 and 4.

[5] Measure the voltage on **Zn3/R10** (3).

Note: The value should be:

- $V = 1.22 \text{ to } 1.25V$.

[6] Measure the voltage at the intersection of **R19/R35** (5).

*Note: The value should be: $V=100mV$ (adjustable with the potentiometer **P1** (2)).*

*Note: If the range is too small, replace the resistor **R1** (1) = 1.3kΩ with 1.4kΩ.*

[7] Set the selector (9) to display **Real °C**.

[8] Adjust the trimmer **P6** (6) in order to obtain the value of **000 °C** on the screen (8).

[9] Vary the Temperature Reference by using the **Set Temperature** 5 turns potentiometer (7) located on the front panel.

Note: The range displayed should be -074 to + 074.

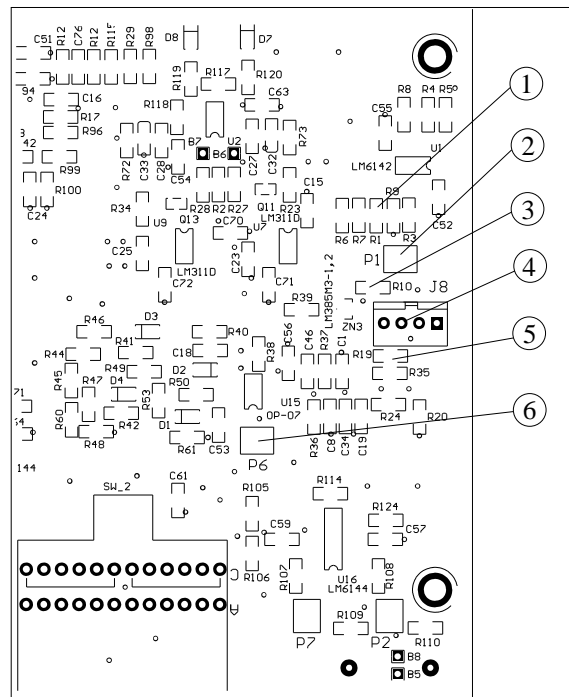


Fig.39: TCU151 main board

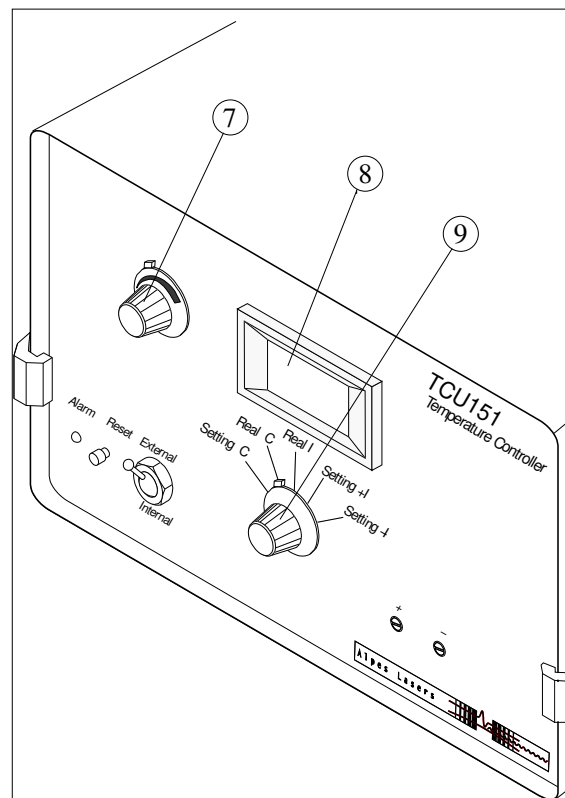


Fig.40: TCU151 front panel

Temperature Reference offset adjustment

- [10] Adjust **B13** (3) to **0.000** with **P3** (4)
- [11] Set the temperature with the **Set Temperature** potentiometer (Fig.40 (7)) to +5 °C
 ↳ The temperature reference signal B13 should be $\geq 4.3V$
- [12] Set the temperature with the **Set Temperature** potentiometer (Fig.40 (7)) to -5 °C
 ↳ The temperature reference signal B3 should be $\leq 4.3V$
- [13] Check the switch range by setting the Temperature Reference at + 2 °C and -2 °C

B7 = -5V and +5V
 B6 = +5V and -5V

- [14] Check the output voltage of the transistors
 ↳ The signals on **R78** and **R81** should toggle simultaneously with the inversal signals on **R79** and **R80**

CAUTION ! The signals B6 and B7 (2) must never be at 0V simultaneously. Otherwise there is a risk of short-circuit!

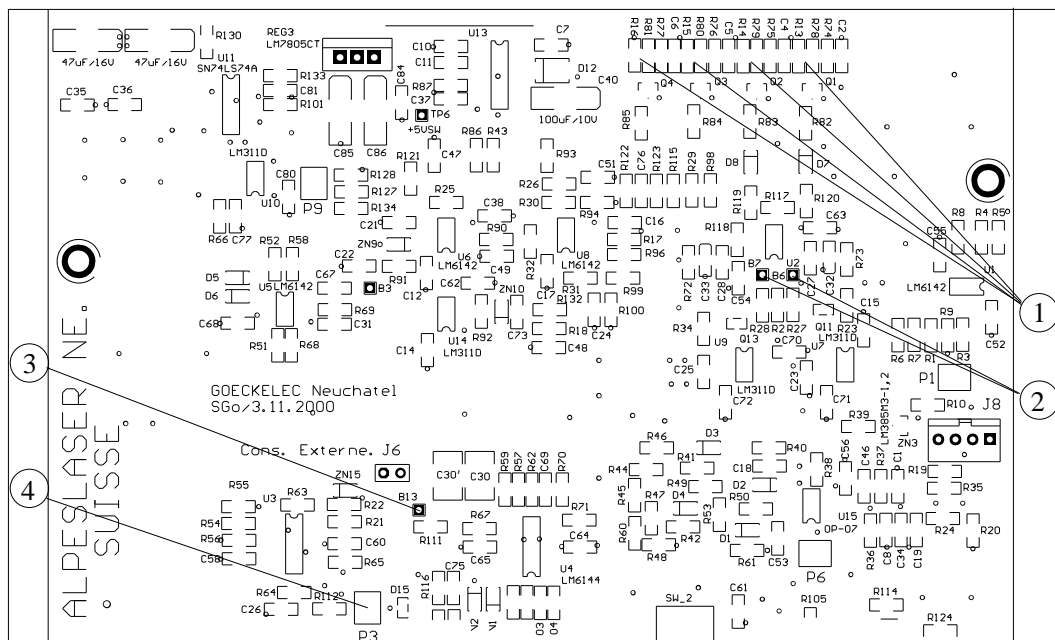


Fig.41: TCU151 main board

Oscillator check

[15] Measure the frequency on the *pin 7* of **U13** (1).

Note: The value is 28KHz + /- 3KHz

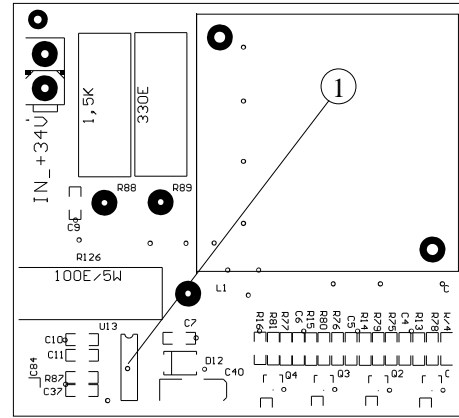


Fig.42: TCU151 main board

Current/Voltage ratio adjustment

[16] Adjust the trimmer **P4** (6) in order to read **B4** = 0.6V (4).

[17] Set the selector (5) to mode **Setting +I**.
The LCD screen should display 1.00 A.

Note: If it is not the case, adjust it with P2 (2).

[18] Adjust the trimmer **P4** in order to read **B4** = 3.0 V.

The LCD screen should display 5.00 A.

Note: If it is not the case, adjust it with P2 (2). Example : 0,6 V ⇒ 0,99 A and 3V ⇒ 4,99 A.

[19] Set the switch on the front panel to mode **Setting -I**.

[20] Repeat steps [2] and [4] for **P5** (7) and **B5** (3).

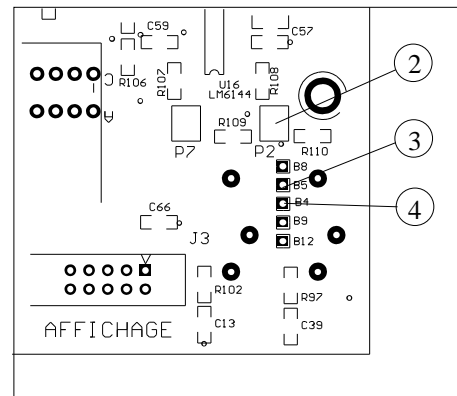


Fig.43: TCU151 main board

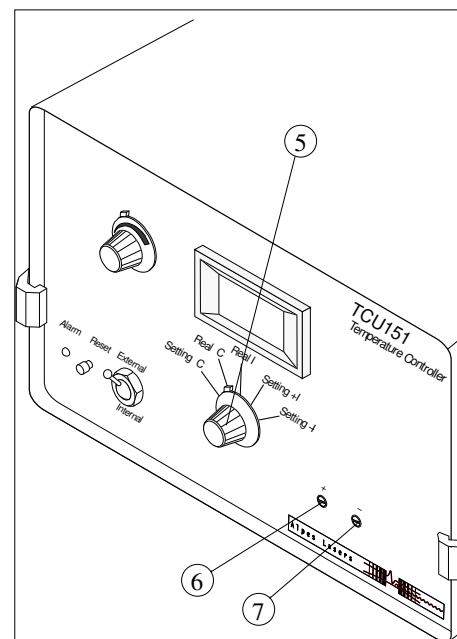


Fig.44: TC51 front panel

CAUTION ! For the further steps of this check, limit the positive current to 1 A and the negative one with 1.2 A by means of the 5 turns potentiometer)

Temperature limit threshold

[21] Measure the voltage on **pin 2** of **U10** (1).

Note: The value should be: 0.7V (= 70 °C) (If needed, adjust it with the trimmer P9(2)).

[22] Power off the instrument.

Starting the power section of the instrument.

[23] Remove the 100 E reference resistor from **J8** (4) and plug the output cable **J8**.

[24] Plug the external cable into the LLH100, and verify that the Pt100 is properly mounted in the latter.

[25] Use an external power supply (0-30VDC/3A) to simulate the internal power supply.

[26] Limit the current to 200 mA and connect it to main board **J1** connector (3).

[27] Power on the instrument and the external power supply.

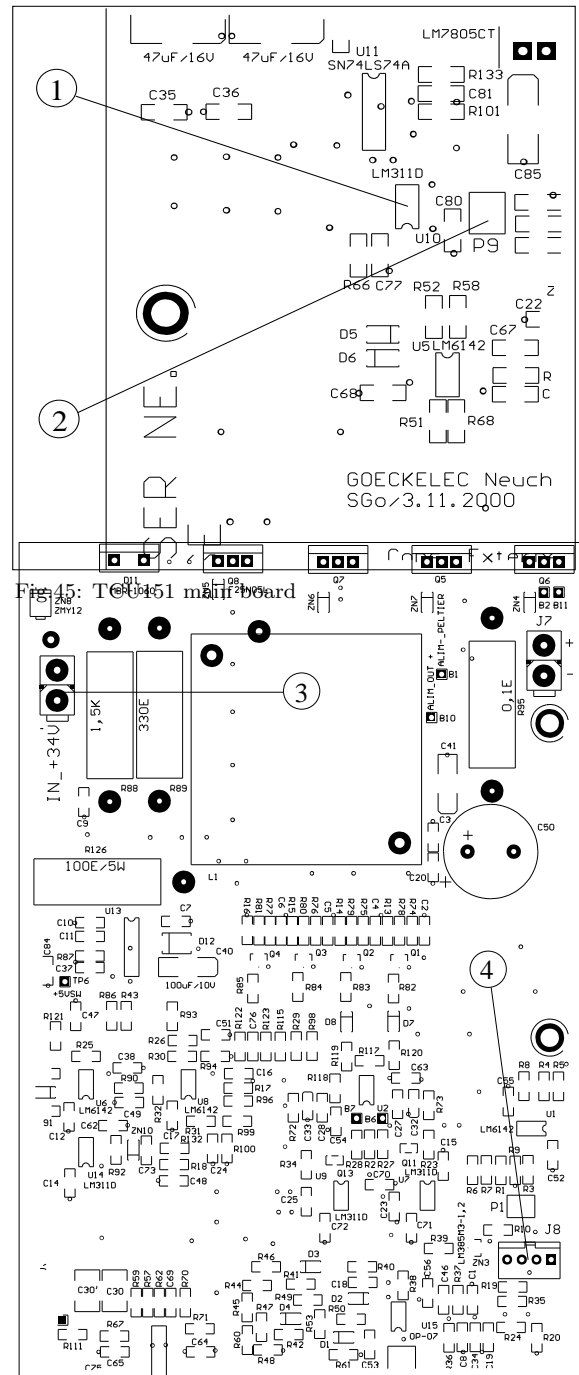


Fig.46: TCU151 main board

Current adjustment

[28] Set the selector (3) to mode **Setting °C** and adjust the temperature value to 25 °C by means of the **Set Temperature** 5 tuns portentiometer P8 (2).

[29] On the external power supply, rise slowly the voltage to 30 V and the current to 1.5 A.

↪ *The tension should stabilize at 30 V*

*Note: If the current is too high, stop the test and verify the transistors **Q1** to **Q4** (1) and their associated resistors.*

There might be a soldering problem. In this case, fix it and repeat the procedure from step [10].

[30] Set the selector (3) to mode **Real I**.

↪ *Value displayed: $\leq 1A$.*

[31] Set the selector (3) to mode **Real °C**.

↪ *Value displayed should tend to the defined value.*

[32] Wait for a certain time and check the Peltier temperature with a thermometer

[33] Set the selector (3) to mode **Setting +I**.

[34] Increase the limit of positive current to 3.5A by means of the **+I** trimmer (4) located on the front panel.

[35] Increase the limit of negative current to 5A by means of the **-I** trimmer (5) located on the front panel.

[36] Change the temperature reference to -25 °C and check the displayed current.

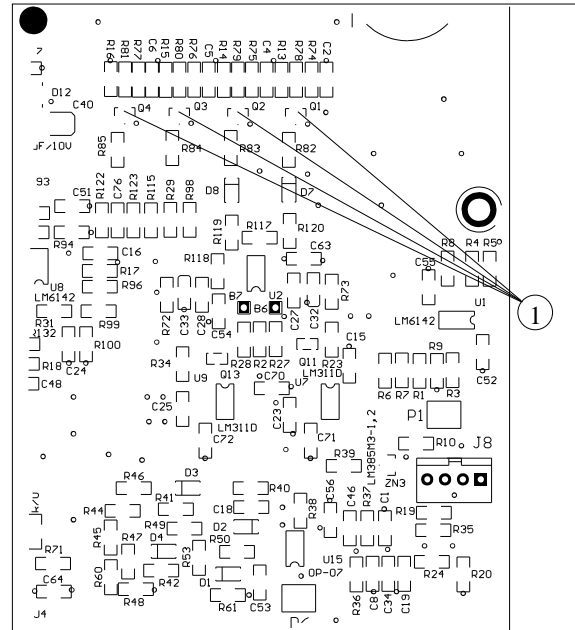


Fig.47: TCU151 main board

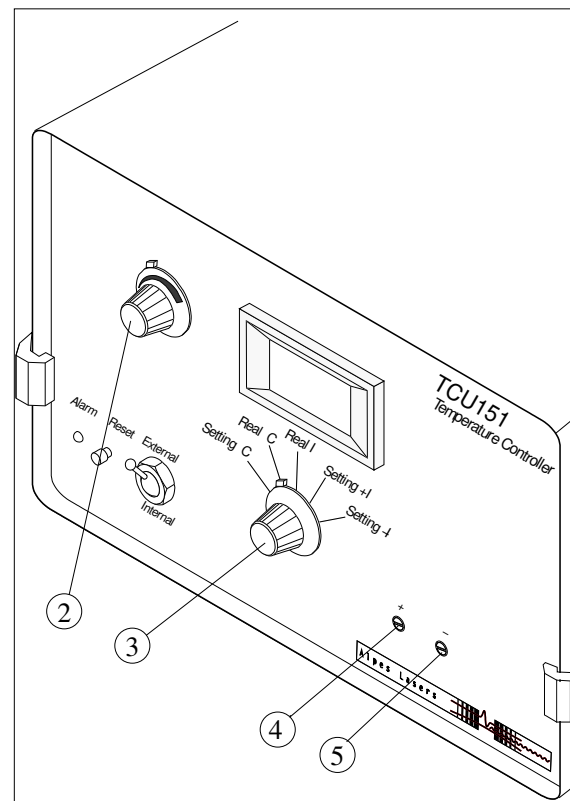


Fig.48: TCU151 front panel

Miscellaneous functions testing Temperature limit testing

[37] Decrease the temperature limit threshold from 0.7 V to 0.3 V.

*Note: For more details, see **Temperature limit threshold** on page 50.*

[38] Increase the temperature reference to 35 °C.

↔ *When the threshold is overpassed, the red LED (1) in front panel should lit.*

[39] Wait the real temperature drops 10 °C below the threshold.

[40] Reset the instrument with the **RESET** button (2).

↔ *The red LED (1) should turn off.*

[41] Reset the temperature limit threshold to 0.7 V.

*Note: For more details, see **Temperature limit threshold** on page 50.*

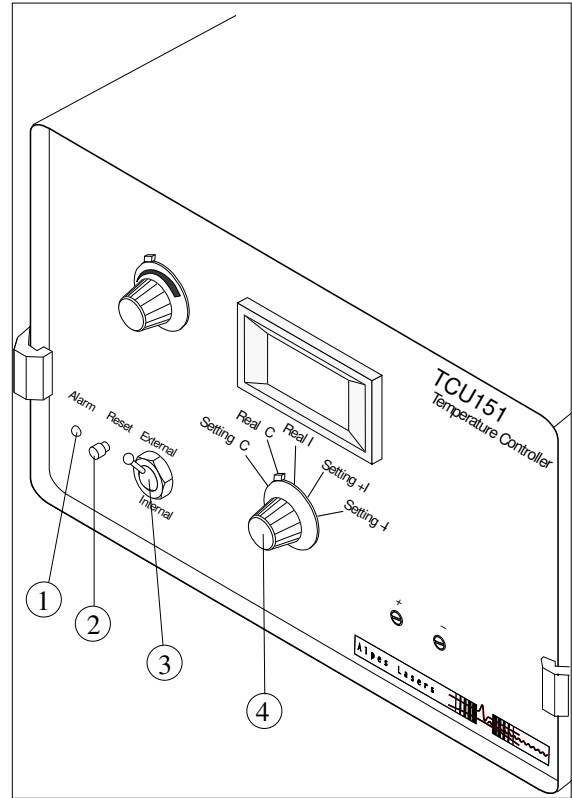


Fig.49: TCU151 front panel

Monitoring

[42] Check the output voltage on the rear instrument BNC connector (5).

Note: For 35 °C, the voltage should be 350 mV.

External reference

[43] Plug an external power supply to the **External Reference** BNC connector (6).

[44] Set the voltage to 3.5 V.

[45] Set the switch **External/Internal** (3) to **External**.

[46] Set the selector (4) to mode **Setting °C**.

↔ *The temperature displayed (2) should be 035 °C.*

[47] Set the selector (4) to mode **Real °C**.

↔ *The temperature displayed (2) should follow the reference temperature.*

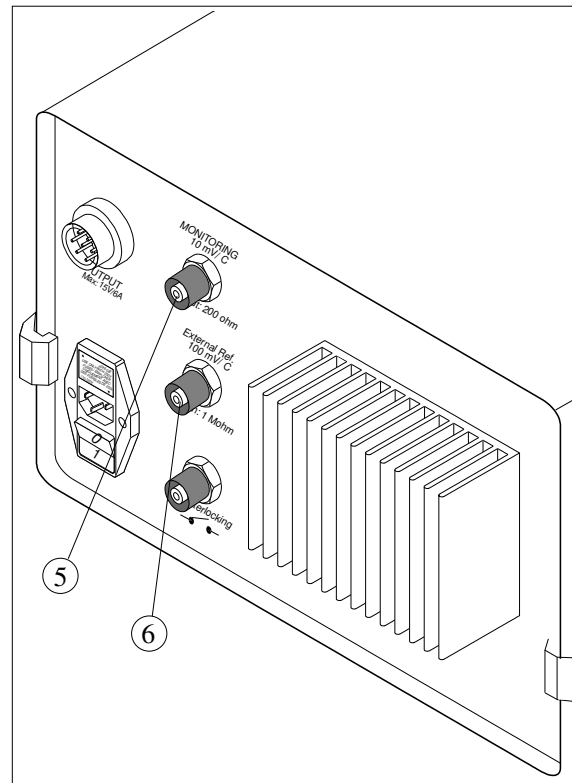


Fig.50:TCU151 rear panel

Chapter 9

Application notes

9.1 Detection techniques

9.1.1 Direct absorption

In a direct absorption measurement, the change in intensity of a beam is recorded as the latter crosses a sampling cell where the chemical to be detected is contained.

This measurement technique has the advantage of simplicity. In a version of this technique, the light interacts with the chemical through the evanescent field of a waveguide or an optical fiber.

9.1.2 Frequency modulation technique (TILDAS)

In this technique, the frequency of the laser is modulated sinusoidally so as to be periodically in and out of the absorption peak of the chemical to be detected. The absorption in the cell will convert this FM modulation into an AM modulation which is then detected usually by a lock-in technique.

The advantage of the TILDAS technique is mainly its sensitivity. First of all, under good modulation condition, an AC signal on the detector is only present when there is absorption in the chemical cell. Secondly, this signal discriminates efficiently against slowly varying absorption backgrounds. For this reason, this technique will usually work well for narrow absorption lines, requiring also a monomode emission from the laser itself.

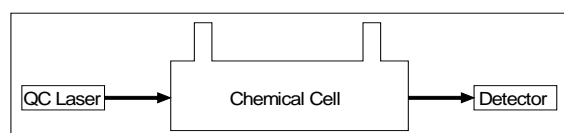


Fig.51: Direct absorption technique

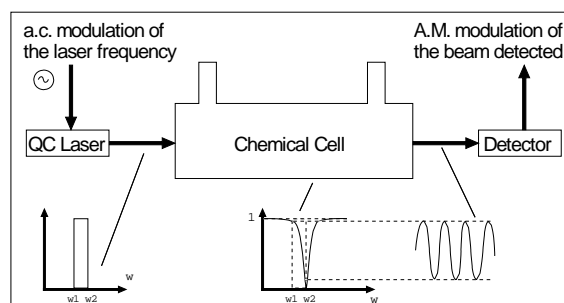


Fig.52: Frequency modulation technique (TILDAS)

9.1.3 Photoacoustic detection

In the photoacoustic detection, the optical beam is periodically modulated in amplitude before illuminating the cell containing the absorbing chemical. The expansion generated by the periodic heating of the chemical creates an acoustic wave which is detected by a microphone.

The two very important advantages of photoacoustic detection are:

- a signal is detected only in the presence of absorption from the molecule;
- no mid-IR detectors are needed.

For these reasons, photoacoustic detection has the potential of being cheap and very sensitive. However, ultimate sensitivity is usually limited by the optical power of the source.

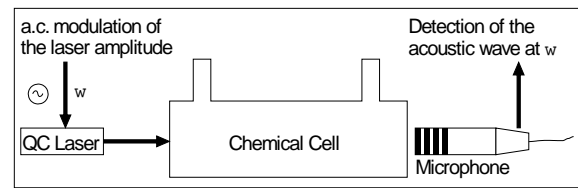


Fig.53: Photoacoustic technique

Chapter 10

Appendix

10.1 Bias Circuit ("Bias-T")

10.1.1 General

The Bias-T allows to apply a constant (DC) current to the laser in addition to the pulsed current (therefore a Bias-T is useless in CW mode). The current is drawn from the external (user supplied) power supply through the laser. This current can be controlled electrically.

Since tuning of a QC laser is done by changing the temperature of the active zone, the DC Bias current can be used to control the emission wavelength of the laser via its heating effect. The Bias-T therefore allows for electrically controlled rapid scanning of the emission wavelength. The achievable shift is of the order of 0.1%, with a Bias frequency of up to 100Hz.

10.1.2 Description

The circuit included in the LDD100 pulser unit is controlled by the twisted black and yellow wires of the control cable (with the DSUB-9 plug). They correspond to the shield and center of the IN connector in the former case (positive voltage on yellow wire). This version has no monitor connection.

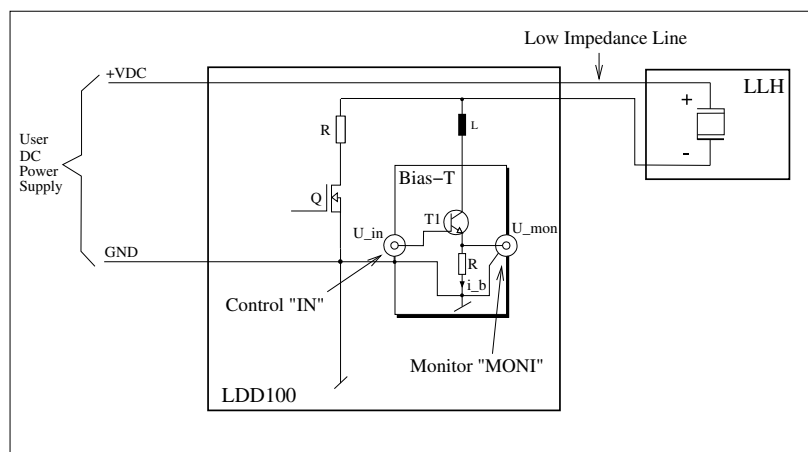


Fig.53: Bias circuit diagram block

10.1.3 Specifications

Bias frequency	Up to 100 Hz
Achievable shift	0.1%
Input voltage U_{in}	0 to 3 V
Input voltage threshold	0.6 V
Input frequency F_{in}	0 to 1 kHz
Input impedance Z_{in}	100Ω
Output U_{mon} max	2.5 V
Output impedance Z_{mon}	10 Ω
Ratio U_{mon}/I_b	10mV/mA

10.1.4 Utilisation

The current into the sink must not exceed too much a value given by the laser specifications as follows:

- The largest allowed peak current of the laser from the LI-curves, multiplied by the respective duty cycle gives the upper limit of the mean laser current.

$$I_{max} = I_{pmax*d}$$

- The sum of the Bias current (I_b) and the actually applied mean laser current (I_{p*d}) should be limited by the upper limit of the mean laser current.

$$I_b + I_{p*d} \leq I_{pmax*d}$$

- The Bias-T itself has a limit at:

$$U_{mon} = 2.5V \text{ or}$$

$$U_{in} = 3V$$

Note: If higher voltages are applied, excessive heating of the Bias-T may occur and destroy the laser.

Dangers and disadvantages of using a Bias-T circuit

- Since a Bias-T only allows to heat the laser, the emission wavelength can only be increased (or emission wavenumber decreased), and output power will decrease with increased Bias current, due to the additional heating.

This means that the laser should be operated initially at lowest possible temperature

- Heating of the active zone will increase thermal stress of the laser, therefore the expected lifetime will decrease more rapidly compared to increasing the temperature of the laser sub-mount and base in total.

If operation at only a fixed wavelength is needed, this should be adjusted with the overall temperature control.

- Too high a DC Bias current can immediately destroy the laser due to catastrophic thermal roll-over. Therefore set-up of the Bias current has to be done only by instructed personnel, and after checking with Alpes Lasers SA for allowed parameter ranges; otherwise warranty will be lost.

What has to be kept in mind before use?

- All use of a Bias-T on a specific QC laser has to be accepted by Alpes Lasers SA before; otherwise all warranty will be lost.
- The Bias-T should never be used at the highest specified current or output power, otherwise the risk of thermal roll-over failure is imminent.
- If optical output power can be monitored, this should be used during set-up of the Bias-T to make sure that thermal roll-over is not reached: Temporary increasing of the pulse current must always result in increased optical power output, otherwise the DC Bias current is already too high.

- As a rule of thumb, the overall dissipated power (sum of DC Bias current dissipation and pulse current dissipation) must never be higher than the average dissipated power given by the highest current / voltage / temperature combination specified in the datasheet.

Take into account that the average dissipated power for a given pulse current I , pulse voltage U , and duty cycle d is given by $d \times I \times U$, whereas the dissipated power due to a Bias current I_B is given by $I_B \times U$. (U is the voltage on the laser, but it is safe for this calculation of Bias current dissipation to use the voltage on the LDD pulser input.)

Current and voltage ranges of the Bias-T circuit

Since the input stage of the Bias-T is a bipolar transistor, applied voltage must be higher than about 0.6V to start Bias current. The input stage has maximum voltage limit of 2.6V, but the laser itself may be destroyed at lower Bias-T control voltage already, therefore the maximum rating has to be checked with the abovementioned rules and together with Alpes Lasers SA.

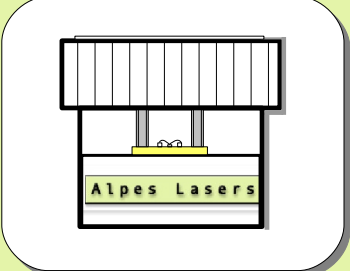
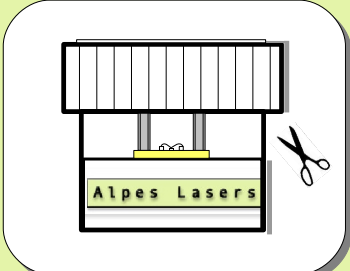
The monitor output (if available) allows measurement of applied DC Bias current: Its voltage divided by 100Ω gives Bias current. In general, Bias current can be in the range of 0.1A, but this must be checked with Alpes Lasers SA before.

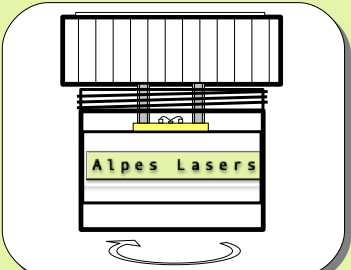
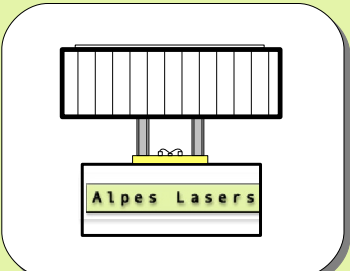
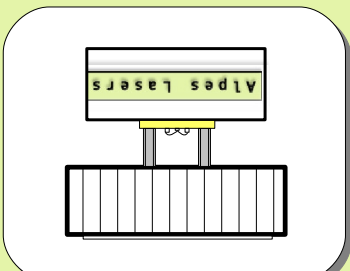
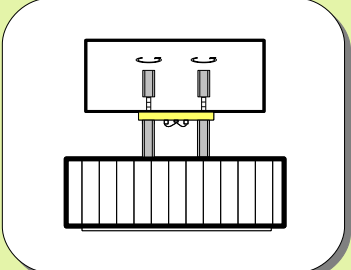
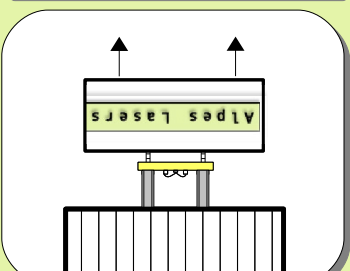
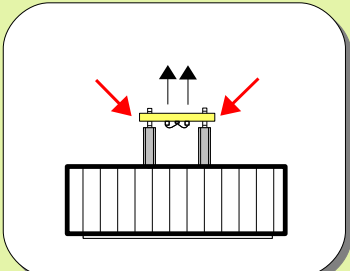
CAUTION !

Avoid reverse polarity on the input!

10.2 Unpacking NS laser from its transportation box

Instructions for QCL unpacking

1. Remove the box from the package.
 
2. Remove the security band.
 

Note: In case the band is not present or intact, please call Alpes Lasers SA before opening.
3. Unscrew the bottom of the box.
 
4. Remove the bottom of the box.
 
5. Flip the box.
 
6. Unscrew the nuts inside the base.
 
7. Remove the base.
 
8. Remove the laser from the rods.
 

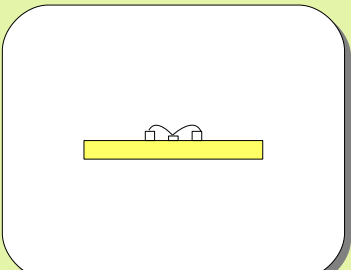
Note: Hold the laser carrier as indicated by the red arrows and avoid to touch the facet or the wire bonds.
9. The laser is ready to be installed.
 

Fig.54: Unpacking instructions for NS submounts

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