

Tango™ TACR3-*bla* U2OS Cell-Based Assay

Catalog Number K1603

Doc. Part No. K1603.pps Pub. No. MAN0002959 Rev. 2.0

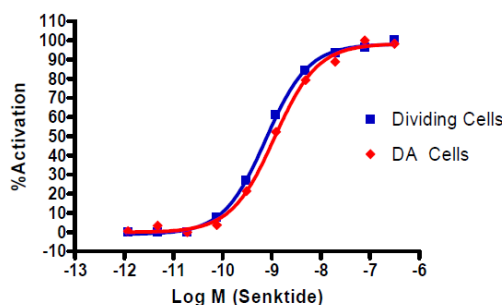
WARNING! Read the Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) and follow the handling instructions. Wear appropriate protective eyewear, clothing, and gloves. Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) are available from thermofisher.com/support.

Product description

Tango™ TACR3-*bla* U2OS cells contain the human Tachykinin 3 (NK3) linked to a TEV protease site and a Ga14-VP16 transcription factor stably integrated into the Tango™ GPCR-*bla* U2OS cell line. This parental cell line stably expresses a beta-arrestin/TEV protease fusion protein and the beta-lactamase reporter gene under the control of a UAS response element. The Tango™ TACR3-*bla* U2OS cells have been functionally validated for a response to Succinyl-[Asp6, N-Me-Phe8]-Substance P Fragment 6-11 (Senktide).

Table 1 Dose response of Tango™ TACR3-*bla* U2OS cells to Succinyl-[Asp6, N-Me-Phe8]-Substance P Fragment 6-11 (Senktide)

| Parameter | Response |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| EC ₅₀ | 0.758 nM |
| Z'-factor at EC ₁₀₀ | 0.60 0.68 |



Overview of Tango™ GPCR cell-based assays

The Tango™ GPCR assay technology combines the benefits of the Tango™ assay platform with the highly accurate, sensitive, and easy-to-use GeneBLAzer™ beta-lactamase reporter system. The Tango™ assay platform is based upon ligand binding to G-Protein Coupled Receptors (GPCRs) that triggers desensitization, a process mediated by the recruitment of intracellular arrestin proteins to the activated receptor. As a result, the ligand-induced activation of GPCRs may be assayed by monitoring the interaction of arrestin with the test GPCR. A major advantage of this approach is that it does not depend on knowledge of the G-protein signaling specificity of the target receptor.

The design of the Tango™ GPCR assay is shown in Figure 1. The target GPCR is fused at its intracellular C-terminus to an exogenous transcription factor. Interposed between the receptor and the transcription factor is a specific cleavage sequence for a non-native protease. This chimeric receptor protein is expressed in a cell line containing the *bla* reporter gene responsive to the transcription factor. The cell line also expresses an arrestin-protease fusion protein that recognizes and cleaves the site between the receptor and transcription factor. The assay is performed by adding a ligand to the growing cells for a defined period and measuring the activity of the reporter gene. Activation of the reporter gene provides a quantifiable measurement of the degree of interaction between the target receptor and the protease-tagged arrestin partner. Additionally, it is unaffected by other signaling pathways in the cell, thus providing a highly selective readout of target receptor activation.

The Tango™ assay technology uses a mammalian-optimized beta-lactamase (*bla*) reporter gene combined with a FRET-enabled substrate to provide reliable and sensitive detection in cells (Zlokarnik, 1998) (Figure 2). Cells are loaded with an engineered fluorescent substrate containing two fluorophores: coumarin and fluorescein. In the absence of *bla* expression, the substrate molecule remains intact. In this state, excitation of the coumarin results in fluorescence resonance energy transfer to the fluorescein moiety and emission of green fluorescent light. However, in the presence of *bla* expression, the substrate is cleaved, separating the fluorophores and disrupting energy transfer. Excitation of the coumarin in the presence of *bla* enzyme activity results in a blue fluorescence signal.

The resulting coumarin:fluorescein ratio provides a normalized reporter response that can minimize experimental noise that masks subtle underlying biological responses of interest. The Tango™ assay technology has been proven in high-throughput screening (HTS) campaigns for a range of target classes, including G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs) (Kunapuli, 2003; Xing, 2000), nuclear receptors (Qureshi, 2003; Peekhaus, 2003; Chin, 2003), and kinase signaling pathways (Whitney, 1998).

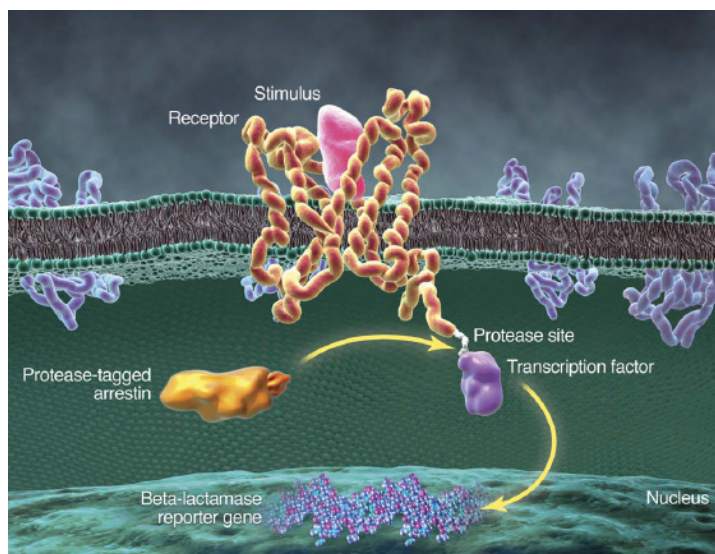


Figure 1 Tango™ GPCR assay design

Upon ligand binding and receptor activation, a protease-tagged beta-arrestin is recruited to the GPCR that has been modified at the C-terminus to include a transcription factor linked by a protease cleavage site. The protease in turn cleaves the transcription factor from the GPCR, the transcription factor immediately translocates to the nucleus, and beta-lactamase activity is activated.

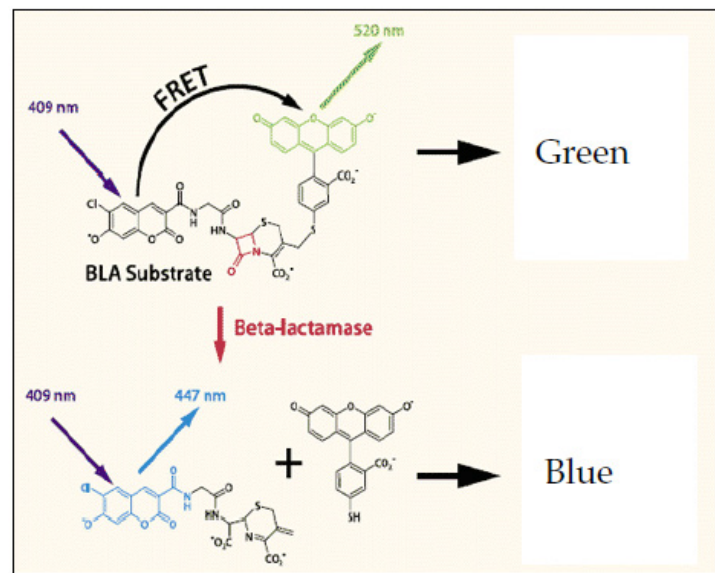


Figure 2 Fluorescent detection of beta-lactamase reporter gene response using a FRET-enabled substrate

After substrate loading, in the absence of beta-lactamase expression, cells appear green fluorescent. In the presence of beta-lactamase expression, the substrate is cleaved and cells appear blue fluorescent.

Contents and storage

Table 2 Tango™ TACR3-*bla* U2OS cells (Cat. No. K1603)

| Contents | Amount | Storage |
|---|--------|------------------------------|
| Tango™ TACR3- <i>bla</i> U2OS cells (Cat. No. K1603A) | 1 tube | Liquid nitrogen, vapor phase |
| Protocol and Certificate of Analysis | — | |

IMPORTANT! Cells are shipped overnight on dry ice. Immediately upon receipt, either thaw for immediate use or store in liquid nitrogen, vapor phase. Cells stored for more than 1 day at -80°C quickly lose viability.

Product details

| Feature | Details |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Shipping condition | Dry ice overnight |
| Growth properties of cells | Adherent |
| Cell phenotype | Epithelial |
| Selection marker(s) for cells | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zeocin™ 200 µg/mL • Geneticin™ 100 µg/mL • Hygromycin-B 50 µg/mL |
| <i>Mycoplasma</i> testing | Negative |
| Biosafety level | 1 |

Required materials not supplied

Unless otherwise indicated, all materials are available through thermofisher.com. "MLS" indicates that the material is available from fisherscientific.com or another major laboratory supplier.

| Item | Source |
|--|---------------------|
| Equipment | |
| Fluorescence plate reader with bottom-read capabilities | MLS |
| Filters (if required for the plate reader) | Chroma Technologies |
| (Optional) Mr. Frosty™ Freezing Container | 5100-0001 |
| (Optional) Epifluorescence- or fluorescence-equipped microscope (with appropriate filters) | MLS |
| (Optional) Microplate centrifuge | MLS |
| Consumables | |
| Black-wall, clear-bottom, 384-well assay plates (with low fluorescence background) | Corning 3764 |
| Compressed air | MLS |

| Item | Source |
|--|----------------------|
| Reagents | |
| LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G Loading Kit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G Substrate (CCF4-AM) (Cat. No. K1089)^[1] • DMSO for Solution A • Solution B • Solution C | K1095 ^[2] |
| Solution D | K1156 |
| Recovery™ Cell Culture Freezing Medium | 12648010 |
| FreeStyle™ 293 Expression Medium | 12338018 |
| McCoy's 5A (Modified) Medium | 16600082 |
| Fetal bovine serum (FBS), dialyzed, tissue-culture grade (Do Not Substitute.) | 26400036 |
| MEM Non-Essential Amino Acids Solution (100X) | 11140050 |
| DPBS, no calcium, no magnesium | 14190136 |
| Sodium Pyruvate (100 mM) | 11360070 |
| HEPES (1 M, pH 7.3) | 15630080 |
| 0.05% Trypsin-EDTA | 25300054 |
| Succinyl-[Asp6, N-Me-Phe8]-Substance P Fragment 6-11 (Senktide) | Sigma S6772 |
| Penicillin-Streptomycin (10,000 U/mL) (antibiotics) | 15140122 |
| Zeocin™ Selection Reagent | R25001 |
| Geneticin™ Selective Antibiotic (G418 Sulfate) (50 mg/mL) | 10131027 |
| Hygromycin-B | 10687010 |

^[1] Cat. No. K1089 can be purchased separately from the kit.

^[2] Additional kit sizes are available.

Cell culture conditions

Media requirements

Unless otherwise indicated, equilibrate all media and solutions to 37°C (recommended) or room temperature before adding to the cells.

IMPORTANT! Do not make media substitutions. The cell lines have been validated for optimal assay performance using the media indicated. For dividing cells, we recommend storing an aliquot of cells for back-up in case of contamination or loss of cell supply.

| Component | Assay Medium | Growth Medium | Thawing Medium | Freezing Medium |
|--|--------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| FreeStyle™ 293 Expression Medium | 100% | — | — | — |
| McCoy's 5A (Modified) Medium | — | 90% | 90% | — |
| Dialyzed FBS (Do not substitute.) | — | 10% | 10% | — |
| NEAA | — | 0.1 mM | 0.1 mM | — |
| Hepes (pH 7.3) | — | 25 mM | 25 mM | — |
| Sodium Pyruvate (100 mM) | — | 1 mM | 1 mM | — |
| Penicillin (antibiotic) | — | 100 U/mL | 100 U/mL | — |
| Streptomycin (antibiotic) | — | 100 µg/mL | 100 µg/mL | — |
| Recovery™ Cell Culture Freezing Medium | — | — | — | 100% |
| Zeocin™ Selection Reagent | — | 200 µg/mL | — | — |
| Hygromycin-B | — | 50 µg/mL | — | — |
| Geneticin™ antibiotic | — | 100 µg/mL | — | — |

Thawing method

Note: The cells are shipped on dry ice and may require a short recovery period before normal growth.

1. Place 14 mL of Thawing Medium into a T75 flask.
2. Place the flask in a humidified 37°C/5% CO₂ incubator for 15 minutes to allow the medium to equilibrate to the proper pH and temperature.
3. Remove the vial of cells to be thawed from liquid nitrogen, then rapidly thaw by placing the vial in a 37°C water bath with gentle agitation for 1–2 minutes. Do not submerge the vial in water.
4. Decontaminate the vial by wiping with 70% ethanol before opening in a Class II biological safety cabinet.
5. Transfer the vial contents, drop-wise, into 10 mL of Thawing Medium in a sterile 15-mL conical tube.
6. Centrifuge the cells at 200 × *g* for 5 minutes.
7. Aspirate the supernatant, then resuspend the cell pellet in 1 mL of fresh Thawing Medium.
8. Transfer the contents to the T75 tissue culture flask containing pre-equilibrated Thawing Medium, then place the flask in the humidified 37°C/5% CO₂ incubator.
9. At first passage, switch to Growth Medium.

Propagation method

- Passage or feed cells at least twice a week.
- Maintain cells between 25% and 95% confluence. Do not allow cells to reach confluence.

1. To passage cells, aspirate medium, rinse once in PBS, add 0.05% Trypsin-EDTA (3 mL for a T75 flask, 5 mL for a T175 flask, and 7 mL for T225 flask), then swirl to coat the cells evenly. The cells usually detach after approximately 2–5 minutes exposure to 0.05% Trypsin-EDTA.
2. Add an equal volume of Growth Medium to inactivate 0.05% Trypsin-EDTA.
3. Verify under a microscope that cells have detached and clumps have completely dispersed.
4. Centrifuge the cells at $200 \times g$ for 5 minutes, then resuspend in Growth Medium.

Freezing method

1. Harvest the cells as described (see “Propagation method” on page 5). After detachment, count the cells, centrifuge at $200 \times g$ for 5 minutes, then resuspend the cells in 4°C Freeze Medium at a density of 2×10^6 cells/mL.
2. Transfer 1.0-mL aliquots into cryogenic vials.
3. Place in an insulated container for slow cooling (we recommend Mr. Frosty™ Freezing Container, Cat. No. 5100-0001), then store overnight at -80°C.
4. Transfer to liquid nitrogen the next day for long-term storage.

Assay procedure

The following instructions outline the recommended procedure for determining activity of compounds as modulators of TACR3 using LiveBLazer™-FRET B/G Substrate as the readout. If alternative substrates are used (for example, ToxBLAzer™ DualScreen or LyticBLazer™ Loading kits), follow the loading protocol provided with the product.

Procedural guidelines

- Work on a dust-free, clean surface.
- Do not touch the bottom of the 384-well, black-wall, clear-bottom assay plate. Always handle the assay plate by the sides.
- If pipetting manually, briefly centrifuge the plate at room temperature (at $14 \times g$ for 1 minute) after adding all assay components to ensure the reagents are on the bottom of the wells.
- Plate layouts and experimental outlines will vary. In screening mode, we recommend using at least three wells for each control: Unstimulated Control, Stimulated Control, and Cell-Free Control.
- Some solvents may affect assay performance. Assess the effects of solvents before screening. The cell stimulation procedure described in the following sections is carried out in the presence of 0.1% DMSO to simulate the effect that a Test Compound's solvent can have on the assay. If other solvents and/or solvent concentrations are used, optimize the assay conditions appropriately.

Quick assay reference guides

For a more detailed assay protocol, see the next section.

Table 3 Agonist Assay Quick Reference Guide

| | Unstimulated Control wells | Stimulated Control wells | Cell-Free Control wells | Test Compound wells |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Step 1: Plate cells, incubate | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) | 32 μ L Assay Medium (no cells) | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) |
| Incubate cells at 37°C/ 5%CO ₂ for 16–24 hours. | | | | |
| Step 2: Add Agonist or Test Compounds | 8 μ L Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 8 μ L 5X Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 8 μ L Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 8 μ L 5X Test Compounds with 0.5% DMSO |
| Step 3: Incubate cells | Incubate in a humidified 37°C/5% CO ₂ incubator for 5 hours. | | | |
| Step 4: Prepare 6X Substrate Mixture | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Combine 6 μL of 1 mM LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G (CCF4-AM) (Solution A) + 60 μL of Solution B, then vortex. Add 904 μL of Solution C, then vortex. Add 30 μL of Solution D, then vortex. | | | |
| Step 5: Add Substrate Mixture | Add 8 μ L per well. | | | |
| Step 6: Incubate Substrate Mixture with cells | Incubate at room temperature for 2 hours in the dark. | | | |
| Step 7: Detect activity | See “Detection” on page 9. | | | |
| Step 8: Analyze data | See “Data analysis” on page 10. | | | |

Table 4 Antagonist Assay Quick Reference Guide

| | Unstimulated Control wells | Stimulated Control wells | Antagonist Control wells | Cell-Free Control wells | Test Compound wells |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Step 1: Plate cells, incubate | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) | 32 μ L Assay Medium (no cells) | 32 μ L cells in Assay Medium (10,000 cells/well) |
| Incubate cells at 37°C/ 5%CO ₂ for 16–24 hours. | | | | | |
| Step 2: Add Antagonist or Test Compounds, incubate | 4 μ L Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L 10X Antagonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L 10X Test Compounds in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO |
| Incubate plate with Antagonist for 30 minutes before proceeding. | | | | | |
| Step 3: Add Agonist | 4 μ L Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L 10X Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L 10X Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L 10X Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO | 4 μ L 10X Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO |
| Step 4: Incubate cells | Incubate in a humidified 37°C/5% CO ₂ incubator for 5 hours. | | | | |
| Step 5: Prepare 6X Substrate Mixture | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Combine 6 μL of 1 mM LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G (CCF4-AM) (Solution A) + 60 μL of Solution B, then vortex. Add 904 μL of Solution C, then vortex. Add 30 μL of Solution D, then vortex. | | | | |
| Step 6: Add Substrate Mixture | Add 8 μ L per well. | | | | |
| Step 7: Incubate Substrate Mixture with cells | Incubate at room temperature for 2 hours in the dark. | | | | |
| Step 8: Detect activity | See “Detection” on page 9. | | | | |
| Step 9: Analyze data | See “Data analysis” on page 10. | | | | |

Detailed assay protocol

Plate cells

1. Harvest dividing cells, then resuspend in Assay Medium to a density of 312,500 cells/mL.
2. Add 32 μ L per well of Assay Medium to the Cell-Free Control wells. Add 32 μ L per well of the cell suspension to the Test Compound wells, the Unstimulated Control wells, and Stimulated Control wells.
3. Incubate cells at 37°C/ 5% CO₂ for 16–24 hours.
4. Proceed to the appropriate assay procedure.
 - For the Agonist assay—see “Agonist assay plate setup” on page 8.
 - For the Antagonist assay—see “Antagonist assay plate setup” on page 8.

Agonist assay plate setup

This section provides directions for performing an Agonist assay. See the next section for performing an Antagonist assay.

1. Prepare a stock solution of 0.5% DMSO in Assay Medium.
2. Prepare a 5X stock of Test Compounds in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO.
3. Prepare a 5X stock of Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO.
Note: We recommend running a dose response curve to determine the optimal concentration of the Agonist solution.
4. Add 8 μ L of Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO (prepared in step 1) to the Unstimulated Control and Cell-Free Control wells.
5. Add 8 μ L of the 5X Agonist stock solution to the Stimulated Control wells.
6. Add 8 μ L of the 5X Test Compound stock solution to the Test Compound wells.
7. Incubate the Agonist assay plate in a humidified 37°C/5% CO₂ incubator for 5 hours. Then proceed to “Substrate preparation, loading, and incubation” on page 9.

Antagonist assay plate setup

This section provides directions for performing an Antagonist assay. See the previous section for performing an Agonist assay.

1. Prepare a stock solution of 0.5% DMSO in Assay Medium.
2. Prepare a 10X stock of Test Compounds in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO.
3. Prepare a 10X stock of Agonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO.
Note: We recommend running a dose response curve to determine the optimal Agonist concentration. For Antagonist assays, we recommend stimulating cells initially with an Agonist concentration in the EC₅₀–EC₈₀ range.
4. Prepare a 10X stock of Antagonist in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO.
Note: We recommend running a dose response curve to determine the optimal inhibition concentration for the Antagonist solution.
5. Add 4 μ L of the 10X Test Compound stock solution to the Test Compound wells.
6. Add 4 μ L of the stock solution of 0.5% DMSO in Assay Medium to the Stimulated Control wells, the Unstimulated Control wells, and the Cell-Free Control wells.
7. Add 4 μ L of the 10X Antagonist stock solution in Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO to the Antagonist Control wells.
8. *(Optional)* If desired, incubate the Test Compounds with the cells in a humidified 37°C/5% CO₂ incubator before proceeding. A 30-minute incubation is typically sufficient.
9. Add 4 μ L of the 10X Agonist stock solution to the Test Compound wells, the Stimulated Control wells, and the Antagonist Control wells.

- Add 4 μL of Assay Medium with 0.5% DMSO (prepared in step 1) to the Unstimulated Control and Cell-Free Control wells.
- Incubate the Antagonist assay plate in a humidified 37°C/5% CO₂ incubator for 5 hours. Then proceed to “Substrate preparation, loading, and incubation” on page 9.

Substrate preparation, loading, and incubation

This protocol is designed for loading cells with LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G Substrate Mixture (CCF4-AM) Substrate Mixture. If you use alternative substrates, follow the loading protocol provided with the substrate.

IMPORTANT! Prepare LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G Substrate Mixture (CCF4-AM) Substrate Mixture and load cells in the absence of direct, strong lighting. Turn off the light in the hood.

- Prepare Solution A: 1 mM LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G Substrate (CCF4-AM) Substrate Mixture in dry DMSO by adding 912 μL of DMSO per mg of dry substrate. Store aliquots of the stock solution at –20°C until use.

Note: The molecular weight of the LiveBLAzer™-FRET B/G Substrate (CCF4-AM) is 1096 g/mol.

- Prepare 6X Substrate Mixture.
 - Add 6 μL of Solution A to 60 μL of Solution B, then vortex.
 - Add 904 μL of Solution C to the above solution, then vortex.
 - Add 30 μL of Solution D to the above solution, then vortex.
- Remove the assay plate from the humidified 37°C/5% CO₂ incubator.

Note: Handle the plate gently. Do not touch the bottom of the assay plate.
- Add 8 μL of 6X Substrate Mixture to each well.
- Cover the plate to protect it from light and prevent evaporation.
- Incubate at room temperature for 2 hours.

Detection

Measure fluorescence at room temperature from the bottom of the wells.

Before reading the plate, use compressed air to remove any dust from the bottom of the plate.

Instrumentation, filters, and plates

- Use a fluorescence plate reader with bottom-reading capabilities.
- Use the following recommended filters for the fluorescence plate reader:
 - Excitation filter: 409/20 nm
 - Emission filter: 460/40 nm
 - Emission filter: 530/30 nm

Read an assay plate

- Set the fluorescence plate reader to bottom-read mode with optimal gain and 5 reads.
- Allow the lamp in the fluorescence plate reader to warm up for at least 10 minutes before making measurements.
- Use the following filter selections.

| | Scan 1 ^[1] | Scan 2 ^[2] |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Excitation filter | 409/20 nm | 409/20 nm |
| Emission filter | 460/40 nm | 530/30 nm |

^[1] Measures fluorescence in the Blue channel.

^[2] Measures FRET signal in the Green channel.

Data analysis

Subtract the background, then calculate the emission ratio

We recommend subtracting the background for both emission channels (460 nm and 530 nm).

1. Use the assay plate layout to identify the location of the Cell-Free Control wells. These control wells are used for background subtraction.
2. Determine the average emission from the Cell-Free Control wells at both 460 nm (Average Blue Background) and 530 nm (Average Green Background).
3. Subtract the Average Blue Background from all of the Blue emission data.
4. Subtract the Average Green Background from all of the Green emission data.
5. Calculate the Blue/Green Emission Ratio for each well by dividing the background-subtracted Blue emission values by the background-subtracted Green emission values.

Visual observation of intracellular beta-lactamase activity using LiveBLazer™-FRET B/G Substrate (CCF4-AM)

Note: Microscopic visualization of cells will cause photobleaching. Always read the assay plate in the fluorescence plate reader before performing microscopic visualization.

An inverted microscope equipped for epifluorescence and with either a xenon or mercury excitation lamp can be used to view the LiveBLazer™-FRET B/G Substrate (CCF4-AM) signal in cells. To visually inspect the cells, you will need a long-pass filter passing blue and green fluorescence light, so that your eye can visually identify whether the cells are fluorescing green or blue.

The following recommended filter set for observing beta-lactamase activity is available from Chroma Technology (www.chroma.com).

Chroma Complete Filter Set (41031):

- Excitation filter—HQ405/20x (405 ± 10)
- Dichroic mirror—425 DCXR
- Emission filter—HQ435LP (435 long-pass)

Filter sizes vary for specific microscopes and need to be specified when the filters are ordered. For epifluorescence microscopes, a long-pass dichroic mirror is needed to separate excitation and emission light and should be matched to the excitation filter (to maximally block the excitation light around 405 nm, yet allow good transmission of the emitted light).

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