

EPU 3.11

User Guide

PN 1552736

Revision A • January 2025

Limited Rights

Copyright and Trademarks

Technical Publications

Technical Publications Team - Hillsboro

Copyright © 2025 by FEI Company, a part of Thermo Fisher Scientific. The information and materials contained herein are proprietary to Thermo Fisher and are provided for your organization's internal use on a need-to-know basis. They cannot be duplicated, published, or disseminated to any third party without the express written consent of Thermo Fisher.

Trademark Acknowledgments

All trademarks are the property of Thermo Fisher Scientific and its subsidiaries unless otherwise specified. FEI and the FEI logo are registered trademarks of FEI Company (part of Thermo Fisher Scientific and its affiliates). All other trademarks belong to their respective owners.

Excel and Microsoft are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.

Limited Rights

The following notice applies to the U.S. Government and other purchases with federal funds:

Contractor Name: Thermo Fisher Scientific

Contractor Address: 5350 NE Dawson Creek Drive, Hillsboro OR 97124

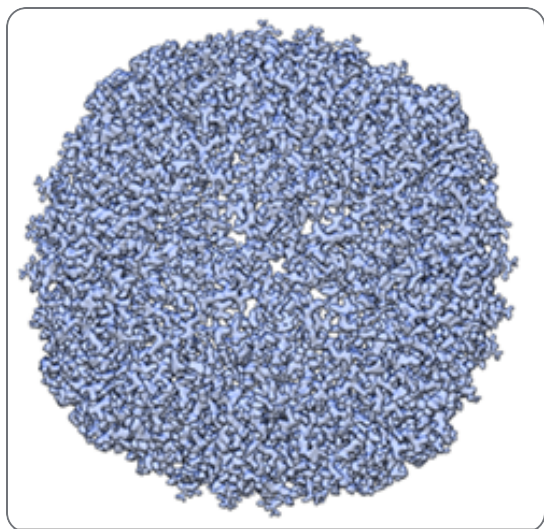
The Government's rights to use, modify, reproduce, release, perform, display, or disclose these technical data are restricted to those rights specified in DFARS 252.227-7015(b)(2), FAR 52.227-14(g)(2)(Alternate II) and FAR 12.211. Any reproduction of technical data or portions thereof marked with this legend must also reproduce the markings. Any person, other than the Government, who has been provided access to such data, must promptly notify the above named Contractor.

Document History

Rev A, January 2025

Introduction

Cryo-electron microscopy (Cryo-EM) for high resolution three-dimensional single particle reconstruction (3D-SPR) has reached near atomic resolution for structures of biological complexes of all kinds.



3D SPA reconstruction of Apoferritin at a resolution of 2.14 Å.

Data acquired on a Krios G3i with Falcon 3EC camera in counting mode.

Reference information on EMDDataBank (EMD4213, http://emsearch.rutgers.edu/atlas/4213_downloads.html)

For the high resolution reconstruction of a particle, large amounts of well-aligned images must be summed and averaged. Biological material is highly sensitive to electron radiation, so an extremely low dose must be applied to prevent damage to the specimen. This can result in a low signal-to-noise ratio in the recorded images. It would be a demanding and time consuming task for a microscopist to acquire the images that the reconstruction software needs to complete its task with a satisfactory result. Fortunately, automation software is available to drastically reduce the time and effort, and at the same time improve the reliability of harvesting such large quantities of high quality data.

EPU is a Thermo Fisher Scientific software product for automated high quality data acquisition in a Single Particle Analysis (SPA) workflow. SPA is an approach to 3D image creation, during which a large number of vitrified, low-contrast complexes are imaged under low electron dose conditions. After conformational classification and particle averaging, this results in a high resolution 3D representation.

Introduction

The acronym EPU is from the Latin "E Pluribus Unum" – Out of Many, One. This reflects the actual pathway: a single 3D particle structure is extracted from numerous 2D images with multiple particles per image. EPU automates the most time-consuming step in the SPA workflow: the acquisition of useful images. The 3D reconstruction is done with various open source software applications.

EPU facilitates the following steps in the data acquisition procedure:

- Screening of multiple specimens to select the specimens and specimen areas with the highest potential for high quality data acquisition.
- Automated or customized selection of the optimal acquisition areas on the specimen.
- High throughput, high resolution data collection.

Audience

This manual is aimed at users of Thermo Fisher Scientific Transmission Electron Microscopes. In particular, you should be able to successfully identify issues with the microscope. Moreover, you should be able to perform the necessary corrective actions to resolve the identified issues, provided that these actions are available. For higher level corrective actions, the assistance of a Thermo Fisher Scientific service engineer may be required.

For online training materials to help you improve your Cryo-EM skills, visit the [EM-learning.com website](https://www.em-learning.com).

For questions, remarks and support regarding the EPU software, please contact the EPU support desk at EPU@thermofisher.com.

System and Software Compatibility

The Thermo Fisher Scientific EPU software is available for Thermo Fisher Scientific TEM systems and FEI TEM systems that run up-to-date microscope software. For detailed system and software version compatibility information, see the EPU Release Notes.



Note: Not all features and functions in this manual are available on all systems and all supported microscope software versions.

Getting Started

Start

Verify that the TEM server is running before starting EPU software.

EPU software can be started from the Windows Start menu (**All programs > Thermo Fisher Scientific EPU > EPU**) or from the microscope software launcher.

Prepare for an EPU Session

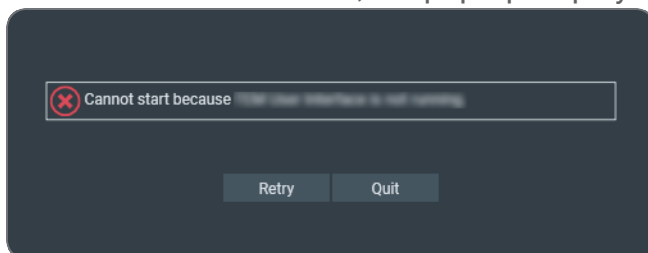
Before starting an EPU session, make sure the following prerequisites are met and preparations are completed.

1. Verify that an **Alignments File** and a **FEG Register** are loaded that match with the High Tension and Extractor settings of the system.
2. Verify that the system is in **TEM mode**.
3. Verify that all **cameras** are cooled and at a stable temperature.

For an extensive preconditions check, see [Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage](#). Detailed instructions for the individual alignments and calibrations are available in the online help of the TEM User Interface.

Start the EPU Software

1. Start **EPU**
Shortcuts to the EPU software can be found on the desktop and in the Windows Start menu.
2. A splash screen appears while EPU runs the start-up checks.
If one or more checks fail, the pop-up displays the related messages.



- Solve the reported issue(s).
- Select **Retry**.

Verify that the Microscope is Ready for High Quality Data Acquisition

In the lower-left corner of the EPU user interface, the Microscope State, also called *Traffic Light*, shows if the system is ready for high quality data acquisition. The Traffic Light displays three states:

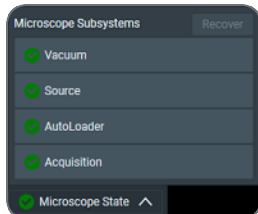
- **Green:** This indicates that the system is ready for high quality data acquisition.
- **Red:** If a subsystem reports an error or is otherwise not in an optimal status, then the status of that subsystem changes to red and the *Recover* function becomes available to return the system to an *all-green* status. When a subsystem is in a red state it is often still possible to use EPU, but the image quality may not be optimal.
- **Blue:** This state indicates a medium severity issue.

If a subsystem reports an error or is otherwise not in an optimal status, then the status of that subsystem changes to red and the Recover function becomes available to return the system to an all-green status.

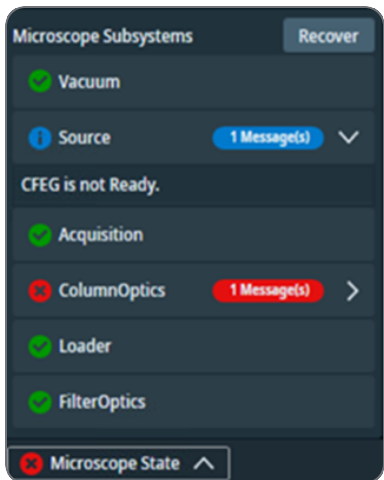
When a subsystem is in a red state it is often still possible to use EPU, but the image quality may not be optimal.

1. Verify that the **Microscope State** is green.

This indicates that the system is ready for high quality data acquisition.



2. If the Microscope State is not green, then:
 - a. (Optional) To display the reason(s) why a subsystem is not ready, expand the corresponding **subsystem section**.
 - b. Select **Recover**
EPU requests the microscope software to recover the failing subsystems. The Recover procedure is fully automated. During recovery, the EPU user interface is temporarily disabled.



User Alignments Sequence (Tundra only)

This sequence performs basic alignment of the microscope. It is meant to run without a sample, and aligns appropriate alignments in LM, HM μ P, and HM nP modes.


It consists of a Preparation part, and three subsequences. The subsequences and their purpose are as follows:

- **Hole/Eucentric (HM μ P)**
Roughly aligns the system in HM μ P mode at a magnification defined in HM Precondition block (about 45 kx).
- **Data Acquisition (HM nP)**
Aligns the system in HM nP mode at a magnification defined in HM Precondition block (above 100 kx) to prepare it for the Data Acquisition.
- **Atlas (LM)**
Aligns the system in LM mode at its highest magnification (around 2 kx) to prepare it for the Atlas screening.


Log in on Thermo Fisher Scientific CryoFlow

Thermo Fisher Scientific **CryoFlow** software is part of the Data Management Platform (DMP) services. Logging in to CryoFlow grants your EPU software access to a number of services on the DMP Server. The services and their respective functions are:


- *CryoFlow* itself; used for the automated upload of acquired data into a selected dataset.
- *EQM* (EPU Quality Monitor); used for real-time evaluation of the quality of acquired data.

 **Note:** EQM requires a separate license.

- Embedded CryoSPARC Live; also used for real-time evaluation of the quality of acquired data.

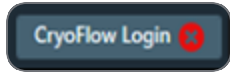
 **Note:** Embedded CryoSPARC Live requires a separate license. You would not need both EQM and Embedded CryoSPARC Live. Smart EPU plugins work with either Embedded CryoSPARC Live or EQM.

- *Smart EPU*; a collection of modules providing AI-based automation for multiple EPU tasks.

 **Note:** Smart EPU is available on Tundra, Glacios and Krios systems.

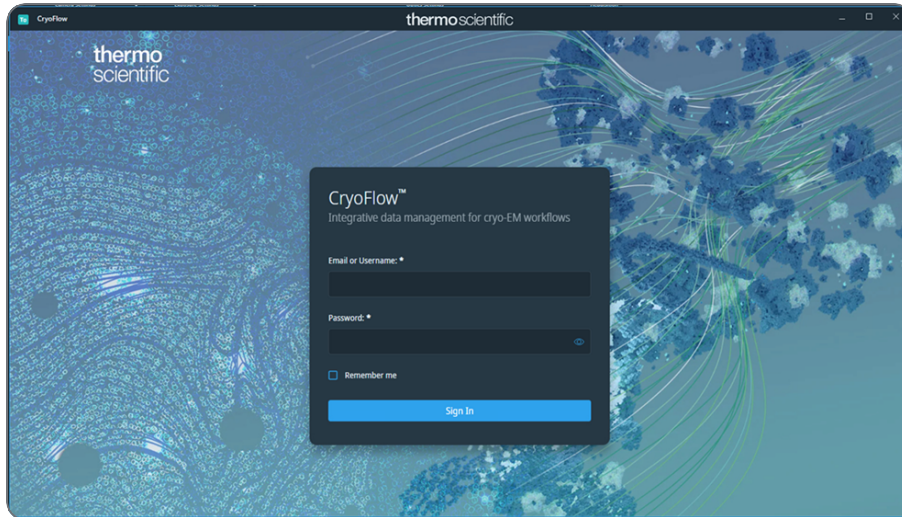
To connect to CryoFlow, follow the instructions below:

1. In the lower-right corner of the EPU user interface, select **CryoFlow Login**.



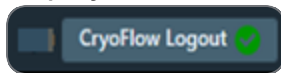
The red dot indicates that there is no active connection to CryoFlow yet.

The *Thermo Fisher Scientific CryoFlow* login screen appears.



2. Enter the **username** and **password** for CryoFlow.

If the login is successful, the CryoFlow connection indicator turns green and the username is displayed.



The User Interface

User Interface Panels

The EPU user interface guides the user through all actions that are needed to prepare and execute an Automated Acquisition run.



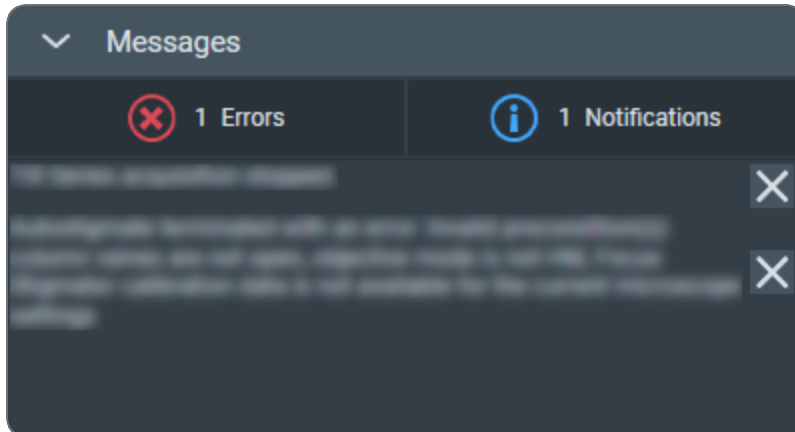
- **Tab Selection**
The tabs are typically worked through from left to right. Each tab provides a set of tasks.
- **Task Selection**
Tasks are typically executed from top to bottom. The set of available tasks depends on the selected tab.
- **Task Execution**
The content of the Task Execution pane depends on the active task. It can display an input dialog, one or multiple acquired images, or progress information for an ongoing function.
- **Ribbon Bar**
The Ribbon Bar offers a set of controls that are necessary or helpful for completing the active task.
- **Side Panels**
The Side Panels pane contains a set of collapsible panels. The set of available side panels depends on the active task and/or the selected image in the Task Execution pane.

- **Status Bar**

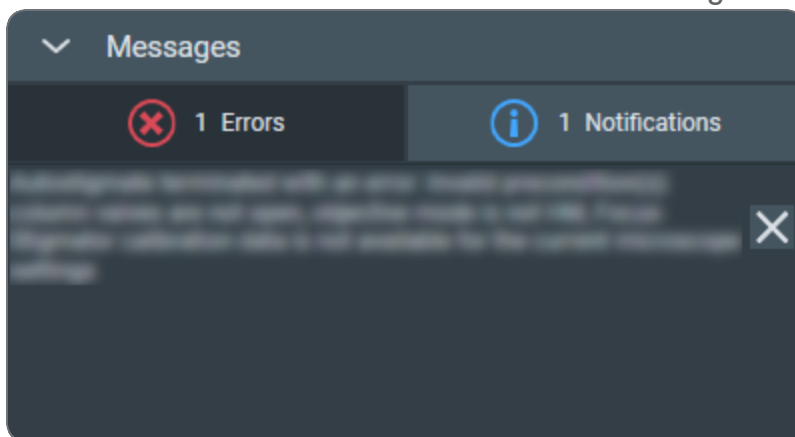
The Status Bar displays the CryoFlow login and status. The Status Bar is only visible when CryoFlow is available.

Messages Side Panel

The Messages panel shows a list of *Error* and *Notification* messages in chronological order.



By default, all Errors and Notifications are displayed. Select **Notifications** to hide the Notification messages.



The same applies to the Error messages.

To clear messages that are no longer relevant:

- Select the **cross** at the right-side of each individual message.
- Right-click on **any message** and select **Delete All Messages**.

Status Side Panel



The Status panel displays various types of messages in chronological order, such as:

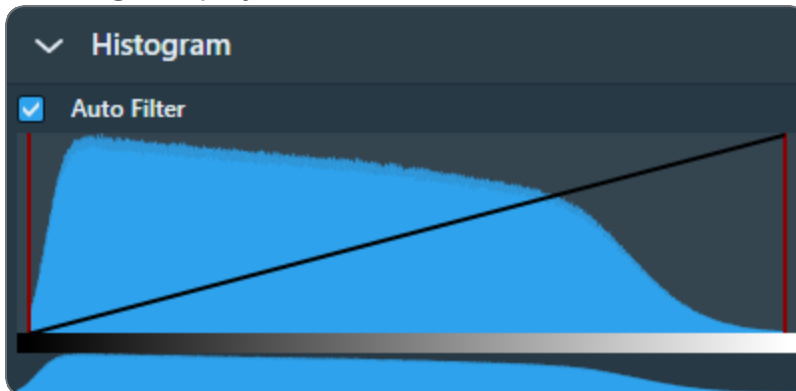
- Errors and Notifications.
- Progress messages for ongoing automated procedures.
- Intermediate and final results of automated procedures.
- Instructions and recommendations to the user.

Histogram Side Panel

If two or more images are present in the Task Execution panel, then the Histogram applies only to the selected image. The selected image is recognizable by the highlighted image title and frame.

Histogram Side Panel

The Histogram side panel shows a histogram of image-pixel intensities for the selected image in the Image Display.



The Histogram side panel offers the following functionalities:

Auto Filter:

- Ticked:
EPU automatically calculates the optimal contrast and brightness settings and applies these values when a new image is acquired or selected.
- Cleared:
Manual adjustments of the contrast, brightness or gamma values are also applied to the next acquisition.

When ticked, it is possible to adjust contrast, brightness and gamma for the current image. To reset contrast, brightness and gamma to their default values, clear Auto Filter and tick it again.

Black Level:

Drag the **red line at the left-side** of the main histogram to adjust the black level. Pixels with an intensity below the black level value are displayed with zero intensity (black).

White Level:

Drag the **red line at the right-side** of the main histogram to adjust the white level. Pixels with an intensity above the white level value are displayed with maximum intensity (white).

Gamma:

Drag the **diagonal black line** up or down to adjust the Gamma curve.

If the Black Level and/or White Level are adjusted, then the Gamma curve is scaled proportionally in the range between the Black Level and White Level values.

Zoom:

In the lower histogram, drag a **range** to zoom in on a section of the spectrum.

Click outside the zoom range in the lower histogram to reset the zoom level.

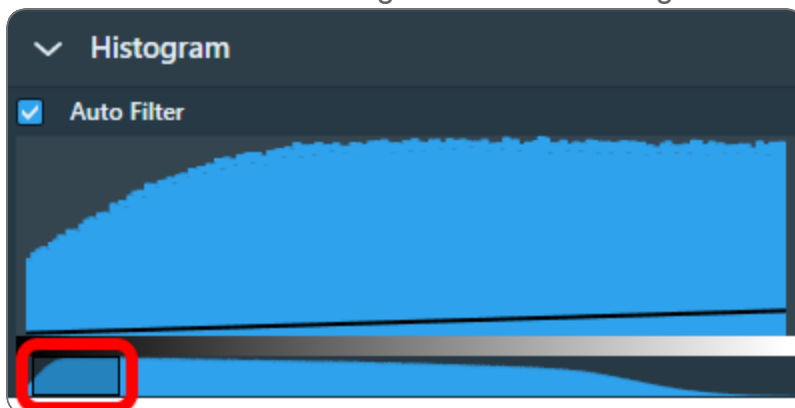


Image Information Side Panel

The Image Information panel displays a small basic set of the image meta data.

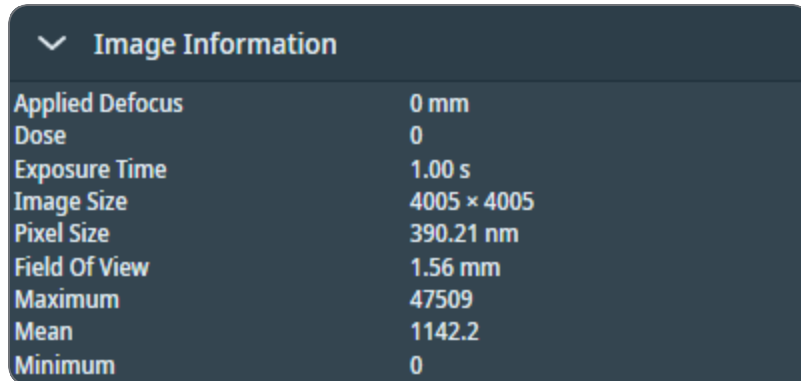


Image Information	
Applied Defocus	0 mm
Dose	0
Exposure Time	1.00 s
Image Size	4005 × 4005
Pixel Size	390.21 nm
Field Of View	1.56 mm
Maximum	47509
Mean	1142.2
Minimum	0

Example for a camera image.

For STEM images, different parameters can be displayed.

Image and Plot Display Area

The availability of functionalities for the Image Display depends on the active task, the applied Acquisition and Optics Preset and the selected image.

Zoom slider



Drag the slider with the mouse to change to the zoom level.

Color Enhancement



Applies a color mapping to the intensity values in the image. This makes it easier to recognize intensity gradients and areas with similar intensity.

Show/hide the inset image (FFT)




By default, the Inset window displays the FFT of the image.

Filter the FFT image



The FFT filter optimizes the contrast and brightness of the FFT, so that for example Thon Rings are shown clearer. The FFT filter does not change the acquired image data for which the FFT is displayed.

 **Note:** This filter is not adjustable and has not been optimized for performance and low resource usage. Activate the FFT filter only when necessary. Deactivate the FFT filter when there is no direct need to display the FFT for an image.

Swap the inset and main image



Swap the images in the Inset and the Main windows. If the Inset window is hidden, then the Main window will toggle between the FFT and the main image.

Zoom to fit



Adjust the zoom level, so the entire image fits in the image display frame. Zoom to fit is also available in the right-click context menu of the image display.

Zoom to 100%



Adjusts the zoom level to 100%, so the image is displayed in actual size. Zoom 1:1 is also available in the right-click context menu of the image display.

Show/hide the panning window




Show or hide the panning inset window.

Zoom In/Out

1. Place the **mouse cursor** at the **region of interest** in the image display.
2. Scroll up or down with the **mouse wheel**.
The image will zoom in or out around the cursor location.

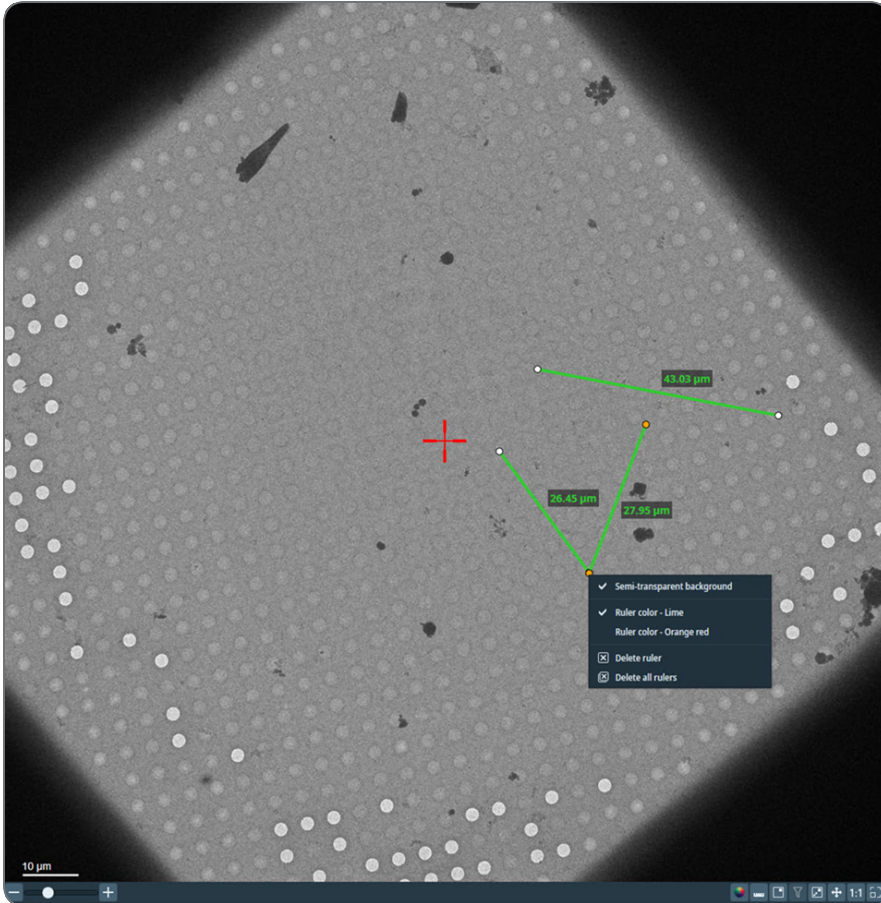
The Measurement Tool

The measurement tool  enables you to measure real distances on an acquired image by drawing rulers.

The User Interface

1. (Basic use) To draw a single ruler:

- Click on the **Measurement tool** icon .
- Click on a point of interest on the image.



2. Move the mouse to a second point of interest on the image and click to place the second end of the ruler.
 - **Multiple rulers:** To draw more rulers, repeat the steps above.
 - **Measurement:** The length of a ruler is displayed next to it. This measurement is the real distance on the sample (e.g. measured in mm).
 - **Edit:** Click and drag any of the two endpoints of a ruler to change its position. Click and drag the body of the ruler to change its position.
 - **Delete:** Right-click a ruler to display the following context menu, then click Delete ruler.
 - The right-click menu also allows you to:
 - Delete all rulers on this image.
 - Choose between two colors for all rulers on all images.

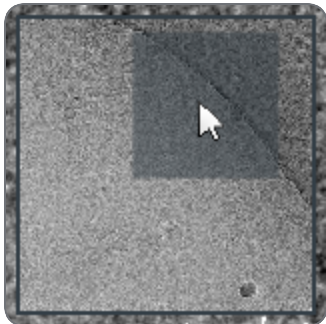
Navigate and Pan in a Zoomed Image

To navigate and pan in an image, either drag the image with the mouse, or use the panning inset.

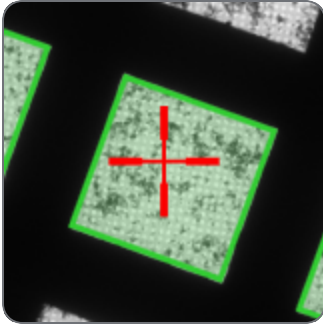
1. Select the **panning inset**



2. Drag the **dark gray square** across the **panning inset**.



The Red Crosshair

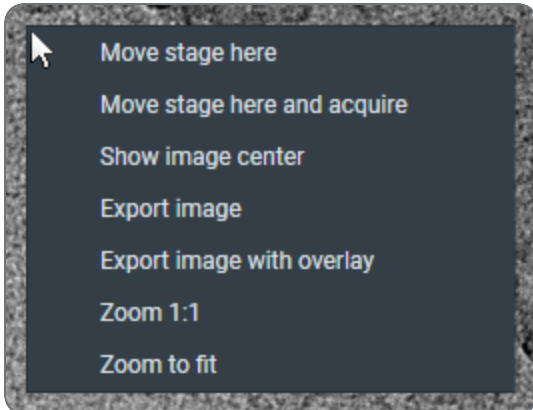


The red crosshair is commonly referred to as the *stage position*. Although the red crosshair moves when the stage moves, it does not mark the stage position itself. The red crosshair marks the *center of the field of view* if a new image were acquired.

Export an Image to File

Images that are displayed in the Task Execution panel can be exported to file.

1. Right-click in the image to open the context menu.

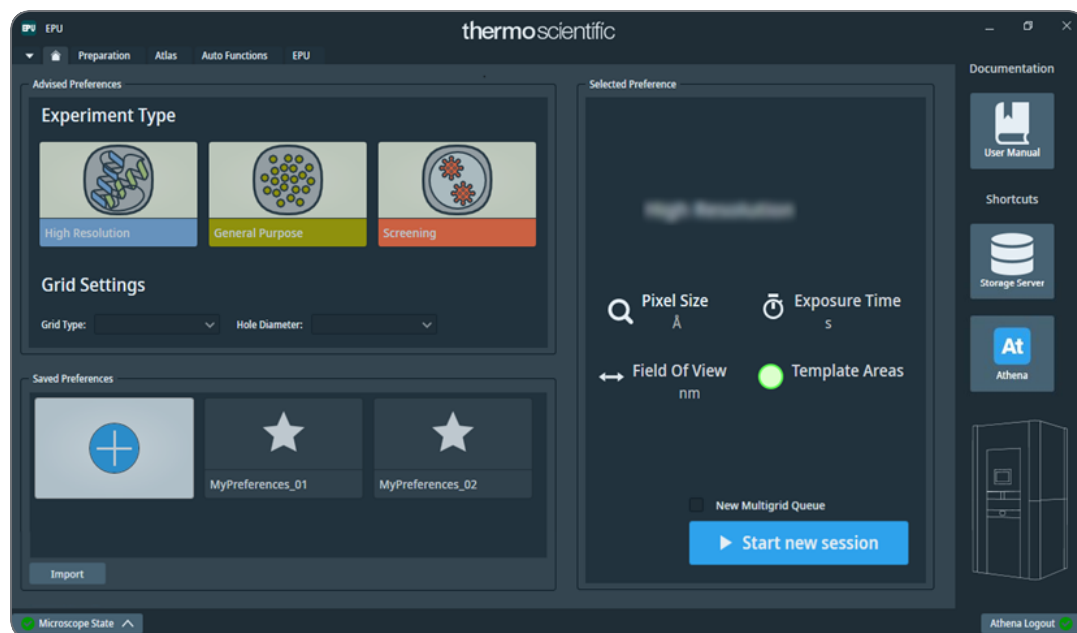


The options in the context menu depend on the active task and image type.

2. Select either:

- **Export image**
Create a file of the image. The image is saved with the original resolution.
- **Export image with overlay**
Create a file of the image with scales, markers and other visual aids. The resolution of the image file is the same as as displayed in EPU. This may be less detailed than the original image.

Home Tab



The main purpose of the Home tab is to quickly set up an EPU Session, based on pre-determined settings and values that are stored as a Preference.

- The Advised Preferences contain generic, *best-practice* settings and values that are proposed by EPU.
Advised Preferences are currently available on Tundra and Glacios systems.
- A Saved Preference contains custom settings and values that have been defined and stored in an earlier EPU Session.

The Home tab also provides fast access to the EPU User Manual (this document), the CryoFlow portal, and the *OffloadData* folder on the Storage Server.

Set up a New EPU Session based on Advised Preferences

If there are no (suitable) *Saved Preferences*, then follow the steps below to set up a new EPU Session:

1. Select the *Experiment Type*:

- **High Resolution:** Settings and values result in a small pixel size for accurate 3D reconstructions.
- **General Purpose:** Settings and values result in a medium pixel size.
- **Screening:** Settings and values result in a larger field of view so that larger areas can be assessed.

The Selected Preference panel displays the key characteristics of the selected Experiment Type.

2. Select the *Grid Settings*:

a. Select the **Grid Type**.

b. Select the **Hole Diameter**.

The exact hole diameter and spacing must be fine-tuned later in the EPU workflow, at the *EPU > Hole Selection* task.

3. Select **Start new session** to create a new EPU Session.

EPU overwrites the settings and (calibrated) values of the current EPU Session with the settings and values from the selected Experiment Type and grid.

The interface loads generic best-practice settings and values for the selected Experiment Type and grid. Continue with the EPU workflow to verify and adjust the settings and values where necessary.

Preferences for the High-Resolution Experiment Type on Mid Range Systems

On Mid Range systems, the High-resolution Advised Preferences include acquisition area(s) for the Template Definition task.

The number of acquisition areas generated varies as follows.

- For non-FFI systems, there is one acquisition area at the default position.
- For FFI systems, there are multiple acquisition areas, depending on the Hole Diameter selected as indicated below.

Hole Diameter selected	Number of acquisition areas generated
0.6 μm	1 acquisition area the default position
1.2 μm	2 acquisition areas
2.0 μm	5 acquisition areas

Set up a New EPU Session based on a Saved or Imported Preference

After the EPU workflow is completed, and it is verified that the preferences and settings result in the desired data quality, then optimized preferences and settings can be stored as a *Saved Preference*. This makes it much faster and easier to set up a new EPU Session for a similar experiment.

Import: A Saved Preference can also be imported from a file using the *Import* button.

To set up a new EPU Session that is identical or similar to a preceding experiment:

1. Select the most suitable Saved Preference
The Selected Preference panel displays the key characteristics of the selected Saved Preference.
2. Select Start new session to create a new EPU Session.
EPU overwrites the settings and (calibrated) values of the current EPU Session with the settings and values from the selected Saved Preference.

Continue with the EPU workflow to verify and adjust the settings and values where necessary. It is not possible to update the values in a stored Saved Preference. If adjustments are necessary in the new experiment, and it is expected that there will be similar experiments in the future, then store the adjusted values in a new Saved Preference.

Preparation Tab

The Preparations tab provides a set of tasks and functionalities to set up the microscope and the EPU application for successful automated acquisition.

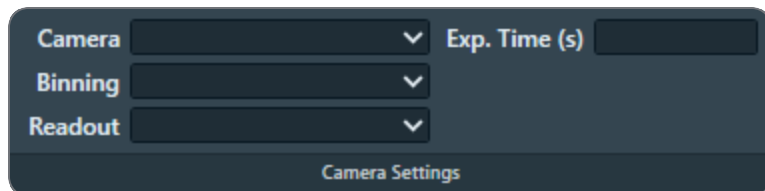
Acquisition and Optics Settings Task

For each step in the preparation and automated acquisition process, a Preset must be prepared that fulfills a specific set of requirements. Each Preset consists of:

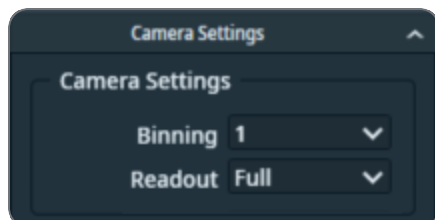
- Camera Settings.
- Advanced camera and/or exposure settings (not for all camera types).
- Optics Settings.

Description of the Camera Settings

Camera Settings for all Camera Types



The Binning and Readout parameters may be found in the tray of Camera Settings.



For the Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4(i) camera, the Exp. Time (s) is available in the Exposure Settings.

Camera

Select the camera that is used for the selected Preset.

Binning

Select the sensor-to-image pixel grouping mode.

The options are:

Preparation Tab

- **1:** each pixel in the acquired image corresponds to a single sensor pixel.
For the exposure preset, the Binning mode is always set to 1.
- **2:** the signal of 4 sensor pixels (2x2) is integrated into a single image pixel.
- **4:** the signal of 16 sensor pixels (4x4) is integrated into a single image pixel.

A higher Binning value:

- Does not affect the field of view.
- Decreases the image resolution.
- Increases the image acquisition speed for CCD cameras.
For CMOS cameras the image acquisition speed is practically independent of the Binning value.
CMOS cameras are:
 - All FEI and Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon and Ceta cameras.
 - Gatan K2, K3 and OneView cameras.
- Increases the signal strength of the image pixels.

Readout

Select the area section of the camera sensor that is used for image acquisition.

The options are:

- *Full:* on a 4096x4096 sensor, all the signal of all pixels is used.
- *Half:* on a 4096x4096 sensor, the signal of a 2048x2048 area around the center is used.
- *Quarter:* on a 4096x4096 sensor, the signal of a 1024x1024 area around the center is used.

A smaller Readout value:

- Decreases the field of view.
- Does not affect the image resolution.
- Does not affect the signal strength of the image pixels.

Exp. time (s)

For the Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4(i) camera, the Exp. Time (s) is available in the Exposure Settings.

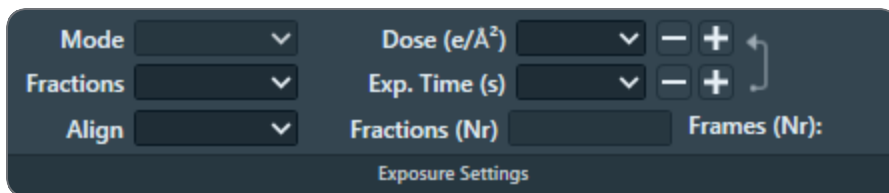
Specify the time during which the camera sensor is exposed to the electron beam.

A longer Exposure Time value:

- Does not affect the field of view.
- Does not affect the image resolution.
- Decreases the image acquisition speed.
Depending on the camera type and other settings, the frame rate is not necessarily affected.
- Increases the signal strength of the image pixels.

EPU validates the specified value. If necessary, EPU adjusts the specified value to the nearest valid value and shows a message.

Exposure Settings for Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4(i) Cameras



Mode

Select the integration mode.

When not in the LM magnifications range, the following options are available:

- *Linear*: The normal integrating mode.
- *Counted*: Electron Counting mode.
The Counted mode gives better performance of the detector, but requires low dose rates. The Counted option delivers sub-pixel accuracy without increasing the image size. It describes the detected electrons by a normalized pattern that is positioned with sub pixel accuracy.

Note: For the Falcon 4(i) camera, The *Counted* mode is selected default.

Fractions

Select whether or not to save Dose Fraction images.

Direct detectors read a lot of elemental frames that can be integrated into Dose Fractions. These Dose Fractions can be saved as separate images, next to the integrated image. The total number of frames depends on the exposure time and the internal frame rate of the camera.

The following options are available:

Preparation Tab

- *No*: Do not save Dose Fractions.
- *Manual*: Specify the number of Dose Fractions in *Fractions (Nr)*.
- *Auto*: The Dose Rate is used to calculate the number of Dose Fractions. To ensure that the Dose Fraction images can be aligned properly, every Dose Fraction has at least 1 e/px.
- *Maximum*: The maximum number of Dose Fractions is equal to the number of frames.
- EER: Electron Event Registration mode.
Only for the Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 4(i) camera.
In EER mode, the camera records the coordinates of the individual electrons that hit the Sensor Package. The following data is stored on the Storage Server:
 - An *.eer file with the coordinates and a Gain Reference image.
 - An integrated image of the recorded specimen area.
 - A copy of the gain reference is supplied in the same folder containing the movies when using EER or TIFF as output for the data acquisition preset.

In EER mode, the size of the acquired data is much smaller than in Counted mode. The camera does not acquire Fractions, and the *.eer file is much smaller than an image file with same data content.

To view and process *.eer files, specialist software is required.

Fraction settings are not applied when acquiring images for focusing and other preparatory actions.

Compression

Select whether or not the saved Dose Fraction images are compressed into TIFF LZW format. The compression is applied on acquired images stored in TIFF at native 4k x 4k resolution. To activate compression, set **Fractions** to **manual** or **max**, specify the number of fractions desired, and set **Compression** to **Yes**.



Note: The Compression option is only available with Falcon 4(i) and TEM Software version 7.17 and higher.

Compression and Native Resolution

When Compression is enabled, the images are stored in their native 4k x 4k resolution. This ensures that the highest level of detail is preserved in the compressed images. The compression is non-gain-normalized, meaning that it does not alter the gain of the image during the compression process. This allows for a more accurate representation of the original image in the compressed format.

Align

Select whether or not the camera frames are aligned before summing.

This parameter is found in the tray of Camera Settings.

When *Align* option *Yes* is selected:

- The camera calculates the image shift between consecutive frames.
- The camera applies a matching correction to each frame before it is summed into an integrated image or a Dose Fraction image.

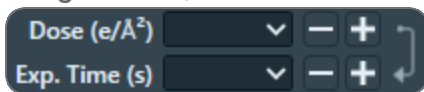
The result of the Align function depends on the selected *Fractions* mode:

- *Fractions* is *No*: The frames are aligned before summing into an integrated image.
- *Fractions* is *Manual* or *Auto*: The frames are aligned before summing into a Dose Fraction image. After that, the Dose Fractions are aligned before summing into the integrated image. An XML file with the applied shifts is saved next to the Dose Fraction images.
- *Fractions* is *Maximum*: The Dose Fractions are aligned before summing into the integrated image, and an XML file with the applied shifts is saved next to the Dose Fraction images.

Dose and Exp. Time

The values of the Dose and Exposure Time parameters are coupled via the measured Dose Rate. When the Exposure Time value is changed, the measured Dose Rate is used to automatically calculate the corresponding Dose value, and vice versa.

If the Dose Rate is known, then EPU automatically calculates Dose or Exposure Time. EPU uses the *leading* parameter as the basis to calculate the value of the other parameter. In the image below, *Dose* is the leading parameter.



- The arrow points from Dose to Exposure Time.
- Exposure Time is grayed out.

To make *Exposure Time* leading, either:

Preparation Tab

- Select the **arrow** to reverse it.
- Select the **Exp. Time** input field.
- Select **[+]** or **[-]** to adjust the Exposure Time value.

Fractions (Nr)

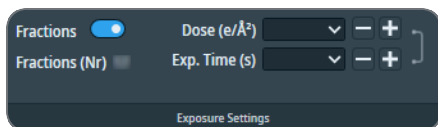
- *Manual*: manually specify the number of Dose Fractions.
- *Auto*: EPU calculates the number of Dose Fractions.
- The average dose in each Dose Fraction must be at least 1 e/px. This requires that the the Dose Rate is known.
- For Falcon 3EC cameras there are additional conditions.
See: [The automatic Dose Fractions calculation for Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4\(i\) cameras.](#)

Frames (Nr)

This is not a user setting, it is a calculated value. The number of frames depends on:

- The internal frame rate of the camera.
- The total Exposure time.

Exposure Settings for the Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta-F Camera



Fractions

- *Enabled*: acquire and store Dose Fractions.
- *Disabled*: acquire and store only integrated images.

Fractions can only be enabled for the Data Acquisition preset.

Frames (Nr)

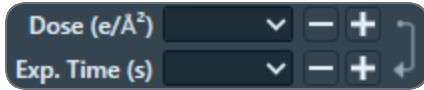
This is not a user setting, it is a calculated value. The number of frames depends on:

- The internal frame rate of the camera.
- The total Exposure time.

Dose and Exp. Time

The values of the Dose and Exposure Time parameters are coupled via the measured Dose Rate. When the Exposure Time value is changed, the measured Dose Rate is used to automatically calculate the corresponding Dose value, and vice versa.

If the Dose Rate is known, then EPU automatically calculates Dose or Exposure Time. EPU uses the *leading* parameter as the basis to calculate the value of the other parameter. In the image below, *Dose* is the leading parameter.

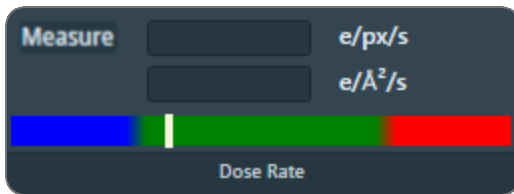


- The arrow points from Dose to Exposure Time.
- Exposure Time is grayed out.

To make *Exposure Time* leading, either:

- Select the **arrow** to reverse it.
- Select the **Exp. Time** input field.
- Select **[+]** or **[-]** to adjust the Exposure Time value.

Dose Rate for Thermo Fisher Scientific Cameras



Measure

Select **Measure** to determine the Dose Rate that the camera sensor receives. The color bar indicates if the measured dose rate is suitable for high quality data acquisition.

- Blue: the Dose Rate is too low. Images may not be usable for 3D reconstruction.
- Green: the Dose Rate is suitable for high quality data acquisition.
- Red: the Dose Rate is too high. The detector is over-exposed.

The measured Dose Rate is only valid for the current Optics Settings. When the Optics Settings are changed, the Dose Rate must be measured again.

The acceptable Dose range in EPU can be different than the Dose range that is used in Velox. The range in Velox is based on the technical range of the camera. The value in EPU is based on what a typical life-science specimen can handle before it becomes severely damaged.

The Automatic Dose Fractions Calculation for Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4(i) Cameras

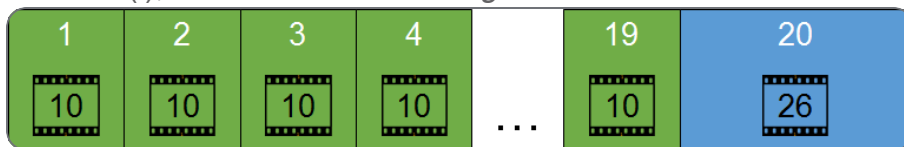
The number of frames in each Dose Fraction image is determined as follows:

- Initially, the frames are distributed equally over the Dose Fractions.
- When *Fractions* is *Auto*, the average dose in each Dose Fraction must be at least 1 e/px. This requires that the the Dose Rate is known.
- For the Falcon 3EC camera, when *Align* is *Yes*, the number of frames per Dose Fraction in the initial distribution must be a multitude of 6.
For the Falcon 4(i) camera there is no additional condition when *Align* is *Yes*.
- Remaining frames are added to the last Dose Fraction.

The rules above may lead to unexpected fractionation schemes. Run a test acquisition to check the distribution. For the best results, the Dose Fractions should be as equidistant as possible. If necessary, adjust the Dose or Exposure Time, or specify a different number of Dose Fractions to reach a more balanced fractionation scheme.

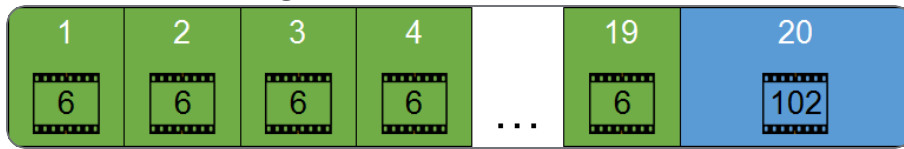
In the example below, 216 frames are distributed in 20 Dose Fractions. This example does not meet the optimal equidistant goal:

- Falcon 4(i), or Falcon 3EC with *Align* is *No*



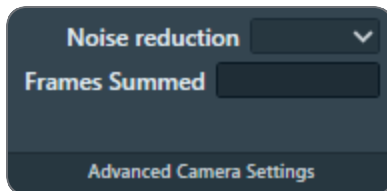
- Each Dose Fraction contains 10 frames.
- The remainder is frames.
These are added to the last Dose Fraction, so that the total number of frames in the last Dose Fraction is 26 frames.

- Falcon 3EC with *Align* is *Yes*



- Each Dose Fraction contains 6 frames.
- The remainder is frames. These are added to the last Dose Fraction, so that the total number of frames in the last Dose Fraction is 102 frames.

Advanced Camera Settings for Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta Cameras



Noise reduction

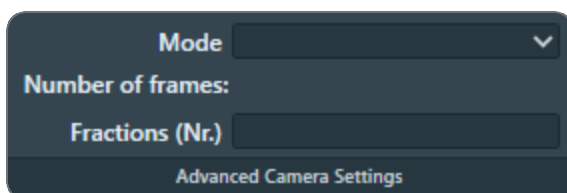
Select **Yes** to decrease the readout noise at low dose. Enabling Noise reduction decreases the maximum frame rate by up to 50%.

Noise reduction is only available when *Frames Summed* is 1.

Frames Summed

Specify the number of frames that is summed during acquisition. A higher number of frames increases the dynamic range in the acquired image.

Advanced Camera Settings for Gatan K2 and K3 Cameras



Mode

Select the integration mode.

When not in the LM magnifications range, the following options are available:

Preparation Tab

- *Linear*: the normal integrating mode.
The Linear mode is only used by the Gatan K2 camera.
The Gatan K3 camera always uses Counted mode or Counted/Super Resolution mode.
- *Counted*: use electron counting.
The Counted mode gives better performance of the detector, but requires low dose rates.
- *Counted/Super Resolution*:
This mode is only available in the Data Acquisition Preset, and when *Fractions (Nr)* is set to a value higher than 1.
In *Counted/Super Resolution* mode, the position of an electron is assigned to a pixel to achieve sub-pixel resolution. This information is saved only in the Dose Fraction images.
Because of this additional information, the Dose Fraction images will have double the width and height in pixels.

Number of frames

This is not a user setting, it is a calculated value. The number of frames depends on:

- The internal frame rate of the camera.
- The total Exposure time.

Fractions (Nr)

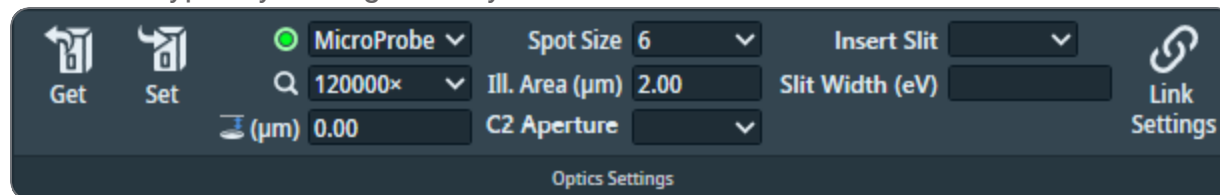
Specify the number of Dose Fraction images.

The specified value is only applied when acquiring images with the Data Acquisition Preset. When acquiring a preview image, the Dose Fraction images are saved in the *Preparation Preview* sub-folder of the camera root folder.

Description of the Optics Settings

Optics Settings for microscopes with a C3 lens.

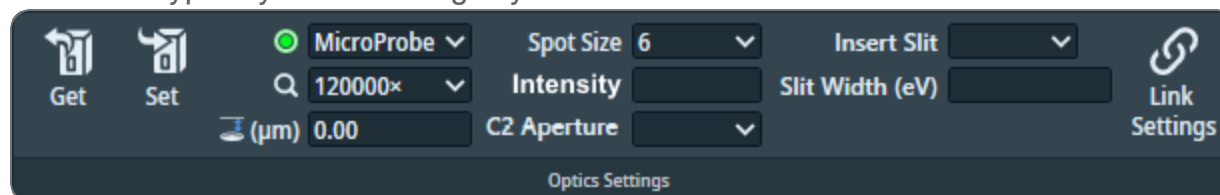
These are typically the High End systems with Titan software.



The beam diameter and magnification are used to calculate the illuminated area on the specimen.

Optics Settings for microscopes without a C3 lens.

These are typically the Mid Range systems with Talos software.



The beam diameter is displayed as an *Intensity* value. On a microscope with two condenser lenses it is not possible to calculate the beam diameter or the illuminated area on the specimen.

Note: *Insert Slit* and *Slit Width* are only available in EFTEM mode on a system with an energy filter.


Get

Imports the Optics Settings parameter values from the microscope.

Set

Applies the Optics Settings parameter values to the microscope.

Link Settings

- Link the Optics settings of high SA presets to the Data Acquisition Preset. You can link any of the following presets: Tracking, Focus, Thon Ring, Zero Loss, Autofocus and Drift Measurement.
- Certain parameters from the Data Acquisition Preset are linked, i.e., Probe Mode, Magnification, Spot Size, Illuminated Area, Intensity, Insert Slit and Slit Width
- You can quickly recognize which presets are linked through the  icon displayed next to the linked preset in the drop-down selection menu.
- The Data Acquisition Preset itself cannot be linked.

Probe Mode

The microscope software remembers the last used defocus value for MicroProbe and for NanoProbe mode. When returning to a probe mode, the last used defocus value for that probe mode is automatically restored. Because of this behavior, some of the Presets must use the same Probe mode.

To prevent that the result of the Autofocus function is lost, the following Presets and Autofunctions must use the same Probe Mode as the Data Acquisition Preset:

Preparation Tab

- Presets: Autofocus, Drift Measurement.
- Autofunctions: Eucentric height by beam tilt, Eucentric height by stage tilt, Autofocus.

Magnification

The Magnification determines the field of view, and therefore also the dimensions of the imaged area per pixel (or pixel size).

Defocus

In most Presets it is useful to apply a small defocus for enhanced contrast. Too much defocus could invalidate the alignments and calibrations.

EPU applies the specified defocus relative to the current focus, not relative to eucentric focus.

During the preparation of the Automated Acquisition run, the Defocus value in the Data Acquisition Preset is used for all acquisitions with the Data Acquisition Preset. During the Automated Acquisition run, EPU uses the Defocus values from the Defocus List.

Spot Size

The Spot Size determines the beam current. A higher Spot Size value corresponds to a lower beam current, and therefore a lower Dose Rate.

Illuminated Area (Ill. Area)

Only available on microscopes with three condenser lenses.

If the beam diameter is larger than the camera field of view, then parts of the specimen that are not imaged at that time are needlessly exposed to the electron beam. This may destroy valuable specimen area, which is then lost for high quality data acquisition.

The ideal beam has the following properties:

- The beam is parallel.
- The beam diameter is just large enough to fully cover the camera field of view.
- The beam has no distortions or aberrations along the edges.

Intensity

Only on microscopes with two condenser lenses.

The Intensity value determines the spreading of the beam. On a system without a C3 lens, the beam diameter can not be locked to a specific size. If the Probe, Magnification or Spotsize value changes, then the Intensity value may require adjustment as well.

If the beam diameter is larger than the camera field of view, then parts of the specimen that are not imaged at that time are needlessly exposed to the electron beam. This may destroy valuable specimen area, which is then lost for high quality data acquisition.

The ideal beam has the following properties:

- The beam is parallel.
- The beam diameter is just large enough to fully cover the camera field of view.
- The beam has no distortions or aberrations along the edges.

Insert Slit

Only available in EFTEM mode on a system with an energy filter.

Select **Yes** to insert the slit.

Slit Width (eV)

Only available in EFTEM mode on a system with an energy filter.

Specify the electron energy bandwidth that can pass through the slit.

Guidelines for the Optics Settings When Using Phase Plates

A Volta Phase Plate is generated by exposing the Phase Plate to the beam. This means there are limitations to the Optics Settings parameters of the Acquisition and Optics Presets when working with a Phase Plate:

- The beam must be parallel, so that the unscattered beam focuses into a small spot on the Phase Plate.
- The focus position on the phase plate has to stay within tight limits, which in turn puts tight limits on the stability of the beam direction. For reference, the stability limits for imaging with a Phase Plate are far stricter than those for coma free imaging.

In practice, the optics system of a microscope is not ideal. Changing the beam diameter may induce a slight tilting of the beam, which may cause the beam to partially leave the Phase Plate. To prevent this effect:

- Always use a parallel beam to illuminate the Phase Plate.
- For a selection of Presets, the Optics Settings must be partially or fully identical. If a Phase Plate related restriction is applicable to a Preset, then this is described in the chapters for that Preset.

It is possible to use a convergent beam when working on the microscope, as long as it does not hurt the existing Phase Plate and does not activate a new one.

The Recommended Order to Define the Acquisition and Optics Presets

The recommended order to define the Presets is not the same as their order in the Presets list:

Preparation Tab

1. Data Acquisition
2. Hole/EucentricHeight
3. Autofocus
4. Drift Measurement
5. Thon Ring
6. Zero Loss (only for EFTEM mode)
7. Grid Square
8. Atlas

In an Automated Acquisition run, the data acquisition step is the value-creating action. To get the best quality images for 3D reconstruction, the Data Acquisition Preset must be optimized without sacrifices to the other Presets.

Although the optics system is highly reproducible, it is always better to avoid changes that are not strictly necessary. To achieve maximum stability, use the Data Acquisition Preset as the basis for all other Presets that are used during the Automated Acquisition run.

Define the Data Acquisition Preset

The Data Acquisition Preset is used to acquire the images that will be used for 3D reconstruction of the particles in the specimen. The parameter values of the Data Acquisition Preset depend only on the requirements for successful 3D reconstruction.

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEM Imaging Mode: Nanoprobe. Nanoprobe is well suited for a narrow parallel beam at high magnifications. • Parallel beam. • Intensity Zoom is Off. • Magnification must match the required resolution. • Illuminated Area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small Illuminated Area prevents double exposure when the Acquisition Areas are close together. • A larger Illuminated Area is preferred when the Acquisition Areas are widely spaced and it is important for the beam to also hit some carbon. • Spot Size must match the Illuminated Area to achieve the required Dose Rate. • Defocus: The Defocus value is only used during preparation for the Automated Acquisition run. The data acquisitions during the run use the values that are specified in the Defocus List for the Acquisition Areas. <p>When using Phase Plates, the Optics Settings must be defined with on-plane conditions. For instructions, see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for the Data Acquisition Preset when using Phase Plates on a microscope with a C3 lens • Guidelines for the Data Acquisition Preset when using Phase Plates on a microscope without a C3 lens.
Camera Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binning: 1 • Readout: Full

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Apertures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C2: start with the 50 μm aperture. • Objective: When using Phase Plates, Make sure the drop-down list for the Objective aperture mechanism contains at least five Phase Plates: PhP1 - PhP5. If present, it can be safely assumed that the Phase Plate positions are defined accurately.

Use the procedure below to set the Data Acquisition Preset.

1. Select **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings**
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**
3. Start a *live image view*.
For Falcon and Ceta cameras, use **Velox**
For other cameras, use the **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel and **TIA**, or use **Gatan Digital Micrograph**
 - a. Select the **Camera** that is used for this Preset.
 - b. Select **Binning: 1**
 - c. Select **Readout area: Full**
 - d. Start the *live image view*.
4. Move the specimen to an area that can be sacrificed for experimenting with the optics settings.
5. Select **Search** to start continuous acquisition.
6. Use the handpanels to adjust the optics settings.
Use the FluScreen and/or the FFT in TIA, Velox or Digital Micrograph to assess the image quality.

7. Verify that the *Dose Rate* measurement is valid and stable.

For cameras that can measure the Dose Rate, monitor the Dose Rate in the acquisition software:

- For Falcon and Ceta-F cameras, use EPU or Velox.
- For Gatan cameras, use Digital Micrograph.

For cameras that do not report the Dose Rate, follow the instructions below:

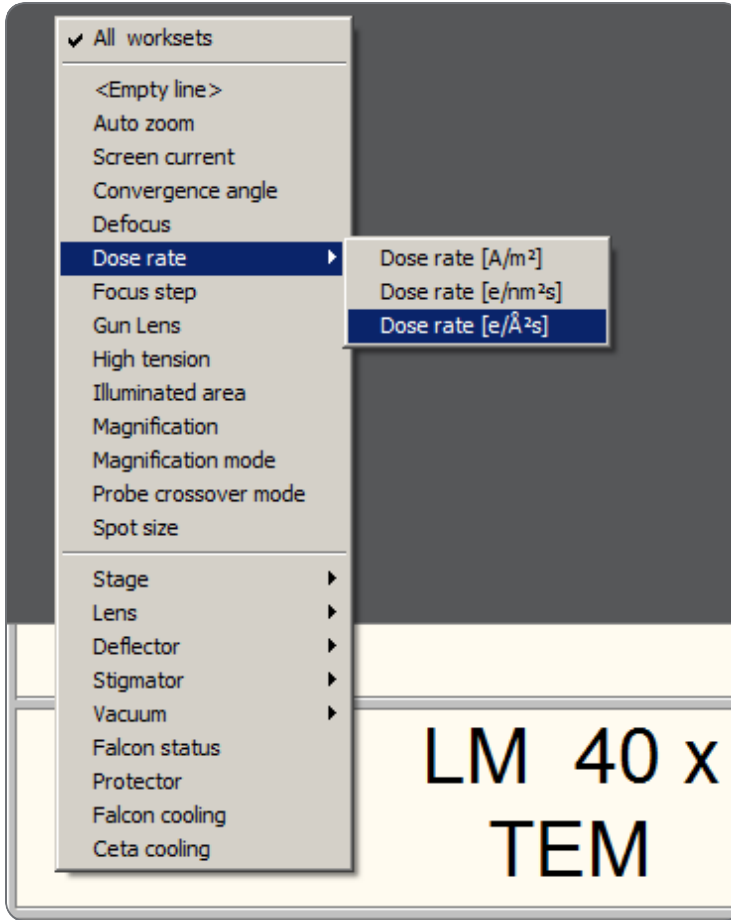
a. Adjust **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**, so that:

- The beam illuminates the entire FluScreen.
- The Screen Current is at 0.2 nA or higher.

If the FluScreen is not fully illuminated with sufficient intensity, then the Dose Rate value in the TEM User Interface is not accurate.

Preparation Tab

- b. If not visible yet, add **Dose rate [e-/Å²s]** to the **TEM User Interface status panel**.
- Right-click in the status panel where you wish to display the *Dose rate* value.
 - Select **Dose rate > Dose rate [e-/Å²s]**.

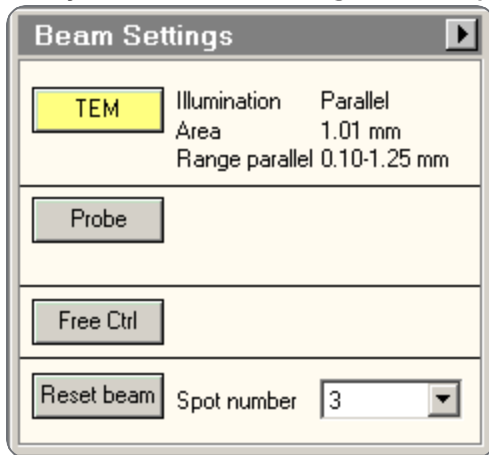


- c. Note the current **Dose Rate** value.
- d. With the **Magnification** knob, increase the magnification by two index steps.
- e. Verify that the **Dose Rate** value is unchanged.
- f. Decrease the magnification by two index steps, back to the initial value.
- g. Verify that the **Dose Rate** value is unchanged.

8. Verify that the beam is parallel.

Depending on the system type, either:

- On a system with a C3 lens (typically High End systems with Titan software), verify that **Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



- On a system without a C3 lens (typically Mid Range systems with Talos software), verify that the **specimen** and the **Objective aperture** are both focused.

If no Objective aperture is inserted, then:

- Select a small Objective aperture.
- Verify that the aperture is focused.
- Return the Objective mechanism to its initial position.

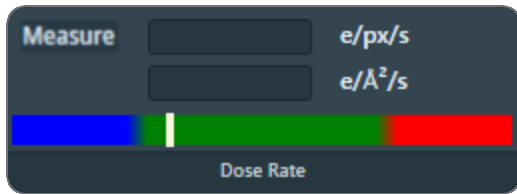
9. Select **Optics Settings** > **Get** to import the current optical settings from the microscope.10. In **Camera Settings**:

a. Select the **Camera**.

b. If the camera is *not* a Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC or Falcon 4(i), then specify the **Exp. Time (s)**.

For Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4(i) cameras, this parameter is specified in *Exposure Settings*, after the Dose Rate has been measured.

11. If a Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC or Falcon 4(i) camera is used, then select Dose Rate > Measure.



If the measured Dose Rate is not in the green zone:

- a. Adjust the illumination.

Either:

- Use the handpanels to adjust the **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**, then select **Optics Settings > Get**.
- In the **Optics Settings**, adjust the **Illuminated Area** or **Intensity**, and/or **Spot Size** then select **Set**.

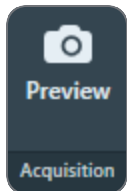
- b. Select **Measure** again to update the Dose Rate value.

If no Dose Rate value is known yet and *Measure* is skipped, then the Preview acquisition includes a Dose Rate measurement.

12. Depending on the selected Camera, also specify the additional camera-specific parameters:

- Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC / Falcon 4(i): **Exposure Settings** with the **Exp. Time (s)** and **Dose** parameters.
- Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta: **Advanced Camera Settings**
- Gatan K2 / K3: **Advanced Camera Settings**

13. Select **Acquisition > Preview**



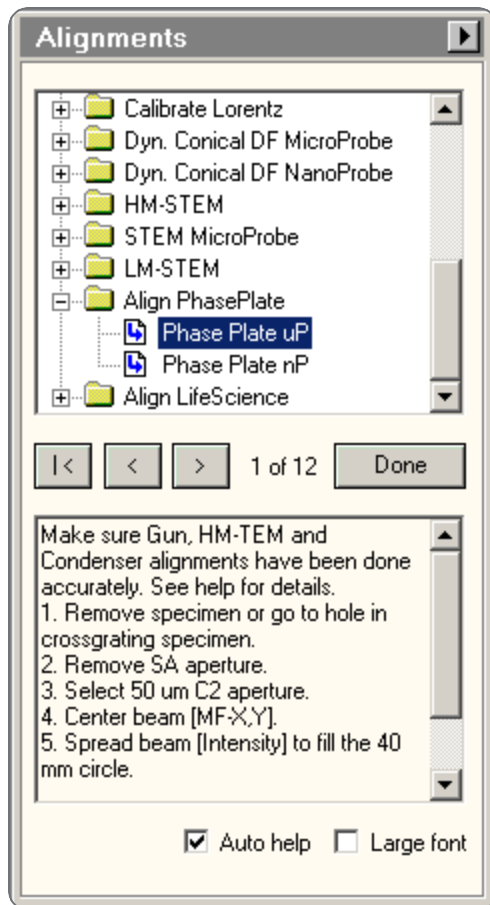
Guidelines for the Data Acquisition Preset When Using Phase Plates on a Microscope with a C3 Lens

Microscopes with a C3 lens are typically the High End systems with Titan software.

Perform the Phase Plate Microprobe (uP) Alignment

On systems with Titan software, perform the Phase Plate Microprobe (uP) alignment procedure:

1. Select the **TEM User Interface > Alignments** control panel.



2. Select **Auto help** to display detailed instructions for accurate execution of the alignments below.
3. Select the **Align PhasePlate > Phase Plate uP** alignment.
In this alignment procedure:
 - a. Very accurately align the **diffraction lens focus** at the **highest camera length**.
This alignment ensures that the phase plate is exactly in focus.
 - b. Very accurately align the **beam shift pivot points**.
This alignment ensures a stable beam position relative to the phase plate, when an image-beam shift is applied.

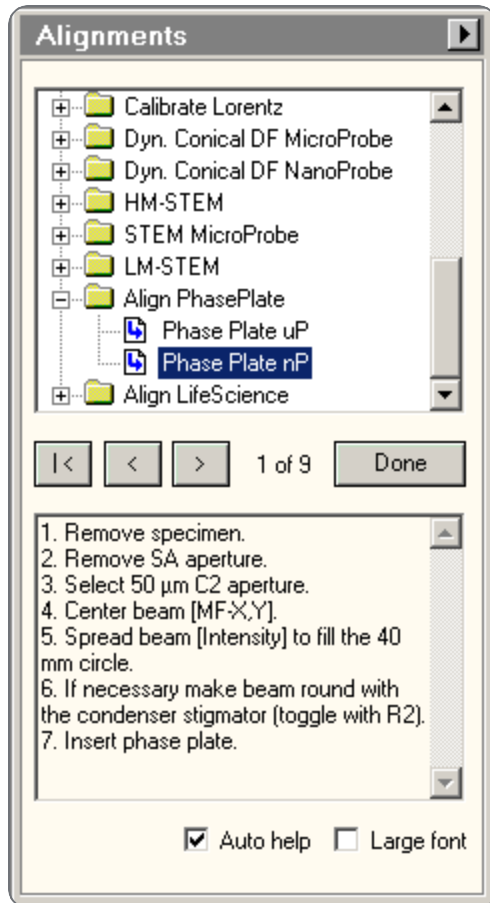
After the Phase Plate Microprobe (uP) alignment procedure is completed, continue with the Phase Plate Nanoprobe (nP) alignment procedure.

Perform the Phase Plate Nanoprobe (nP) Alignment

Perform the Phase Plate Nanoprobe (nP) alignment procedure.

Note: On systems with Titan software, the Phase Plate nP Alignment must be preceded by the Phase Plate uP Alignment.

1. Select the **TEM User Interface > Alignments** control panel.



2. Select **Auto help** to display detailed instructions for accurate execution of the alignments below.

3. Select the **Align PhasePlate > Phase Plate nP** alignment.
In this alignment procedure:
 - a. Very accurately align the **diffraction lens focus** at the **highest camera length**.
This alignment ensures that the phase plate is exactly in focus.
 - b. Very accurately align the **beam shift pivot points**.
This alignment ensures a stable beam position relative to the phase plate, when an image-beam shift is applied.

Verify the On-Plane Illumination on a Microscope with a C3 Lens

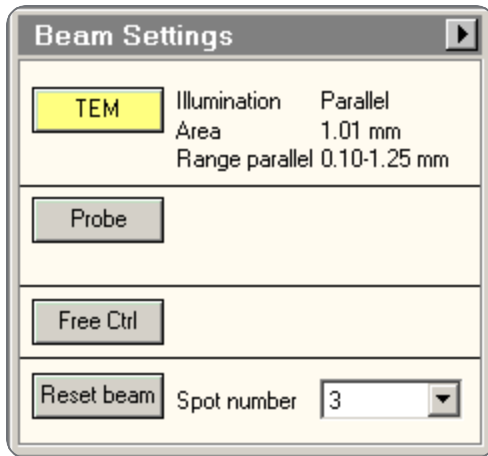
When the beam is focused onto the Phase Plate, the illumination is called on-plane. In all other cases, the illumination is called off-plane.

For the desired illumination conditions, the on-plane conditions must be verified. On-plane illumination of the phase plate implies parallel illumination of the specimen.

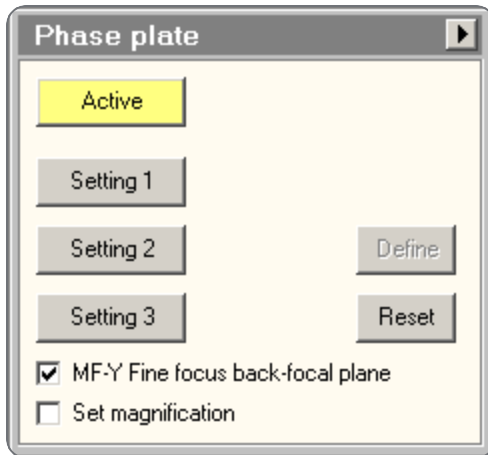
Follow the steps below to adjust the optics settings for on-plane illumination:

1. If the Data Acquisition Preset is already completed, then:
 - a. Select **EPU > Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings > Presets > Preset: Data Acquisition**.
 - b. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. If the *Data Acquisition Preset* is not defined yet, then use the TEM User Interface and/or the Handpanels to:
 - a. Select the **TEM imaging mode**.
 - b. Select the desired **Magnification, Spot Size** and **Intensity** for high quality data acquisition.

3. In the **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings** control panel, verify that **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



4. Select **Handpanels > Diffraction**.
5. With the **Handpanels > Magnification** knob, set the highest camera length.
6. Select **Handpanels > Eucentric Focus**.
7. In the **TEM User Interface > Phase plate** control panel:



- a. Select **Active**.
 - b. Tick **MF-Y Fine focus back-focal plane**.
8. With the **Handpanels > Multifunction Y** knob, focus the beam to the smallest possible spot on the FluScreen.
 9. Select **Handpanels > Diffraction** again to return to imaging mode.

i **Note:** During the Automated Acquisition run, make sure that the *Phase plate* control panel is in *Active* status.

i **Note:** If the spot size and/or illuminated area are changed, the on-plane condition needs to be verified again.

Guidelines for the Data Acquisition Preset When Using Phase Plates on a Microscope without a C3 Lens

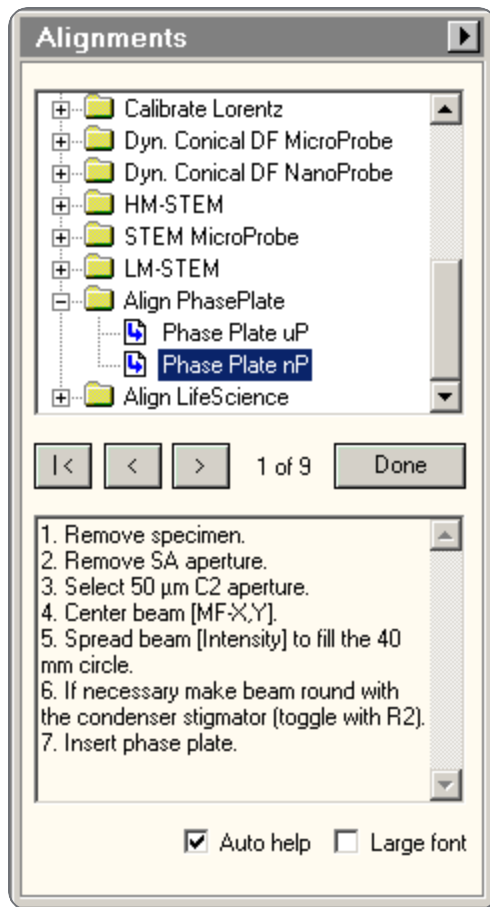
Microscopes without a C3 lens are typically the Mid Range systems with Talos software.

Perform the Phase Plate Nanoprobe (nP) Alignment

Perform the Phase Plate Nanoprobe (nP) alignment procedure.

i **Note:** On systems with Titan software, the Phase Plate nP Alignment must be preceded by the Phase Plate uP Alignment.

1. Select the **TEM User Interface > Alignments** control panel.




2. Select **Auto help** to display detailed instructions for accurate execution of the alignments below.
3. Select the **Align PhasePlate > Phase Plate nP** alignment.
In this alignment procedure:
 - a. Very accurately align the **diffraction lens focus** at the **highest camera length**.
This alignment ensures that the phase plate is exactly in focus.
 - b. Very accurately align the **beam shift pivot points**.
This alignment ensures a stable beam position relative to the phase plate, when an image-beam shift is applied.

Verify the On-Plane Illumination on a Microscope without a C3 Lens

Follow the steps below to achieve on-plane illumination:

1. If the *Data Acquisition Preset* is already completed, then:
 - a. Select **EPU > Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings > Presets > Preset: Data Acquisition**.
 - b. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. If the *Data Acquisition Preset* is not defined yet, then use the TEM User Interface and/or the Handpanels to:
 - a. Select the **TEM imaging mode**.
 - b. Select the desired **Magnification, Spot Size and Intensity**.
3. In the **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings** control pane > **Tune** tab, verify that the beam is set to **Nanoprobe**.
4. Insert the **FluScreen**.
5. Verify that the beam is parallel:
 - a. Select **Handpanels > Diffraction**.
 - b. With the **Handpanels > Magnification** knob, set an intermediate camera length.
 - c. On the **FluScreen**, verify that the beam is forming a probe.
6. With the **Handpanels > Magnification** knob, set the highest camera length.
7. Select **Handpanels > Eucentric Focus**.
8. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, narrow the beam to a probe.
9. Select **Handpanels > Diffraction** again to return to imaging mode.

 **Note:** If the Spot Size and/or Intensity are changed, then the on-plane condition must be verified again.

Define the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset

The Hole/Eucentric Height Preset is used to perform the Auto-eucentric Height function during the automated run.

On Quantifoil specimens, the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset is also used to:

Preparation Tab

- Find and center individual Foil Holes that have been selected at the Grid Square level.
- Specify the Template that defines the locations for Autofocus, Drift Measurement and one or more Data Acquisition Areas.

The Hole/Eucentric Height Preset must meet the following requirements:

- For Quantifoil samples: the field of view must contain at least one complete Foil Hole. The algorithm for marking and centering a hole is more reliable if the neighboring holes are also partly visible.
- The field of view must contain an area of carbon foil for successful execution of the Auto-eucentric function.
- The contrast and brightness must be good enough to clearly identify the edge of the carbon foil around a hole.
- The Dose rate must be small enough to prevent damage to the Data Acquisition Area(s) in the Foil Hole.

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TEM Imaging Mode: the same as the Data Acquisition Preset.• Illuminated Area: typically $\pm 20 \mu\text{m}$. On Quantifoil samples: twice as large as the Foil Hole inter-spacing.• Magnification: low SA range ($\pm 3800X$), The Illuminated Area must not be much larger than the field of view.• Defocus: 10-20 μm. Defocus helps to enhance contrast, so it is easier to detect the edge of the carbon foil around a hole.• Parallel beam.• Dose must be smaller than 0.1 [$e^- / \text{\AA}^2\text{sec}$]. <p>When using Phase Plates, the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset must be defined with an off-plane illumination, so that an activated Phase Plate is not harmed.</p>
Camera Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Binning: 1• Readout: Full
Apertures	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Use the procedure below to set the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset.

1. Apply the Data Acquisition Preset values to the microscope:
 - a. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
 - b. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**.
 - c. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Hole/Eucentric Height**.
3. Start a *live image view*.
For Falcon and Ceta cameras, use **Velox**
For other cameras, use the **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel and **TIA**, or use **Gatan Digital Micrograph**
 - a. Select the **Camera** that is used for this Preset.
 - b. Select **Binning: 1**
 - c. Select **Readout area: Full**
 - d. Start the *live image view*.
 - e. Select **Binning: 1**
4. Select **Search** to start continuous acquisition.
5. Move the specimen to an area that can be sacrificed for experimenting with the optics settings.
6. Use the handpanels to create an image that meets the field of view requirements.
This will typically be the case at a **Magnification** in the lower SA range, and an **Illuminated Area** of 10-15 μm .
7. Adjust the illumination parameters to meet the contrast and brightness requirements.
8. Verify that the Dose rate matches the requirements.

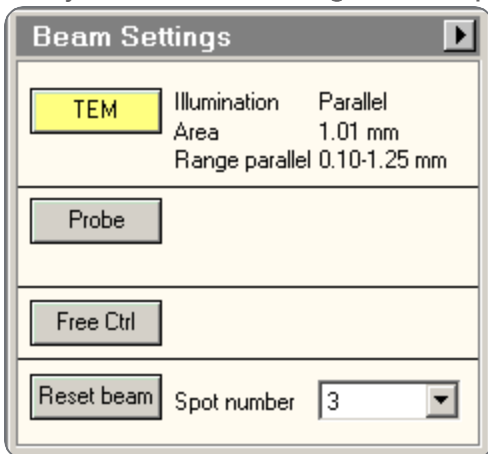


Note: Make sure that the beam covers the entire FluScreen, and that the Screen Current is at least 0.2 nA.

If the FluScreen is not fully illuminated with sufficient intensity, the Dose rate value in the Microscope User Interface TEM User Interface is not accurate.

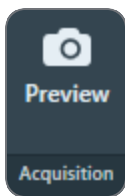
Preparation Tab

9. If the Dose Rate is higher than 0.1 [$e^- / \text{\AA}^2\text{sec}$]:
 - a. Insert the **FluScreen**.
 - b. Select a higher **Spot Size** number.
 - c. Use the **Intensity** knob to adjust the beam diameter.
Make sure that the entire FluScreen is illuminated and that the Screen Current does not drop below 0.2 nA.
 - d. Retract the **FluScreen** again.
10. Verify that the beam is parallel.
Depending on the system type, either:
 - On a system with a C3 lens (typically High End systems with Titan software), verify that **Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



- On a system without a C3 lens (typically Mid Range systems with Talos software), verify that the **specimen** and the **Objective aperture** are both focused.
If no Objective aperture is inserted, then:
 - Select a small Objective aperture.
 - Verify that the aperture is focused.
 - Return the Objective mechanism to its initial position.
11. Acquire an image with the following camera settings:
 - **Bias/Gain** correction: **Bias/Gain**
 - The same **Integration time**, **Binning** and **Readout area** as used for the live image view.

12. Verify that the acquired image meets the requirements above.
If necessary:
 - a. Use the Handpanels to adjust **Magnification**, **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**.
 - b. Acquire a **new image** and verify it against the requirements above.
13. In **EPU**:
 - a. Select **Optics Settings > Get** to import the current optics values from the microscope.
 - b. In **Camera Settings**, select the same **Camera**, **Binning**, **Readout** and **Exp. time (s)** values as used for the previously acquired image.
 - c. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.



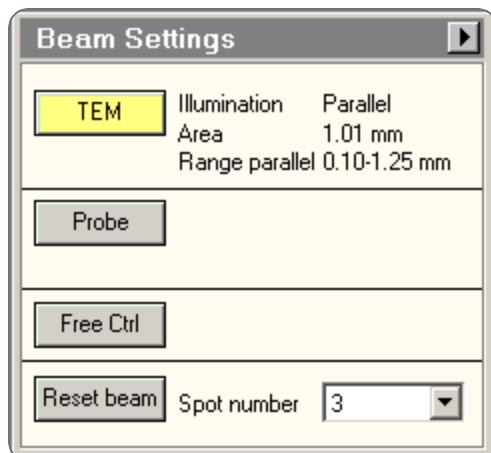
14. Verify that the **image quality** is identical to the previously acquired image.

Guidelines for the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset When Using Phase Plates

When using Phase Plates, the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset must be defined with an off-plane illumination, so the currently activated Phase Plate is not harmed.

On Titan systems:

Use NanoProbe and verify that **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



Above a certain illuminated area ($\sim 8 \mu\text{m}$ for a $50 \mu\text{m}$ C2 aperture) the beam changes from parallel to spreading.

On Talos systems, verification of the off-plane condition is done in Diffraction mode.

To verify the off-plane condition:

1. Switch to **MicroProbe**.
2. Set sufficient **Defocus** to enhance contrast.
3. Select **Handpanels > Diffraction**.
4. With the **Handpanels > Magnification** knob, set the highest camera length.
5. Verify that the diffraction spot size is at least as large as the 40 mm circle on the FluScreen or Flucam Viewer.

Define the Autofocus Preset

The Autofocus Preset is used for:

- Calibration of the Autofocus function.
- Execution of the Autofocus step during the automated run.

The Autofocus function determines the amount of image shift while beam is tilted. After calibration, the amount of image shift is a measure for the amount of defocus.

The Autofocus Preset must meet the following requirements:

- The Optics Settings for the Autofocus Preset must be as close to the Optics Settings of the Data Acquisition as possible.
- The combination of beam diameter and field of view must be such, that the entire field of view is illuminated at all times during execution of the Autofocus function.

Recommendations for the beam diameter and the field of view:

Sample flatness and stability	Optics Settings > Illuminated Area or Intensity	Camera Settings > Readout
Better than average	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset	Half
Average	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset	Full
Worse than average	Slightly larger than the Data Acquisition Preset	Full

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnification: typically $\pm 45.000X$ • Illuminated Area / Intensity: see recommendations above. • Probe Mode: if the AFIS functionality is present and calibrated, then use the same Probe Mode as for the Data Acquisition Preset.
Camera Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See recommendations above. • Binning: 1
Apertures	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Use the procedure below to define the Autofocus Preset.

1. Apply the Data Acquisition Preset values to the microscope:
 - a. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
 - b. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**.
 - c. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Autofocus**.
3. In **Camera Settings**, select the same **Camera**, **Binning** and **Readout** as used in the Data Acquisition Preset.
4. Depending on the selected camera, select the same camera-specific values as used in the Data Acquisition Preset:
 - Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4:
Duplicate the parameter values in the **Exposure Settings** section.
 - Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta and Gatan K2 / K3:
Duplicate the parameter values in the **Advanced Camera Settings** section.

Settings that are not used in the Autofocus Preset can be duplicated without negative consequences. When a value is not applicable to the Autofocus Preset, it will be ignored.
5. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.

The Autofocus Preset cannot be finalized without executing the Autofocus calibration and/or Autofocus function. Depending on the flatness and stability of the sample, the Camera Settings and/or the Optics Settings parameters may need adjustment. If adjustments are necessary, this will be done during Autofocus calibration and/or during Stand-alone execution of the Autofocus function.

Guidelines for the Autofocus Preset When Using Phase Plates

When using Phase Plates, changes in the Condenser Lens System must be avoided. This makes it even more important to use the same Optics Settings parameter values as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Since the Autofocus function acquires images with a tilted beam, it will create satellite spots on the phase plate film. These spots are sufficiently far removed from the actual Volta area in the optical center to have a negative effect on the quality of the data acquisitions.

If Phase Plates are used in combination with a Direct Detection camera in electron counting mode, the beam intensity can be very low and exposure time for data acquisition can be very long. Nevertheless, Autofocus will work with an integration time that is significantly shorter than the time that is specified in the Data Acquisition preset. For the Autofocus function a very small dose is sufficient to reliably perform cross-correlation based shift measurements. The equivalent of a couple of dose fractions should be sufficient.

Define the Drift Measurement Preset

The Drift Measurement Preset is used for:

- Stand-alone execution of the Drift Measurement function in the Auto Functions tab.
- Execution of the Drift Measurement function during the automated run.
The automated run postpones data acquisition until the drift speed has dropped below a configurable threshold.

The Drift Measurement function tracks the position of recognizable features and patterns in consecutive images, and compares the detected position shift with a specified threshold value.

The Drift Measurement Preset must meet the following requirements:

- The Optics Settings for the Drift Measurement Preset must be as close to the Optics Settings of the Data Acquisition as possible.
- The exposure time must be small enough to minimize blur in the images that are used for the Drift Measurement.
In a blurry image, it is hard to accurately identify recognizable features and patterns.
- The time interval between consecutive images must be short enough to allow for fast measurements.
- If the Drift Threshold is set very low, the resolution of the acquired images must be high enough to enable detection of very small shifts.
- For Quantifoil samples: the beam diameter must be small enough, so that the Drift Measurement Area can be placed close to the Data Acquisition Area(s) without risking multiple exposure of the Data Acquisition Area(s).

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<p>If Phase Plates are used, then the Optics Settings for the Drift Measurement Preset must be identical to the Data Acquisition Preset, including the on-plane illumination conditions.</p> <p>If Phase Plates are not used, then the below recommendations are applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe Mode: if the AFIS functionality is present and calibrated, then use the same Probe Mode as for the Data Acquisition Preset. • TEM Imaging Mode: same as the Data Acquisition Preset. • Magnification: If the drift threshold is very low, it may be necessary to select a higher magnification than is used for the Data Acquisition preset. • Illuminated Area / Intensity for Quantifoil samples: Decrease the beam diameter if possible, but make sure the entire field of view is illuminated.
Camera Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binning: 1 Readout: Half. This increases the readout speed.
Apertures	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Preparation Tab

Use the procedure below to define the Drift Measurement Preset.

1. Apply the Data Acquisition Preset values to the microscope:
 - a. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
 - b. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**.
 - c. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Drift Measurement**.
3. In **Camera Settings**:
 - a. Select the same **Camera** as used in the Data Acquisition Preset.
 - b. Select **Binning: 1**
 - c. Select **Readout: Half**
4. Depending on the selected camera, select the same camera-specific values as used in the Data Acquisition Preset:
 - Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4:
Duplicate the parameter values in the **Exposure Settings** section.
 - Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta and Gatan K2 / K3:
Duplicate the parameter values in the **Advanced Camera Settings** section.

Settings that are not used in the Drift Measurement Preset can be duplicated without negative consequences. When a value is not applicable to the Drift Measurement Preset, it will be ignored.
5. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.

The Drift Measurement Preset cannot be finalized without executing the Drift Measurement function. Depending on the specified Drift Threshold and the measurement results, the Optics Settings and/or Camera Settings parameters may need adjustment. If adjustments are necessary, this will be done during Drift Measurement calibration and/or during Stand-alone execution of the Drift Measurement function.

Define the Thon Ring Preset

The Thon Ring Preset is used for:

- Stand-alone execution of the Autocoma function.
- Stand-alone execution of the Autostigmatate function.

The Autocoma and Autostigmatate functions are intended for optimization of the system alignments before starting an automated run. Both functions are not executed during the automated run, which means that also the Thon Ring Preset is not applied during the automated run.

The Thon Ring Preset must meet the following requirements:

- Thon Rings are clearly visible in the FFT of the acquired images.

The recommendations below are specified relative to the Data Acquisition Preset.

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When using Phase Plates, the Optics Settings for the Thon Ring Preset must be identical to the Data Acquisition Preset to prevent accidental overexposure of an activated Phase Plate. • Spot Size: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use Spot Size 1 or 2. • When using the survey camera: select Spot Size 3 or higher. • When using the high sensitivity camera: check the dose rate to select a suitable Spot Size. • Illuminated Area / Intensity: If desired, slightly decrease the beam diameter to increase the signal strength. When the beam is too narrow, less Thon Rings will be visible. • Defocus: typically between -1 μm and -3 μm.
Camera Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binning: 2 • Readout: Full

Use the procedure below to set the Thon Ring Preset.

Preparation Tab

1. Apply the Data Acquisition Preset values to the microscope:
 - a. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
 - b. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**.
 - c. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Thon Ring**.
3. Select **Optics Settings > Get**.
4. Prepare a *live FFT view*.

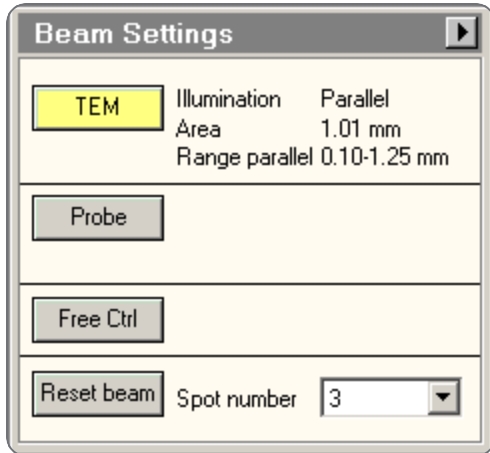
For Falcon and Ceta cameras, use **Velox**.
For other cameras, use the **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel and **TIA**, or use **Gatan Digital Micrograph** .

 - a. Select the same **Camera** as used in the Thon Ring Preset.
 - b. Use the following camera settings:
 - **Binning: 2**
 - **Readout area: Full**
 - c. Start the *live image acquisition*.
 - d. Move the **specimen** to an area with **thin, uninterrupted, amorphous carbon foil** that is *not* close to a grid bar.
 - e. Display the **FFT** of the live image.
5. Assess the quality of the **Thon Rings**.

If necessary adjust the optics parameters to improve the sharpness of the Thon Rings.

6. Verify that the beam is parallel.
Depending on the system type, either:

- On a system with a C3 lens (typically High End systems with Titan software), verify that **Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



- On a system without a C3 lens (typically Mid Range systems with Talos software), verify that the **specimen** and the **Objective aperture** are both focused.
If no Objective aperture is inserted, then:

- Select a small Objective aperture.
- Verify that the aperture is focused.
- Return the Objective mechanism to its initial position.

7. Acquire an image with the following camera settings:

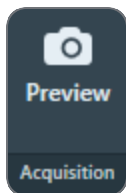
- **Bias/Gain** correction: **Bias/Gain**
- The same **Integration time**, **Binning** and **Readout area** as used for the live image view.

8. Verify that the acquired image meets the requirements above.
If necessary:

- Use the Handpanels to adjust **Magnification**, **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**.
- Acquire a **new image** and verify it against the requirements above.

9. In EPU:

- a. Select **Optics Settings > Get** to import the current optics values from the microscope.
- b. In **Camera Settings**, select the same **Camera, Binning, Readout** and **Exp. time (s)** values as used for the previously acquired image.
- c. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.



10. Verify that the **image quality** is identical to the previously acquired image.

11. In the **Image Display**, select **Show/Hide Inset** and/or **Swap Inset and Main** to display the FFT for the acquired image.



12. Check the quality of the Thon Rings.

Select **Filter FFT** to improve the contrast and brightness of the FFT if the Thon Rings .



13. If necessary, adjust the Optics Settings.

Either:

- Use the handpanels to adjust the **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**, then select **Optics Settings > Get**.
- In the **Optics Settings**, adjust the **Illuminated Area** or **Intensity**, and/or **Spot Size** then select **Set**.

Define the Zero Loss Preset

The Zero Loss Preset is only available when the microscope is in EFTEM mode at the time EPU is started. The Zero Loss Preset is used by the Auto Zero-Loss auto function. During an Automated Acquisition run, EPU executes the Auto Zero-Loss function at the specified interval to maintain a proper alignment of the energy slit in the filter with the Zero Loss Peak.

If Phase Plates are used, then the Optics Settings for the Zero Loss Preset must be identical to the Data Acquisition Preset to prevent accidental overexposure of an activated Phase Plate. If no Phase Plates are used, then it is still recommended to use the same Optics and Camera Settings as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.
Camera Settings	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.
Apertures	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Use the procedure below to define the Zero Loss Preset.

1. Apply the Data Acquisition Preset values to the microscope:
 - a. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
 - b. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**.
 - c. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Zero Loss**.
3. In **Camera Settings**, select the same **Camera**, **Binning** and **Readout** as used in the Data Acquisition Preset.
4. Depending on the selected camera, select the same camera-specific values as used in the Data Acquisition Preset:
 - Thermo Fisher Scientific Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4:
Duplicate the parameter values in the **Exposure Settings** section.
 - Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta and Gatan K2 / K3:
Duplicate the parameter values in the **Advanced Camera Settings** section.

Settings that are not used in the Zero Loss Preset can be duplicated without negative consequences. When a value is not applicable to the Zero Loss Preset, it will be ignored.
5. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.

Define the Grid Square Preset

The Grid Square Preset is used to find and select Target Areas that are suitable for data acquisition.

The Grid Square Preset must meet the following requirements:

- The field of view must contain an entire, centered Grid Square.
- The field of view must contain a part of each neighboring Grid Square.
This is needed to make sure that a Grid Square image still contains an entire Grid Square in case the positioning of the specimen has drifted over time. As a rule of thumb, the field of view of the Grid Square image must be approximately twice as large as a single Grid Square.
- The contrast and brightness must be good enough to assess the ice thickness.
- For Quantifoil samples, the contrast and brightness must be good enough to detect Foil Holes.

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEM Imaging Mode: same as the Data Acquisition Preset. • Magnification: LM 400X - LM 600X. • Illuminated Area: typically $\pm 200 \mu\text{m}$. • Parallel beam. <p>When using Phase Plates, do not focus the beam to a spot to prevent high doses on the Phase Plate.</p>
Camera Settings	<p>Binning: 1</p> <p>Readout: Full</p>
Apertures	Same as the Data Acquisition Preset.

Use the procedure below to set the Grid Square Preset.

1. Apply the Data Acquisition Preset values to the microscope:
 - a. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
 - b. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Data Acquisition**.
 - c. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Grid Square**.
3. Start a *live image view*.

For Falcon and Ceta cameras, use **Velox**
For other cameras, use the **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel and **TIA**,
or use **Gatan Digital Micrograph**

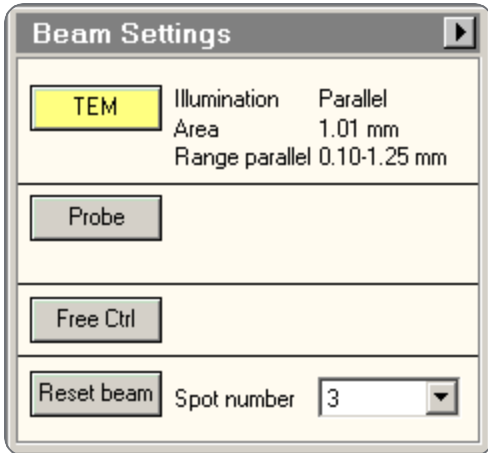
 - a. Select the **Camera** that is used for this Preset.
 - b. Select **Binning: 1**
 - c. Select **Readout area: Full**
 - d. Start the *live image view*.
4. Select **Search** to start continuous acquisition.
5. Use the **handpanels** to adjust the **Magnification** and/or **Intensity** to meet the requirements for contrast and brightness, and for the field of view.

This will typically be the case at a Magnification of LM 400X - LM 600X with an Illuminated Area of 150-200 μm .

6. Verify that the beam is parallel.

Depending on the system type, either:

- On a system with a C3 lens (typically High End systems with Titan software), verify that **Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



- On a system without a C3 lens (typically Mid Range systems with Talos software), verify that the **specimen** and the **Objective aperture** are both focused.

If no Objective aperture is inserted, then:

- Select a small Objective aperture.
- Verify that the aperture is focused.
- Return the Objective mechanism to its initial position.

7. Acquire an image with the following camera settings:

- **Bias/Gain** correction: **Bias/Gain**
- The same **Integration time**, **Binning** and **Readout area** as used for the live image view.

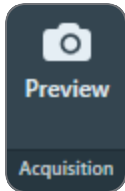
8. Verify that the acquired image meets the requirements above.

If necessary:

- a. Use the Handpanels to adjust **Magnification**, **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**.
- b. Acquire a **new image** and verify it against the requirements above.

9. In EPU:

- a. Select **Optics Settings > Get** to import the current optics values from the microscope.
- b. In **Camera Settings**, select the same **Camera, Binning, Readout** and **Exp. time (s)** values as used for the previously acquired image.
- c. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.



10. Verify that the **image quality** is identical to the previously acquired image.

Define the Atlas Preset

An automated run starts by acquiring an Atlas. The Atlas is an overview of the specimen. The Atlas is used to detect and select Grid Squares for automatic data acquisition. It is assembled by stitching a series of images (so-called *Tiles*) together.

For these purposes, the Atlas Preset must meet the following requirements:

- The field of view must cover the largest possible specimen area. The field of view must contain an area of at least 3x3 entire Grid Squares.
The Grid Square detection algorithm becomes more reliable when more Grid Squares are captured in the field of view.
- The field of view must be fully illuminated. This also means that the image does not contain any cut-offs.
To fulfill this requirement it may be necessary to not only set the Atlas Preset, but also to perform the Atlas Optical Alignment calibration.
- The grid bars of the carbon foil are clearly recognizable at the edges of each image.
- The contrast and brightness must be good enough to assess the ice thickness.
- The contrast and brightness must be good enough to detect broken carbon foil.

Parameters	Typical Settings and Recommendations
Optics Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEM Imaging Mode: Microprobe Microprobe is better suited for a wide parallel beam at lower magnifications. • Magnification: low LM, typically LM 40X - LM 200X • Illuminated Area: typically $\pm 800 \mu\text{m}$ • Parallel beam. With defocus, a convergent beam may lead to an effective change of magnification. <p>When using Phase Plates, do not focus the beam to a spot to prevent high doses on the Phase Plate.</p>
Camera Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binning: 1 • Readout: Full
Apertures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C2: $150 \mu\text{m}$ • All other aperture mechanisms: If possible, use the same apertures as the Data Acquisition Preset. If it is not possible to meet the illumination requirements with the same apertures as the Data Acquisition Preset, then use the TEM User Interface > Apertures control panel to select the required apertures before Atlas acquisition and to revert them after Atlas acquisition.

Use the procedure below to define the Atlas Preset.

1. Select the **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings** task.
2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Atlas**.
3. In the **TEM User Interface > Apertures** control panel:
 - Set **Condenser 2** to the largest aperture.
 - Set **Objective** to the retracted position.

4. Start a *live image view*.
For Falcon and Ceta cameras, use **Velox**
For other cameras, use the **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel and **TIA**,
or use **Gatan Digital Micrograph**
 - a. Select the **Camera** that is used for this Preset.
 - b. Select **Binning: 1**
 - c. Select **Readout area: Full**
 - d. Start the *live image view*.
5. Select **Magnification: LM 60X**, or a magnification close to this value.
6. With the handpanels, adjust the **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size** and/or **Magnification**, so the requirements above are fulfilled.
7. If the system has a Cryobox and the image still has cut-offs at a magnification of LM 200X or higher, then the center of the Cryobox aperture may have an offset relative to the system's optical axis. To compensate for this offset, perform these steps:
 - a. Complete the Atlas Preset procedure as if there were no cut-offs.
The purpose of this procedure is no longer to fulfill all the requirements for the Atlas Preset. Instead the goal is now to prepare an Atlas Preset that can be used as a starting point for the Atlas Optical Alignment calibration. This means that the contrast and brightness requirements still apply, but that any remaining cut-offs do not have to be removed by adjusting the Intensity, Spot Size and Magnification.
 - b. Perform the Atlas Optical Alignment
The Atlas Optics Alignment determines the offset of the Cryobox aperture relative to the system's optical axis. It then calculates the amount of beam-shift that is needed to let the beam pass through the center of the Cryobox aperture.
See chapter [Perform the Atlas Optics Alignment](#).
 - c. Return to this Atlas Preset procedure at step 6 to adjust the Intensity and/or Spot Size and/or Magnification.
It may be necessary to repeat steps 6 and 7 more than once.
8. Acquire an image with the following camera settings:
 - **Bias/Gain** correction: **Bias/Gain**
 - The same **Integration time**, **Binning** and **Readout area** as used for the live image view.

Preparation Tab

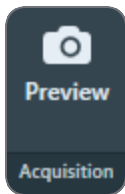
9. Verify that the acquired image meets the requirements above.

If necessary:

- a. Use the Handpanels to adjust **Magnification**, **Intensity** and/or **Spot Size**.
- b. Acquire a **new image** and verify it against the requirements above.

10. In **EPU**:

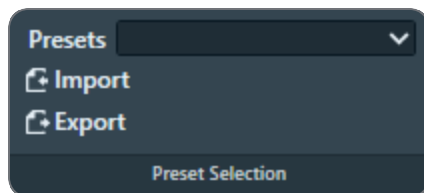
- a. Select **Optics Settings > Get** to import the current optics values from the microscope.
- b. In **Camera Settings**, select the same **Camera**, **Binning**, **Readout** and **Exp. time (s)** values as used for the previously acquired image.
- c. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.



11. Verify that the **image quality** is identical to the previously acquired image.

Import and Export the Acquisition and Optics Presets

With the Import and Export functions it is possible to archive the values for all current Presets, and to load them again at a later time. This way, setting up a new Automated Acquisition run for a regularly used specimen type can be done much easier and much faster.



Export

Writes the current parameter values for all Presets to an XML file. The Presets file contains the following values for all Presets:

- The Optics Settings.
- The Camera Settings.
Depending on the selected camera the Advanced Camera Settings and/or Exposure Settings are also included.

Import

Overwrite all current parameter values for all Presets with the values from the selected Presets file.

- There is no *Undo* function. It may be wise to export the current Presets to a file before importing a different Presets file.
- Presets files that are created with previous software versions are supported with limitations. When EPU can not import or convert a legacy Presets file it will display an error message.



Note: A Presets file contains the parameter values for all Presets. It is not possible to export or import the settings for a single Preset.

Atlas Optics Alignment Task

On systems with a Cryobox, a cut-off may become visible in low magnification images. This cut-off appears when the center of the Cryobox aperture has an offset relative to the system's optical axis.

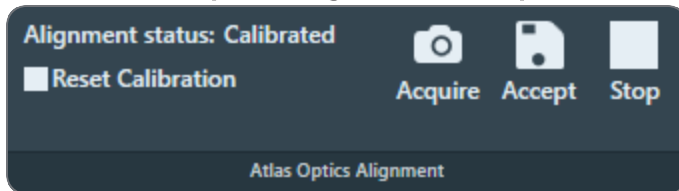
The Atlas Optics Alignment determines the offset of the Cryobox aperture relative to the system's optical axis. It then calculates the amount of Image/Beam Shift that is needed to compensate for the offset, so that the beam passes through the center of the Cryobox aperture. The Image/Beam Shift value that results from the Atlas Optical Alignment calibration is only applied when the Atlas Preset is used to acquire images. It does not affect other Presets.

After the Atlas Optics Alignments is completed, the Atlas Preset can typically use a lower magnification. This means less images are needed to cover the entire specimen, which saves time.

Perform the Atlas Optics Alignment

To perform the Atlas Optics Alignment procedure, follow the steps below:

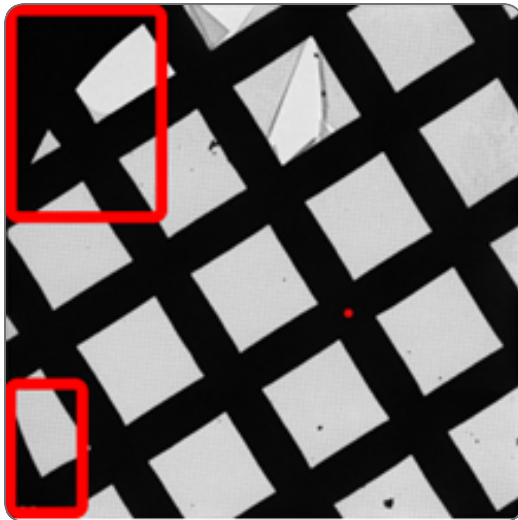
1. Select **Atlas Optics Alignment > Acquire**.



If the image does not meet the requirements for the Atlas Preset, then follow the instructions in [Define the Atlas Preset](#). The requirement that no cut-offs must be visible does not apply yet.

2. In the acquired image, check for cut-offs.

A Cryobox aperture cut-off is very similar to a C2 aperture or Objective aperture cut-off. It appears as a dark area with a round edge.



The red dot represents the position of the system's optical axis relative to the center of the Cryobox aperture.

3. If one or more cut-offs are present:
 - a. Estimate where the physical center of the Cryobox aperture is.
 - b. In the image, double-click on the estimated location.
The red dot moves to the indicated location.
 - c. Select **Acquire** again.
 - d. Check again for cut-offs. If necessary, repeat steps a, b and c.

4. When the image is free from cut-offs, select **Accept**.

i Note: The Atlas Optics Alignment calibration is based on the Optics Settings of the Atlas Preset. If the Optics Settings of the Atlas Preset are changed, then the calculated beam shift value may not be accurate anymore, and the calibration might have to be renewed.

To renew the Atlas Optical Alignment calibration:

5. Select **Reset Calibration**.

6. Perform steps 4 - 6 again.

Calibrate Image Shifts Task

Even on a well-aligned system, a centered feature may shift away from the image center when a new image is acquired at a different magnification. A good lens series alignment minimizes the amount of shift, but a small amount of shift could be present due to the following factors:

- The alignment is done on the FluScreen or on a different camera than the camera that is used for the image acquisition. Different cameras on the same system can have small offsets relative to each other.
- Readjustment of the LM rotation center can cause a shift when switching between LM and HM modes.
- The use of defocus during the Automated Acquisition run can cause a small shift due to inaccuracies in the rotation center alignment.
- During lens series alignment, the normalization of the lenses may have been handled differently than during Automated Acquisition.

For optimum performance of the Automated Acquisition run, any remaining shifts must be compensated.

The Calibrate Image Shifts task includes a guided tutorial that walks you through the calibration process step by step. This guide simplifies the process and reduces the need for extensive user experience. Additionally, it includes the option to perform Auto Eucentric during the calibration, ensuring valid results and saving you time.

The Image Shift Calibration acquires images with each Preset. In each image, EPU requests you to mark the exact location of an easily recognizable feature. EPU uses the distance between the marked locations to compensate for image center offsets between the Presets.

Preparation Tab

All shifts are relative to the Data Acquisition Preset, so reconstruction is always based on zero-shift images.

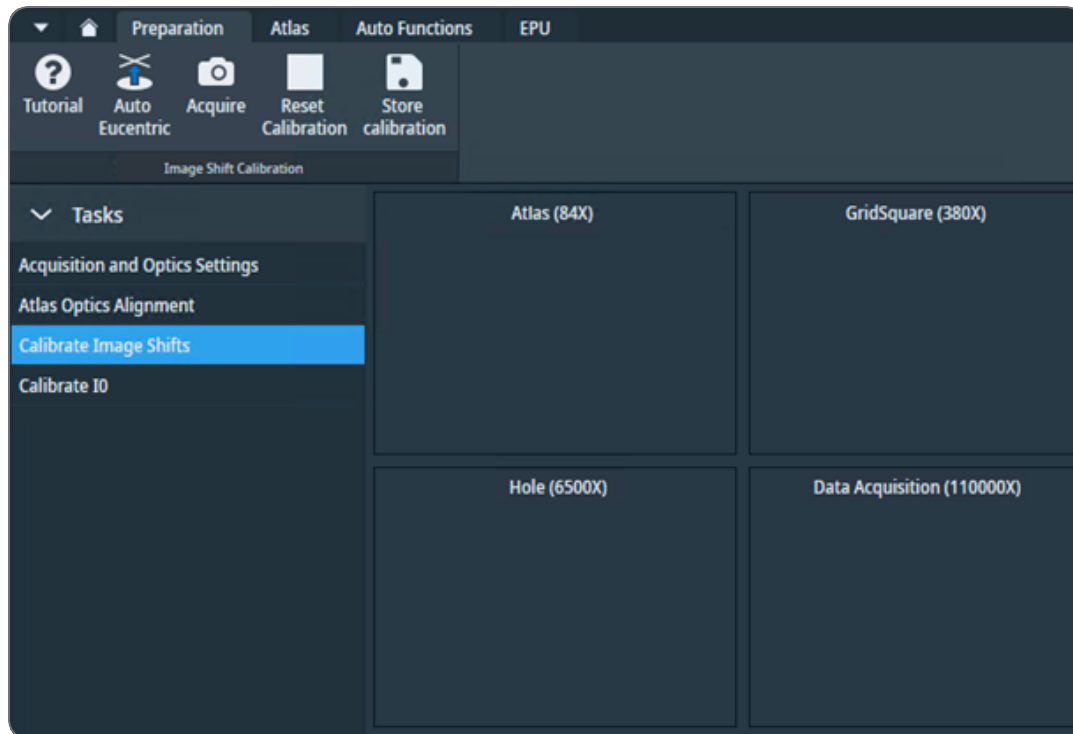
When to Reset and Renew the Image Shift Calibration

The Image Shifts Calibration needs to be renewed:

- When the Optics Settings of a Preset are updated (magnification or defocus).
- When a different camera is selected in the Camera Settings of a Preset. The magnification center may shift.
- When the Alignment file that was used to define the Presets is updated, or when a different Alignment file is loaded.
- When the FEG Register that was used to define the Presets is updated, or when a different FEG Register is loaded.
- When a feature does not stay centered after selecting a different Preset.

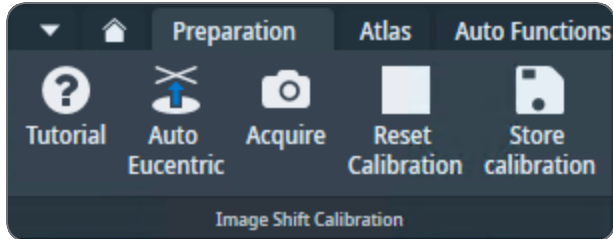
Understanding the Layout

Go to **Preparation > Calibrate Image Shifts** task.



There are four quadrants in the Task Execution panel that are meant to show the acquired images at different presets, ordered from the lowest magnification to the highest magnification: Atlas, Grid Square, Hole and Data Acquisition.

The Image Shift Calibration ribbon contains the following buttons:



- Tutorial: This opens a tutorial window with instructions on how to prepare for and perform the calibration. You can drag the tutorial window away from the view; it does not prevent you from interacting with main EPU window.
- Auto Eucentric: This performs the Auto Eucentric function.
- Acquire: This acquires an Atlas image with 1 tile.
- Reset Calibration: Reset to the state before applying the image shift calibration.
- Store Calibration: Store calibration so that it is used in subsequent acquisitions.

Prepare for Image Shift Calibration

As preparation for Image Shift Calibration, two conditions must be met:

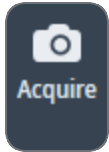
1. Auto Eucentric has been performed at least once on the loaded sample.
2. A feature is centered in the field of view that is easily recognizable at all four Preset magnifications.

Perform Auto Eucentric

Note: It is strongly recommended that Image Shift Calibration is performed at eucentric height. If you have already performed Auto Eucentric on the loaded sample, this step becomes optional.

Preparation Tab

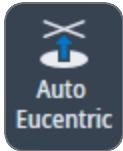
1. Make sure an image is loaded in the Task Execution panel. If no image is loaded, it means you have not acquired an Atlas yet. In that case, you can either:
 - a. Select **Acquire** in the Calibrate Image Shifts task to acquire an Atlas image with 1 tile.



- b. If you would like to acquire an Atlas with your preferred settings, go to the Atlas tab, select/create a session, then come back to *Preparation > Calibrate Image Shifts* task.
2. Make sure the stage is centered on a visible grid square. The stage should *not* be centered on either:
 - a. A grid bar.
 - b. An overexposed grid square, e.g., where the ice film or the carbon support film is torn.
 - c. A blocked grid square, e.g., by a thick ice crystal.

Once a suitable grid square is found, right-click on it and select **Move Stage Here**.

3. Select **Auto Eucentric**.



If the button is greyed out (disabled), it means you have not acquired an Atlas yet. Go back to step 1.

Center a Recognizable Feature

1. Identify a **unique and easily recognizable feature**, for example a distinctive edge or corner of a small asymmetric crack in the foil. If necessary, zoom in to make it easier to identify a suitable feature.
 - a. From the upper left quadrant, the **Atlas view**, right-click on the **easily recognizable feature** and select **Move stage here and acquire**.

- In the upper right quadrant, the **Grid Square view**, find the hole that contains the recognizable feature, right-click on it and select **Move Stage Here and Acquire**.

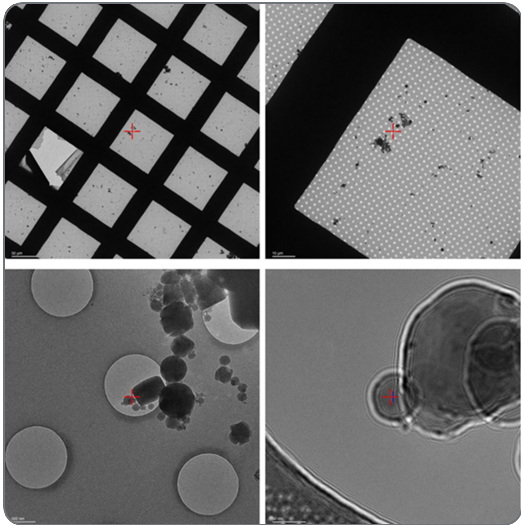
Note: On some systems (Glacios, Tundra) the low magnification images, i.e., the Atlas view and the Grid Square view, may be rotated typically by 180°.

- In the lower left quadrant, the **Hole view**, find the hole that contains the recognizable feature, right-click close to the recognizable feature and select **Move Stage Here and Acquire**.
- In the lower right quadrant, the **Data Acquisition view**, find the recognizable feature, accurately right-click on it, and select **Move Stage Here and Acquire**.
- Verify that in all four quadrants, the same recognizable feature is visible near the image center.

Perform the Image Shift Calibration

- Make sure that the preparations for the Image Shift Calibration are completed.
For instructions, see: [Prepare for Image Shift Calibration](#).
- (Optional) Reset Calibration: If the feature and stage position are completely misaligned in different images and it's not possible to locate the feature in the Hole view, select **Reset** and return to the preparation step.
- Make sure the feature is centered in the Hole view and the Data Acquisition view.
 - If the feature is not properly centered, repeat the use of **Move Stage Here and Acquire** in the Hole view and/or the Data Acquisition view.
On a well-aligned and calibrated system this should solve the offset.
Note that the CompuStage is not infinitely accurate. A very small offset may still exist at the highest magnification. This is acceptable.
- Accurately center the recognizable feature in each Preset.
 - In each of the four quadrants (Atlas, Grid Square, Hole, and Data Acquisition), double-click on the **recognizable feature** to place a blue crosshair.
 - The blue crosshair can be re-placed as often as necessary.
 - Optionally zoom in for better accuracy.

5. After the feature is properly centered, the shifts between the four Presets can be determined:
 - a. Select **Image Shift Calibration > Store Calibration** to store your calibration. Once stored, your calibration is complete.
 - b. The Status panel reports the successful completion of the calibration.
6. (Optional) You may verify the calibration by reacquiring images. If successful, the feature should be visible and centered across all magnification levels. A good calibration should look like this.



This image is from Glacios, 200kV, 1.2/.3 QF.

Saving and reusing the calibration data

EPU saves the results of your image shift calibrations, allowing you to reuse them in new sessions:

- When creating a session from advised preferences, if there are saved calibrations associated with these preferences, they will be automatically applied.
- When creating a session from a favorite preference and no calibration data is available, the calibration will start from the default position.

After a successful calibration, the new calibration data is saved and can be reused in future sessions. This is especially beneficial when using favorite preferences, since the saved calibration data is automatically updated.

Calibrate I₀ Task

A Cryo-EM specimen consists of a solution that contains the particles of interest, which is flash-frozen on a carbon foil. It forms a layer of vitreous ice that spans across the holes on the carbon foil. The thickness and quality of the ice layer is a critical parameter for efficient, high quality data acquisition:

- Ice that is too transparent is typically too thin and does not contain many particles.
- Ice that is not transparent enough is typically too thick, or is not vitreous. Images from such ice layers typically have insufficient contrast.

When the beam passes through ice, the illumination intensity decreases. The ratio between the pre-specimen illumination intensity (*source intensity*) and the post-specimen illumination intensity (*recorded intensity*) is an indicator for the thickness and quality of the ice layer.

In an acquired image, the recorded intensity (*counts*) for each pixel is displayed as a gray scale value. The Ice Quality Filter uses the recorded intensity to assess the thickness and quality of the ice layer. This filter compares the average gray scale value of the candidate target areas with an upper and a lower boundary value, and selects only the target areas that are inside the suitable range.

The source intensity can fluctuate a little over time, which transfers directly to the average gray scale values. As a consequence, the *absolute* gray scale value is not a durable selection criterion for the Ice Quality Filter. The I₀ Calibration determines a reference value (I₀) based on the counts in an image that is acquired while the beam passes through an area of the specimen where no carbon foil and no ice are present. Because there is no material between the source and the camera sensor, the I₀ reference value represents the source intensity. If an I₀ reference value is available, then the upper and lower boundaries of the Ice Quality Filter are defined relative to that I₀ reference value. When the I₀ reference value changes, the Ice Quality Filter proportionally adjusts the boundaries for target area selection.

To remain reliable, the I₀ reference value must be measured regularly. The I₀ reference value can be refreshed manually at any time during the preparation of an Automated Acquisition run. EPU automatically refreshes the I₀ reference value during an Automated Acquisition run at regular intervals. If the most recent I₀ measurement is older than 2 hours, then EPU refreshes the I₀ reference value automatically before target area selection in a new Grid Square. The I₀ reference images are saved in the EPU session directory.

The I₀ Calibration is an optional task. If no I₀ reference value is available, then the Ice Quality Filter boundaries use fixed gray scale values. This is fine, as long as the source intensity is kept stable for the duration of the experiment.

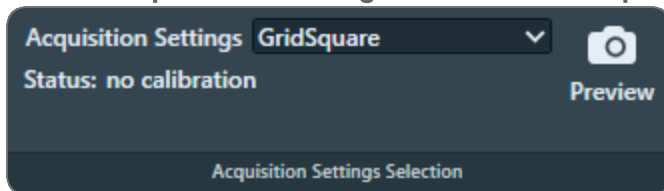
If the specimen is unloaded and reloaded after the Calibrate I_0 task is performed, then the I_0 reference value measurements during the Automated Acquisition run may be less reliable.

Perform the I_0 Calibration for the Grid Square Preset

In an Atlas, areas that are suitable for the I_0 measurement can be found quite easy. It is also easier to move the specimen to a suitable area.

To prepare and perform the I_0 Calibration, follow the procedure below:

1. If an Atlas is available for the currently loaded specimen, then:
 - a. Select **EPU > Square Selection**.
 - b. Right-click on a **Grid Square** with a large gap and select **Move stage to grid square**.
2. Select **Preparation > Calibrate I_0** .
3. Select **Acquisition Settings Selection > Acquisition Settings: Grid Square**.



4. Select **Preview** to acquire an image at the current location.
5. Center the region that will be used for reference intensity (I_0) measurement:
 - a. In the image, right-click in the center of a suitable area and select **Move stage here**.
 - b. Select **Preview** again to acquire a new image.

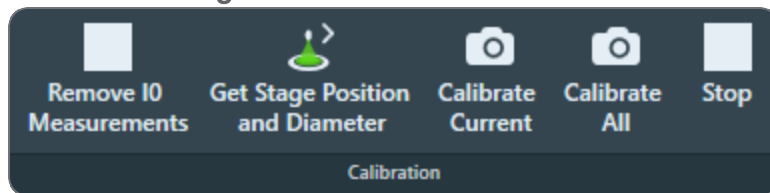
Note: Do not center the I_0 region by moving the specimen with the joystick.

The **Move stage here** function uses a backlash correction routine to ensure stage position reproducibility. During the Automated Acquisition run the same backlash correction routine is used to revisit the selected location for I_0 calibration updates.

6. Set the diameter of the I_0 region:
 - a. Double-click on the **center of the I0 region**.
A circle appears.
 - b. Increase the **diameter** of the circle, but make sure it stays at least 250 nm away from the surrounding carbon foil.

The I_0 measurement determines the average signal inside the circular boundary. A larger diameter increases the reliability of the measurement.

7. Select **Get Stage Position and Diameter**.



8. Either:
 - Select **Calibrate Current** to measure I_0 for the Grid Square Preset.
 - Select **Calibrate All** to measure I_0 for the Grid Square and the Hole/Eucentric Height Presets.

EPU acquires new images and measures the I_0 values.

- The results are stored and are displayed in the Status side panel.
- The Status changes to "calibrated" with a date time stamp.

To renew the I_0 calibration it is not necessary to select *Remove I0 Measurements* before the calibration is started.

Perform the I_0 Calibration for the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset

The procedure to calibrate I_0 for the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset is the same as for the Grid Square Preset. For the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset, the same stage position and area diameter are used for calibration and during the Automated Acquisition run.

Currently, I_0 for the Hole/Eucentric Height Preset is only measured for reference. In the future it may be used for Target Area analysis.

Activate Phase Plate Task

The use of a Phase Plate substantially enhances the low-to-medium frequencies when imaging weak phase objects. This frequency enhancement results in a higher image contrast. A higher contrast makes identifying and aligning features of interest easier and more reliable.

With an activated Phase Plate, image contrast is maintained under optical focus, so it should be possible to acquire data that does not need any Contrast Transfer Function (CTF) correction.

Resolution is severely limited by focus accuracy. To avoid specimen damage the focus cannot be adjusted on the region of interest. Therefore, the preferred strategy is to acquire data with a certain amount of defocus and to apply a CTF correction.

For example, see: ["Using the Volta phase plate with defocus for cryo-EM single particle analysis"](#) (Danev et al, eLife 2017;6:e23006).

The duration of an Automated Acquisition run generally exceeds the lifespan of a Phase Plate area. During an Automated Acquisition run procedure, EPU selects and activates a new Phase Plate at regular intervals. A new Phase Plate must be activated to make sure that:

- The next data acquisition starts with a decent phase shift, so that the acquired image has sufficient contrast for fast, reliable and accurate feature identification.
- The change in phase shift during the first acquisition stays within limits. At the beginning of the Phase Plate development, phase shift changes rapidly. Activating the new Phase Plate before acquiring an image stabilizes the phase shift.

To successfully activate new Phase Plates during an Automated Acquisition run, the following parameters must be specified:

Activation time

For a successful EPU experiment, the Phase Plate should establish a phase shift range of $0.5\pi \pm 0.3\pi$. To achieve a phase shift of 0.5π , the Phase Plate typically needs to be irradiated with an electron dose of 50 nC - 200 nC. The required activation time can be calculated from the electron dose number:

$$t = \text{dose} / (\text{beam current})$$

For example: with a 1 nA beam current, an activation time of 120 seconds is needed to reach 120nC.

Accelerate and Accelerate factor

- The **Accelerate** function temporarily selects the largest C2 aperture to increase the beam current. After the phase plate activation is completed, the initial C2 aperture is selected again.
- The **Accelerate factor** is the area ratio between the initial C2 aperture and the largest C2 aperture.

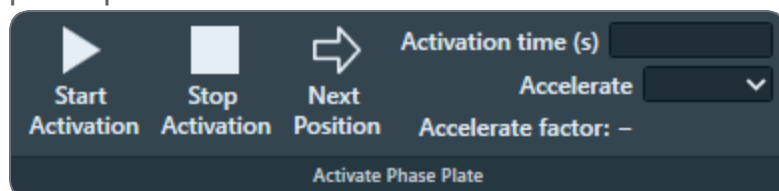
The Accelerate function *only* changes the selected C2 aperture. The Optics settings are not affected.

Determine the Phase Plate Activation Time

i **Note:** The Phase Plate activation time is best determined with the *Sherpa > AutoCTF function*.

For regular users it is possible to check the activation time in the **Preparations** tab > **Activate Phase Plate** task. To do so, follow these steps:

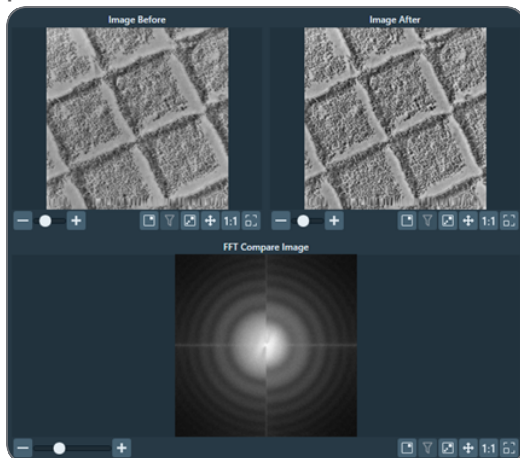
1. Correct for astigmatism if necessary.
For instructions, see: [Run the Autostigmatate auto-function](#).
2. In the **TEM User Interface > Apertures** control panel, select an **Objective** mechanism > **Phase Plate** position.
3. Retract the **FluScreen**.
The beam will be blanked now.
4. Select the **Preparation** tab > **Activate Phase Plate** task.
5. Select **Next Position** to move the Objective aperture mechanism to a fresh area on the phase plate.



6. Wait for the drift of the aperture mechanism to settle.
For a small move, this takes about 30 seconds.

Note: After a large move with the aperture mechanism, for example a move to a different Phase Plate, it may take up to 5 minutes for drift to settle.

7. Specify the **Activation time (s)** value.
8. (Optional) Select **Accelerate: Yes**.
9. Select **Start Activation**.
An image is acquired and displayed in the top left section of the Task Execution panel.
10. Wait for the Activation time to expire.
EPU acquires a new image and displays it in the top right section of the Task Execution panel.
The FFT of both images are displayed side-by-side in the bottom section of the Task Execution panel, so they are easy to compare. If the Thon rings are shifted inward by half a period, then Phase Plate activation is completed successfully.



Bottom left half: FFT of an image at the beginning of the activation.

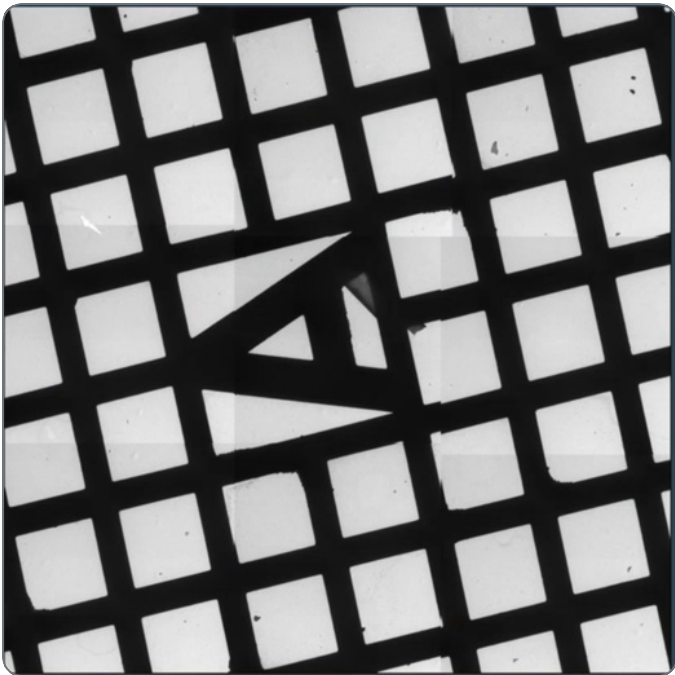
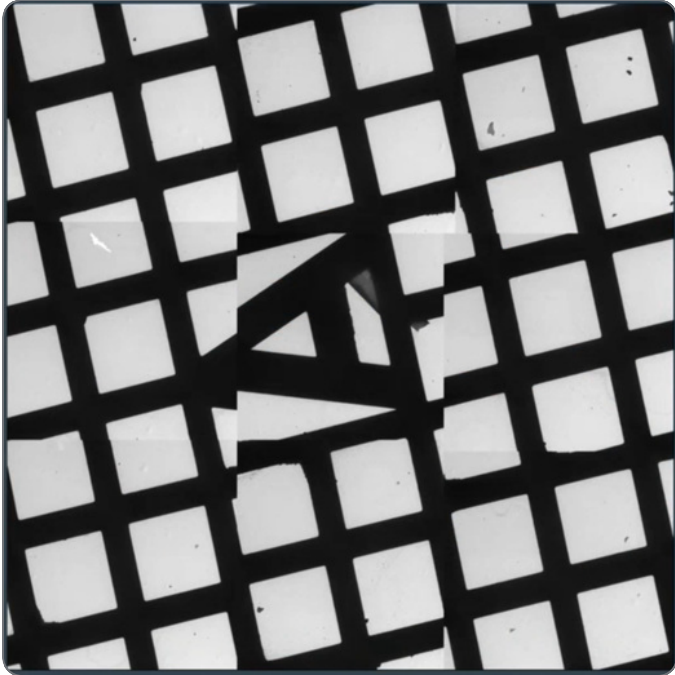
Bottom right half: FFT of an image at end of the activation.

Atlas Targeting Correction in Atlas tab

Misaligned tiles in the acquired Atlas can result from various factors, impacting EPU's ability to target desired specimen areas and features accurately.

The Targeting Correction task mitigates these targeting errors through software processing for systems with inadequate calibration. However, software-based error correction has its limitations.

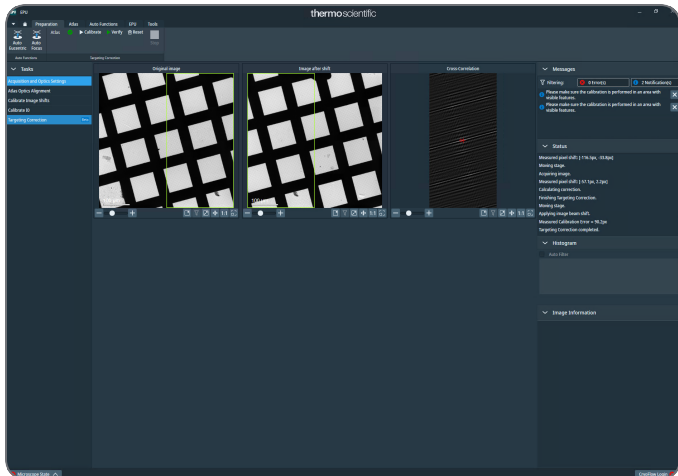
Review the images below to compare an Atlas before and after applying the Targeting Correction calibration:



Preparation Tab

Targeting correction operates at a lower magnification, at the Atlas level, where Stage shift is used to acquire adjacent tiles. The calibration procedure follows these steps:

1. Acquire images before and after a shift in a specified direction.
2. Limit the shift distance to within the already observed area.
3. Compare the before-shift and after-shift images in Fourier space.
4. Display the comparison results in the Cross-Correlation image display.



The Cross-Correlation image displays a single red-circled dot. If no calibration is required, the dot aligns precisely with the center, indicated by the crosshair. If a targeting error is detected, the red-circled dot shifts from the center, with the distance representing the error value. The Status window provides a specific measurement of the error during the calibration procedure.

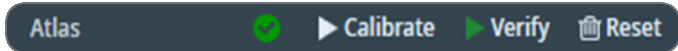
In summary, the Targeting Correction task enables precise calibration of Stage movements to improve accuracy when acquiring features of interest during automated Data Acquisition. It also enhances the alignment between Atlas tiles. Targeting Correction calibration is available for the Atlas preset.

Calibrate the Targeting Correction

To calibrate the Target Correction factor, follow these steps:

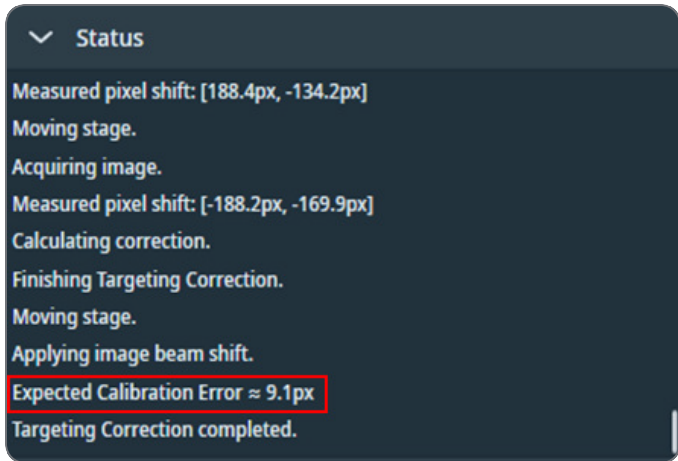
1. Move the specimen to an area in the center of a grid square, preferably where identifiable features are clearly visible.
2. Ensure the specimen is at eucentric height and properly focused.

In **Calibration > Targeting Correction**, select **Calibrate** in the first row to calibrate the Targeting Correction factor for the Atlas preset.



If the Objective Aperture Mechanism is enabled and inserted, EPU automatically retracts the aperture before starting the acquisition. Once the acquisition is complete, EPU reinserts the aperture.

At the end of the calibration, the Status area displays the estimated margin of error, referred to as the Expected Calibration Error.



To confirm the calibration's success, select **Verify** in the first row. This action will repeat the measurement using the updated Targeting Correction factor.

Once the verification is complete, the Status area will display the measured calibration error. A small measured calibration error indicates that the calibration was successful.

When to re-calibrate the Targeting Correction

Once a Targeting Correction calibration is performed for a specific set of parameters, it is saved and reused when applicable. If the parameters in the Atlas preset are changed, the calibration remains stored. Reverting the parameter values restores the calibration associated with those values.

Re-calibration is recommended in the following cases:

- When the alignment of the tiles in the Atlas image becomes worse.
- When the Targeting Correction was performed for the current magnification and camera settings, but multiple different sets of values were used after the initial calibration.
- If the magnification and camera settings are changed, the calibration for that preset becomes invalid. In such cases, it is recommended to re-calibrate for the new settings.

Auto Functions Tab

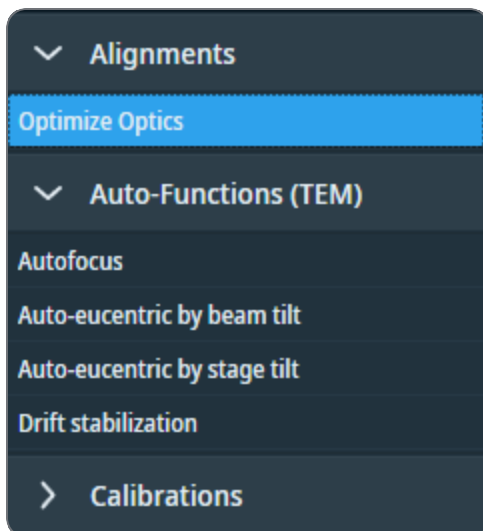
The Auto Functions tab provides various (semi-) automated tasks. These tasks are organized in the following categories:

- *Alignments*: execute an automated alignment.
Alignments tasks are only available on Tundra and Glacios systems.
- *Auto-Functions (TEM)*: execute the Auto Functions as stand-alone tasks, outside the context of setting up an Automated Acquisition run.
For descriptions and instructions, see: [Auto-Functions \(TEM\) tasks](#).
- *Calibrations*: calibrate the Auto Functions.
For descriptions and instructions, see: [Calibration tasks](#).

The Auto Functions use the Acquisition and Optics Presets. Except for the *Auto-eucentric by stage tilt* task, the Defocus value that is specified in the selected Preset is not applied during calibration or stand-alone execution of the Auto Function.

Alignments Tasks

The Alignments category contains only the Optimize Optics task.



Optimize Optics Sequence

This sequence performs fine tuning of the microscope to prepare it for the Data acquisition.

It is meant to run on a sample and aligns appropriate alignments in HM nP mode. Execution is done on the optical settings that corresponds to the data acquisition preset.

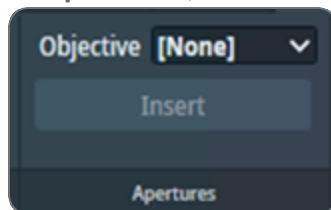
The optimizations include among others: automated coma correction, automated stigmatism, objective aperture centering, and an adjustment of the intensity to ensure a parallel beam.

Optimize Optics sequence is available for Tundra and Glacios systems only. The sequence can be used to optimize optics on grids with carbon support only.

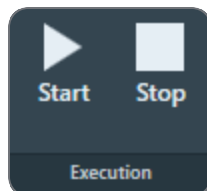
Run the Optimize Optics Task

The Optimize Optics task optimizes the beam, based on the Optics Settings of the Data Acquisition preset and the currently loaded specimen. The optimizations include among others: automated coma correction, automated stigmatism, and an adjustment of the Intensity to ensure a parallel beam.

1. Select **Auto Functions > Alignments > Optimize Optics**.
2. In **Apertures**, Select the appropriate **Objective** aperture.

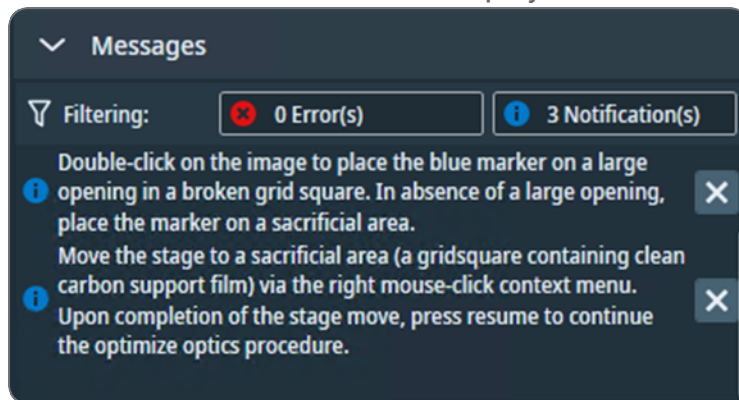


3. Select **Execution > Start**.



If the selected Objective aperture is not inserted yet, then the Optimize Optics procedure will automatically insert the selected aperture.

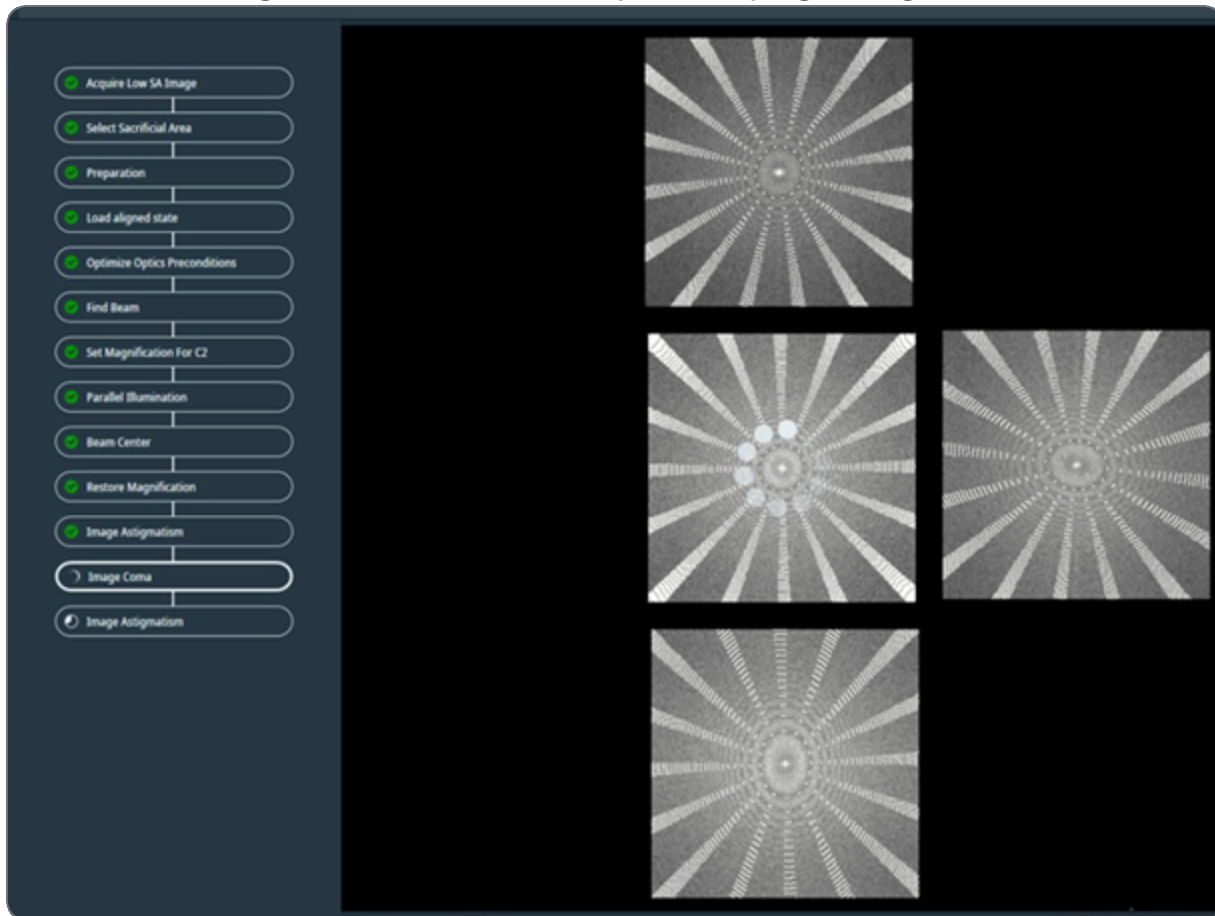
4. Follow the instructions that are displayed.



The Optimize Optics procedure will request to navigate to bare carbon foil for Tundra systems or to an area of vacuum and bare carbon foil for Glacios systems.

5. Each step in the sequence is denoted with a symbol. The symbols can be interpreted as follows:
- Default state
 - Manual interaction is needed
 - Waiting to be executed
 - Failed step
 - Unexecuted step after a failure
 - Step succeeded

- When a step is in progress, it is accompanied by a corresponding image on the right along with status messages to denote how the sequence is progressing.



- After the optimizations are completed, the Optimize Optics task updates the Optics Settings in the Data Acquisition presets. If a step fails, the changes made to optics are reverted to the original state.

Auto-Functions (TEM) Tasks

The functions in the **Auto-Functions (TEM)** group of tasks can be executed outside of the workflow context. To set up a properly performing Automated Acquisition run, it is *not absolutely necessary* to run the Auto-Functions (TEM) tasks.

Run the Autofocus Auto-Function

The Autofocus function works in two steps.

First, the Autofocus function establishes focus. The Autofocus algorithm iterates to an *initial* defocus value, typically $-5\ \mu\text{m}$. By aiming for a small defocus:

- The images that are used to measure and adjust the current defocus have good contrast.
- The Cross-Correlation image shows a significant peak that is not at zero-shift.

The initial defocus value is specified in **Auto Functions** tab > **Auto-Functions (TEM): Autofocus** task > **Auto Function Settings** section > **Iterate to**

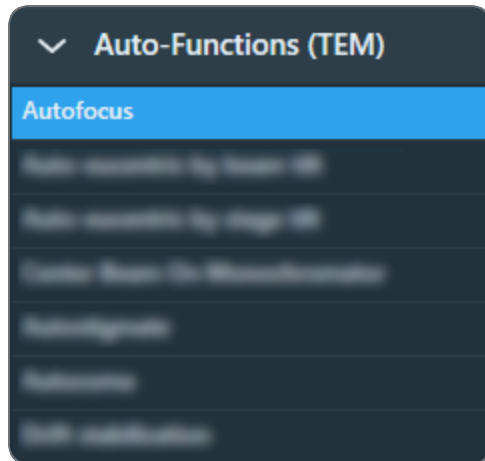
In a stand-alone execution, the Autofocus function can also correct for astigmatism and/or for drift. During an Automated Acquisition run these corrections are skipped.

After the algorithm established the initial defocus, the Autofocus function applies the *final defocus* value. Which final defocus value is used depends on where in the EPU workflow the Autofocus function is executed:

- In the **Auto Functions** tab > **Auto-Functions (TEM): Autofocus** task, EPU uses the **Auto Function Settings > Desired Defocus** value.
- To acquire an image from an Acquisition Area during the Automated Acquisition run, EPU uses the defocus value from the Defocus list. The Defocus list is specified in the *EPU > Area Selection* task for Lacey Carbon specimens, or in the *EPU > Template Definition* task for Quantifoil specimens.
- At any other time, EPU uses the defocus value from the active Preset.

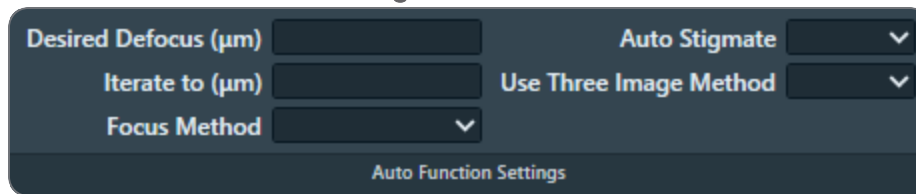
To run the Autofocus function, follow the procedure below:

1. Select Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Autofocus.



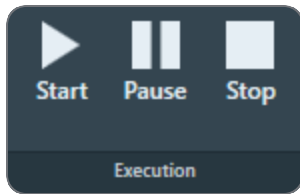
2. EPU selects the *Focus/Autofocus Preset* automatically. Otherwise, select the **Preset Selection > Preset** that should be used for the stand-alone execution of the Autofocus function.

3. In the **Auto Function Settings** section:



- a. Specify the final defocus value in **Desired Defocus**.
- b. Specify the initial defocus value in **Iterate to**.
- c. Select the **Focus Method** that will be used to change from the initial *Iterate to* value to the final *Desired Defocus* value.
- d. (Optional) Select **Auto Stigmatize: Yes** to correct for astigmatism during the Autofocus execution.
Including astigmatism during Autofocus works well on a stable area of the specimen such as a piece of carbon film.
The Auto Stigmatize action is *not* executed during an Automated Acquisition run. On CryoEM specimens, the ice quality changes between consecutive exposures, which may cause stigmatism to fail or to give inaccurate results.
- e. (Optional) Select **Use Three Image Method: Yes** to include drift correction. EPU will acquire an extra image to measure drift.

4. Select **Execution** section > **Start**.



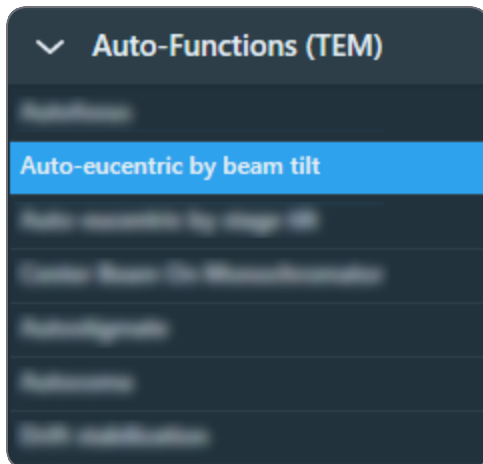
Run the Auto-Eucentric by Beam Tilt Auto-Function

The Auto-eucentric by beam tilt function is used to set the specimen to eucentric height. Before using this function, the Eucentric correction calibration must be completed. See [The Eucentric Correction Calibration task](#) for background information and for instructions how to perform the Eucentric correction calibration.

This method is more suited for higher magnifications. At low magnifications the method can be used also, but the accuracy can be less than optimal.

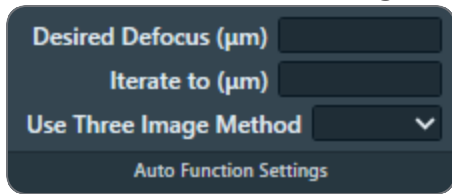
To run the Auto-eucentric by beam tilt Auto Function, follow the procedure below:

1. Select **Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Auto-eucentric by beam tilt**.



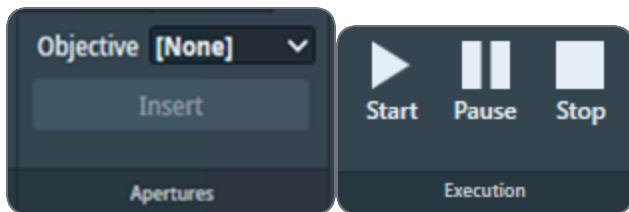
2. EPU selects the relevant preset automatically, e.g. the *Eucentric Height* preset. Otherwise, select the **Preset Selection > Presets** with which the Auto Function will be executed.

3. In the Auto Function Settings section:



For a description of the parameters, see [Run the Autofocus auto-function](#).

- a. Specify the Desired Defocus
 - b. Specify the Iterate to defocus value
 - c. (Optional) Select **Use Three Image Method: Yes** to include drift correction. EPU will acquire an extra image to measure drift.
4. Select **Execution > Start** .



Run the Auto-Eucentric by Stage Tilt Auto-Function

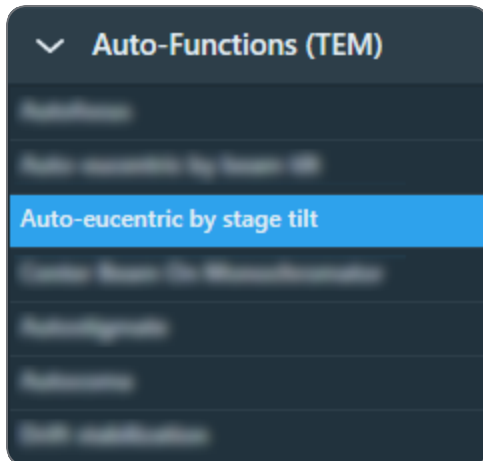
The *Auto-eucentric by stage tilt* function is used to set the specimen to eucentric height. This method is more suited for lower and mid range magnifications.

The *Auto-eucentric by stage tilt* auto-function is not available on Tundra systems.

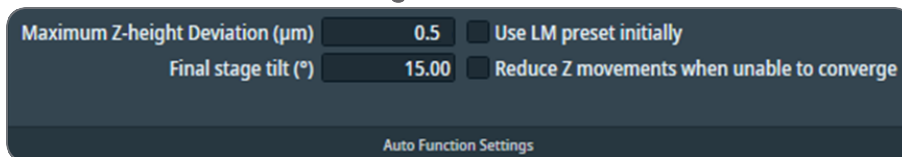
The *Auto-eucentric by stage tilt* auto-function is not used during Automated Acquisition.

To run the *Auto-eucentric by stage tilt* auto-function, follow the procedure below:

1. Select Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Auto-eucentric by stage tilt .

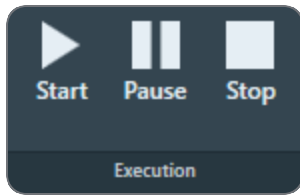


2. Select the **Preset Selection > Presets** that will be used to execute the auto-function. The Auto Functions can be executed with any Preset.
3. In the **Auto Function Settings** ribbon:



- a. Specify the **Maximum Z Deviation**.
The default value, 0.5 μm, is suitable for the majority of all experiments and specimens.
- b. Specify the **Final stage tilt** .
This is the maximum tilt angle at which the CompuStage Alpha tilt axis wobbles. The default value is 15 degrees. Larger and smaller values can be entered, depending on the start conditions.
- c. (optional) Tick **Use LM preset initially**. This uses the LM preset for the initial measurement whereas the selected preset is used in the final phase. This is recommended when far from the Eucentric height.
- d. (optional) Tick **Reduce Z movements when unable to converge**. When the eucentric height does not converge, select this option to reduce the Z compensation movement by 25%.

4. Select **Execution > Start**.

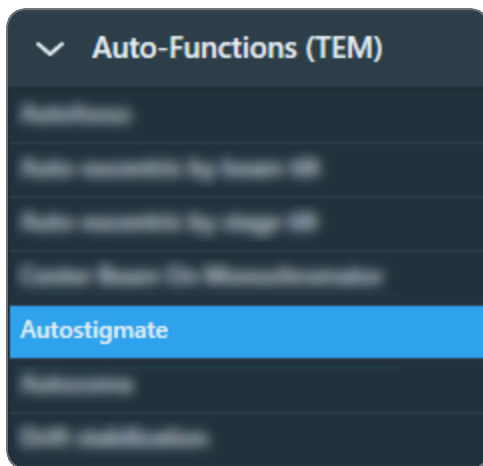


Run the Autostigmatize Auto-Function

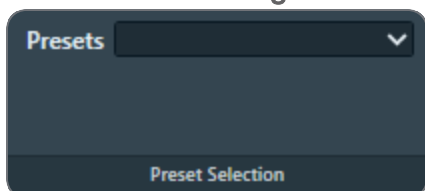
The Autostigmatize function uses Thon ring-based aberration corrections. This method corrects astigmatism with higher accuracy than the Auto Stigmatize option in the Autofocus function.

To run the **Autostigmatize** Auto Function, follow the procedure below:

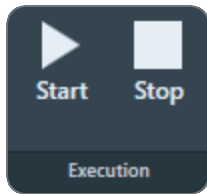
1. Verify that the *Autofocus* calibration is completed.
If not, see [The Autofocus Calibration task](#) for instructions.
2. Move the specimen to an area of continuous amorphous carbon foil that is *not* close to a grid bar.
3. Select **Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Autostigmatize**.



4. EPU selects the *Thon Ring* preset automatically. Otherwise, select **Preset Selection > Presets: Thon Ring**.



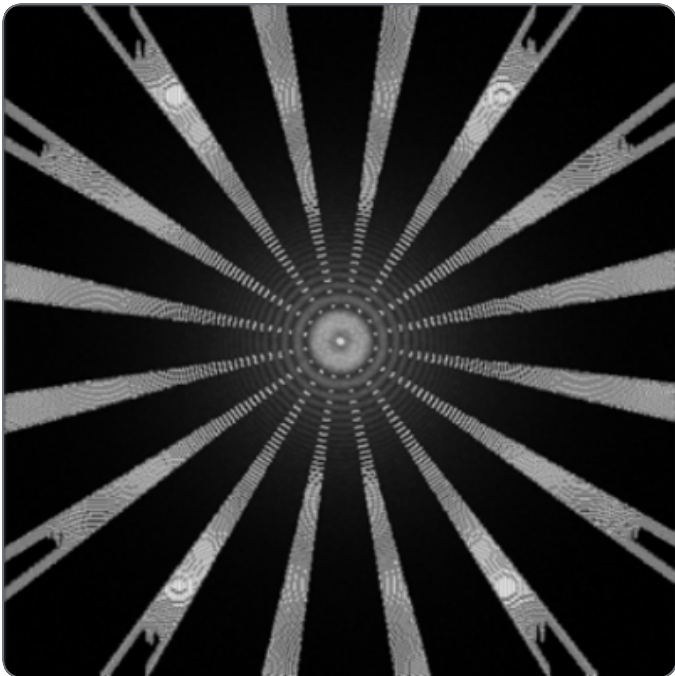
5. Select **Execution >Start**.



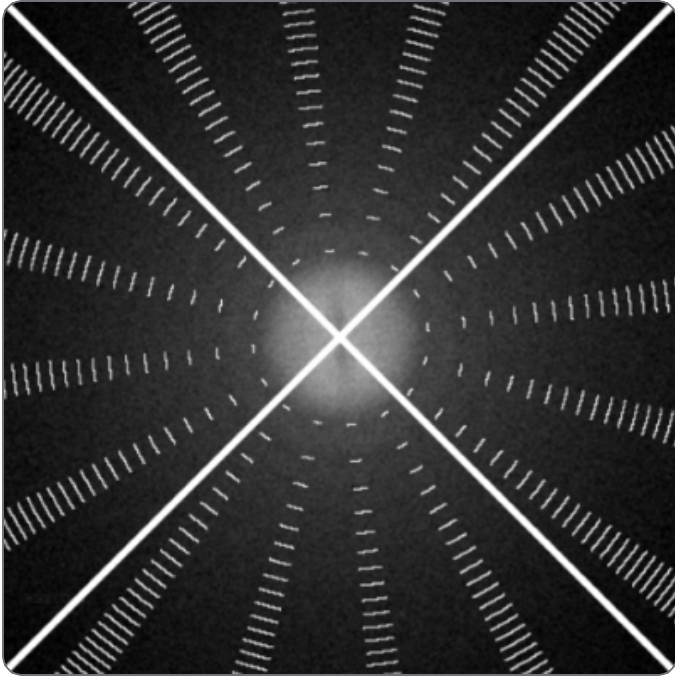
EPU acquires an image and then attempts to fit Thon Rings.

6. Wait for the Autostigmatism function to complete.
The Autostigmatism function does not have a Pause option.

The Autostigmatism function is successful when Thon Rings can be properly fitted. If fitting fails, then a white cross is drawn across the Thon Rings image.



Stigmatism is successful



Stigmatism has failed.

Run the Autocoma Auto-Function

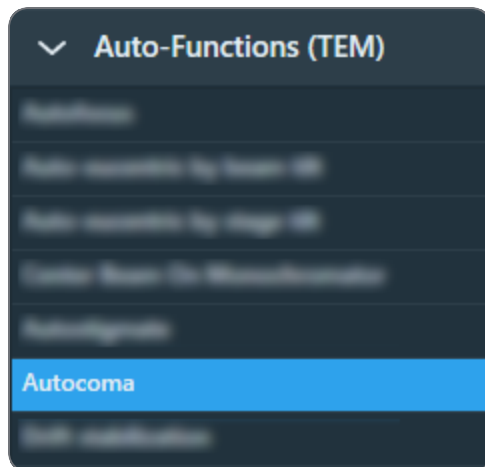
Coma-free alignment is important since coma decreases the achievable reconstruction resolution. If coma is not corrected, a beam shift or beam tilt will result in different objective astigmatism values across an image.

i **Note:** For the best result, run the Autostigmatate function before *and* after running the Autocoma function.

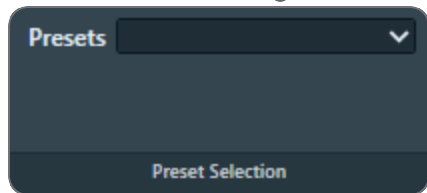
To run the **Autocoma** Auto Function, follow the procedure below:

1. Run the **Autostigmatate** Auto Function as described in chapter [Run the Autostigmatate auto-function](#).
2. Move the specimen to an area of continuous amorphous carbon foil that is *not* close to a grid bar.
3. Verify that the **Objective aperture** is accurately centered.
If necessary, manually center the **Objective aperture**.

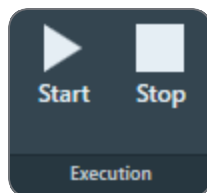
- Select Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Autocoma.



- EPU selects the *Thon Ring* preset automatically. Otherwise, select **Preset Selection > Presets: Thon Ring**.



- Select **Execution > Start**.



EPU acquires an image and then attempts to fit Thon Rings.

- Wait for the Autocoma function to complete.
The Autocoma function does not have a Pause option.
- Verify that the **Objective aperture** is still accurately centered.
During execution of the Autocoma, the Objective aperture may be automatically retracted and inserted again.
If necessary, manually center the **Objective aperture**.
- Run the **Autostigmatate** Auto Function again, as described in chapter [Run the Autostigmatate auto-function](#).

Run the Drift Stabilization Auto-Function

After a stage move, a certain amount of mechanical and thermal drift occurs.

Auto Functions Tab

- Friction in the stage mechanics needs to settle and relax.
- A small amount of heat is generated by the motors, which needs to dissipate and disappear.

To acquire images with the highest possible quality, data acquisition must be postponed until drift has decreased to an acceptable level. The Drift stabilization task provides a good estimation for the *Delay after Stage Shift* value that EPU uses during the Automated Acquisition run.

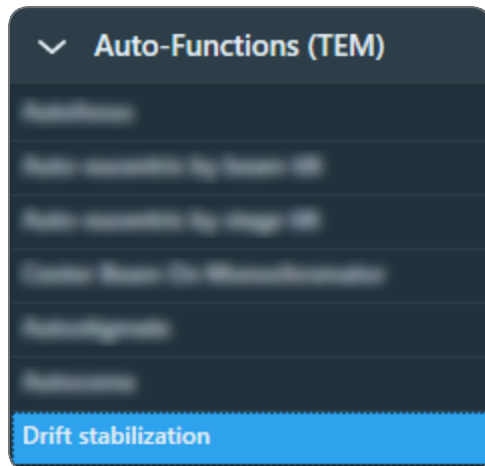
- Quantifoil: *Delay after Stage Shift* is typically used to postpone the next action after a long move, for example to a new Grid Square.
- Lacey Carbon: *Stage Shift Delay* is typically used to postpone high quality data acquisition after the specimen is moved the next Acquisition Area.

The Drift Measurement function acquires a series of images, and then measures the image shift between consecutive images to calculate the drift speed.

- If the drift speed decreases below a specified threshold value before it times out, then the Drift stabilization function reports OK.
- If the drift speed times out before it reaches the specified threshold value, then the Drift stabilization function reports a failure.

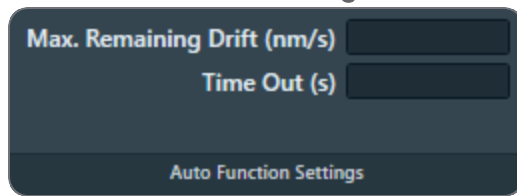
To run the Drift stabilization Auto Function, follow the procedure below:

1. Select **Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Drift stabilization**.



2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Drift Measurement**.

3. In Auto Function Settings:



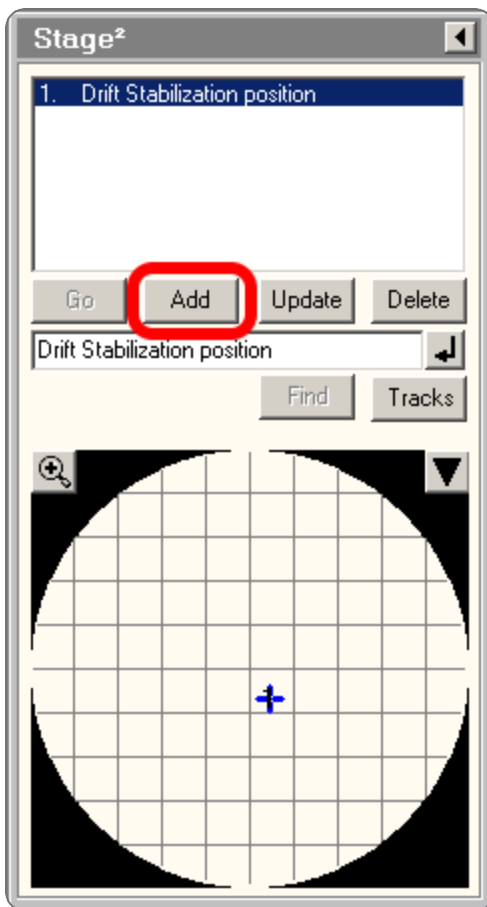
Max. Remaining Drift (nm/s)

Time Out (s)

Auto Function Settings

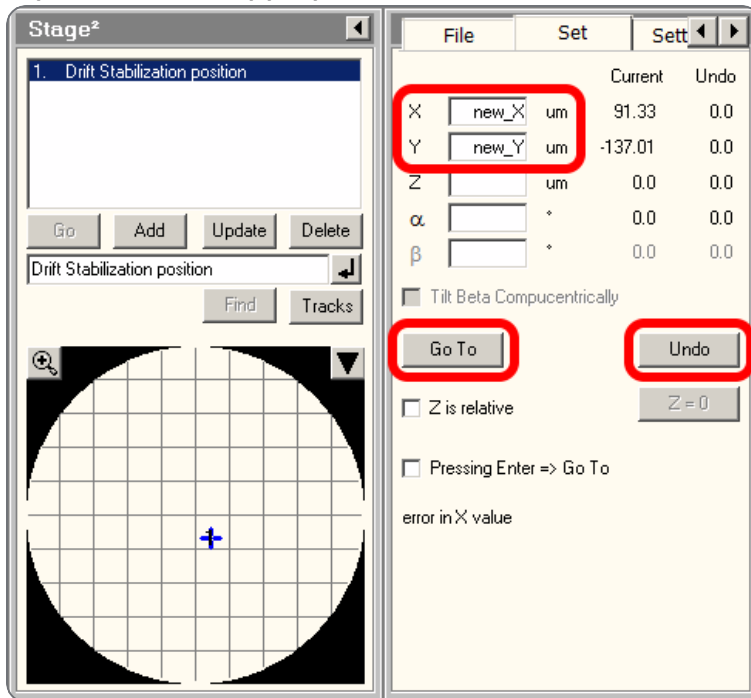
- a. Specify **Max. Remaining Drift (nm/s)**.
This is the threshold value at which the Drift stabilization function reports a successful result.
- b. Specify **Time Out (s)**.
This is the time after which the Drift stabilization function reports a failure.
During the Automated Acquisition run, the Time Out is fixed at 600 seconds.

4. Prepare the CompuStage for a move at a similar speed and across a similar distance as during the Automated Acquisition run:
 - a. With the **Handpanel > Magnification** knob, set the magnification to the same value as the Grid Square Preset.
The maximum speed of the CompuStage depends on the current magnification. The magnification that is specified in the Tracking Preset will be not set to the microscope until the Drift stabilization Auto Function is started.
 - b. Move the specimen to an area of continuous amorphous carbon foil that is not close to a grid bar.
 - c. Select **Add**.



(Optional) enter a name to identify the stage position.

- d. In the **TEM User Interface** > **Stage2** control panel > **Set** tab, specify an **X** position and a **Y** position at an appropriate distance from the current position.

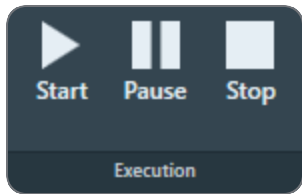


- To mimic a large move, add 160 μm to both X and Y.
Specimens with a Grid Square width of 80 μm are commonly used. Adding two Grid Square lengths assures there is a decent margin in the measured stabilization time.
- To mimic a short move, add 10 μm to both X and Y.
On Lacey Carbon, an Acquisition Area spacing of 5 μm is fairly common, but this depends on the beam diameter in the Data Acquisition Preset.

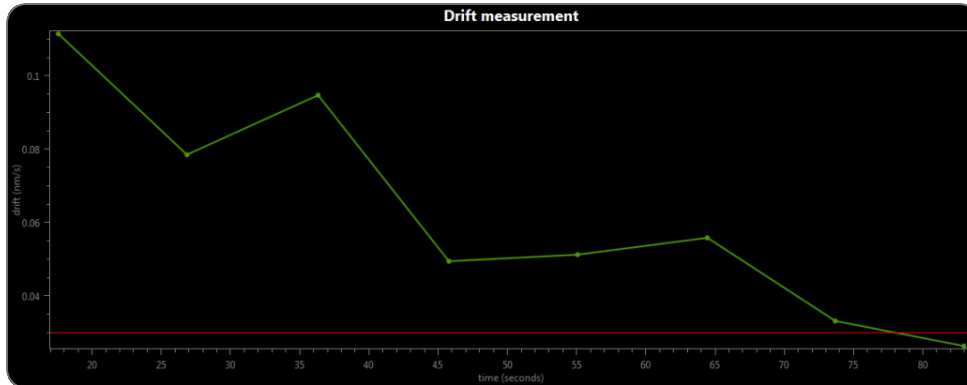
- e. Select **Go To** and wait for the CompuStage to complete the move.

5. Select **Stage2** control panel > **Undo** to move back to the previous position.

6. Wait for the move to complete, then immediately select **Execution > Start**.



The Drift stabilization Auto Function will run until either the Time Out is exceeded or the specified Max. Remaining Drift is reached. The drift measurement results are plotted in a graph. The Max. Remaining Drift is indicated by the red line.



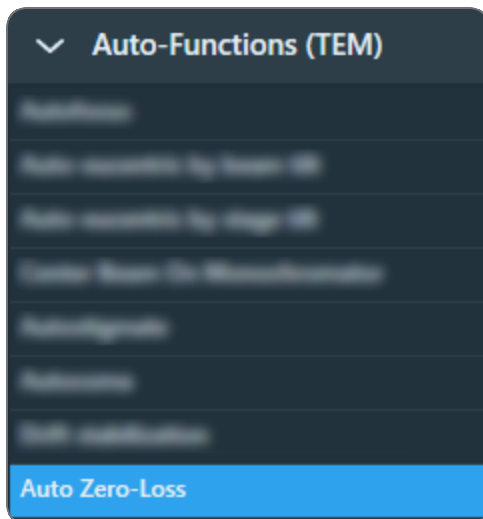
Run the Auto Zero-Loss Auto-Function

The Auto Zero-Loss function maintains the alignment of the energy slit in the filter with the Zero Loss Peak. This requires that the filter alignment must be accurate and recent.

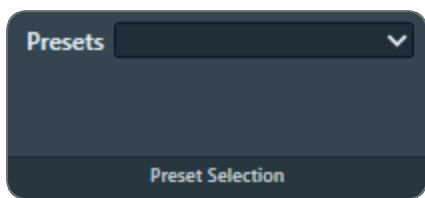
Note: The Auto Zero-Loss function is only available when the system is in EFTEM mode when EPU is started.

Follow the steps below to run the Auto Zero-Loss function:

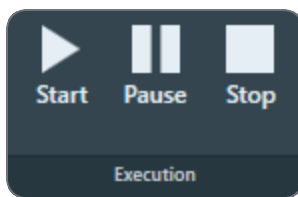
1. Select Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Auto Zero-Loss.



2. EPU selects the *Zero Loss* preset automatically. Otherwise, select **Preset Selection > Presets:Zero Loss**.



3. Select **Start**.



4. Wait until the Auto Zero Loss function is completed successfully,
or:
 - Select **Pause** to inspect the progress and intermediate result, then select **Resume** to let the Auto Zero Loss function continue.
 - Select **Stop** to abort the Auto Zero Loss function and revert the alignment value.

Calibration Tasks

The Autofocus Calibration Task

Prepare for Autofocus Calibration

The Autofocus calibration calibrates the Autofocus function, and measures and corrects astigmatism.

Note: The Autofocus calibration result is stored in the Windows Registry. It can only be completed successfully by Thermo Fisher Scientific engineers, or after logging in with the *Supervisor* account.

For the best result, the Autofocus calibration requires an area on the specimen:

- Where no ice is present.
- Where only carbon foil with a decent amount of gold particles is visible.

If the currently loaded specimen does not meet all the above requirements, then please exchange the specimen. For example, use the *Combined Test Specimen (Agar S142)* that is delivered with the microscope. This is a holey carbon foil specimen with gold particles and graphitized carbon.

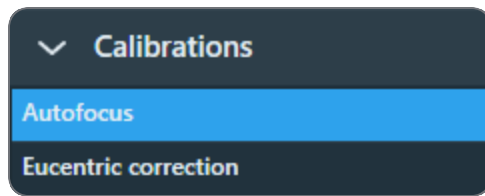
To prepare for the Autofocus calibration, use the Handpanels and the TEM User Interface to perform the procedure below:

1. Select **Right Handpanel > Eucentric Focus**.
2. Select the **Handpanel User Button** that is assigned to **Reset Defocus**. This is usually **R2**.
3. Move the specimen to an area that meets the requirements listed above.
4. Manually set the specimen to eucentric height.
5. If necessary, use the **TEM User Interface** and the **Handpanels** to accurately correct for astigmatism.
6. Adjust **Handpanels > Focus** to accurately focus the specimen.

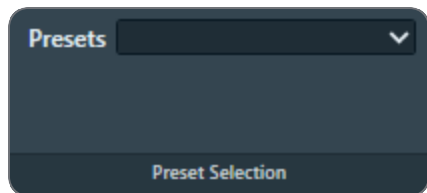
Perform the Autofocus Calibration for the Autofocus Preset

To perform the Autofocus calibration, follow the procedure below:

1. Select Auto Functions > Calibrations: Autofocus.

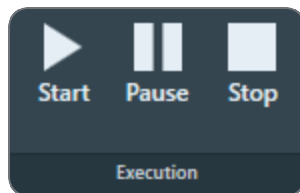


2. Select Preset Selection > Preset: Autofocus

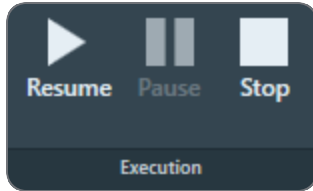


The Autofocus calibration ignores the Defocus value of the selected Preset.

3. Select Execution > Start.



- Follow the instructions on screen.
EPU can request to manually adjust focus and correct astigmatism.
After completion of a manual adjustment, select **Resume**.



The Autofocus calibration procedure acquires images with negative beam tilt and positive beam tilt, and calculates their cross-correlation. The encircled bright spot in the Cross-Correlation image corresponds to the shift between the beam tilt images.



- In the Cross-Correlation image, estimate the length of the shift.

6. Compare the **length of the shift** to the **width of the beam tilt images**.
For accurate calibration results, the shift must be at least 10% of the beam tilt image width. If the shift in the Cross-Correlation image is less than 10% of the image width:
 - a. Select **Stop** to abort the calibration procedure.
 - b. Estimate the length of the shift in the Cross-Correlation image.
 - c. Select **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings > Preset Selection > Presets: Autofocus**.
 - d. Increase the **Optics Settings > Magnification**.
 - e. Select **Acquisition > Preview**.
 - f. Make sure the width of the acquired image is less than 10 times the length of the cross-correlation shift.
If not, increase **Magnification**, select **Preview** and check again.
 - g. Return to the **Auto Functions > Calibrations: Autofocus** task and select **Execution > Start** again.
7. At the end of the procedure, select **Resume** to accept and store the calibration results.
8. Inspect the last Cross-Correlation image. If necessary, zoom in for a more accurate look.
 - a. Verify that the **green arrows** form a **symmetric cross** with the arms at 90° angles and of approximately the same length. This indicates that there is no significant astigmatism. If the arms are not at 90°, or are of different lengths, then correct the astigmatism and perform the Autofocus calibration again.
 - b. Verify that the **red circle** marks a **clear and bright spot**. This indicates that the shift between the beam tilt images is measured without problems.

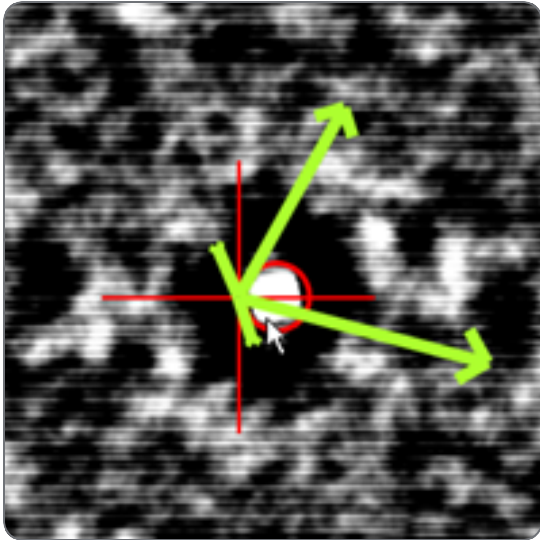
Perform the Autofocus Calibration for other Presets

The Autofocus function is not only used in the Automated Acquisition run. It can also be executed as a stand-alone Auto Function with any Preset.

The result of the Autofocus calibration is coupled to the Probe Mode in which it is executed. If both Probe Modes are used in the Presets, then the Autofocus calibration must be performed with a Preset that uses Nanoprobe mode and a Preset that uses Microprobe mode. The procedure is exactly the same, except for the selected Preset.

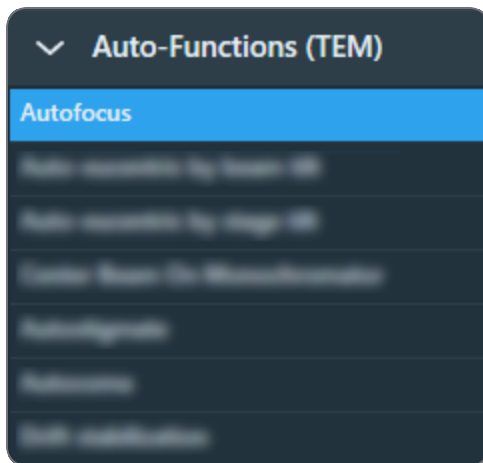
How to Improve the Autofocus Calibration Result

If the green arrows in the final Cross-correlation image are not at 90 degree angles relative to each other, the astigmatism has not been corrected completely.

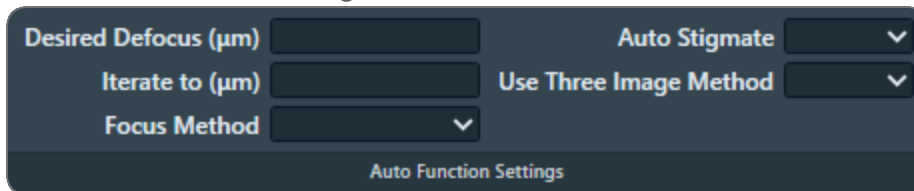


Although the Autofocus function may work well enough for automated data acquisition, it may be worthwhile to improve the stigmatism and the accuracy of the calibration.

1. Select Auto Functions > Auto Functions (TEM): Autofocus.

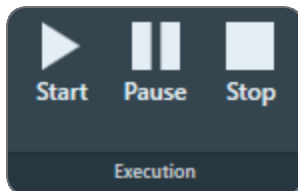


2. In Auto Function Settings:



- a. Specify **Desired Defocus: 0.0**
- b. Select **Auto Stigmatize: Yes**

3. Select **Execution > Start** to run the Autofocus function.



4. Repeat the calibration procedure.

The Eucentric Correction Calibration Task

There are several methods to bring a specimen to eucentric height. Two common methods are:

- Via stage tilt, using the CompuStage Alpha tilt axis wobbler. This is the most accurate method. It brings the specimen to the *mechanically defined* eucentric height.

The stage tilt method is best suited for low to medium magnifications.

- Via beam tilt, using the beam tilt wobbler.
This method is better suited for high magnifications.

At higher magnifications, it can be difficult or even impossible to use the stage tilt method in an automated routine, especially when the starting position is too far off eucentric height. Two reasons are:

- The initial shift between images that are acquired at opposite Alpha tilt positions would be so large that there is little or no overlap, so no meaningful cross-correlation can be calculated. Without a meaningful cross-correlation, any adjustments to the CompuStage Z-position would be guesswork.
- Due to mechanical tolerances, the CompuStage is not infinitely accurate. At low magnifications, the field of view of the camera is large enough to absorb these mechanical tolerances, especially after running a backlash correction routine. As the magnification increases, the field of view of the camera approaches the same order of magnitude as the tolerances of the CompuStage. This means it is no longer certain that the region of interest on the specimen is returned to the field of view after using the Alpha tilt wobbler.

The beam tilt method is the preferred method at higher magnifications, because it can use very small tilt angles to limit initial image shift and does not suffer from mechanical tolerances.

To get the same result from both methods:

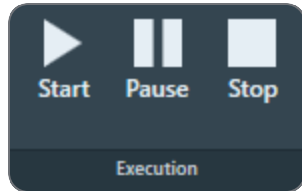
- The beam tilt pivot points must be accurately aligned at eucentric focus height.
- Eucentric focus height and the mechanical eucentric height must be exactly the same.

On an accurately aligned system, the stage tilt method and the beam tilt method result in the same Z-position. In reality, the result of the beam tilt method can have a small offset relative to the mechanically defined eucentric height. The purpose of the Eucentric correction calibration is to measure this offset, so that the *Auto-eucentric by beam tilt* Auto Function can compensate for it.

The Eucentric correction calibration is optional. If there is a noticeable offset between the results of the stage tilt method and the beam tilt method, then it is also possible to renew the microscope's lens series alignments.

Prepare for the Eucentric Correction Calibration

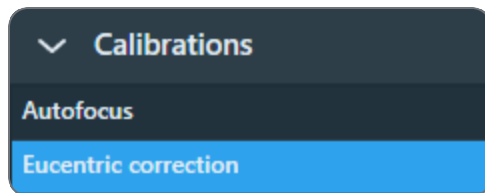
1. Select **Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Auto-eucentric by stage tilt**.
2. Select **Preset Selection : Presets: Hole/EucentricHeight**.
3. Select **Execution > Start**.



4. Wait until the *Auto-eucentric by stage tilt* function is completed.
Check the **Status** panel to monitor progress and intermediate results.
5. Use the **Handpanels > Focus** knob to accurately focus the specimen.

Perform the Eucentric Correction Calibration

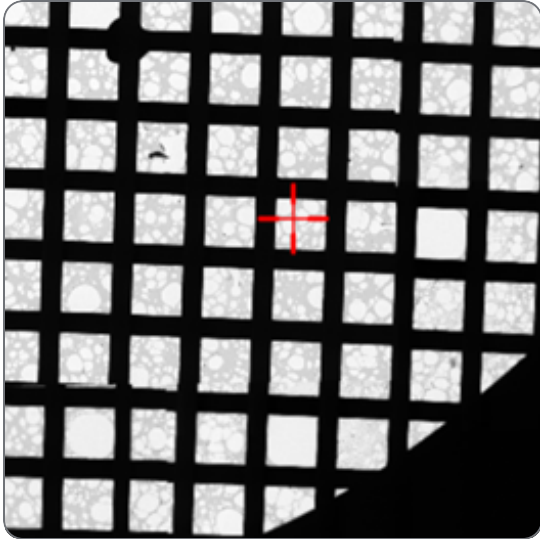
1. Select **Auto Functions > Calibrations: Eucentric correction**.



2. Select **Preset Selection > Presets: Hole/EucentricHeight**.
3. Select **Execution > Start**.
No manual actions are required during the calibration procedure.
4. Wait until the calibration procedure is completed.
Check the **Status** panel to monitor progress and intermediate results.

Atlas Tab

An *Atlas* is an overview of a specimen. An Atlas is a collage of large area images (tiles) to form a map of the specimen. At the edges of the tiles, small offsets can be visible. This is acceptable.



In EPU, the Atlas is used for:

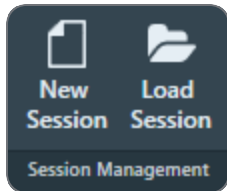
- Screening:
Estimate the potential to yield high quality data during the Automated Acquisition run. The success of an Automated Acquisition run depends among others on:
 - Good ice quality and thickness, with low to no contamination.
 - Good particle distribution.
- The magnification of the Atlas Preset allows for an assessment of the ice quality and thickness. It does not allow for a direct assessment of the presence and distribution of particles, although the thickness of the ice layer is usually a good indicator for particle density.
- Navigation:
During the preparation and execution of an Automated Acquisition run, the Atlas is used to identify Grid Squares and to move to their locations.

Session Setup Task

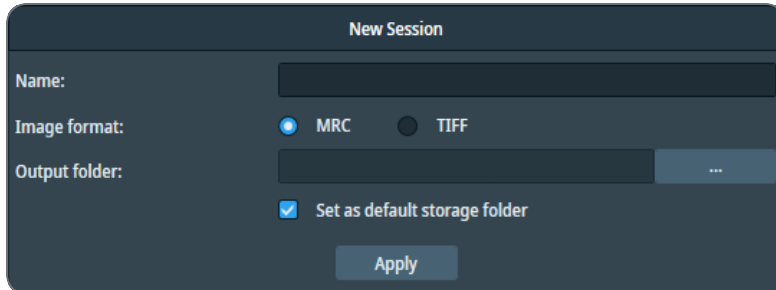
Create a New Atlas Session

To setup a new Atlas session, follow the procedure below:

1. Select the **Atlas** tab > **Session Setup** task.
2. Select **New Session**.




3. Enter a **Name** for the session.



4. Select the **Image format** that will be used to store the acquired images.
 - **MRC**: Electron microscopy image format. The MRC format includes an extensive set of metadata about the microscope and the microscope settings. See [The MRC2014 Image Format](#).
 - **TIFF**: Raster image format: [TIFF file format](#).


5. At *Output folder*, select [...] and navigate to the target folder.
In the specified folder, EPU creates a sub-folder with the *Name* of the Atlas session.

 **Note:** Do *not* rename or move the Output folder.

In this folder, EPU stores the following files:

- The Atlas session file *ScreeningSession.dm*
 - For each specimen that is processed in the session: the images and metadata for the Atlas and for all Tiles.
 - On a system with an Autoloader, the Screening task can process multiple specimens.
 - On a system without an Autoloader, the Atlas Acquisition task processes only the specimen that is loaded on the stage.
6. (Optional) Tick **Set as default storage folder**.
If *Set as default storage folder* is ticked, then the specified folder is used as the default *Output folder* for subsequent Atlas sessions.
 7. Select **Apply**.

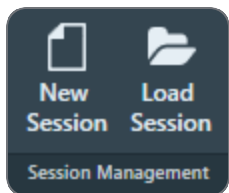
Load an Existing Atlas Session

 **Note:** If a specimen has already been (partly) processed in an Automated Acquisition run, then do not load an existing Screening Session file for a new EPU session with that specimen.

The Screening Session file does not contain data about which Grid Squares have been processed already in a preceding Automated Acquisition run. Processed areas may be too damaged to yield new high quality data. Revisiting these areas is therefore not a productive use of system time.

To load an existing Atlas Screening Session, follow the steps below:

1. In the Atlas > Session Setup task, select **Session Management > Load Session**.



2. Navigate to the Output folder of the desired Screening Session and select the *ScreeningSession.dm* file.

Note: Do not load an *Atlas.dm* file.

Screening Task

The Screening functionality acquires an Atlas and categorizes the Grid Squares. For the categorization, EPU evaluates the size, brightness and contrast of the Grid Squares. These visual properties loosely correlate to the physical properties that indicate the suitability of a Grid Square for high quality data acquisition, such as:

- Ice thickness (average brightness of a Grid Square).
- Contamination's (local dark areas in the Grid Square).
- Cracks (sharply defined local bright areas in the Grid Square).
- Empty holes (local bright areas that coincide with foil holes).

On a system with an Autoloader the Atlas acquisition and Grid Square categorization can be done for multiple specimens from a selection of Slot Positions.

The Screening Task for Systems with an Autoloader

Acquire Atlases for Multiple Specimens

To acquire Atlases for specimens from multiple Slot Positions, follow the steps below:

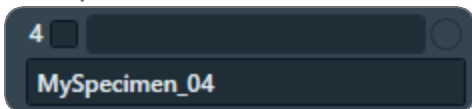
1. Select the **Atlas > Screening** task.

The Task Selection panel displays all Slot Positions in the Autoloader.

- Empty slot:

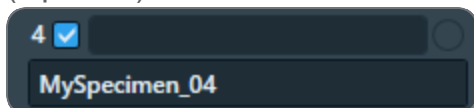


- Occupied slot:



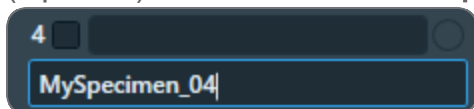
2. For each occupied slot:

- (Optional) Tick the **Slot Position** to schedule it for Atlas acquisition.



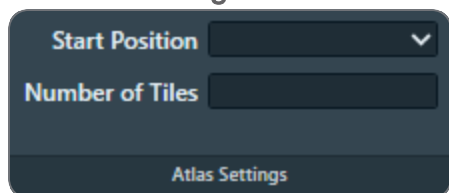
It is not possible to select an empty Slot Position.

- (Optional) Edit the default **description**.



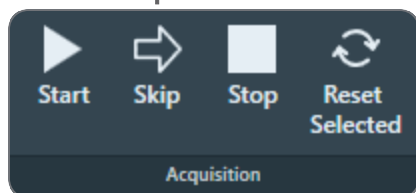
At the creation of a new Screening session, EPU copies the slot descriptions that are present in the *TEM User Interface > Autoloader* control panel. After the Screening session is created, EPU and the TEM User Interface do not synchronize their slot descriptions.

3. In Atlas Settings:



- a. If the currently loaded specimen is included in the set of selected Slot Positions, then select the **Start position**. The selected Start Position only applies to the Slot Position of the currently loaded specimen. For all other Slot Positions, Atlas acquisition starts at *Close to center*.
 - **Close to center**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the center of the specimen.
 - **Close to current**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the current stage position.
- b. (Optional) Specify the **Number of tiles** to restrict the area that will be covered in the new Atlas. The specified *Number of tiles* applies to all Slot Positions. It is not possible to specify a different value per Slot Position.

4. Select **Acquisition > Start** to begin the screening procedure.

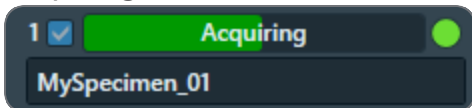


EPU prepares the system for Atlas acquisition.

- If the Objective Aperture Mechanism is enabled and inserted, then EPU retracts the aperture before acquisition starts. After the acquisition is completed, the aperture is inserted again.
- If the Autoloader TMP is not running, then EPU will start it to shorten the exchange time between Slot Positions. After the Screening acquisition is completed, EPU returns the Autoloader TMP to its previous status.

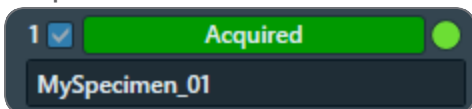
5. Wait until all selected Slot Positions are processed.
For each included Slot Position, EPU loads the specimen and acquires an Atlas.
The progress bar displays the progress or the result of the Atlas acquisition.

- Acquiring

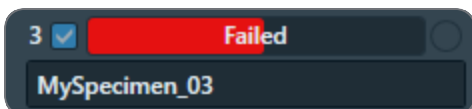


The **green LED** shows that the specimen from this Slot Position is currently loaded on the CompuStage.

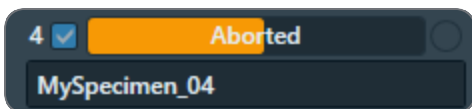
- Acquired



- Failed

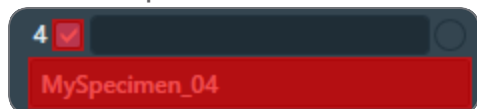


- Aborted

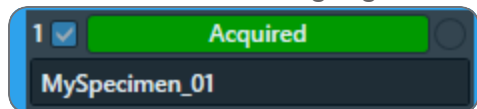


While the screening procedure is running, it is possible to:

- Schedule or unschedule Slot Positions for which Atlas acquisition has not started yet.
- Select any Slot Position to view the Atlas.
To select a Slot Position, click anywhere in the Slot Position, except for the check box and the description.



The Slot Position is highlighted and the Atlas for the specimen appears in the Image Display.



Viewing the Atlas for a specimen does not affect an ongoing acquisition for a different specimen.

Acquire a Single Atlas from an Unknown Specimen on the Stage

Sometimes the occupation status of the stage is not known. It is unknown if a specimen is currently present on the stage, or it is unknown from which Slot Position the specimen on the stage was loaded. This situation can occur when, for example, the cassette is undocked or when the Autoloader is not initialized.

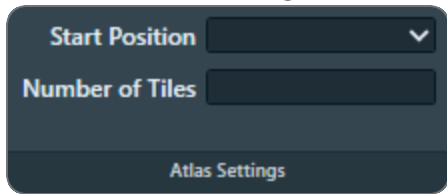
Under these circumstances, the Single Atlas functionality allows the acquisition of an Atlas from the unknown specimen. If no specimen is present, then the Atlas will be blank.

The Single Atlas functionality is available in the Screening task as an additional (virtual) Slot Position, below the regular Slot Positions. Unlike regular Slot Positions, the Single Atlas slot has its own Acquire function. The Acquire function is only available when the occupation status of the stage is unknown. An Atlas that is acquired with the Single Atlas functionality behaves the same and is treated the same as an Atlas that is acquired for a regular Slot Position in a regular Screening session.

To acquire an Atlas from an unknown specimen on the stage, follow the steps below:

1. (Optional) Verify that a specimen is present on the stage:
 - a. In **Preparation > Acquisition and Optics Settings**, select **Preset Selection > Presets: Atlas** or another Preset with a large illuminated area to prevent that the specimen is exposed to a converged beam.
 - b. Select **Optics Settings > Set**.
 - c. With the TEM User Interface and/or Hand Panels, insert the **FluScreen** and open the **Column Valves**.

2. In Atlas > Screening > Atlas Settings:



a. Select the **Start position**:

- **Close to center**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the center of the specimen.
- **Close to current**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the current stage position.

b. (Optional) Specify the **Number of tiles** to restrict the area that will be covered in the new Atlas.

c. At the bottom of the Autoloader Slot Positions, select **Single Atlas > Acquire**.



If the Objective Aperture Mechanism is enabled and inserted, then EPU retracts the aperture before the acquisition starts. After the acquisition is completed, the aperture is inserted again.

d. Wait until the Single Atlas acquisition is completed.

Reset the Slot Position Status

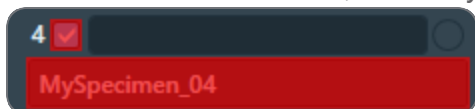
After a Slot Position is processed by the Screening task, it is possible to reset the status back to the initial value. This means that the following information is erased or returned to its initial value:

- Slot Position status
- Atlas
- Selected Grid Square categories

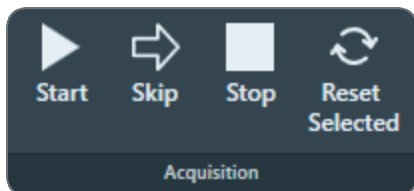
To reset the status of a Slot Position:

1. Select the **Slot Position**.

To select a Slot Position, click anywhere except for the check box or the description.



2. Select **Reset Selected**.



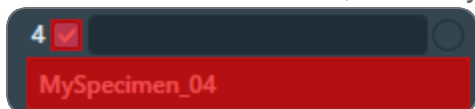
The status, Atlas, name and selection Grid Square categories are erased, or are returned to their initial values.

Load a Specimen on the Stage

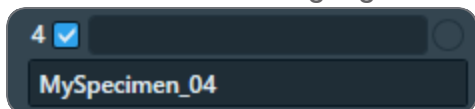
1. Select **Atlas > Screening** to display all Slot Positions in the Autoloader.

2. Select the **Slot Position** at which the desired specimen is located.

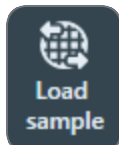
To select a Slot Position, click anywhere except for the check box or the description.



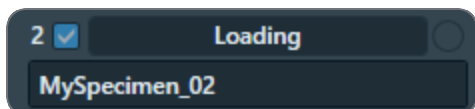
The Slot Position is highlighted and the Atlas for the specimen appears in the Image Display.



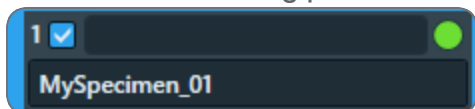
3. Select **Load sample**.



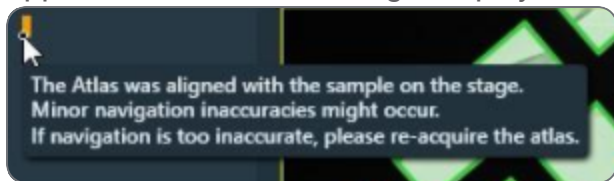
The status of the selected Slot Position changes to *Loading*.



4. Wait until the loading procedure is completed and the **LED is green**.



If an Atlas exists for the selected Slot Position, then EPU automatically aligns the existing Atlas with the specimen on the stage. Because there may be small inaccuracies between the aligned Atlas and the physical position of the specimen on the stage, EPU displays a warning in the upper-left corner of the Image Display.



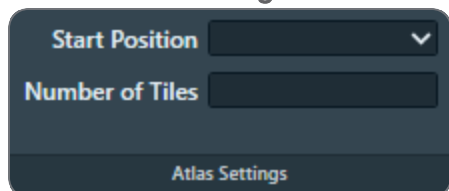
If the specimen is unloaded and reloaded after the *Calibrate I0* task is performed, then the I_0 reference value measurements during the Automated Acquisition run may be less reliable.

The Screening Task for Tundra Systems

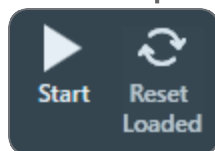
Acquire an Atlas on a Tundra System

To acquire an Atlas on a Tundra system, follow the instructions below:

1. Select **Atlas > Screening**.
2. In the **Atlas settings** section:



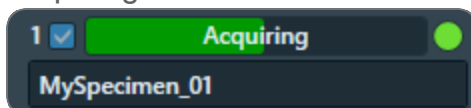
- a. Select the **Start position**:
 - **Close to center**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the center of the specimen.
 - **Close to current**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the current stage position.
 - b. (Optional) Specify the **Number of tiles** to restrict the area that will be covered in the new Atlas.
3. Select **Acquisition > Start**.



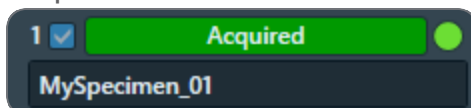
EPU prepares the system for Atlas acquisition.

- If the C2 aperture mechanism is enabled, then EPU first selects the largest C2 aperture. After the acquisition is completed EPU returns the aperture mechanism to its initial position.
 - If the Objective aperture mechanism is enabled and inserted, then EPU first selects the retracted position. After the acquisition is completed EPU returns the aperture mechanism to its initial position.
4. Wait until EPU has acquired all images for the Atlas.
The progress bar displays the progress or the result of the Atlas acquisition.

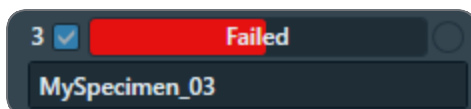
- Acquiring



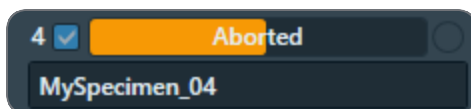
- Acquired



- Failed



- Aborted



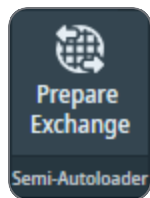
If the image quality is not good enough, or if stitching the tiles does not result in a good Atlas:

- Select **Stop**.
This can be done at any time during the Atlas acquisition and may take a few seconds.
- Select **Acquisition and Optics Settings > Presets: Atlas** and adjust the settings.
- (For side entry loader) Select **Reset Loaded** to unload the current specimen and prepare for re-acquiring the Atlas.
- Select **Atlas > Screening > Start** again to acquire a new Atlas.
All tiles that were acquired before adjusting the Atlas Preset are discarded.

Exchange the Specimen on a Tundra System

The procedure to unload the current specimen, and to load a new specimen is as follows:

1. Select **Prepare Exchange**.



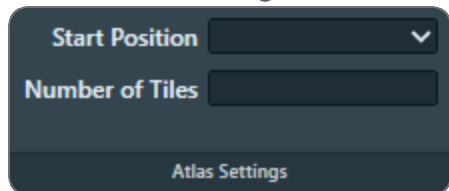
EPU closes the Column Valves.

2. Perform the exchange procedure for Tundra with the Transfer Device and the Cryo Loading Station (CLS).
After the exchange procedure is started on the CLS, EPU locks the Column Valves and the stage on the Tundra, and it is not possible to acquire images.
3. Insert the **Transfer Device** into the Tundra system.
4. In **EPU > Atlas > Screening**, select **Load Sample**.
5. Return the **Transfer Device** to the CLS.
EPU unlocks the Column Valves and the stage.

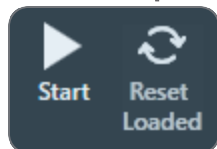
Acquire an Atlas for a Single Specimen on a System with Removable Holders (Side Entry)

To acquire an Atlas on a system with a removable holder (a so-called side entry system), follow the instructions below:

1. Select **Atlas > Screening**.
2. In the **Atlas settings** section:



- a. Select the **Start position**:
 - **Close to center**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the center of the specimen.
 - **Close to current**
Atlas acquisition starts close to the current stage position.
 - b. (Optional) Specify the **Number of tiles** to restrict the area that will be covered in the new Atlas.
3. Select **Acquisition > Start**.

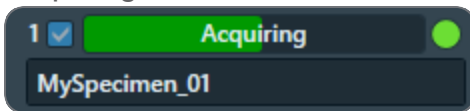


EPU prepares the system for Atlas acquisition.

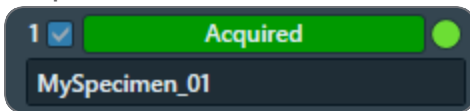
- If the C2 aperture mechanism is enabled, then EPU first selects the largest C2 aperture. After the acquisition is completed EPU returns the aperture mechanism to its initial position.
- If the Objective aperture mechanism is enabled and inserted, then EPU first selects the retracted position. After the acquisition is completed EPU returns the aperture mechanism to its initial position.

4. Wait until EPU has acquired all images for the Atlas.
The progress bar displays the progress or the result of the Atlas acquisition.

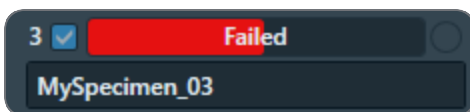
- Acquiring



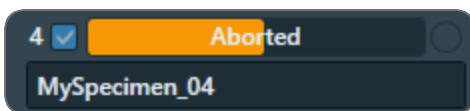
- Acquired



- Failed



- Aborted



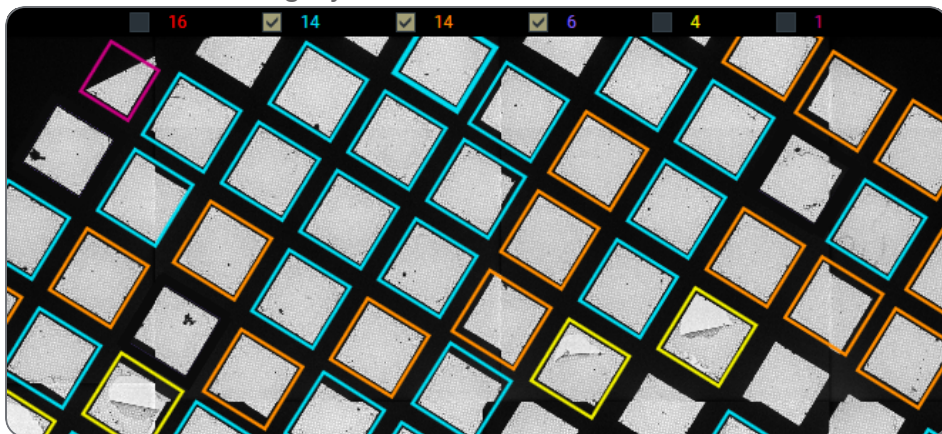
If the image quality is not good enough, or if stitching the tiles does not result in a good Atlas:

- a. Select **Stop**.
This can be done at any time during the Atlas acquisition and may take a few seconds.
- b. Select **Acquisition and Optics Settings > Presets: Atlas** and adjust the settings.
- c. (For side entry loader) Select **Reset Loaded** to unload the current specimen and prepare for re-acquiring the Atlas.
- d. Select **Atlas > Screening > Start** again to acquire a new Atlas.
All tiles that were acquired before adjusting the Atlas Preset are discarded.

Note: If the Optics Settings parameters of the Atlas Preset are changed, and the system has a Cryobox, then the Atlas Optics Alignment might have to be performed again.

Pre-Select the Grid Squares for the Automated Acquisition Run

The Screening functionality assesses the quality of the individual Grid Squares. Grid Squares with similar characteristics are assigned to the same category. Above the Atlas, a check box is visible for each category. Each check box shows the number of Grid Squares in that category.



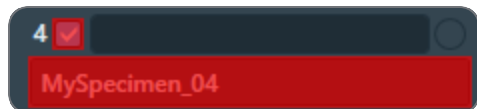
If present, the *Broken Grid Squares* category is always *red*. The other Grid Square categories have randomly assigned colors. These colors do not indicate the suitability of the Grid Square category for high quality data acquisition. The colors are help to mark the Grid Squares in each category.

EPU assumes that less than 50% of the Grid Squares is broken. If more than 50% of the Grid Squares would be marked as broken, than the *Broken* category is omitted and all Grid Squares are assigned to the non-broken categories.

In the Screening task, it is possible to make a pre-selection of suitable Grid Squares for the Automated Acquisition run. If the Atlas from the Screening Session is used for the Automated Acquisition run, then the *EPU > Square Selection* task loads the Grid Squares in the selected Grid Square categories as the initial selection.

To pre-select Grid Squares for the *EPU > Square Selection* task:

1. If the system has an Autoloader, then select a **Slot Position** with status Acquired.
To select a Slot Position, left-click anywhere, except for the check box or the description.



The Atlas for the specimen appears in the Image Display.

2. In the Image Display, above the Atlas:

- Tick the **Grid Square categories** that appear suitable for high quality data acquisition.
- Clear the **Grid Square categories** that do not appear suitable for high quality data acquisition.

EPU Tab

The EPU tab provides a set of tasks to start, prepare and execute Automated Acquisition sessions.

This chapter describes the functions and actions for an EPU experiment with a single specimen. The single specimen workflow is supported on all system configurations.

If the system has an Autoloader and the *EPU Multigrid* license is registered and activated, then the *Multigrid* functionality is available. With the Multigrid functionality it is possible to first prepare multiple sessions, and then start the Automated Acquisition for the prepared Sessions in the queue. The preparation tasks for each specimen in a Multigrid workflow are mostly the same as for the single specimen workflow.

For instructions for the Multigrid workflow, see: [The EPU Multigrid Option](#).

The set of available tasks depends on the Grid type: *Holey carbon* or *Lacey carbon*.

The actions in each task depend on the Session type: *Automated* or *Manual* target selection.

Phase	Task	Session type	
		Automated	Manual
Start	Session Creation	The Session Creation task is generic for both Grid types and for both Session types.	

Phase	Task	Session type	
		Automated	Manual
Preparation	Session Setup	The Session Setup task is generic for both Grid types and for both Session types.	

Phase	Task	Session type	
		Automated	Manual
	Square Selection	The Square Selection task is generic for both Grid types and for both Session types.	
	Area Selection (Lacey)	Once, valid for all selected Grid Squares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and generate an Acquisition Area pattern. Set the filters. 	Each individual selected Grid Square: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and generate an Acquisition Area pattern. Set the filters for initial selection. Customize the selection manually.
	Hole Selection (Holey)	Once, valid for all selected Grid Squares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify the Foil Hole diameter and spacing. Find the Foil Holes. Set the filters. 	Each individual selected Grid Square: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify the Foil Hole diameter and spacing. Find the Foil Holes. Set the filters for initial selection. Customize the selection manually.
	Template Definition (Holey)	How to define a Foil Hole Template does not depend on the Session type.	
	Template Execution (Holey)	How to validate the Foil Hole Template does not depend on the Session type.	
Execution	Automated Acquisition	The Automated Acquisition task is generic for both Grid types and for both Session types.	

In a *Manual* session, the Area Selection or Hole Selection tasks offer *Automated Preparation* functions to apply the manual selection settings from a prepared Grid Square to other Grid Squares. This saves a large amount of time and effort that would otherwise be spent on manually repeating the same selection settings for multiple Grid Squares.

Session Creation Task

The EPU Session Saved Preferences

EPU offers the possibility store the settings and calibration results from a session in a Saved Preference. Saved Preferences are available in the Home tab. You can re-use a Saved Preference to create a new session. The use of a Saved Preference has the following consequences for the EPU workflow:

- The order in which the tasks must be completed is different than the regular EPU workflow.
- For many tasks it is sufficient to only verify the loaded settings.

The recommended workflow sequence for starting a session from a Saved Preference is as follows:

1. In the Home tab, select a Saved Preference.
2. Click **Start a New Session**.
3. Verify the **Acquisition and Optics Presets**.



Note: If one or more presets are adjusted, then the related calibrations and other settings need to be adjusted as well.

4. If no Atlas is available for the currently loaded specimen, then acquire an **Atlas**.
5. Continue with the tasks in the **EPU** tab.
For some tasks, the settings are pre-loaded from the EPU Session Saved Preference.

The EPU Session Saved Preferences can contain the following values:

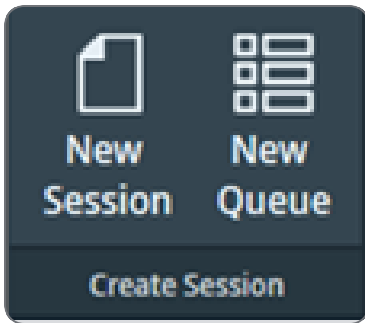
Tab	Task	Included Values
Preparation	Acquisition and Optics Settings	All Presets, same as an Preparations > Preset Selection > Export.
	Atlas Optics Alignment	All values
	Calibrate Image Shifts	All values
	Calibrate I0	All values
	Activate Phase Plate	None
Auto Functions	Calibrations: Autofocus	None
	Calibrations: Eucentric correction	None
	Auto-Functions (TEM): Autofocus	None
	Auto-Functions (TEM): Auto-eucentric by beam tilt	None
	Auto-Functions (TEM): Auto-eucentric by stage tilt	None
	Auto-Functions (TEM): Autostigmatate	None
	Auto-Functions (TEM): Autocoma	None
Atlas	Session Setup	None
	Atlas Acquisition	None
	Screening	None

Tab	Task	Included Values
EPU	Session Setup	All values, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session name and Description • CryoFlow settings • Output folder • Email settings
	Square Selection	None
	Area Selection	All values and filter selections.
	Hole Selection	All values and filter selections.
	Template Definition	All values
	Template Execution	None
	Automated Acquisition	Phase Plate selections and values .

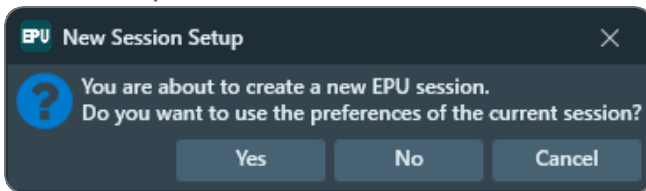
Create a New EPU Session Without Using a Saved Preference

To setup a new Automated Acquisition session without using a Saved Preference, follow the procedure below:

1. Select **EPU > Session Creation > New Session**.



2. Select the preferred EPU Session creation method:



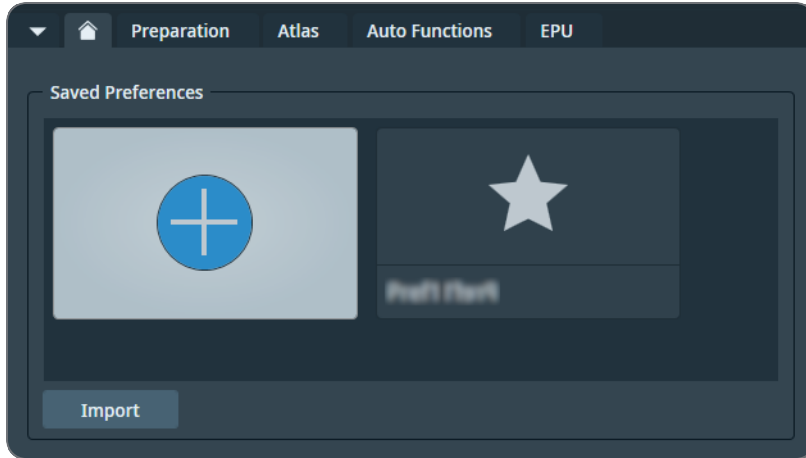
- **Yes:** Create a new EPU Session that uses mostly the same settings and values as the current EPU Session. For an overview of the copied settings and values, see [The EPU Session Saved Preferences](#).
- **No:** Create a new EPU Session without pre-selected settings and values.
- **Cancel:** No new EPU Session is created. The current EPU Session stays as it is.

EPU automatically moves on to the *Session Setup* task.
For instructions, see: [Session Setup task](#).

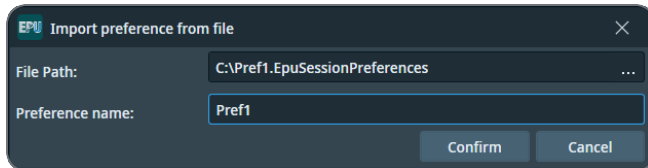
Import an EPU Session Preferences File

To import a Preferences file, follow the steps below:

1. Select **Home > Saved Preferences > Import**.



The *Import preference from file* dialog appears:



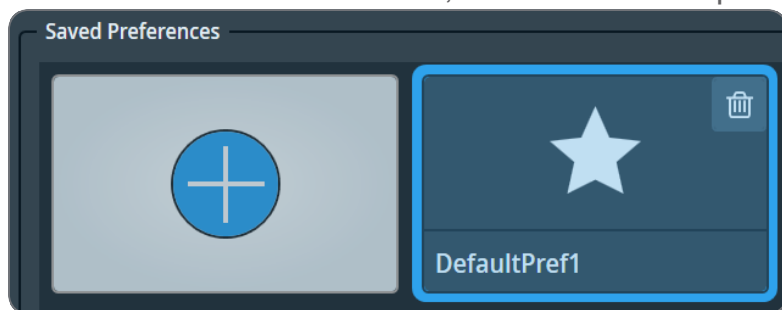
2. In **File Path**, locate the desired *EpuSessionPreferences* file on your computer.
3. In **Preference name**, enter a unique name for the selected preference.
4. Select **Confirm**.

The imported EPU Session Preferences file is now available in *Home > Saved Preferences*, and can be used to create a new EPU Session.

Create a New Session based on a Saved Preference

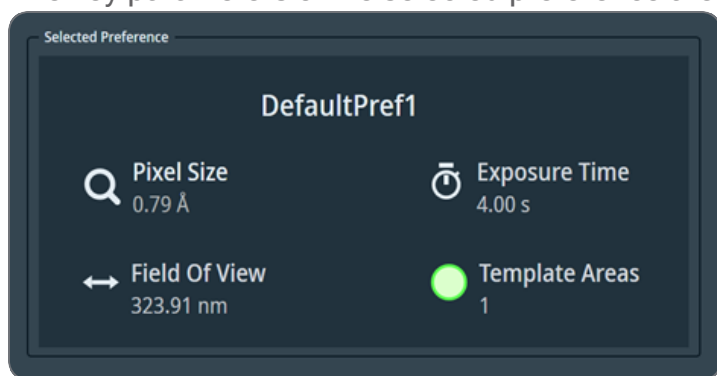
To create a session based on a Saved Preference, follow these steps:

1. In **Home > Saved Preferences**, select the desired preference. It becomes highlighted.

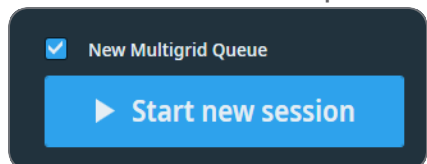


If the desired Preference is not available, then follow the instructions in [Import an EPU Session Preferences file](#) to add it to the available Saved Preference.

The key parameters of the selected preference are displayed on the right side.



2. (Optional) Tick **New Multigrid Queue** to create a Multigrid queue containing a single session based on the selected preference.



The New Multigrid Queue check box is only available when a Preference file for an *automatic* EPU session is selected.

3. Select **Start a New Session**.

EPU automatically moves on to the *Session Setup* task. For instructions, see: [Session Setup task](#).

Session Setup Task

In an EPU Multigrid workflow, the *Session Setup* task is named *Session Queue*.

Description of the Session Setup Options

The Acquisition Mode for Quantifoil Specimens

EPU has two methods to locate and center a position on the specimen:

- Optical centering with Image/Beam Shift:
The specimen remains stationary while the beam shifts to illuminate the feature of interest and project it in the center of the camera field of view.
Although this is very fast, Image/Beam Shift may induce coma under sub-optimal conditions. The amount of coma is typically not significant for small offsets, but for larger offsets this may reduce the image quality.
- Mechanical centering with Stage Shift:
The beam remains stationary while the specimen moves, so that the feature of interest is located in the center of the camera field of view.
Although the aberrations that are associated with Image/Beam Shift are absent, mechanical centering is considerably slower than optical centering.

If certain conditions are met, then EPU can use optical centering also for relatively large offsets, and thus replace most Stage Shifts by Image/Beam Shifts. These conditions are:

- Aberration Free Image Shift (AFIS) is present, and is calibrated by a Thermo Fisher Scientific engineer.
- A wide usable Image/Beam Shift range is available:
 - The system does *not* have an Image Corrector.
An Image Corrector restricts the usable Image Shift range.
 - Phase Plates are *not* used.
The use of Phase Plates is not compatible with the beam tilt angles that are needed for coma correction.

For Lacey Carbon specimens, EPU automatically determines when to use Stage Shift and when to use Image/Beam Shift to optimize accuracy and throughput.

For Quantifoil specimens, *EPU > Session Setup* offers a manual selection between two *Acquisition Mode* options:

- Accurate Hole Centering
- Faster Acquisition

The Acquisition Modes use different methods to center and visit the Foil Holes for data acquisition. The execution of the Foil Hole Template is the same for both Acquisition Modes.

Accurate Hole Centering

In Accurate Hole Centering mode, EPU processes each individual Foil Hole independently from its surrounding Foil Holes. EPU first locates the individual Foil Hole, and then accurately centers it in the camera field of view. This procedure requires magnification changes and lens normalizations, and uses small Stage Shifts to mechanically adjust the position of the specimen.

The Accurate Hole Centering procedure does not use Image/Beam Shift to center a Foil Hole. If the Template Areas are within reach of the Maximum Image Shift, then Image/Beam Shift may still be used to center the Drift Measurement, Autofocus and Acquisition Areas during execution of the Foil Hole Template

Faster Acquisition

In Faster Acquisition mode, EPU processes the Foil Holes in groups.

The Faster Acquisition procedure uses Stage Shifts to center multiple Foil Holes at once as a group. This reduces the number of Stage Shifts, magnification changes and lens normalizations.

- If the conditions for Faster Acquisition mode are fulfilled, then EPU uses Image/Beam Shifts to visit the individual Foil Holes within the centered group. This reduces the number of Stage Shifts even further.
- If the conditions for Faster Acquisition mode are *not* fulfilled, then EPU uses Stage Shifts to visit the individual Foil Holes in the centered group.

See [The Acquisition Mode for Quantifoil specimens](#) for the conditions for Faster Acquisition mode.

If Image/Beam Shift is used to visit the individual Foil Holes, then the stage remains stationary. As a result, the metadata of all acquired images in the centered group contains the same stage coordinates. To separate and group the images per Foil Hole or per Acquisition Area, the file names of the acquired images must be processed.

The format of the file names is: *FoilHole_[Hole ID]_Data_[Acquisition Area ID]_[date]_[time].mrc*.

For example: in *FoilHole_31545690_Data_31547881_31547882_20210601_0819.mrc*.

- *[Hole ID]* is 31545690
- *[Acquisition Area ID]* is 31547881_31547882
- *[date]* is 20210601 in *yyyymmdd* format

- *[time]* is 0819 in 24-hour *hhmm* format

In Faster Acquisition mode, the Automated Acquisition run starts with an automatic calibration to maximize centering accuracy. This calibration takes 2-3 minutes. In a longer automated run, the calibration duration is easily recovered by the much faster Foil Hole processing method. For short runs that acquire images from only a few Foil Holes, the Accurate Hole Centering is often faster.

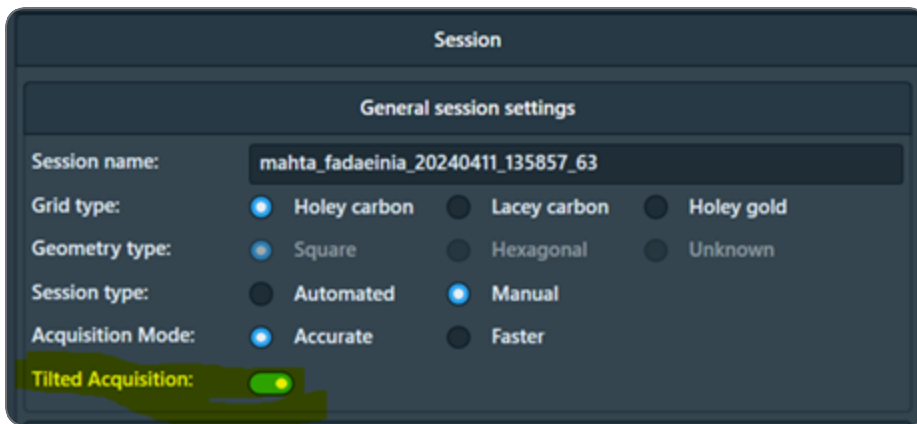
Tilted Grids Acquisition Workflow

Tilted Grids Acquisition workflow makes it possible to run samples with preferred orientation. This section describes how to setup & run a tilted acquisition workflow.

Note: The performance of automated data acquisition might not be optimal with nominal stage tilt higher than 40 degrees.

EPU Session Creation

In the **EPU** tab, in the **Session Creation** task, a Tilted Acquisition session can be created by clicking on the **Tilted Acquisition** button.

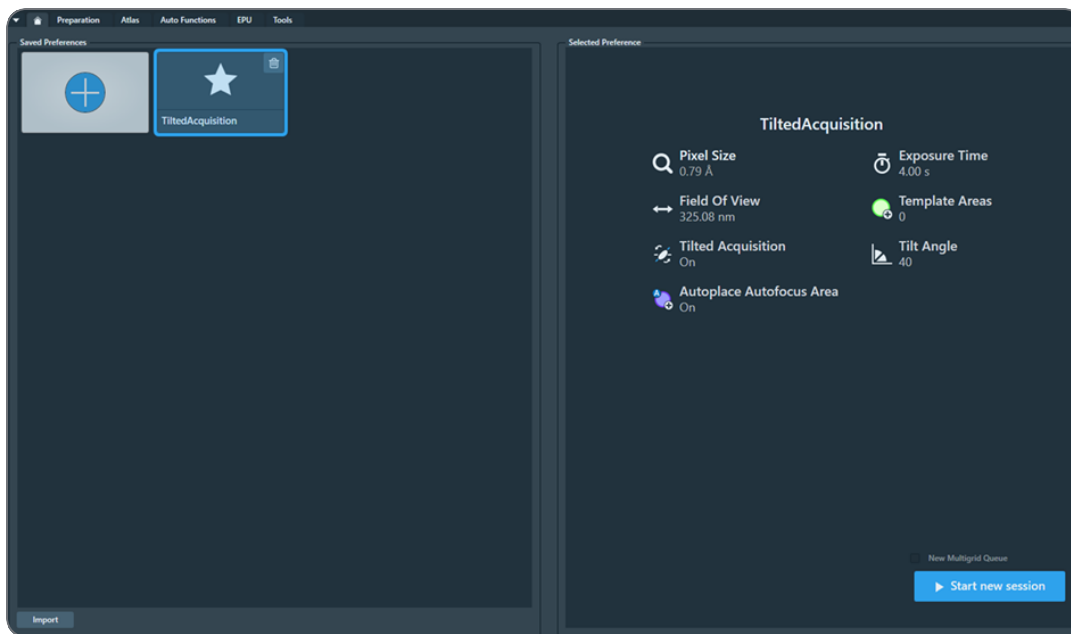


During session set-up, with tilted acquisition enabled, it is not possible to use EQM. It is also not possible to use any of the EPU Smart Plugins during Tilted Acquisition. This applies to:

- Smart Grid Square Selection
- Smart Hole Finder
- Smart Filter

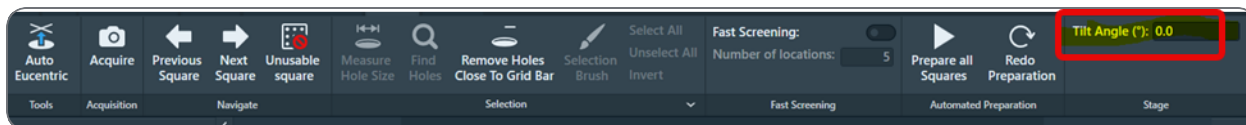
- Smart Ice Filter
- Predict Stage Setting Time

In the **EPU** landing page, the favorites indicate if they were acquired at tilt or not. If at tilt, then the favorite also indicates the tilt angle defined.



Tilt Angle Setup and Acquisition of Grid Square

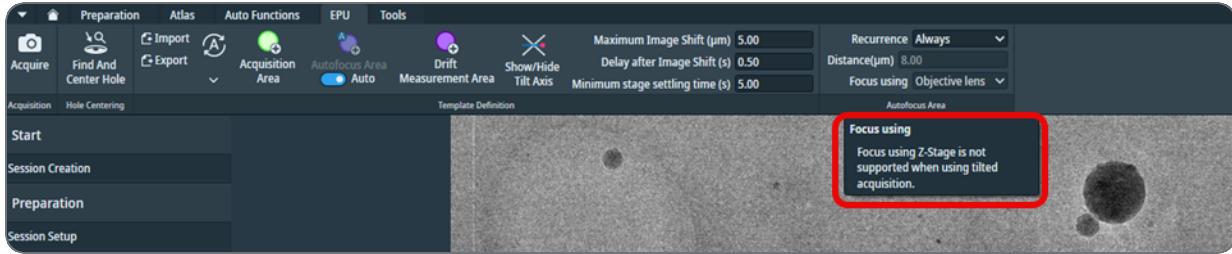
In the **EPU** tab and in the **Area Selection** and **Hole Selection** tasks, the tilt angle can be set. This is only possible when tilted acquisition was selected in session setup.



When the next acquisition is made in hole selection/area selection, EPU will tilt the stage at the specified tilt angle.

The grid square image can be acquired after adjusting the tilt angle.

Note: During the tilted acquisition workflow, it is not possible to focus using z-stage in the template definition task.



The Pixel Format for Gatan Dose Fraction Images

The pixel format of the images that are acquired with the Gatan K2 and K3 cameras depends on the *Acquisition and Optics Presets > Advanced Camera Settings > Mode* and the *EPU > Session Setup > Dose fraction output format*. The pixel format has a direct impact on the image file sizes.

MRC Image Pixel Format for Gatan K2 and K3 Cameras

The pixel format specification below applies to:

- Gatan K3 cameras.
- Gatan K2 cameras on a system with Titan 3.6 or later, or Talos 2.6 or later.

Advanced Camera Settings > Mode	Dose fraction output format		
	Gain Normalized	Non-Gain Normalized	Non-Gain Normalized Packed
Counted	8-bit unsigned integer	8-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image per Grid Square	4-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image per Grid Square
Counted / Super Resolution	8-bit unsigned integer	8-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image per Grid Square	4-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image per Grid Square

The pixel format specification below applies to Gatan K2 cameras on a system with Titan 3.5 or earlier, or Talos 2.5 or earlier.

Advanced Camera Settings > Mode	Dose fraction output format		
	Gain Normalized	Non-Gain Normalized	Non-Gain Normalized Packed
Linear	32-bit float	16-bit unsigned integer + dark reference image(s) + gain reference image(s)	<i>not supported</i>
Counted	32-bit float	16-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image	8-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image
Counted / Super Resolution	32-bit float	8-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image	4-bit unsigned integer + gain reference image

TIFF Image Pixel Format for Gatan K2 and K3 Cameras

The pixel format specification below applies to:

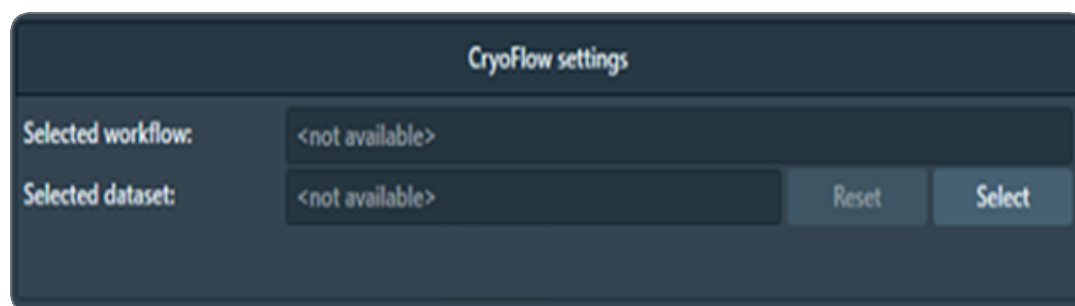
- Gatan K3 cameras.
- Gatan K2 cameras on a system with Titan 3.6 or later, or Talos 2.6 or later.

Advanced Camera Settings > Mode	Dose fraction output format	
	Gain Normalized	Non-Gain Normalized
Counted	8-bit unsigned integer	8-bit unsigned integer
Counted / Super Resolution	8-bit unsigned integer	8-bit unsigned integer

All Gatan Dose Fraction TIFF images use lossless LZW file compression.

The CryoFlow Settings

If the Microscope PC has a connection to the CryoFlow software on the Data Management Platform (DMP) Server, then EPU can store the acquired data in an CryoFlow Dataset. Optionally, the CryoFlow Dataset can be related to a Grid, but this is not required for a successful EPU session. To select the CryoFlow Dataset, the Session Setup > CryoFlow Settings must be defined.



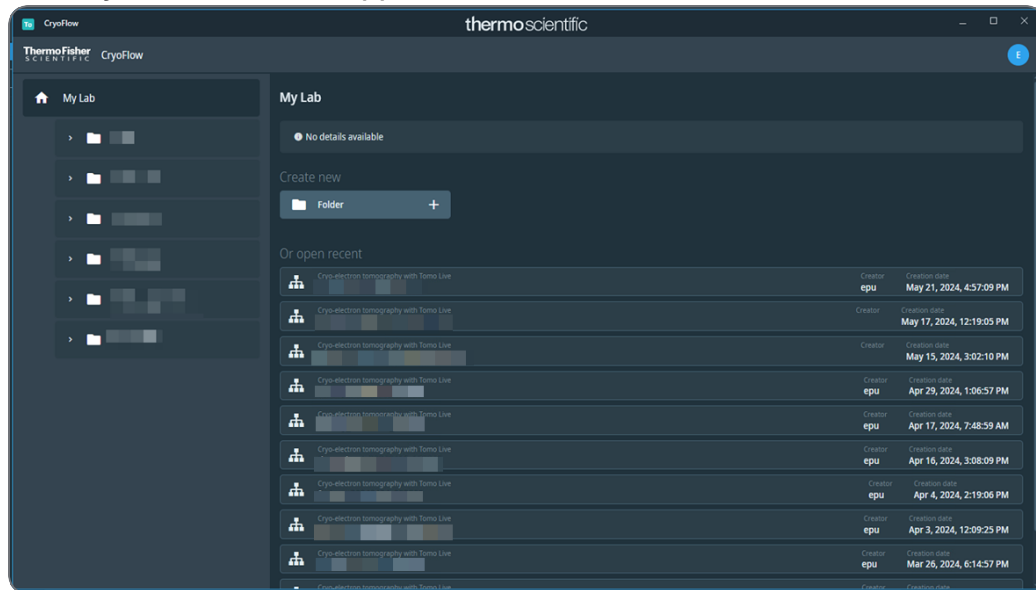
The CryoFlow Settings section is only visible when the CryoFlow client software is installed on the Microscope PC. If the CryoFlow Settings are disabled, then first log in on Thermo Fisher Scientific CryoFlow.

For instructions, see [Log in on Thermo Fisher Scientific CryoFlow](#). For a successful Automated Acquisition run it is not required to select an CryoFlow Dataset.

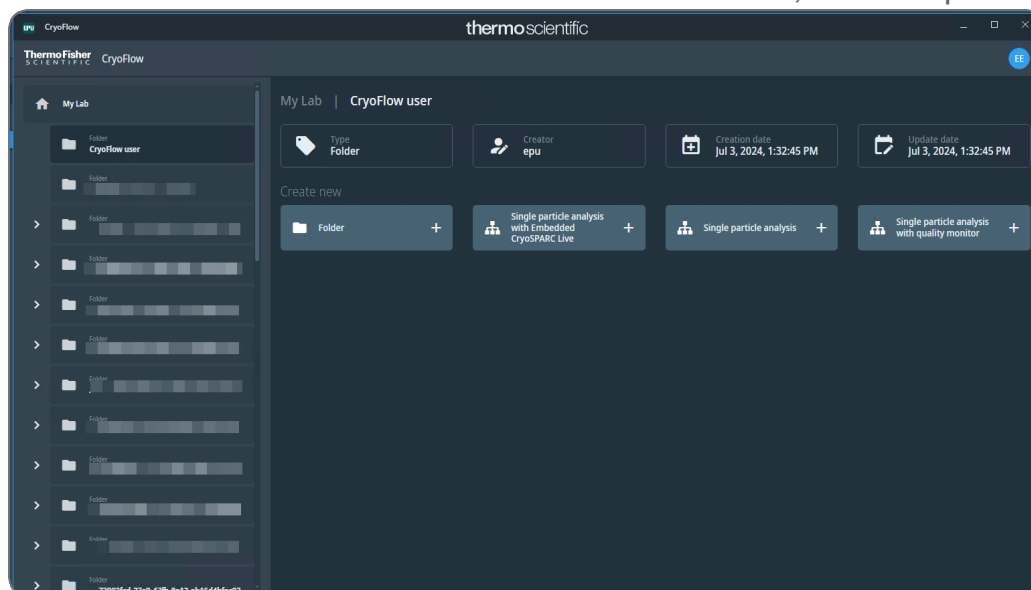
Note: It is not possible to change the CryoFlow Settings during the Automated Acquisition run.

To select an CryoFlow Dataset in the EPU, perform the actions below in the Session Setup task.

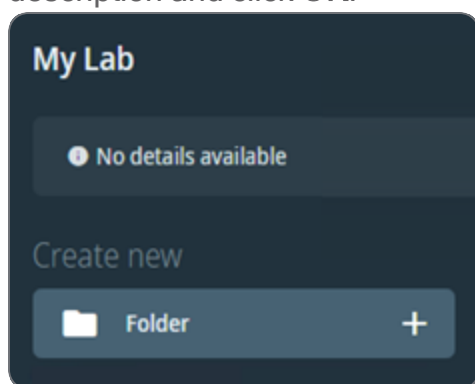
1. In the **CryoFlow settings** section, select **Select**.
The *CryoFlow interface* appears.



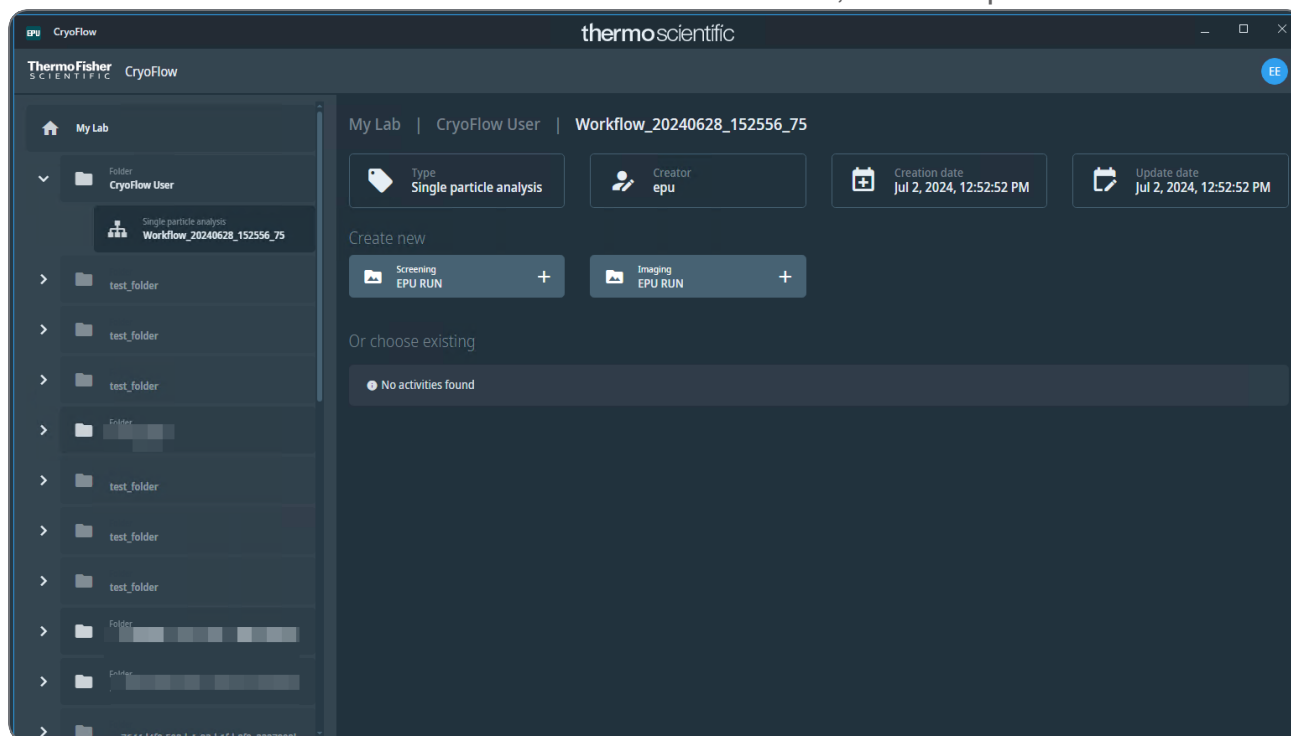
2. Select the **Folder** for which the EPU session is executed, in the left panel.



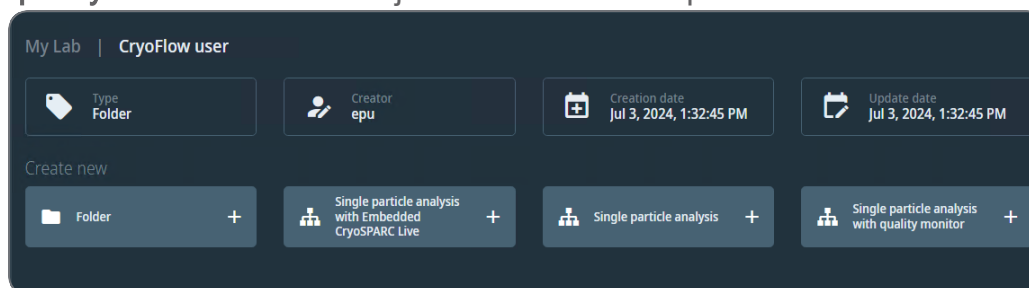
If not yet available, create a new folder by using the **Folder+** button. Adjust name and description and click **OK**.



3. Select the **Workflow** for which the EPU session is executed, in the left panel.



If not yet available, create a new workflow by using the **Single particle analysis+**, **Single particle analysis with Embedded CryoSPARC Live+** or **Single particle analysis with quality monitor+** button. Adjust name and description and click OK.



4. Create a new dataset by using the **EPU Run+** button. Adjust name and description and click OK.

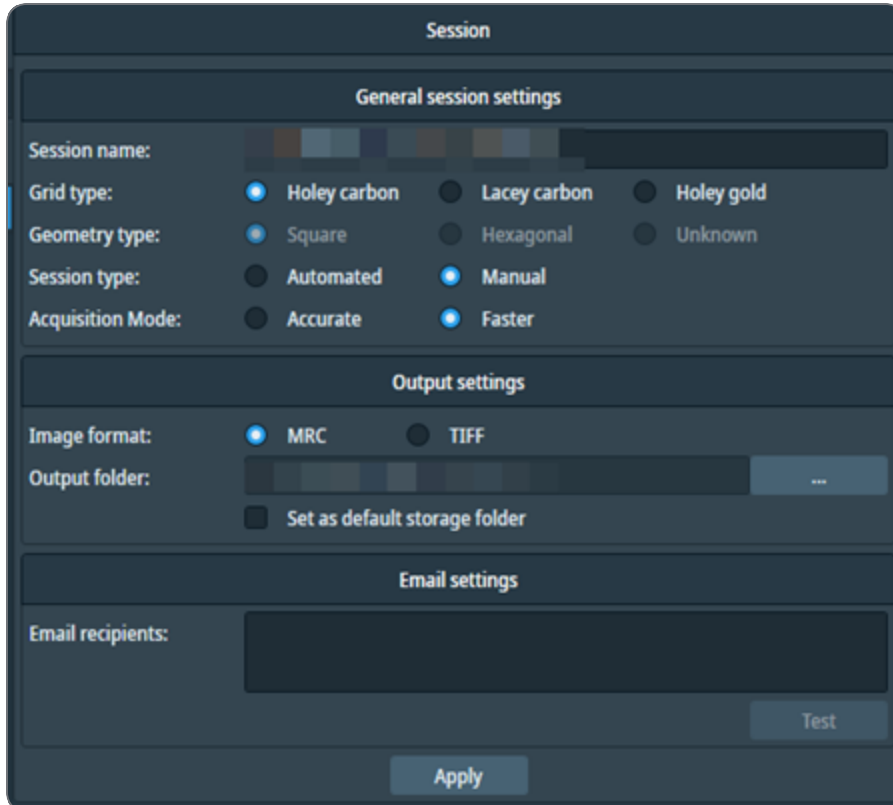
It is not possible to change the Dataset selection for data that is already acquired. If the CryoFlow Settings are changed after data has already been acquired, then the new CryoFlow Settings apply only to the data that is acquired from that moment onwards.

Set up an EPU Session

1. Select the **EPU > Session Setup** task.

The session setup dialogue was enhanced to let the user provide the specific grid type used for the data collection. This ensures the optimal procedures and smart algorithms are applied based on the used sample carrier type.

The *Session* form appears in the Task Execution panel.



The screenshot shows the 'Session' dialog box with the following settings:

- General session settings:**
 - Session name: [Text field]
 - Grid type: Holey carbon, Lacey carbon, Holey gold
 - Geometry type: Square, Hexagonal, Unknown
 - Session type: Automated, Manual
 - Acquisition Mode: Accurate, Faster
- Output settings:**
 - Image format: MRC, TIFF
 - Output folder: [Text field] ...
 - Set as default storage folder
- Email settings:**
 - Email recipients: [Text field]
 - Test button

Apply button at the bottom.

Session type *Holey carbon* with non editable geometry

Session

General session settings

Session name: [Color bar]

Grid type: Holey carbon Lacey carbon Holey gold

Geometry type: Square Hexagonal Unknown

Session type: Automated Manual

Acquisition Mode: Accurate Faster

Output settings

Image format: MRC TIFF

Output folder: [Folder path] ...

Set as default storage folder

Email settings

Email recipients: [Field]

Test

Apply

Session type *Holey Gold* with editable geometry

If the EPU Session is created from the current EPU Session or from a Saved Preference, then several values in the Session Setup form may be pre-loaded. All pre-loaded values can be adjusted. See [The EPU Session Saved Preferences](#) for:


- An overview of the supported values and results.
- The changes in the EPU Workflow when using a Saved Preference.

2. In the **General session settings** section:

a. Enter a **Session name**.

b. Select the **Grid type**.

- **Holey carbon:** Intended for carbon carriers where all foil holes are circular and have an identical diameter, typically *Quantifoil* types. The *Holey carbon* option also works for gold carriers bearing a square grid layout.
- **Lacey carbon:** Intended for carbon carriers where the foil holes have irregular shapes and dimensions.
- **Holey gold:** Intended for carriers with even smaller foil holes of *hexagonal* shape, typically on gold carriers.

 **Note:** EPU supports Hexagonal grids under the Holey gold type, which covers hexagonal grids on gold as well as carbon carriers.

c. Select the **Geometry type**.

The options in the geometry type are **Square**, **Hexagonal**, and **Unknown**.

- Grid type *Holey carbon* - The geometry type *Square* is selected and the user cannot change the geometry.
- Grid type *Holey gold* - The geometry type *Square* is selected and the user can change the geometry.
- Grid type *Lacey carbon* - There is no geometry, so it is not visible to the user.

d. Select the **Session Type**.

The Type setting defines how suitable areas are selected for Data Acquisition.

- **Automated:** Suitable areas are automatically detected, assessed and selected by filters and algorithms. For most sessions, the Automated session type results in the most efficient acquisition of high quality data.
- **Manual:** Suitable areas must be hand-picked. Use this mode when the number of areas from which high quality data must (or can) be acquired is very limited.
The Manual option is not available for EPU Sessions in an EPU Multigrid Queue.

It is not possible to use a mix of automated and manual area selection in a single Automated Acquisition run. It is possible though to follow-up an automated session by a manual session or vice versa, as long as the specimen remains loaded and the Atlas is not replaced or renewed.

e. Select the **Acquisition Mode**.

For a description of the available options, see [The Acquisition Mode for Quantifoil specimens](#).

f. Tick or clear **Use Phase Plates**.

Phase plates can only be used in a *Session type: Manual* session.

3. If the **CryoFlow Settings** section is available, then optionally select a Workflow, Dataset and Grid. See: [The CryoFlow settings](#).

4. In the **Output** section:

a. Select the **Image Format**.

- **MRC**: Electron microscopy image format.

The MRC format includes an extensive set of meta-data about the image, the microscope settings, and the used detector.

For a description of the Thermo Fisher Scientific meta-data, see [The MRC2014 Image Format](#).

For a description of the generic meta-data, see [MRC/CCP4 file format for images and volumes](#).

- **TIFF**: Generic raster image format.

A description of the format can be found on the web, e.g. at [TIFF file format](#).

Most 3D reconstruction software supports the MRC2014 format. If your reconstruction software does not support the MRC format, select the TIFF format.

Note: When using the Dose Fractions functionality that is available for Direct Detection cameras, the TIFF image format cannot be used.

- ##### b. For systems with a Gatan K2 or K3 camera only: select the **Dose fractions output format**. For a description of the options, see: [The pixel format for Gatan Dose Fraction images](#).

- ##### c. At *Output folder*, select [...] and navigate to the target output folder. All session data and acquired images are stored in the selected folder, except for Dose Fraction images. Dose Fraction images are saved on the Storage Server (Falcon 3EC and Falcon 4) or on the Gatan PC (Gatan K2 and K3).

Note: Do *not* rename or move the EPU Session Output folder.

EPU loads the active EPU session at startup. If the folder path is changed, EPU cannot find the session data. It is not possible to manually load an EPU session from a different location.

- ##### d. (Optional) Tick **Default folder**. When ticked, the specified *Output folder* is the default location for succeeding sessions.

5. (Optional) In the **Email** section:

a. Specify the **Recipients**.

Addresses must be separated by commas, semi-colons or spaces.

b. (Optional) Select **Test** to confirm if the entered email addresses are valid and if the email services are configured correctly.

The notification emails are sent via the email service components that are installed on the Microscope PC and on the Support PC. If the test email is not delivered to at least one of the specified addresses, contact Thermo Fisher Scientific.

EPU will send an email:

- When the Automated Acquisition run is completed.
- When the Automated Acquisition run terminates automatically before it is completed, for example if the column valves are closed due to vacuum issues, or if there is no more available disk space on the Storage Server or the Gatan PC.

If the Automated Acquisition run is stopped manually in the EPU user interface, then EPU will not send emails.

The email settings can be updated after the Automated Acquisition run has started.

6. Select **Apply**.

Limitations to Loading or Acquiring an Atlas after Session Setup

On a system without an Autoloader, EPU loads the most recently acquired Atlas as the basis for the Automated Acquisition run. On a system with an Autoloader, the Atlas for the currently loaded specimen is loaded from the Screening Session.

As long as no data has been acquired yet, it is possible to acquire a new Atlas or to load a different Atlas Session file for the currently loaded specimen.



Note: If a specimen has already been (partly) processed in an Automated Acquisition run, then do not load an existing Screening Session file for a new EPU session with that specimen.

The Screening Session file does not contain data about which Grid Squares have been processed already in a preceding Automated Acquisition run. Processed areas may be too damaged to yield new high quality data. Revisiting these areas is therefore not a productive use of system time.

Once data acquisitions have taken place, the Automated Acquisition session relies on the underlying Atlas to keep track of the processing progress and status and to maintain data consistency.

Square Selection Task

The purpose of the Square Selection task is to select only those Grid Squares that meet the requirements for high quality data acquisition:

- The specimen area is thin enough to be electron translucent.
- The specimen area contains no broken carbon foil.
- For Cryo-EM samples:
 - The holes in the carbon foil are filled with vitreous ice.
 - The Grid Square contains no contamination.

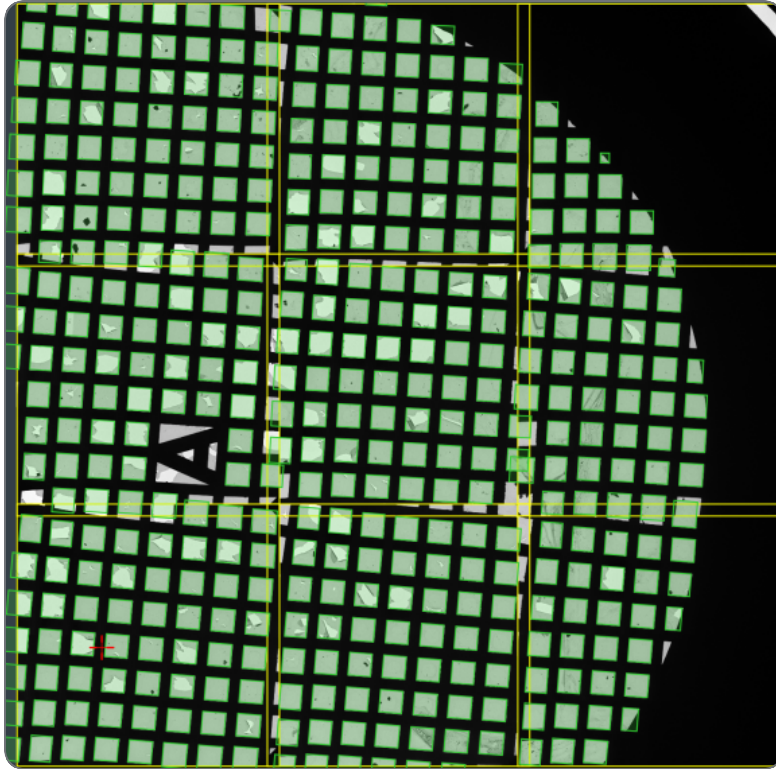
The Square Selection task is the same for lacey and holey carbon grids.

Select Grid Squares for High Quality Data Acquisition

Grid Square selection is a manual task. To select the Grid Squares that meet the requirements for high quality data acquisition, follow the procedure below:

1. Select the EPU > Square Selection.

The Atlas for the loaded specimen appears in the Task Execution panel.

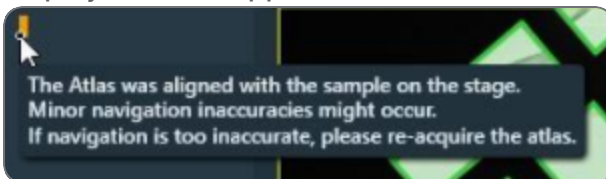


In the Atlas image:

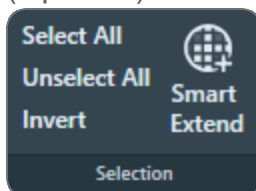
- Atlas Tiles have a yellow outline. The Atlas Tiles typically overlap a bit.
- Selected Grid Squares have a green outline and shading.
- If the Atlas is loaded from the Screening Session, then the default selection includes only the Grid Squares of the selected categories.
For an explanation of the Grid Square categories, see [Pre-select the Grid Squares for the Automated Acquisition run](#).
- If a new Atlas is acquired, the default selection includes all detected Grid Squares.
- When hovering over a Grid Square, a tooltip displays additional information.



- If the specimen has been unloaded and reloaded after the Atlas was acquired, then EPU automatically re-aligns the Atlas with the physical position and orientation of the specimen on the stage. Because there may still be small inaccuracies, a warning is displayed in the upper-left corner of the image display.

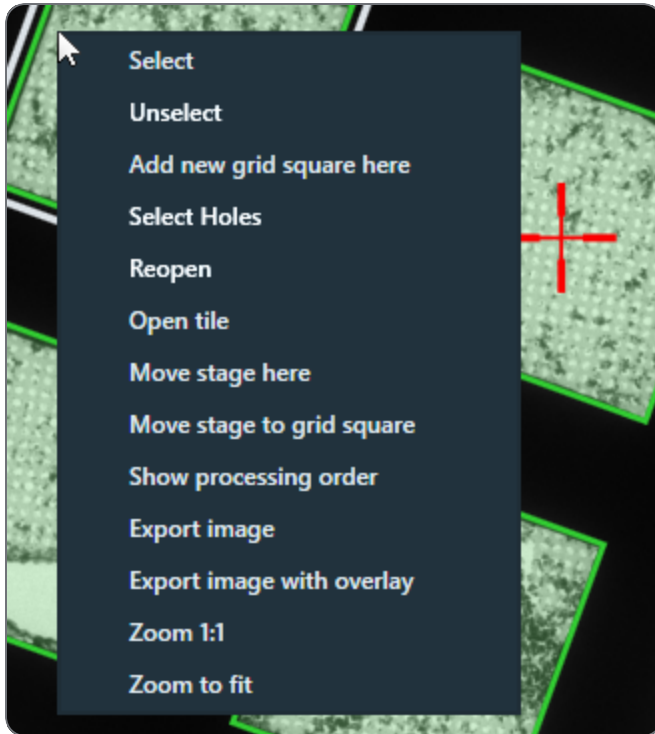


2. (Optional) Select **Unselect All** to start with an empty selection.



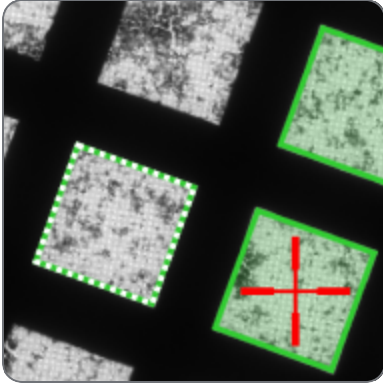
3. Customize the selection of Grid Squares from which data must be acquired.

- Use your own judgment to manually select or unselect individual Grid Squares. Blue and orange Grid Squares are already (partly) processed in an Automated Acquisition run. They cannot be selected or unselected anymore.
- Use the context menu:
Right-click on a Grid Square, then select **Select** or **Unselect** from the context menu.



- Use the keyboard and mouse:
To select one or more Grid Squares, hold the **Control** key and select one or more **gray Grid Squares**.
To unselect one or more Grid Squares, hold the **Shift** key and select one or more **green Grid Squares**.

- Use the suggestions from the *Grid Square Suggestion* function. Grid Square Suggestion is a machine learning algorithm that identifies Grid Squares that are not selected yet, but that have similar properties as the existing selection. These best-match Grid Squares are marked with a dotted green-and-white border.



To select a suggested Grid Square, either:

- Select it manually as described above.
- Select **Smart Extend** to add the best matching Grid Square from the suggested set.

The Grid Square Suggestion and Smart Extend functions are only available if the existing selection includes at least one Grid Square, and there is at least one detected Grid Square available that is not broken and not selected yet. For a good result, start with a selection of at least three Grid Squares. A larger baseline will result in a better match.

4. (Optional) Create and select a new Grid Square on a location of choice.

a. Right click on the **center of the new Grid Square location**.

If necessary, zoom in for better accuracy.

b. Select **Add new Grid Square here**

EPU creates and selects a new Grid Square with the following properties:

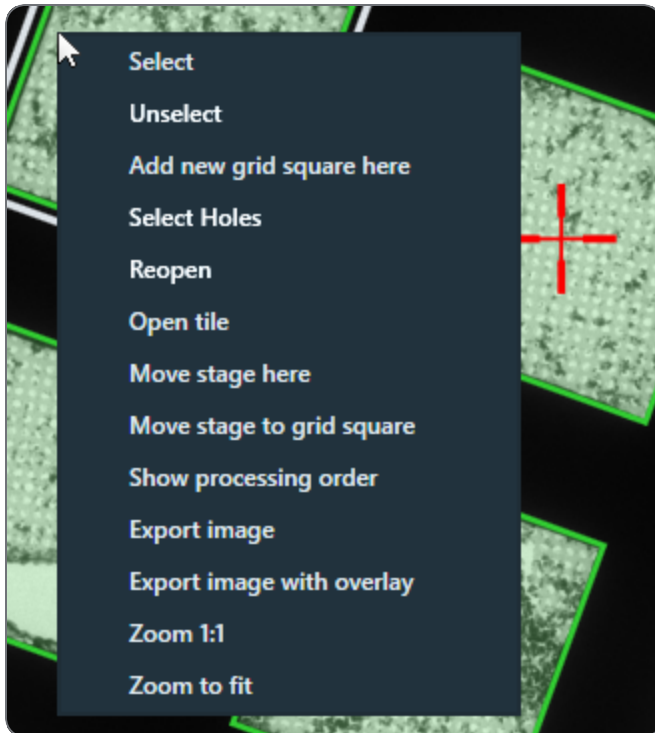
- The center of the new Grid Square is at the position of the mouse cursor.
- The orientation of the new Grid Square is perpendicular to the image display. The new Grid Square will not have the same orientation as the detected Grid Squares.
- The dimensions of the new Grid Square are according to Mesh-300 specifications.

If the newly created Grid Square overlaps with an already selected Grid Square, then both Grid Squares remain selected.

Zoom in on an Individual Atlas Tile Image

In the Atlas overview image it can be difficult to assess the quality of a single Grid Square. For a higher resolution image of an Atlas Tile:

Right-click on an **Atlas Tile**.



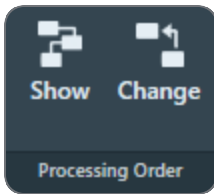
1. Select **Open tile**.
2. Add individual Grid Squares to the selection, and/or remove individual Grid Squares from the selection.
3. Right-click in the **Atlas Tile** image.
4. Select **Close tile** to return to the Atlas overview image again.

Change the Processing Order of the Grid Squares

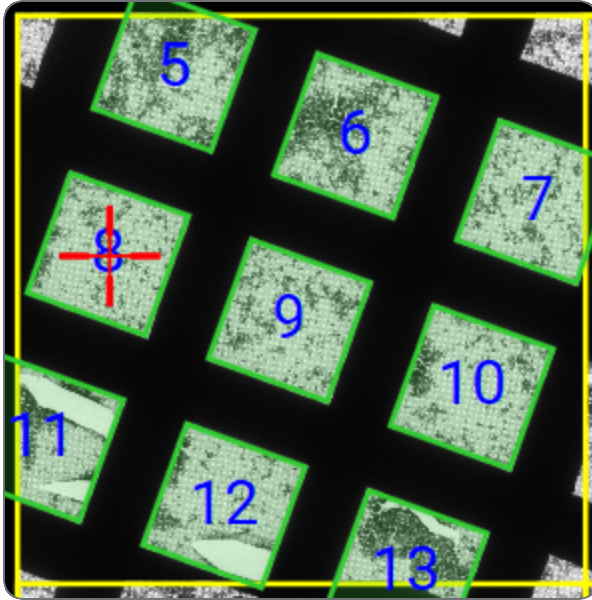
The order in which the selected Grid Squares must be processed during the Automated Acquisition run can be re-arranged. This makes it possible to prioritize Grid Squares with the best chance of large quantities of high quality data. It is not possible to change the processing order during the Automated Acquisition run or while the run is paused.

To view and change the processing order, follow the instructions below:

1. In the **Processing Order** section of the Ribbon Bar, select **Show**.



The processing order appears in the Atlas overview image.



The processing order is determined on Atlas level, not per individual Atlas Tile.

2. Select **Processing Order > Change**.
3. In the image display, select the **Grid Square** that must be processed first.
The selected Grid Square is moved to the number 1 position in the processing order. The other Grid Squares in the Atlas automatically move one position down in the processing order.
4. Select the **Grid Square** that must be processed next.
This Grid Square is moved to the number 2 position in the overall processing order.
5. Continue selecting **Grid Squares** in the desired processing order.
After the Grid Squares with the best chances of high quality data yield are re-assigned to the start of the processing order, then it is not necessary to re-assign all remaining Grid Squares.
6. Select **Change** again to leave the processing order change mode.

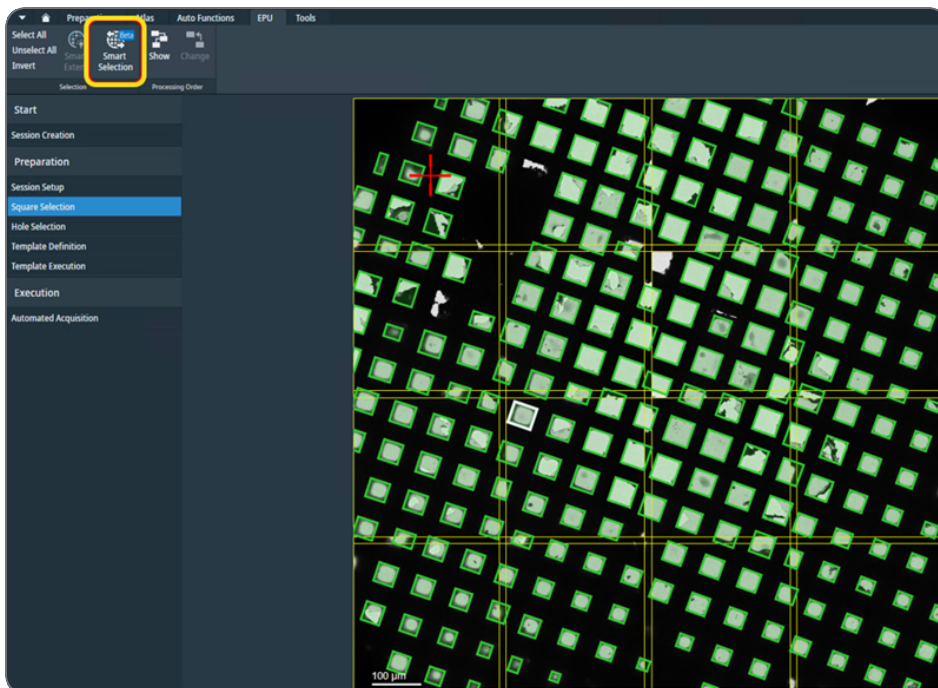
Smart Selection for Screening in the Square Selection Task

An AI/DL based algorithm to automatically select a user-specified number of grid squares for screening is available as a *Smart Selection* toggle button in the *Square Selection* task in the EPU tab.

Note: Requires Smart EPU with EQM or Smart EPU with Embedded CryoSPARC Live license.

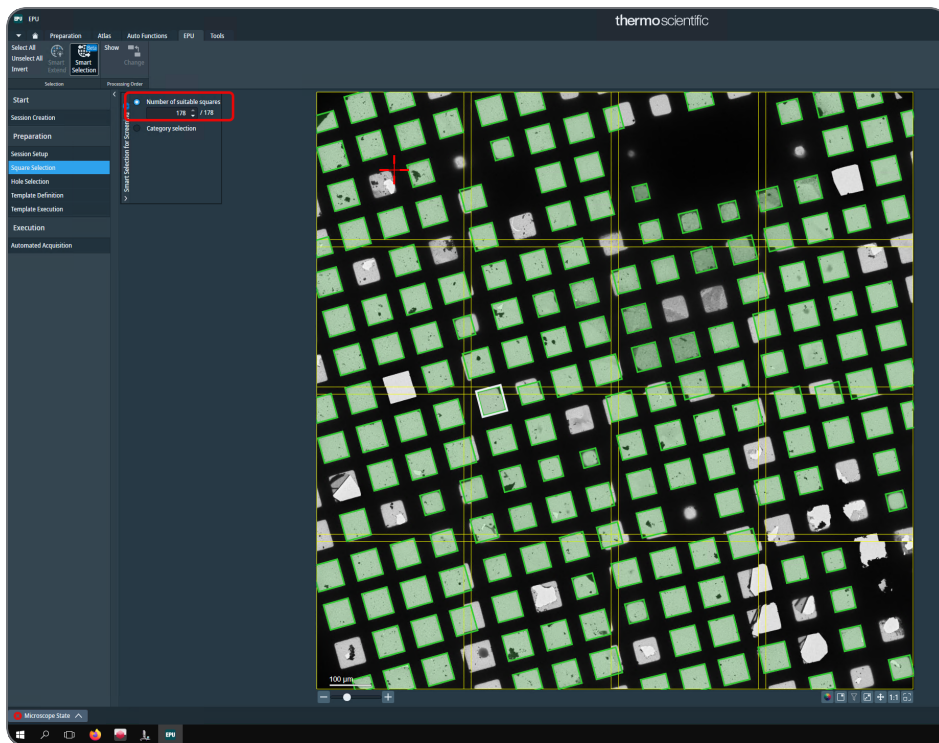
Note: Starting from EPU 3.10, Holey Gold Grid type is supported along with Holey carbon Grid type.

To enable the feature, you must log in to CryoFlow, and an CryoFlow dataset must be connected in the Session Setup.



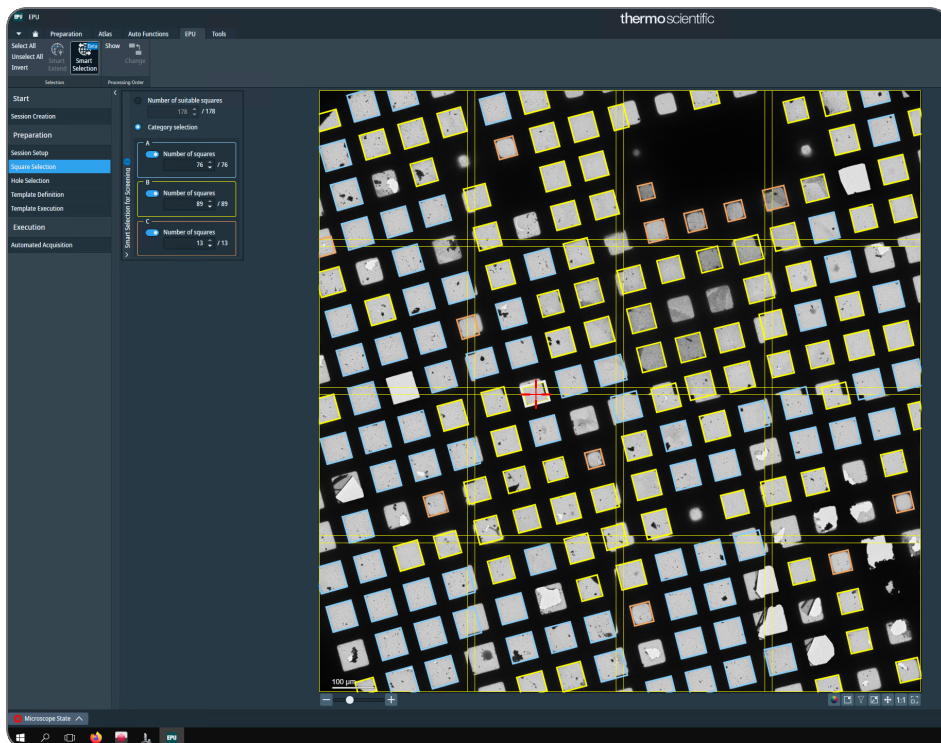
The AI/DL algorithm detects defects such as contamination, cracks, "fried-egg" ice and aggregation and filters out squares that are deemed unsuitable for image acquisition. All suitable squares are initially marked as selected (green). A new selection box is displayed, which allows you to automatically narrow down this selection in the below two different ways:

1. *Number of suitable squares*: From all squares evaluated as suitable (denominator on the UI), a user-chosen **total number** of grid squares (numerator on the UI) is selected by automatically distributing this total number across all identified grid square categories (details on categories below). The number 10 is prefilled in the selection text box. This option is recommended for broad screening of samples with unknown behavior in ice.
2. *Category selection*: You can enter a number of **squares per category**, allowing a more fine-grained selection (details on categories below). For each category, the number 10 is prefilled in the selection box if the category has at least 10 squares, otherwise the number of squares in that category. This option is recommended for more selective screening, where certain ice conditions can be excluded based on prior knowledge.



Note: Starting from EPU 3.8, the *Apply* button on the Smart Screening Selection is removed. From now, any change in the text boxes will be applied immediately. Furthermore, the displayed numbers now always reflect the current state of selection rather than prefilled values

Clicking the *Category selection* radio button enables the more fine-grained selection of squares with per-category radio buttons and number text boxes. Each category is highlighted with a distinct frame color in the image pane corresponding to the respective category color in the category selection UI element.



Categorization and Ordering

All suitable grid squares are **categorized** based on their **apparent sizes** (a proxy for ice thickness). The grid square categories are sorted according to the **apparent size** of the grid squares, from largest (A) to smallest. Screening is typically performed across different ice thickness levels to determine optimal ice conditions for the sample at hand. The Smart Selection feature supports this flow by offering the user different square size categories to choose from. If a total number of squares is chosen (first radio button), the total is distributed evenly across all categories.

The **number of categories** and the category assignment are dynamically determined based on the grid square size distribution. If the variance is low (all squares of similar size), only one category is used.

Furthermore, the grid squares are **ordered** according to their **defect levels**, from least defective to most defective. When you select N squares (total or within a category), EPU proposes the N best-ranked (least defective) squares while ensuring the user-chosen distribution across categories.

Combining Smart Selection with Multigrid

When creating a new session in a multigrid queue, the values from the categorization window from the previous session will be taken. If categories were selected, the sum of selected squares will be used to choose representative grid squares in the new grid.

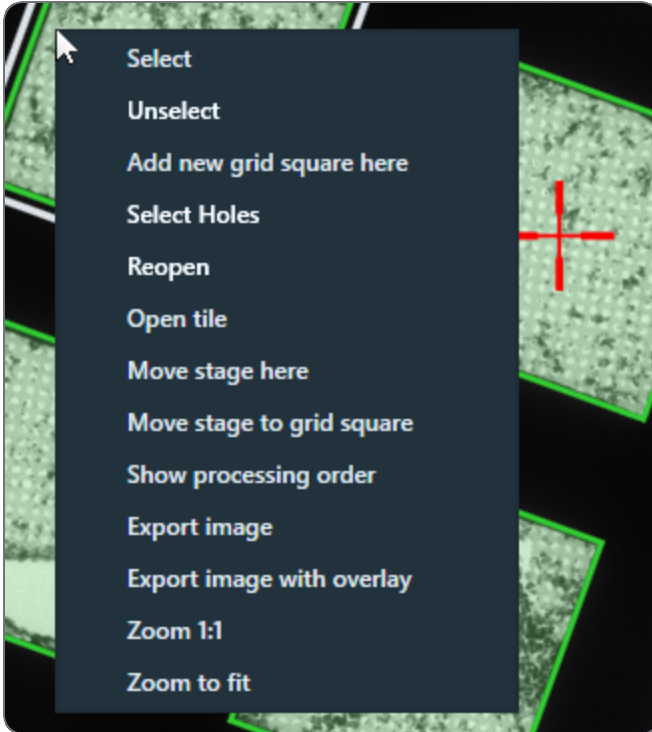
Area Selection Task for Lacey Carbon Specimens

Define the Acquisition Area Pattern and Filter Settings for an Automated Selection Session

If the *Session type* is Automated, then EPU uses the built-in filters and algorithms to select suitable Acquisition Areas.

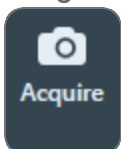
To configure the filter settings, follow the instructions below. This procedure must be executed for only one of the selected Grid Squares. During the Automated Acquisition run, EPU uses the same filter settings for all selected Grid Squares.

1. Acquire a representative Grid Square image:
 - a. Select the **EPU** tab > **Square Selection** task.
 - b. In the **Image Display**, identify a Grid Square that appears representative for the condition of the specimen.
 - c. Right-click on the identified Grid Square and select **Select Areas**.



EPU switches to the *Area Selection* task for the selected Grid Square.

If the specimen is already at eucentric height, or if there is a different reason to skip the Auto Eucentric function, then select **Acquire** to only acquire a new Grid Square image.



If the specimen is not already at eucentric height, then select **Auto Eucentric**.



If necessary, EPU first moves the specimen, so that the center of the selected Grid Square is in the center of the field of view.

While the Auto Eucentric function runs, the *Auto Eucentric* button changes to *Stop Auto Eucentric*. If selected, the Auto Eucentric function is aborted and the specimen returns to its previous Z position.

The Auto Eucentric function includes the acquisition of a new Grid Square image.

2. If the particles all have a similar orientation in the ice layer:

a. Adjust the **A-tilt angle** of the specimen.

A different A-tilt axis can be applied for each Grid Square to acquire images from various incident angles. EPU stores the A-tilt angle of the Grid Square during Hole Selection, and applies the A-tilt angle during Automated Acquisition at the same Grid Square. This typically results in a higher quality 3D reconstruction.

b. Select **Acquire** to update the Grid Square image.

On Tundra systems it is not possible to adjust the A-tilt angle of the stage.

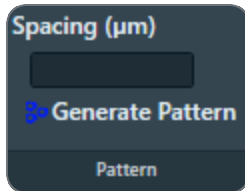
3. (Optional) Modify the **Defocus List**.

The Defocus List is applied to all Acquisition Areas on the specimen. For instructions, see [Define the Defocus List for a Lacey Carbon specimen](#).

4. Generate a pattern of Acquisition Areas:

a. Specify the **Spacing** value.

This is the Center-to-Center distance of adjacent Acquisition Areas.

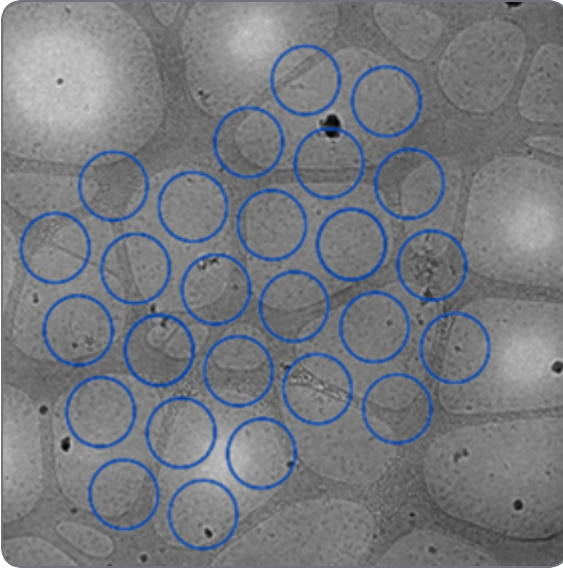


The Spacing value can not be smaller than the diameter of the Acquisition Area.

- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Acquisition Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset.
- On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the Acquisition Area is defined as the smallest circle that fully covers the camera field of view at the Data Acquisition Preset magnification. The beam is typically slightly wider than the camera field of view.

b. Select **Generate Pattern**.

EPU draws hexagonal pattern of Acquisition Areas across the entire Grid Square image.

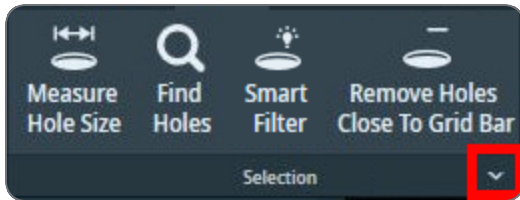


Depending on the microscope type and configuration, the pattern contains circles and rectangles. Rectangles mark the field of view of the camera. Circles mark the beam diameter.

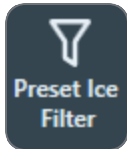
- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Acquisition Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset.
 - On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the Acquisition Area is defined as the smallest circle that fully covers the camera field of view at the Data Acquisition Preset magnification.
- c. If the Acquisition Areas are too close to each other or too far apart, then adjust **Spacing** and select **Generate Pattern** again.

5. Set or adjust the Ice Quality Filter:

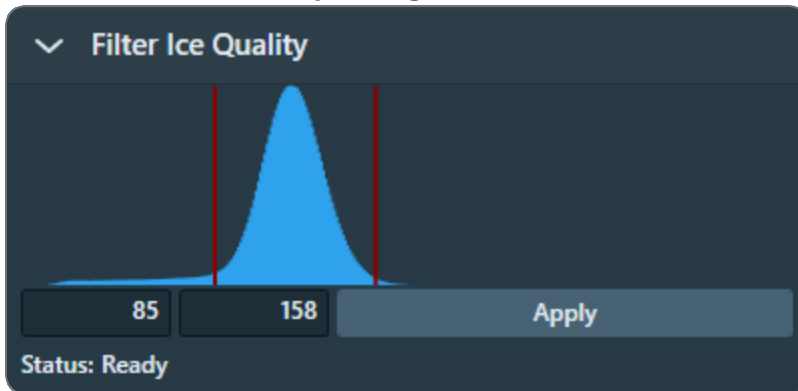
- a. Expand the **Selection** ribbon group by clicking on the small arrow in the lower right corner.



- b. Select **Preset Ice Filter** to reset the Ice Quality Filter boundaries.



- c. In the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:



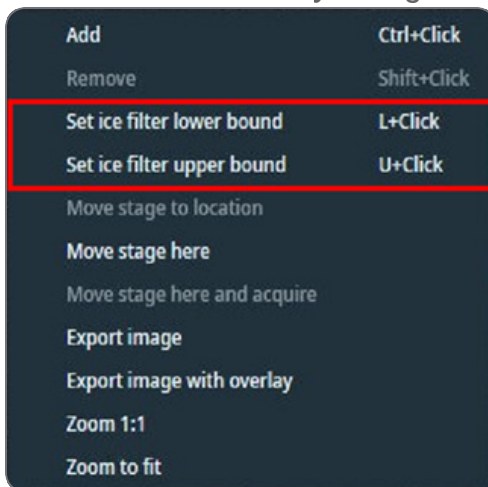
- Drag the **red lower boundary marker** to exclude Acquisition Areas that are too dark.
- Drag the **red upper boundary marker** to exclude Acquisition Areas that are too bright.

After every change, the Ice Quality filter updates the selection of suitable Acquisition Areas immediately. Depending on the number of areas in the Grid Square image, this may take some time.

- d. Alternatively, you can set the the lower and/or upper bounds of the Ice Filter according to an existing hole:
- Hover the mouse pointer over a hole. The ice filter value is highlighted over the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:

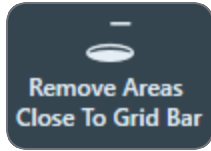


- Right-click a hole and select one of the two options:
Set ice filter lower bound. This sets the lower bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.
Set ice filter upper bound. This sets the upper bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.



You can also use the keyboard shortcuts displayed in the right-click menu.

6. (Optional) Select **Remove Areas Close To Grid Bar** to exclude Acquisition Areas near the edge of the Grid Square.



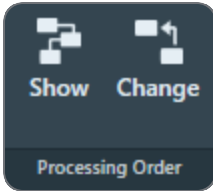
If the result of the *Remove Areas Close to Grid Bar* filter is not satisfactory, then select the filter button again to de-activate it. This will automatically generate a new pattern and apply the Ice Quality filter.

Handpick the Acquisition Areas for a Manual Selection Session

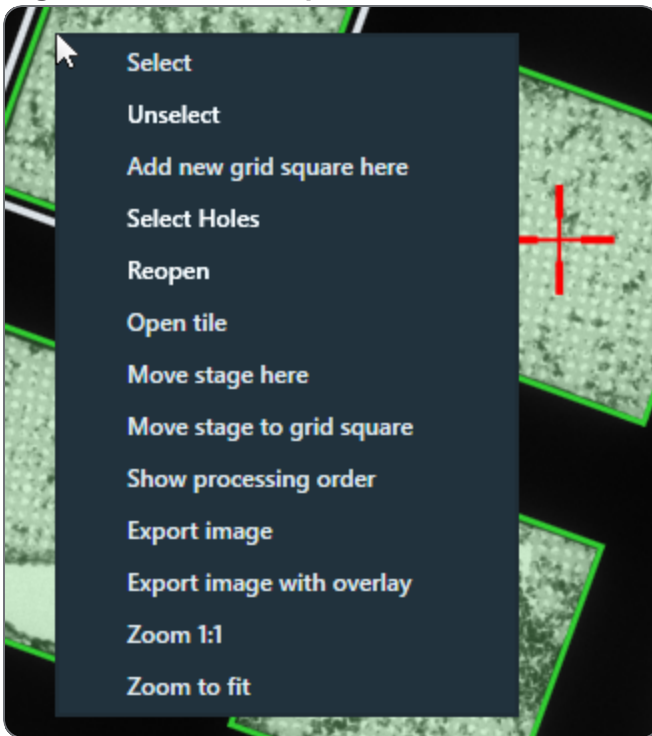
If *Session type* is *Manual*, then it is possible adjust the Acquisition Area pattern and filter settings for each individual selected Grid Square. With these settings, the Acquisition Areas are selected from which data will be acquired. For each selected Acquisition Area, the X, Y and Z position of the area center is stored. This selection can be customized in each individual Grid Square. During the Automated Acquisition run, EPU does not re-evaluate the suitability of the selected Acquisition Areas.

After the suitable Grid Squares are selected in the *Square Selection* task, the procedure to handpick the target Acquisition Areas is as follows:

1. Select the Grid Squares from which data will be acquired:
 - a. Select the **Square Selection** task.
 - b. Select **Processing Order > Show**.



- c. (Optional) Change the Grid Square processing order. For instructions, see [Change the processing order of the Grid Squares](#).
- d. Right-click on **Grid Square 1** and select **Select Areas**.



EPU switches to the *Area Selection* task for the selected Grid Square. The lower-left corner of the Area Selection Image Display displays the processing order number of the Grid Square and Z-position of the selected Grid Square.

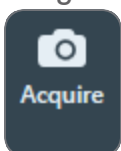
2. Prepare the first selected Grid Square:

a. Select the **Area Selection** task.

If a Grid Square image is available, then the image display shows the selected Grid Square. The lower-left corner of the image display shows the Stage Z-position for the displayed Grid Square.

- White: The Eucentric Height value is not determined yet.
- Green: The Eucentric Height value is determined.

If the specimen is already at eucentric height, or if there is a different reason to skip the Auto Eucentric function, then select **Acquire** to only acquire a new Grid Square image.



If the specimen is not already at eucentric height, then select **Auto Eucentric**.



If necessary, EPU first moves the specimen, so that the center of the selected Grid Square is in the center of the field of view.

While the Auto Eucentric function runs, the *Auto Eucentric* button changes to *Stop Auto Eucentric*. If selected, the Auto Eucentric function is aborted and the specimen returns to its previous Z position.

The Auto Eucentric function includes the acquisition of a new Grid Square image.

Define the Acquisition Area pattern and filter settings. For instructions, see [Define the Acquisition Area Pattern and Filter Settings for a Manual Selection Session](#).

(Optional) Customize the selection of target Acquisition Areas. For instructions, see [Customize the selection of Acquisition Areas](#).

3. Prepare the other selected Grid Squares:

- a. (Optional) Use the *Automated Preparation* functions to apply the Acquisition Area pattern and filter settings of the current Grid Square to all other selected Grid Squares. For instructions, see [Automatically create a Manual Selection in all selected Grid Squares](#).
- b. Select **Navigate > Next Square** to move to the next Grid Square.



In the Square Selection image display, the white border moves to the next Grid Square. The specimen does not move until *Auto Eucentric* or *Acquire* is selected.

c. If desired or necessary:

- Define or adjust the Acquisition Area pattern and filter settings. For instructions, see [Define the Acquisition Area Pattern and Filter Settings for a Manual Selection Session](#).
- Customize the selection of target Acquisition Areas. For instructions, see [Customize the selection of Acquisition Areas](#).

4. (Optional) Inspect or adjust the Acquisition Area selection for a prepared Grid Square:

Either:

- Select **Navigate > Previous Square** until the desired Grid Square is reached. In the Square Selection image display, the white border moves to the previous Grid Square. The specimen does not move until *Auto Eucentric* or *Acquire* is selected.
- Select the **Square Selection** task .
 - > Right-click on the desired **Grid Square**.
 - > Select **Select Areas**.

EPU displays the Grid Square image with the Acquisition Area selection for the selected Grid Square.



Note: Unless the current selection of Acquisition Areas must be cleared:

- Do *not* select *Acquire*
- Do *not* select *Generate*
- If *Remove Areas Close to Grid Bar* is active, then do *not* select *Remove Areas Close to Grid Bar*.

Define the Acquisition Area Pattern and Filter Settings for a Manual Selection Session

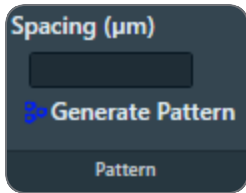
1. (Optional) Modify the **Defocus List**.

The Defocus List is applied to all Acquisition Areas on the specimen. For instructions, see [Define the Defocus List for a Lacey Carbon specimen](#).

2. Generate a pattern of Acquisition Areas:

a. Specify the **Spacing** value.

This is the Center-to-Center distance of adjacent Acquisition Areas.

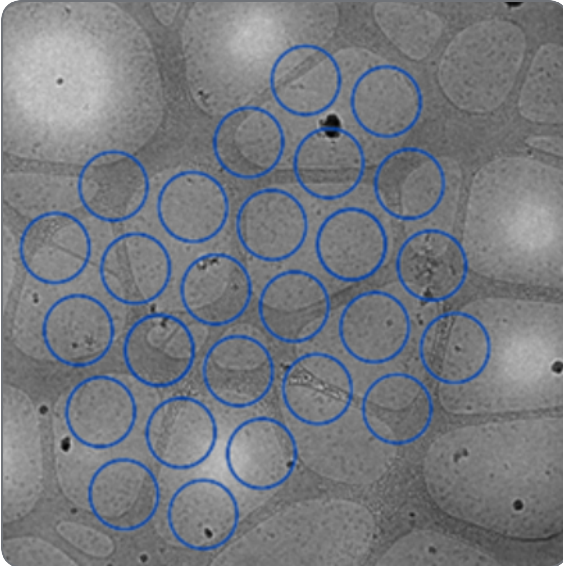


The Spacing value can not be smaller than the diameter of the Acquisition Area.

- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Acquisition Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset.
- On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the Acquisition Area is defined as the smallest circle that fully covers the camera field of view at the Data Acquisition Preset magnification. The beam is typically slightly wider than the camera field of view.

b. Select **Generate Pattern**.

EPU draws hexagonal pattern of Acquisition Areas across the entire Grid Square image.

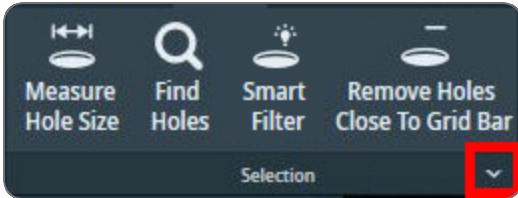


Depending on the microscope type and configuration, the pattern contains circles and rectangles. Rectangles mark the field of view of the camera. Circles mark the beam diameter.

- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Acquisition Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset.
 - On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the Acquisition Area is defined as the smallest circle that fully covers the camera field of view at the Data Acquisition Preset magnification.
- c. If the Acquisition Areas are too close to each other or too far apart, then adjust **Spacing** and select **Generate Pattern** again.

3. Set or adjust the Ice Quality Filter:

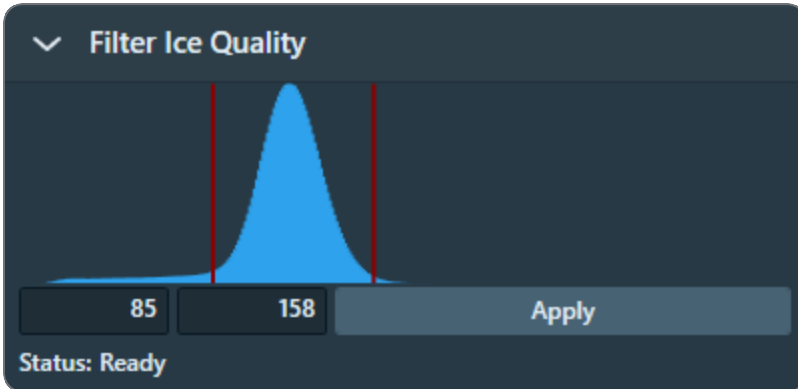
- a. Expand the **Selection** ribbon group by clicking on the small arrow in the lower right corner.



- b. Select **Preset Ice Filter** to reset the Ice Quality Filter boundaries.



- c. In the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:



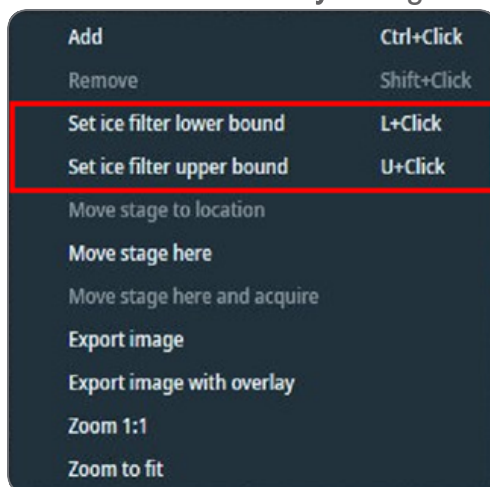
- Drag the **red lower boundary marker** to exclude Acquisition Areas that are too dark.
- Drag the **red upper boundary marker** to exclude Acquisition Areas that are too bright.

After every change, the Ice Quality filter updates the selection of suitable Acquisition Areas immediately. Depending on the number of areas in the Grid Square image, this may take some time.

- d. Alternatively, you can set the the lower and/or upper bounds of the Ice Filter according to an existing hole:
- Hover the mouse pointer over a hole. The ice filter value is highlighted over the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:

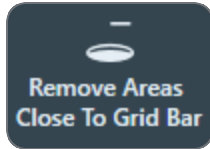


- Right-click a hole and select one of the two options:
Set ice filter lower bound. This sets the lower bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.
Set ice filter upper bound. This sets the upper bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.



You can also use the keyboard shortcuts displayed in the right-click menu.

4. (Optional) Select **Remove Areas Close To Grid Bar** to exclude Acquisition Areas near the edge of the Grid Square.



If the result of the *Remove Areas Close to Grid Bar* filter is not satisfactory, then select the filter button again to de-activate it. This will automatically generate a new pattern and apply the Ice Quality filter.

i Note: When the Generate Pattern function is executed, all Acquisition Areas that match with the Ice Quality Filter are automatically included in the target area selection.
Any previous customization of the target area selection is cleared.

5. (Optional) Customize the initial selection of target Acquisition Areas as described in [Customize the selection of Acquisition Areas](#).

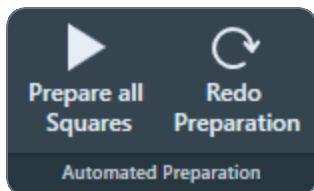
i Note: The Filter Ice Quality boundaries and the Remove Areas Close to Grid Bar status are not stored for each Grid Square.

The settings of the Filter Ice Quality and the status of the Remove Areas Close to Grid Bar remain in their last adjusted values. When a Grid Square is displayed for which the selection is already completed, then the displayed filter settings may be different than the filter settings that were used to select the Acquisition Areas in the displayed Grid Square.

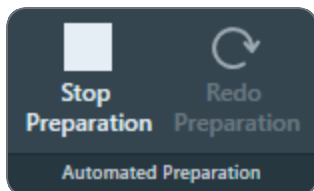
To apply the currently displayed filter settings to all Grid Squares, select Prepare All Squares or Redo Preparation as described in [Automatically create a Manual Selection in all selected Grid Squares](#).

Automatically Create a Manual Selection in all Selected Grid Square

The *Automated Preparation* functions significantly decrease the time and effort that is needed to manually select the acquisition targets (Foil Holes or Acquisition Areas) for an Automated Acquisition run. After the suitable Grid Squares are selected and the first Grid Square is prepared, Automated Preparation offers the following functions:



Automated Preparation ribbon bar while no automated preparation is ongoing



Automated Preparation ribbon bar while automated preparation is ongoing

- **Prepare All Squares:** EPU automatically performs the manual target selection procedure in all selected Grid Squares:
 - Move to the next selected Grid Square.
 - Set the specimen to Eucentric height.
 - Acquire a Grid Square image.
 - Create the selection of acquisition targets, using the Selection parameters of the current Grid Square. i.e., filter settings, Smart Filter, etc.
 - If a Grid Square already contains a target selection, then no targets are added or removed.

Even if the parameters and filter settings need to be adjusted for each individual Grid Square, then *Prepare All Squares* may still provide a good starting point for each Grid Square.

- **Stop Preparation:** Aborts the ongoing automated preparation. The Eucentric Height values, Grid Square images and target selections that are completed so far are not cleared or discarded.

If *Prepare All Squares* has been executed at least once in the EPU session, then the following functions can be used:

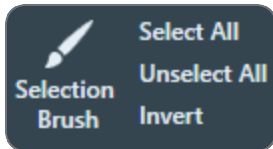
- **Redo Preparation:**

Use *Redo Preparation* when the existing target selection must be renewed after the parameters and/or filters are adjusted.

- In already prepared Grid Squares, *Redo Preparation* clears the target selection, then creates a new selection. The Grid Square image and Eucentric Height value are maintained.
- For not yet prepared Grid Squares the *Redo Preparation* function performs the same actions as the initial *Prepare All Squares* execution.
- Select **Prepare All Squares** again to prepare newly selected Grid Squares, or to complete an aborted preparation run. *Prepare All Squares* uses the current selection and filter values.
 - Already prepared Grid Squares remain as they are. If the selection and filter values have changed, then the existing selection is not changed.
 - For not yet prepared Grid Squares the initial *Prepare All Squares* actions are performed.

Customize the Selection of Acquisition Areas


Before starting the manual selection, check if the manual selection tools are available in the Ribbon Bar.



If not, then select **Session Setup > Session type: Manual**.

Note: The following steps must be repeated for *each* individual selected Grid Square.

1. Perform all the steps that are described in [Define the Acquisition Area Pattern and Filter Settings for an Automated Selection Session](#).

 **Note:** Make sure the specimen is accurately set to eucentric height.

The positions of the selected areas are stored as (X,Y,Z) coordinates. If the specimen is not at eucentric height during manual selection, the X and Y coordinates of the selected areas may have an offset. This may cause failure of the Autofocus and/or Eucentric Correction functions during the Automated Acquisition run, which may negatively impact the amount and quality of the acquired data.

2. Create a selection of Acquisition Areas.

Either:

- Select the suitable areas in the generated pattern.
- Unselect the bad areas in the generated pattern.
- Select the bad areas in the generated pattern, then invert the selection.
- Create a selection of suitable areas without using a generated pattern.

Instructions for each of these selection procedures are described below.

If the Ice Quality Filter boundaries are changed after a manual selection has been made, then the selected set is not updated. Selected areas that fall outside the new boundaries will not be removed from the selection. Likewise, areas that are not part of the selection will not be added to selection if their average gray scale value now falls inside the new boundaries.

Select the Suitable Areas in the Generated Pattern

When the number of bad areas is larger than the number of suitable areas:

1. Select **Unselect All** to clear the selected set.
2. Add the suitable areas to the selection:
 - To add a single area to the selected set, right-click on an area, then select **Add** from the context menu.
 - To add one or more separate areas to the selected set, hold the **Control** key and select the individual suitable areas.
 - To add multiple adjacent areas, select **Selection Brush**, hold the **Control** key and swipe across the region of suitable areas.

Unselect the Bad Areas in the Generated Pattern

When most areas in the generated pattern are suitable for high quality data acquisition, it can be more efficient to remove the ones that are *not* suitable:

1. Select **Select All** to add all areas to the selected set.
2. Remove the bad areas from the selection:
 - To remove a single area from the selected set, right-click on an area and select **Remove** from the context menu.
 - To remove one or more separate areas from the selected set, hold the **Shift** key and select the individual bad areas.
 - To remove multiple adjacent areas, select **Selection Brush** and swipe across the region of bad areas.

Select the Bad Areas in the Generated Pattern, then Invert the Selection

When the bad areas in the generated pattern are easier to identify than the suitable areas:

1. Select **Unselect All** to clear the selected set.
2. Select the bad areas as if they were added to the selection:
 - To add a single area to the selected set, right-click on an area and select **Add** from the context menu.
 - To add one or more separate areas to the selected set, hold the **Control** key and select the individual areas.
 - To add multiple adjacent areas, select **Selection Brush**, hold the **Control** key and swipe across the region of bad areas.
3. Select **Invert**.

Add and Remove Acquisition Areas with the Selection Brush

The instruction in [Add and Remove Foil Holes with the Selection Brush](#) are applicable for a Quantifoil specimen. These instructions are also applicable for the generated pattern of Acquisition Areas on a Lacey Carbon specimen.

Define a Selection of Acquisition Areas without a Generated Pattern

When the generated pattern does not hit all the suitable areas in the Grid Square, it is possible to freely create Acquisition Areas at any location.


1. Select **Acquire** to start with a fresh Grid Square image.
Do *not* select View Pattern.
2. Create Acquisition Areas.
Either:
 - Right-click in the center of a suitable area, then select **Add** from the context menu.
 - Hold the **Control** key, then select the center of one or more suitable areas.

Inspect an Acquisition Area to Assess Suitability

To decide whether or not to include an Acquisition Area in the selection, a closer look may be needed to assess particle content, ice thickness, charging, etc,.

1. In the Grid Square image, right-click on the desired Acquisition Area and either select:
 - **Move stage to location** to center the Acquisition Area in which the right mouse button was clicked.
 - **Move stage here** to center the exact position at which the right mouse button was clicked.

2. Select **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel > **Acquire** to acquire a single image. To avoid unnecessary exposure:
 - Do not select Search.
 - Do not use the FluScreen to view the specimen.
3. If necessary, change magnification and/or illumination, and acquire a new image.

 **Note:** Every exposure causes damage to the specimen. To maintain the highest quality, try to keep the accumulated dosage to a minimum.

Set the Autofocus and Drift Stabilization Values

On a Lacey Carbon specimen there is no repetitive pattern of identically shaped Foil Holes. Because of this, the Autofocus and Drift Measurement functions cannot be performed on predefined dedicated areas.

- **Autofocus:** After data has been acquired from an Acquisition Area, that Acquisition Area becomes the Autofocus Area for the next Acquisition Area.
- **Drift Measurement:** On Lacey Carbon specimens, the Drift Measurement function is not performed. Instead, a timed delay is used to wait for drift to decrease after a stage move. Use the **Auto Function** tab > **Drift stabilization** task to determine a realistic value for a short move. See [Run the Drift Stabilization auto-function](#) for instructions.

Set the Autofocus and Drift Stabilization values as follows:

1. Select or specify the **Autofocus Area** settings:

a. Select **Recurrence**:

- **Never**: Do not perform the Autofocus function at all.
- **Always**: Autofocus is performed at every Foil Hole.
- **After Distance**: Autofocus is performed only when the distance between the current Foil Hole and the most recent Autofocus location is larger than a specified value.
- **After Centering**: Autofocus is performed after a cluster of Foil Holes is centered. Only available when *Session Setup > Acquisition Mode* is *Faster Acquisition*.

b. If *Recurrence* is set to *After Distance*, then specify the *Distance*.

c. Select **Focus using**:

- **Objective Lens**: EPU adjusts the focal plane to the Z-position of the specimen.
- **Stage Z axis**: EPU adjusts the Z-position of the specimen to the focal plane.

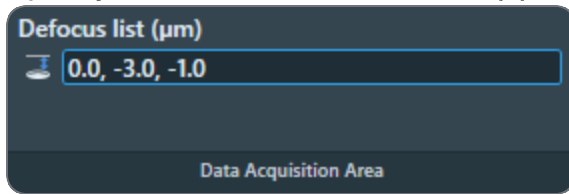
2. In the **Data Acquisition Settings** section of the Ribbon Bar, specify the **Delay after Image Shift** and **Delay after Stage Shift**.

Define the Defocus List for a Lacey Carbon Specimen

EPU acquires one image per Acquisition Area. By default, this image is acquired with the Defocus value that is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset. To use a different defocus, specify one or more defocus values in the Defocus List. During the Automated Acquisition run, EPU cycles through the Defocus List to acquire images with different defocus values. On Lacey Carbon specimens, EPU cycles through a single Defocus List that is applicable for all Acquisition Areas.

Follow the instructions below to specify or modify the Defocus List:

1. Select the **Defocus list**.
2. Use the **arrow keys** or the **mouse** to move the cursor to the desired location in the list.
3. Specify the desired **Defocus value(s)**.



Use a **comma** or a **space** to separate multiple values.

4. Select **Enter** or click outside the list to store the updated Defocus list.
EPU validates the list. If invalid values are present, then EPU corrects or removes the invalid values.

It is not possible to modify the Defocus list while an Automated Acquisition run is ongoing or paused. To modify the Defocus list, the run must first be stopped.

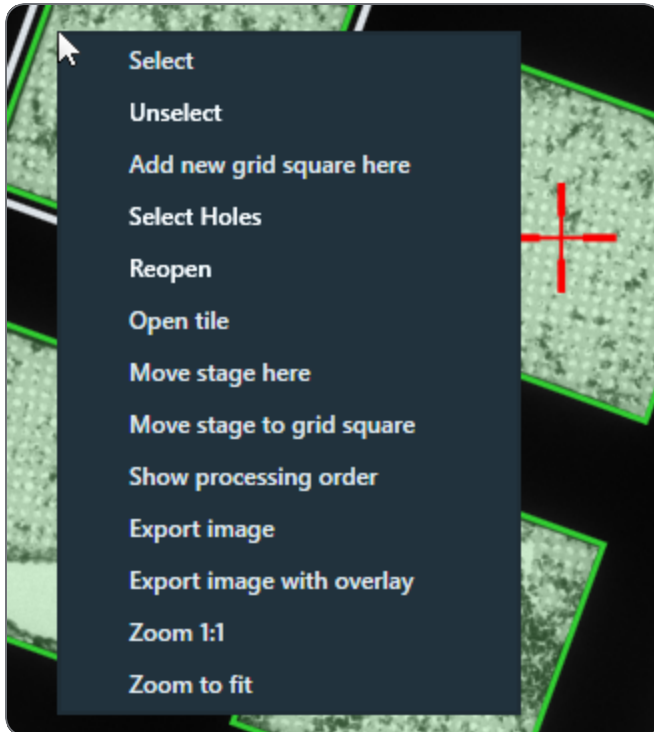
Hole Selection Task for Quantifoil Specimens

Define the Foil Hole Dimensions and Filter Settings for an Automated Selection Session

If the *Session type* is *Automated*, then EPU uses the built-in filters and algorithms to select suitable Foil Holes. At the start of each Grid Square, EPU evaluates the position and condition of the Foil Holes, so that suitable Foil Holes are identified and selected just before data acquisition begins.

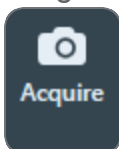
To configure the Hole Selection parameters and filter settings, follow the instructions below. This procedure must be executed for only one of the selected Grid Squares. During the Automated Acquisition run, EPU uses the same Hole Selection parameters and filter settings for all selected Grid Squares.

1. Acquire a representative Grid Square image:
 - a. Select the **EPU** tab > **Square Selection** task.
 - b. In the **Image Display**, identify a Grid Square that appears representative for the condition of the specimen.
 - c. Right-click on the Grid Square and select **Select Holes**.

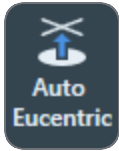


EPU switches to the *Holes Selection* task for the selected Grid Square.

If the specimen is already at eucentric height, or if there is a different reason to skip the Auto Eucentric function, then select **Acquire** to only acquire a new Grid Square image.



If the specimen is not already at eucentric height, then select **Auto Eucentric**.



If necessary, EPU first moves the specimen, so that the center of the selected Grid Square is in the center of the field of view.

While the Auto Eucentric function runs, the *Auto Eucentric* button changes to *Stop Auto Eucentric*. If selected, the Auto Eucentric function is aborted and the specimen returns to its previous Z position.

The Auto Eucentric function includes the acquisition of a new Grid Square image.

2. If the particles all have a similar orientation in the ice layer:
 - a. Adjust the **A-tilt angle** of the specimen.

A different A-tilt axis can be applied for each Grid Square to acquire images from various incident angles. EPU stores the A-tilt angle of the Grid Square during Hole Selection, and applies the A-tilt angle during Automated Acquisition at the same Grid Square. This typically results in a higher quality 3D reconstruction.
 - b. Select **Acquire** to update the Grid Square image.

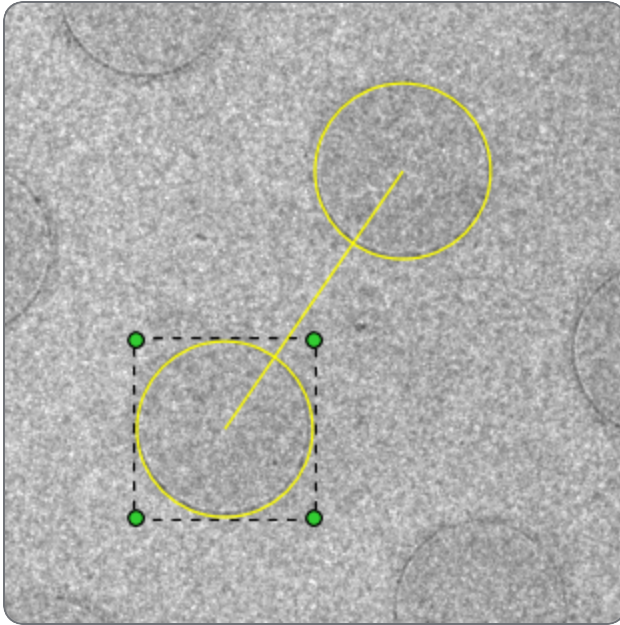
On Tundra systems it is not possible to adjust the A-tilt angle of the stage.

3. Specify the Foil Hole diameter and center-to-center interspacing:

a. Select **Measure Hole Size**.



A measurement tool appears in the Grid Square image.



b. Zoom in on the location of the measurement tool.

c. Drag **one of the yellow circles** to the center of a Foil Hole.

d. Drag **one of the green corner handles**, so that the circle diameter accurately matches with the diameter of the physical Foil Hole.

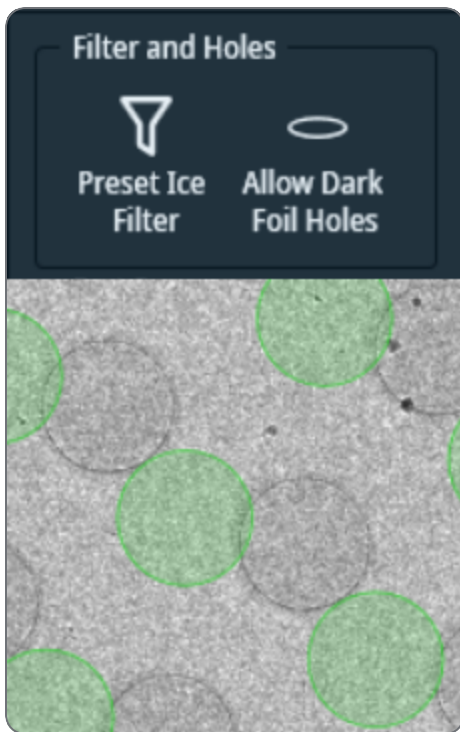
e. Drag **the other yellow circle** to the center of a nearest neighboring Foil Hole to define the interspacing.

4. Identify and select all Foil Holes in the Grid Square:

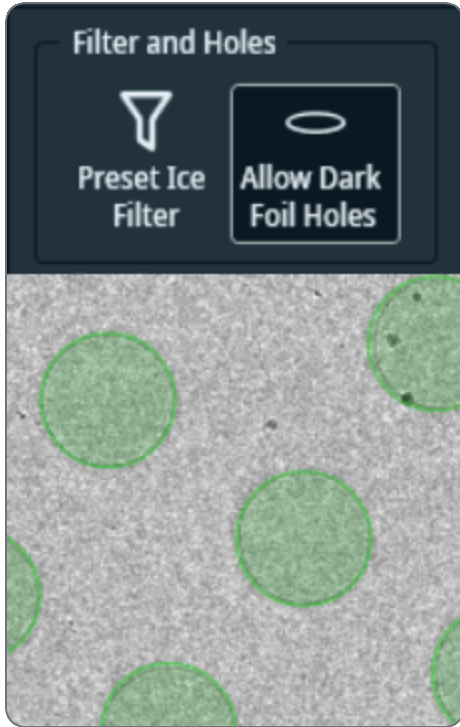
- a. If the Foil Holes appear darker than the surrounding carbon foil, then first select **Allow Dark Foil Holes** found in the expandable panel of the **Selection** ribbon.



By default, the Hole Detection algorithm searches for bright circles in a darker environment. If the *Allow Dark Foil Holes* toggle is active, then the algorithm searches for dark circles in a brighter environment.

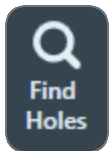


Allow Dark Foil Holes is *not* active: EPU does not recognize the real Foil Holes.



Allow Dark Foil Holes is *active*: EPU finds the real Foil Holes.

- b. Select **Find Holes**.

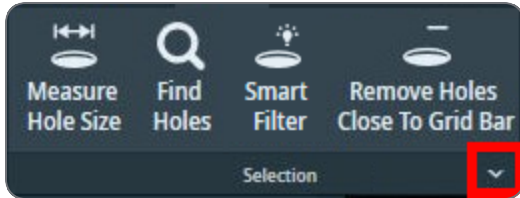


The Hole Detection algorithm searches for Foil Holes that match with the specified diameter and interspacing, and generates a pattern of Foil Hole outlines in the Grid Square image.

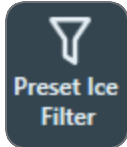
- c. Verify that the generated pattern matches with the physical Foil Holes in the Grid Square image.
If necessary, adjust the diameter and interspacing and select Find Holes again.

5. Set or adjust the Ice Quality filter:

a. Expand the **Selection** ribbon group by clicking on the small arrow in the lower right corner.



b. Select **Preset Ice Filter** to reset the Ice Quality filter boundaries.



c. In the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:

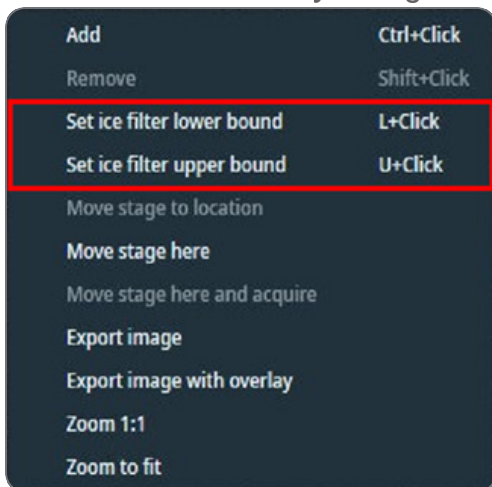


- Drag the **red lower boundary marker** to exclude Foil Holes that are too dark.
 - Drag the **red upper boundary marker** to exclude Foil Holes that are too bright.
- After every change, the Ice Quality filter updates the target Foil Holes selection.

- d. Alternatively, you can set the the lower and/or upper bounds of the Ice Filter according to an existing hole:
 - Hover the mouse pointer over a hole. The ice filter value is highlighted over the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:

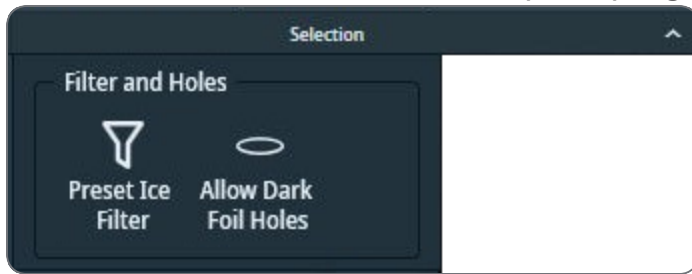


- Right-click a hole and select one of the two options:
 - Set ice filter lower bound.** This sets the lower bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.
 - Set ice filter upper bound.** This sets the upper bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.



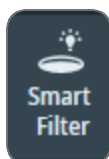
You can also use the keyboard shortcuts displayed in the right-click menu.

- e. (Optional) Switch-on **Fast Screening** to enable the automatic selection of holes. Then set the desired number of holes to be acquired per grid square.

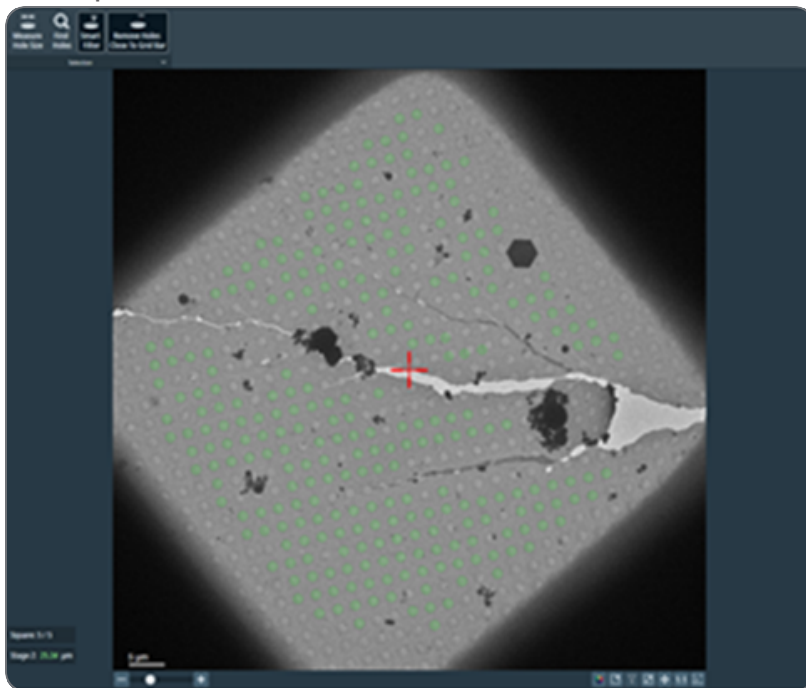


6. (Optional) Select **Smart Filter** located in the Selection ribbon. This function automatically filters out unsuitable holes found by the Find Holes functionality.

Note: Smart Filter is not compatible with Allow Dark Foil Holes. When Smart Filter is enabled, the Allow Dark Foil Holes setting is automatically deactivated.



A sample result of Smart Filter is shown below.



When the effect of Smart Filter function is in place, the button appears depressed.



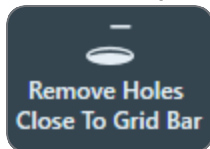
This button is a toggle switch. Press it again if you wish to turn off the Smart Filter.

If you wish to re-apply the Smart Filter on this Grid square or apply it to another Grid square, click Find Holes while Smart Filter is on.

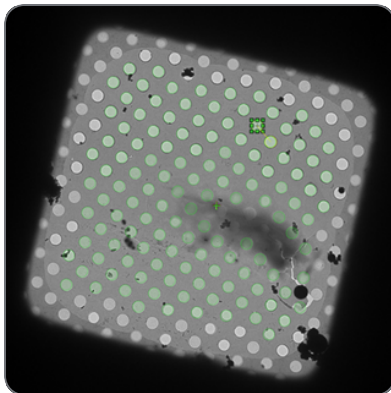
If the result of Smart Filter is not satisfactory, remember that you can modify the selection at any point by adding/removing holes manually.

i **Note:** This feature is only available on systems with *Smart EPU* and either *EQM* or *Embedded CryoSPARC Live*.

- (Optional) Select **Remove Holes Close To Grid Bar** to exclude Foil Holes near the edge of the Grid Square.



Foil Holes that are near the Grid Bars are excluded from the selection.



If the result of the *Remove Holes Close to Grid Bar* filter is not satisfactory, then select the filter button again to de-activate it. This will automatically run the Find Holes function and apply the Ice Quality filter.

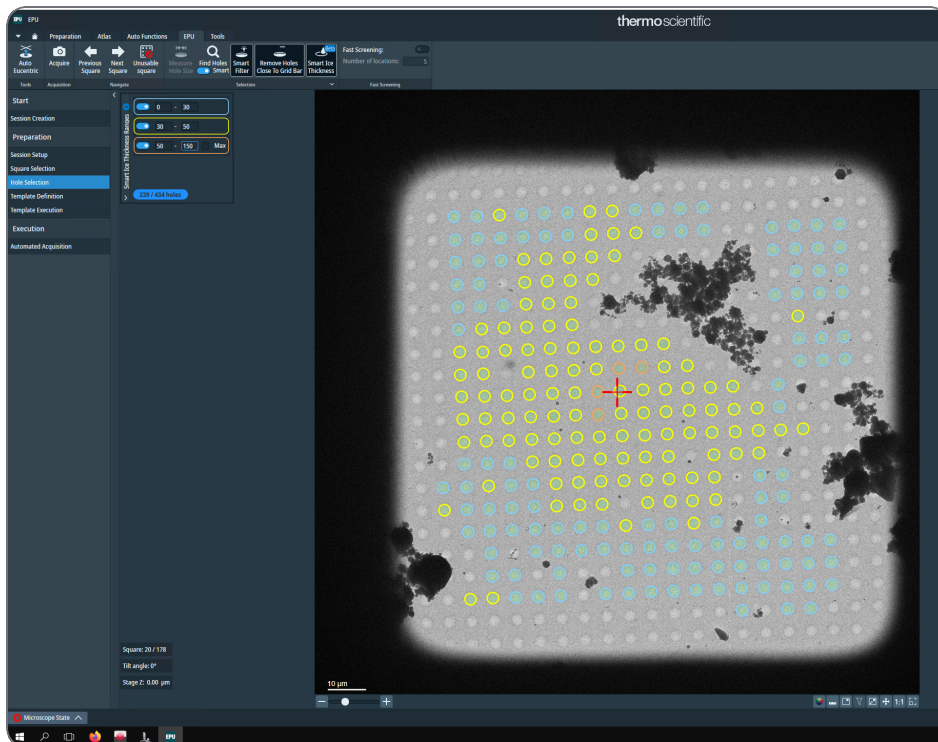
Smart Ice Thickness Prediction (Beta)

Smart Ice Thickness Prediction toggle button is enabled on the UI. This is an AI-driven tool for selection of foil holes depending on ice thickness ranges assignments. A set of predefined ranges for absolute thickness is provided to the user. This tool is primarily designed to be used during sample screening.

For screening of multiple grids, users can define the conditions for foil hole selection in one grid and apply those to other grids in a queue without exchanging grids.

User has the option to adjust the range group limits via the new UI control added in Hole Selection task.

- Foil Holes are colored respective to the ice thickness range group they belong to.
- Updating the range limits for a group adjusts the range limits accordingly for the remaining ones.
 - Example: Updating the minimum for the second range group will update the maximum of the first one with the same value.
- Filter Ice Quality histogram is replaced with a new one when Smart Ice Thickness Prediction is enabled.

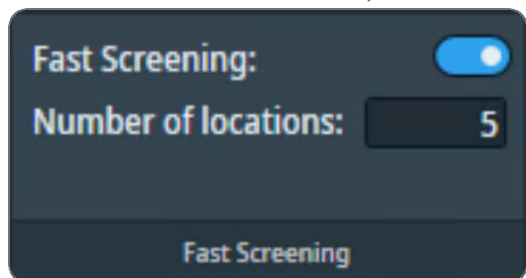


The Fast Screening Functionality

The *Fast Screening* function streamlines the process of setting up a screening run in EPU. This makes it easier and more efficient for users to select target locations on the grid. Fast Screening is particularly useful for users with limited experience in microscopy and the SPA technique, as it allows for quick selection of a defined number of target locations, sampling different ice thicknesses within the user-defined Ice Filter boundaries.

Follow the instructions below to use Fast Screening:

1. In the Hole Selection task, locate the Fast Screening ribbon group.



2. Turn on Fast Screening using the On/Off button.
3. Enter the desired number of target locations in the *Number of locations* text field.

When Smart Ice Thickness Prediction toggle is *ON*, then the fast screening takes into account the hole distribution based on the ranges enabled in the plugin, thus user can select holes across different ice thickness ranges.

Fast Screening will automatically select the specified number of target locations after applying the *Ice Filter* and *Remove close to gridbar* operations. The selected target locations are then persisted in the EPU session for further processing.

Note that the Fast Screening feature is applicable for both manual and automatic Quantifoil runs, but not for Lacey Carbon runs.

Ice Filter Adaptation for CFEG Systems

Beam current in Cold Field Emission Gun (CFEG) systems can vary over time due to contamination buildup on the tip and subsequent cleaning via temperature flashing. This occurs automatically during automated EPU data collections. As a result, holes with similar ice thickness may display varying intensities in the ice filter histogram (*EPU > Hole Selection task > Ice Filter*).

To maintain consistent hole selection by the Ice Filter feature, regardless of the CFEG's beam current fluctuations, EPU automatically scales the ice filter boundaries based on the current beam current. During automated runs, users define ice filter boundaries on a reference grid square, which are then stored as reference values, including the beam current at the time of acquisition.

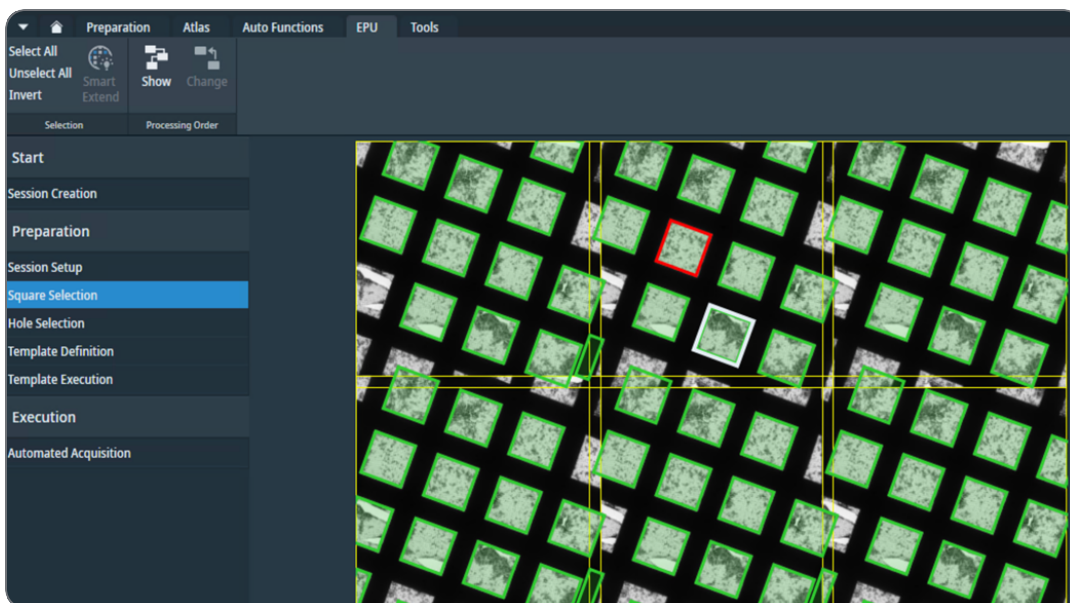
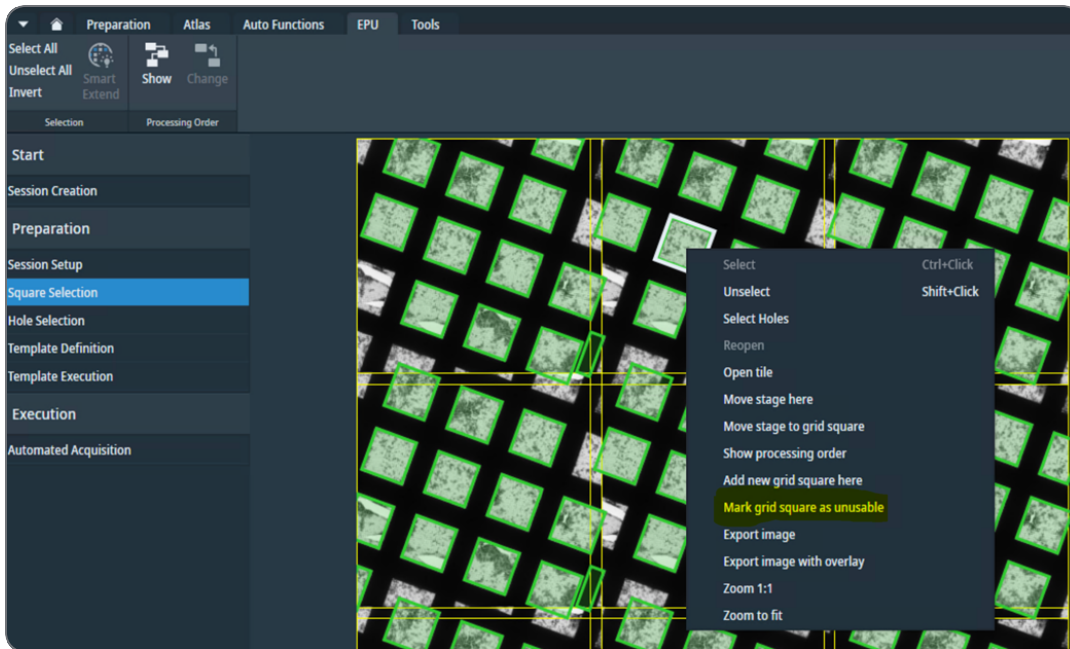
For subsequent grid squares, EPU scales the reference ice filter boundaries according to the beam current value at the time of each grid square's acquisition and applies the adjusted boundaries accordingly. This is especially useful for EPU multigrid runs, where the Selection Brush tool is unavailable.

The Ice Filter feature collaborates with other Hole Selection features, such as *Remove close to gridbars* and *Smart Filter*, in a cumulative manner. Reference values are carried over to new sessions when initiating a new EPU session based on the current session's preference. This enables the Autofill feature for convenient setup of EPU multigrid queues, defining multigrid sessions on CFEG systems with custom ice filters.

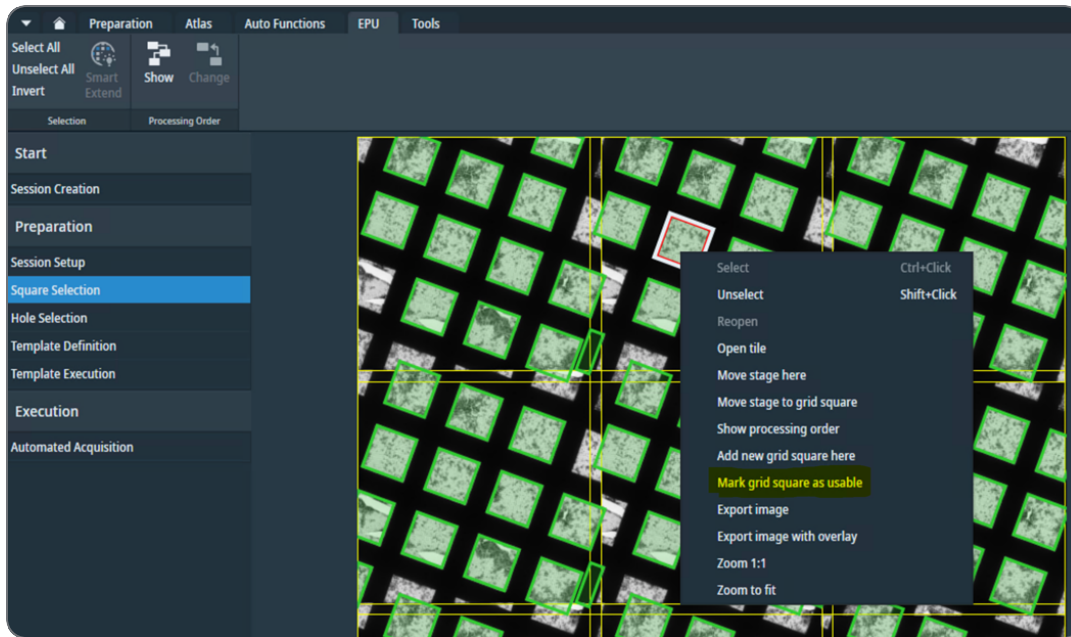
Reference values are included in custom preferences generated by users on the EPU landing page. However, please note that custom preferences (*Home > Custom preferences*) created with earlier EPU versions lack the necessary reference values. Users intending to start EPU (multigrid) sessions with custom ice filters from custom preferences in the Home Tab should generate new versions.

Mark Grid Squares as Unusable from the Square Selection Task

For efficient high-resolution data collections on tricky samples on which good areas in the grid can only be identified once medium or high magnification images were taken. You can now deselect non-satisfactory grid squares using the tasks in the **EPU** tab. You can mark a grid square as unusable for high-resolution data collection from the square selection task by right clicking on the respective square and click on **Mark Square as Unusable**. This selection will exclude the respective grid square from the list of grid squares scheduled for automated data acquisition and will visualize it with a red border.

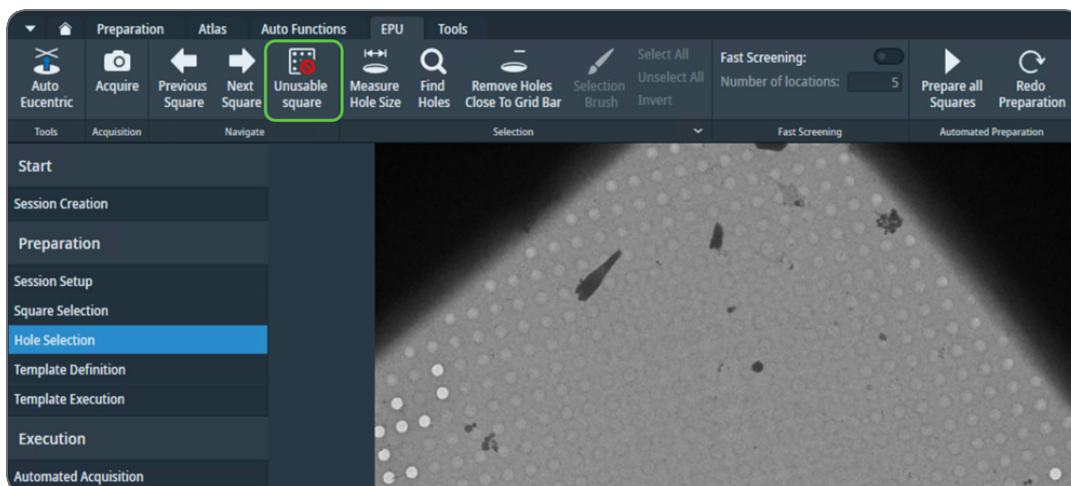


You can add grid squares back to the list of grid squares scheduled for automated data acquisition by clicking on **Mark Square as Usable** in the context menu.



Mark Grid Squares as Unusable from the Hole Selection / Area Selection Task

For efficient high-resolution data collections on tricky samples on which good areas in the grid can only be identified once medium or high magnification images were taken. You can now deselect non-satisfactory grid squares using the tasks in the **EPU** tab. You can mark a grid square as unusable for high-resolution data collection from the hole selection / area selection task by clicking the button **Unusable square**.



Upon clicking the button, the current grid square will be removed from the list of grid squares scheduled for data acquisition. In case, you have performed any hole selection or filtering actions, the resulting hole selection is still stored. You can add a grid square marked as unusable back to the list of grid squares scheduled for data acquisition by marking it as usable using the context menu (right click in the respective grid square) in the square selection task (see [Mark Grid Squares as Unusable from the Square Selection Task](#)). The user defined hole selection for the respective grid square will be restored.

Handpick the Foil Holes for a Manual Selection Session

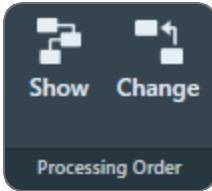
If *Session type* is *Manual*, then it is possible adjust the Foil Hole dimensions and filter settings for each individual selected Grid Square. With these settings, the Foil Holes are selected from which data will be acquired. For each selected Foil Hole, the X, Y and Z position of the hole center is stored. This selection can be customized in each individual Grid Square.

During the Automated Acquisition Run:

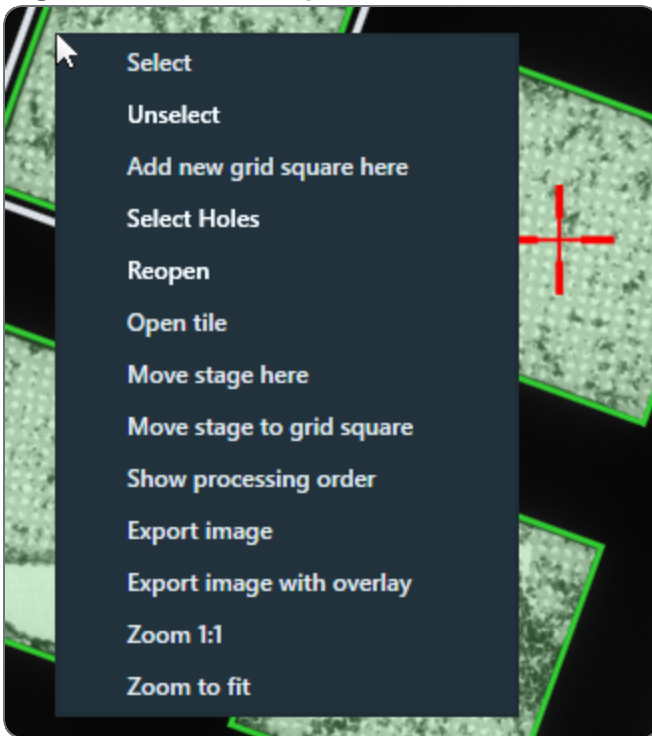
- EPU performs the *Hole Position Refinement* function. This function acquires a new *just-in-time* Grid Square image and updates the stored coordinates for each target Foil Hole, so that the Foil Holes can be centered with better accuracy for execution of the Foil Hole Template.
- EPU does not re-evaluate the suitability of the selected Foil Holes.

After the suitable Grid Squares are selected in the *Square Selection* task, the procedure to handpick the target Foil Holes is as follows:

1. Select the Grid Squares from which data will be acquired:
 - a. Select the **Square Selection** task.
 - b. Select **Processing Order > Show**



- c. (Optional) Change the Grid Square processing order. For instructions, see [Change the processing order of the Grid Squares](#).
 - d. Right-click on **Grid Square 1** and select **Select Holes**.



EPU switches to the *Hole Selection* task for the selected Grid Square. The lower-left corner of the Hole Selection Image Display displays the processing order number of the Grid Square and Z-position of the selected Grid Square.

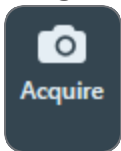
2. Prepare the first selected Grid Square:

a. Select the **Area Selection** task.

If a Grid Square image is available, then the image display shows the selected Grid Square. The lower-left corner of the image display shows the Stage Z-position for the displayed Grid Square.

- White: the Eucentric Height value is not determined yet.
- Green: the Eucentric Height value is determined.

If the specimen is already at eucentric height, or if there is a different reason to skip the Auto Eucentric function, then select **Acquire** to only acquire a new Grid Square image.



If the specimen is not already at eucentric height, then select **Auto Eucentric**.



If necessary, EPU first moves the specimen, so that the center of the selected Grid Square is in the center of the field of view.

While the Auto Eucentric function runs, the *Auto Eucentric* button changes to *Stop Auto Eucentric*. If selected, the Auto Eucentric function is aborted and the specimen returns to its previous Z position.

The Auto Eucentric function includes the acquisition of a new Grid Square image.

Define the Foil Hole dimensions and the filter settings. For instructions, see [Define the Foil Hole dimensions and Filter Settings for a Manual Selection Session](#).

Customize the selection of target Foil Holes. For instructions, see [Customize the selection of Foil Holes](#).

3. Prepare the other selected Grid Squares:

- a. (Optional) Use the *Automated Preparation* functions to apply the Acquisition Area pattern and filter settings of the current Grid Square to all other selected Grid Squares. For instructions, see [Automatically create a Manual Selection in all selected Grid Squares](#).
- b. Select **Navigate > Next Square** to move to the next Grid Square.



In the Square Selection image display, the white border moves to the next Grid Square. The specimen does not move until *Auto Eucentric* or *Acquire* is selected.

- c. Repeat steps *a - e* above until all Grid Squares are prepared.
4. (Optional) Inspect or adjust the Acquisition Area selection for a prepared Grid Square:
Either:
- Select **Navigate > Previous Square** until the desired Grid Square is reached.
In the Square Selection image display, the white border moves to the previous Grid Square. The specimen does not move until **Auto Eucentric** or **Acquire** is selected.
 - Select the **Square Selection** task .
> Right-click on the desired **Grid Square**.
> Select **Select Holes**.

EPU displays the Grid Square image for the selected Grid Square.



Note: Unless the current selection of target Foil Holes must be cleared:

- Do *not* select *Acquire*
- Do *not* select *Find Holes*
- If *Remove Holes Close to Grid Bar* is active, then do *not* select *Remove Holes Close to Grid Bar*.

Define the Foil Hole dimensions and Filter Settings for a Manual Selection Session

In a Manual Selection Session, the actions below must be repeated for each selected Grid Square.

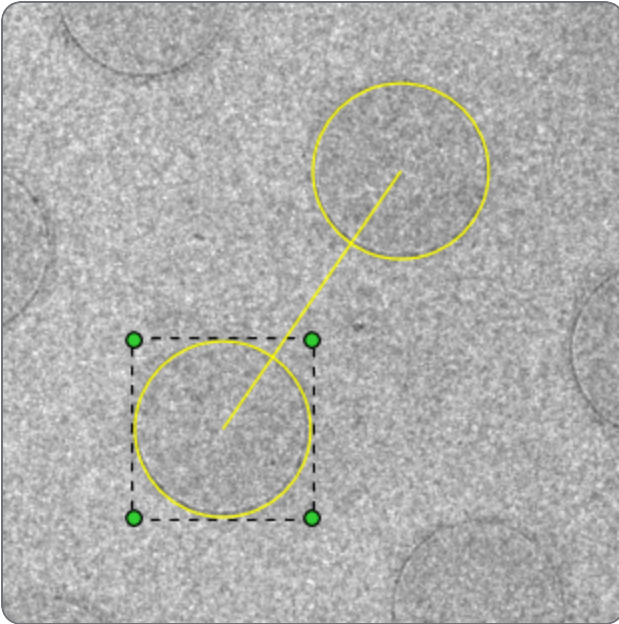
i Note: You can use the Auto-selection, refer [Smart Hole Finder for Holey Carbon and Holey Gold Grid Types](#).

1. Specify the Foil Hole diameter and center-to-center interspacing:

a. Select **Measure Hole Size**.



A measurement tool appears in the Grid Square image.



- b. Zoom in on the location of the measurement tool.
- c. Drag **one of the yellow circles** to the center of a Foil Hole.
- d. Drag **one of the green corner handles**, so that the circle diameter accurately matches with the diameter of the physical Foil Hole.
- e. Drag **the other yellow circle** to the center of a nearest neighboring Foil Hole to define the

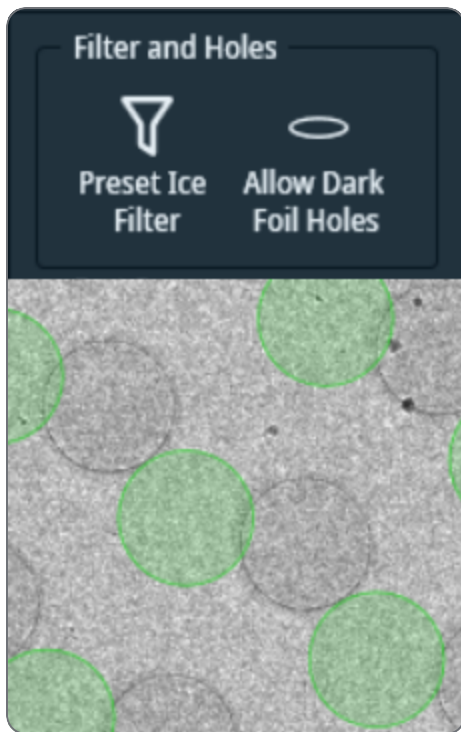
interspacing.

2. Identify and select all Foil Holes in the Grid Square:

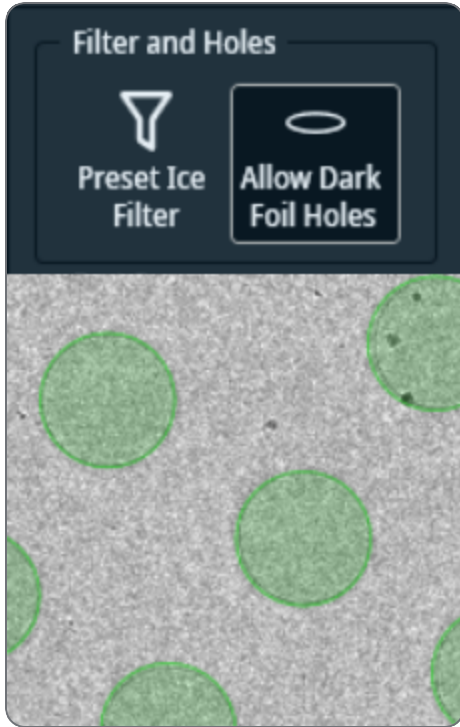
- a. If the Foil Holes appear darker than the surrounding carbon foil, then first select **Allow Dark Foil Holes** found in the expandable panel of the **Selection** ribbon.



By default, the Hole Detection algorithm searches for bright circles in a darker environment. If the *Allow Dark Foil Holes* toggle is active, then the algorithm searches for dark circles in a brighter environment.

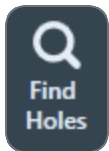


Allow Dark Foil Holes is *not* active: EPU does not recognize the real Foil Holes.



Allow Dark Foil Holes is *active*: EPU finds the real Foil Holes.

- b. Select **Find Holes**.

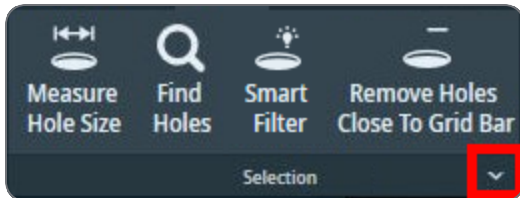


The Hole Detection algorithm searches for Foil Holes that match with the specified diameter and interspacing, and generates a pattern of Foil Hole outlines in the Grid Square image.

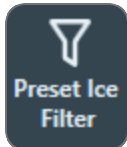
- c. Verify that the generated pattern matches with the physical Foil Holes in the Grid Square image.
If necessary, adjust the diameter and interspacing and select Find Holes again.

3. Set or adjust the Ice Quality filter:

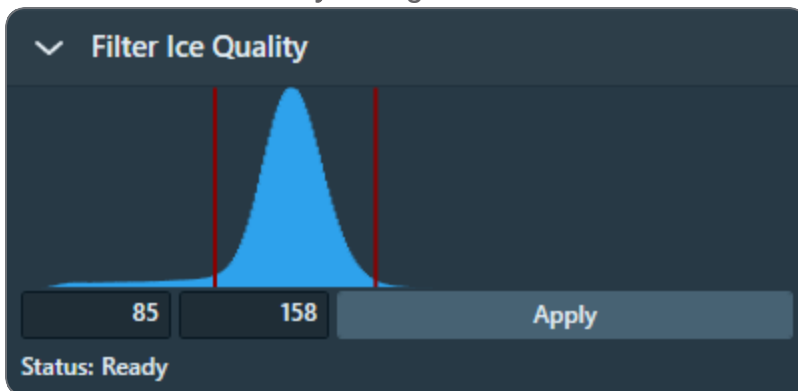
- a. Expand the **Selection** ribbon group by clicking on the small arrow in the lower right corner.



- b. Select **Preset Ice Filter** to reset the Ice Quality filter boundaries.



- c. In the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:

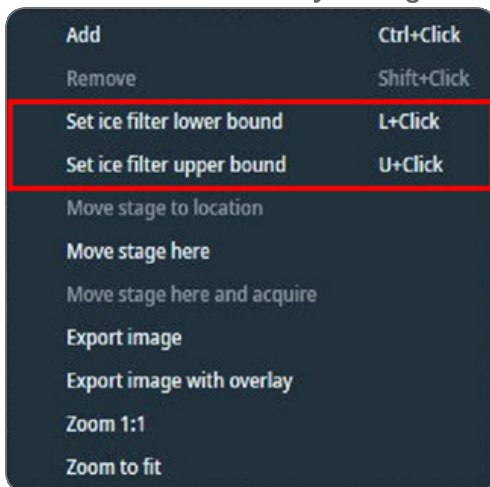


- Drag the **red lower boundary marker** to exclude Foil Holes that are too dark.
 - Drag the **red upper boundary marker** to exclude Foil Holes that are too bright.
- After every change, the Ice Quality filter updates the target Foil Holes selection.

- d. Alternatively, you can set the the lower and/or upper bounds of the Ice Filter according to an existing hole:
 - Hover the mouse pointer over a hole. The ice filter value is highlighted over the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram:



- Right-click a hole and select one of the two options:
 - Set ice filter lower bound.** This sets the lower bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.
 - Set ice filter upper bound.** This sets the upper bound according to the highlight shown in the **Filter Ice Quality** histogram.

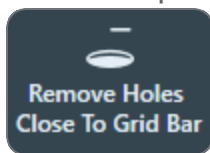


You can also use the keyboard shortcuts displayed in the right-click menu.

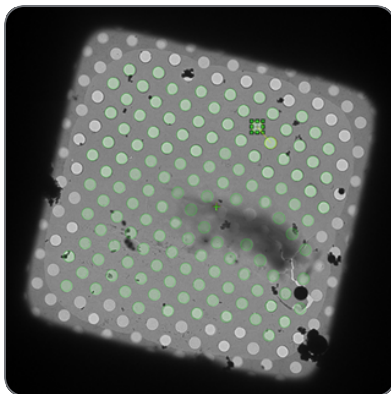
- e. (Optional) Switch-on **Fast Screening** to enable the automatic selection of holes. Then set the desired number of holes to be acquired per grid square.



4. (Optional) Select **Remove Holes Close To Grid Bar** to exclude Foil Holes near the edge of the Grid Square.



Foil Holes that are near the Grid Bars are excluded from the selection.



If the result of the *Remove Holes Close to Grid Bar* filter is not satisfactory, then select the filter button again to de-activate it. This will automatically run the Find Holes function and apply the Ice Quality filter.

i Note: When the Find Holes function is performed, all Foil Holes that match with the Ice Quality Filter are automatically included in the target Foil Hole selection. Any previous customization of the target Foil Hole selection is cleared.

5. (Optional) Customize the initial selection of target Foil Holes as described in [Customize the selection of Foil Holes](#).

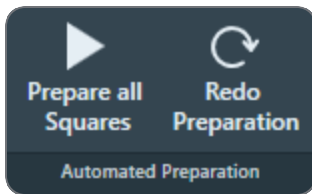
Note: The Filter Ice Quality boundaries and the Remove Holes Close to Grid Bar status are not stored for each Grid Square.

The settings of the Filter Ice Quality and the status of the Remove Holes Close to Grid Bar remain in their last adjusted values. When a Grid Square is displayed for which the selection is already completed, then the displayed filter settings may be different than the filter settings that were used to select the Foil Holes in the displayed Grid Square.

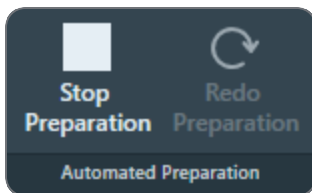
To apply the currently displayed filter settings to all Grid Squares, select **Prepare All Squares** or **Redo Preparation** as described in [Automatically create a Manual Selection in all selected Grid Squares](#).

Automatically Create a Manual Selection in all Selected Grid Square

The *Automated Preparation* functions significantly decrease the time and effort that is needed to manually select the acquisition targets (Foil Holes or Acquisition Areas) for an Automated Acquisition run. After the suitable Grid Squares are selected and the first Grid Square is prepared, Automated Preparation offers the following functions:



Automated Preparation ribbon bar while no automated preparation is ongoing



Automated Preparation ribbon bar while automated preparation is ongoing

- **Prepare All Squares:** EPU automatically performs the manual target selection procedure in all selected Grid Squares:
 - Move to the next selected Grid Square.
 - Set the specimen to Eucentric height.
 - Acquire a Grid Square image.
 - Create the selection of acquisition targets, using the Selection parameters of the current Grid Square. i.e., filter settings, Smart Filter, etc.
If a Grid Square already contains a target selection, then no targets are added or removed.

Even if the parameters and filter settings need to be adjusted for each individual Grid Square, then *Prepare All Squares* may still provide a good starting point for each Grid Square.

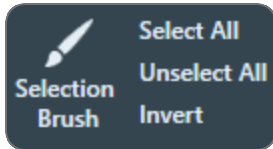
- **Stop Preparation:** Aborts the ongoing automated preparation.
The Eucentric Height values, Grid Square images and target selections that are completed so far are not cleared or discarded.

If *Prepare All Squares* has been executed at least once in the EPU session, then the following functions can be used:

- **Redo Preparation:**
Use *Redo Preparation* when the existing target selection must be renewed after the parameters and/or filters are adjusted.
 - In already prepared Grid Squares, *Redo Preparation* clears the target selection, then creates a new selection. The Grid Square image and Eucentric Height value are maintained.
 - For not yet prepared Grid Squares the *Redo Preparation* function performs the same actions as the initial *Prepare All Squares* execution.
- Select **Prepare All Squares** again to prepare newly selected Grid Squares, or to complete an aborted preparation run. *Prepare All Squares* uses the current selection and filter values.
 - Already prepared Grid Squares remain as they are. If the selection and filter values have changed, then the existing selection is not changed.
 - For not yet prepared Grid Squares the initial *Prepare All Squares* actions are performed.

Customize the Selection of Foil Holes

Before starting the manual selection, check if the manual selection tools are available in the Ribbon Bar.



If not, then select **Session Setup > Session type: Manual**.

Note: The following steps must be repeated for *each* individual selected Grid Square.

1. Perform all the steps that are described in [Define the Acquisition Area Pattern and Filter Settings for an Automated Selection Session](#).

Note: Make sure the specimen is accurately set to eucentric height.

The positions of the selected areas are stored as (X,Y,Z) coordinates. If the specimen is not at eucentric height during manual selection, the X and Y coordinates of the selected areas may have an offset. This may cause failure of the Autofocus and/or Eucentric Correction functions during the Automated Acquisition run, which may negatively impact the amount and quality of the acquired data.

2. Create a selection of Foil Holes:
Either:

- Select the suitable Foil Holes in the generated pattern.
- Unselect the bad Foil Holes in the generated pattern.
- Select the bad Foil Holes in the generated pattern, then invert the selection.
- Create a selection of suitable Foil Holes without using a generated pattern.

Instructions for each of these selection procedures are described below.

If the Ice Quality Filter boundaries are changed after a manual selection has been made, then the selected set is not updated. Selected areas that fall outside the new boundaries will not be removed from the selection. Likewise, areas that are not part of the selection will not be added to selection if their average gray scale value now falls inside the new boundaries.

Select the Suitable Foil Holes in the Generated Pattern

When the number of bad Foil Holes is larger than the number of suitable Foil Holes:

1. Select **Unselect All** to clear the selected set.
2. Add the suitable Foil Holes to the selection:
 - To add a single Foil Hole to the selected set, right-click on the Foil Hole and select **Add** from the context menu.
 - To add one or more separate Foil Holes to the selected set, hold the **Control** key and select the individual suitable Foil Holes.
 - To add multiple adjacent Foil Holes, select **Selection Brush**, hold the **Control** key and swipe across the region of suitable Foil Holes.

Unselect the Bad Foil Holes in the Generated Pattern

When most Foil Holes in the generated pattern are suitable for high quality data acquisition, it can be more efficient to remove the ones that are *not* suitable:

1. Select **Select All** to add all Foil Holes to the selected set.
2. Remove the bad Foil Holes from the selection:
 - To remove a single Foil Hole from the selected set, right-click on the Foil Hole and select **Remove** from the context menu.
 - To remove one or more separate Foil Holes from the selected set, hold the **Shift** key and select the individual bad Foil Holes.
 - To remove multiple adjacent Foil Holes, select **Selection Brush** and swipe across the region of bad Foil Holes.

Select the Bad Foil Holes in the Generated Pattern, then Invert the Selection

When the bad Foil Holes in the generated pattern are easier to identify than the suitable Foil Holes:

1. Select **Unselect All** to clear the selected set.
2. Select the bad Foil Holes as if they were added to the selection:
 - To add a single Foil Hole to the selected set, right-click on an Foil Hole and select **Add** from the context menu.
 - To add one or more separate Foil Holes to the selected set, hold the **Control** key and select the individual Foil Holes.
 - To add multiple adjacent Foil Holes, select **Selection Brush** , hold the **Control** key and swipe across the region of bad foil Holes.
3. Select Invert.

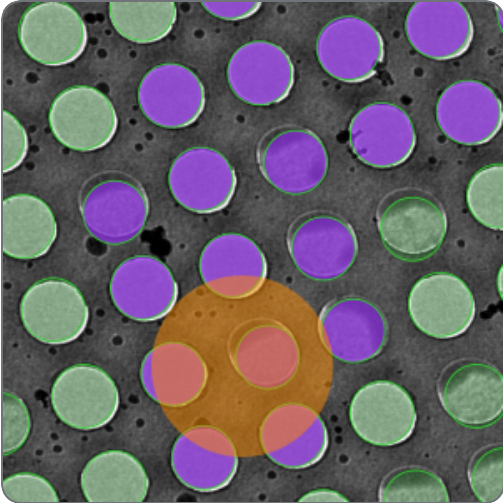
Add and Remove Foil Holes with the Selection Brush

1. From the **Selection** section of the Ribbon Bar, select **Selection Brush**.



2. Move the mouse to the Image Display. The Selection Brush is displayed as a dark yellow circle.
3. (Optional) Change the **Selection Brush size**:
Hold down the **Shift** key and scroll with the **mouse wheel**.

4. To remove Foil Holes from the selection:
 - a. Hold down the **left mouse button**.
 - b. Drag the **Selection Brush** across the image.



Foil Holes that are touched by the brush have a purple highlight.

- c. Release the **left mouse button**. The purple Foil Holes are removed from the selection.
5. To add Foil Holes to the selection:
 - a. Hold down the **Control** key.
 - b. Hold down the **left mouse button**.
 - c. Drag the **Selection Brush** across the image.
 - d. Release the **left mouse button**. The purple Foil Holes are added to the selection.

Create a Selection of Foil Holes without a Generated Pattern

When it not possible to let the Hole Detection algorithm generate a pattern that matches the specimen, it is possible to freely create Foil Hole locations at any position on the specimen.

1. Select **Acquire** to start with a fresh Grid Square image. Do *not* select Find Holes.
2. Create Foil Hole locations at any position.

Either:

 - Right-click in the center of the new Foil Hole location, then select **Add** from the context menu.
 - Hold the **Control** key, then select the center of one or more suitable Foil Holes.

Inspect a Foil Hole to Assess Suitability

To decide whether or not to include a Foil Hole in the selection, a closer look may be needed to assess particle content, ice thickness, charging, etc.,

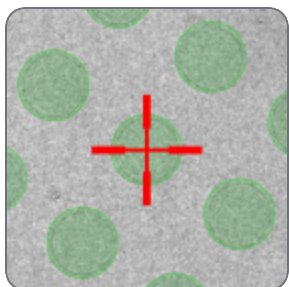
1. In the Grid Square image:
 - a. Right-click on the Foil Hole you wish to inspect.
 - b. Select one of the **Move stage...** options:
 - **Move stage to location:** Centers the Foil Hole in which the right mouse button was clicked.
 - **Move stage here:** Centers the exact position at which the right mouse button was clicked.
 - **Move stage here and acquire:** Centers the exact position at which the right mouse button was clicked, and acquires a new Grid Square image.
To prevent clearing the current selection, this option is only available when no Foil Holes have been selected.
2. Select **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel > **Acquire** to acquire a single image.
To avoid unnecessary exposure:
 - Do not select Search.
 - Do not use the FluScreen to view the specimen.
3. If necessary, change magnification and/or illumination, and acquire a new image.



Note: Every exposure causes damage to the specimen.
To maintain the highest quality, try to keep the accumulated dosage to a minimum.

The Impact of Hole Position Refinement on the 'Move Stage to Location' Function

In a *Session type: Manual* session, the *Hole Selection > Find Holes* function identifies Foil Holes in a Grid Square image, and stores the XYZ coordinates of each Foil Hole center. When the **Move stage to location** function is used during preparation for the Automated Acquisition run, the red crosshair in the Image Display will end up in the center of the Foil Hole.



Between the acquisition of a Grid Square image in the Hole Selection task and the time at which the Automated Acquisition run reaches that same Grid Square, a small positioning offset may have accumulated. To prevent skipped Foil Holes due to such offsets, the Automated Acquisition procedure features an automatic **Hole Position Refinement** function. This function acquires a new *just-in-time* Grid Square image and updates the stored coordinates for each Foil Hole, so that the Foil Holes can be centered with better accuracy for execution of the Foil Hole Template.

During the Automated Acquisition run it is possible to fine-tune the Foil Hole Template. To do so, return to the **Hole Selection** task, use the **Move stage to location** function to center a Foil Hole, and then select the **Template Definition** task to revise the Foil Hole Template.

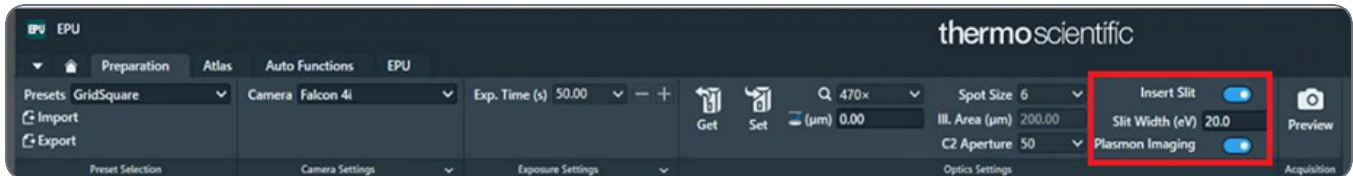
In the Hole Selection task, the image display uses the initial Grid Square image, but the **Move stage to location** function uses the updated Foil Hole coordinates. As a result, the crosshair in the image display may end up at a small offset from the uncorrected Foil Hole center in the Grid Square image.

Plasmon Peak Imaging

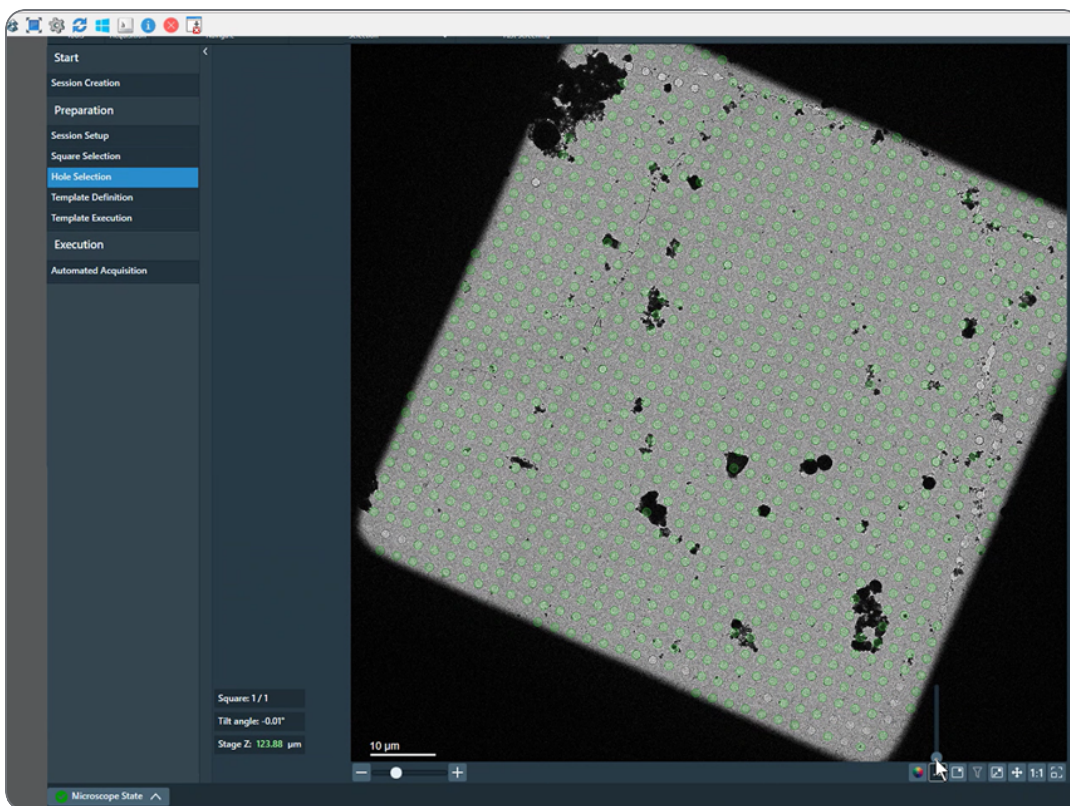
Plasmon peak imaging is introduced to enhance low ice thickness contrast. This is particularly useful for selecting foil holes in gold grids, where the contrast difference between gold film and ice is large and the contrast generated by varying ice thickness is low.

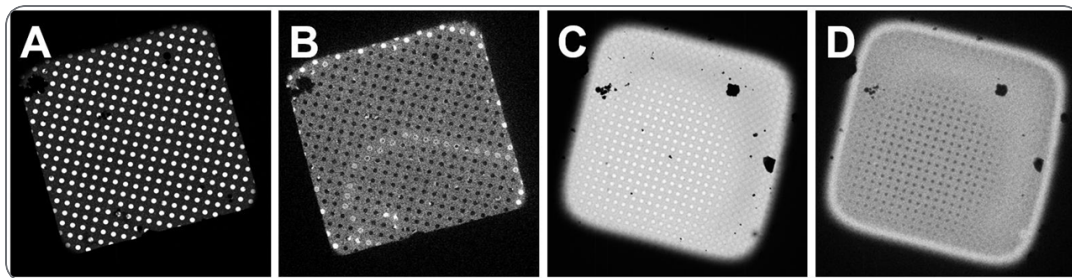
EPU Tab

In the **Preparation** tab, Atlas and Grid Square image presets have a toggle **Plasmon imaging**. The current implementation requires that the zero loss image is set up in counted mode. Therefore, it is recommended to optimize the Grid Square and Atlas presets to get well-exposed zero-loss micrographs with an exposure time of 0.5-1.0 seconds, so that the plasmon exposures take between 5 and 10 seconds. Note that plasmon images work best in focus and using counting mode.



- When the user turns on plasmon peak imaging, the exposure time is increased 10x which is displayed to the user in the exposure time field. The user shall not be able to adjust the exposure time for plasmon peak imaging, so it is greyed out (in the EPU configuration this factor can be adapted).





Zero-loss and plasmon images of Cryo-EM grid squares,

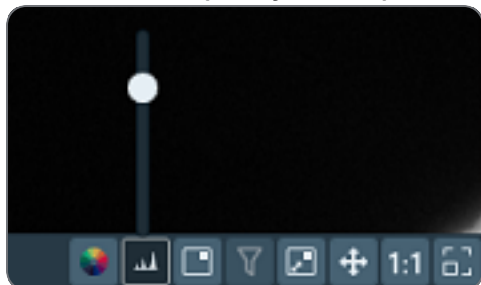
A - Zero-loss image of an UltrAuFoil square.

B - Plasmon image of the same UltrAuFoil square.

C - Zero-loss image of a QuantiFoil square.

D - Plasmon image of the same QuantiFoil square.

- If the user has enabled *Plasmon Imaging* in the Grid square preset, then the user can create an EPU session in the same way they are used to. Preparing Grid squares in the Hole Selection step of an EPU session will now take both a zero-loss image and a plasmon image back to back. Using the newly added annotation button shown below, the user has the ability to toggle back and forth between the two images by clicking on the slider, or gradually increase the opacity of the plasmon image in an overlay on top of the zero-loss image.



- The hole finding algorithm continues to use the zero-loss image to find the edge of the hole, while the ice thickness filter uses the plasmon signal within the hole areas, improving the dynamic range and facilitating hole selection on UltrAuFoil grids.
- For gold grids only Smart Filter works. The other smart features are not available.

Important Parameters and Troubleshooting

How to Find a Good Starting Preset

Start without an HT offset and find the smallest spot size in counting mode where the camera is not overexposed, find an exposure time that results in a crisp zero-loss image, and then set the 20eV HT offset and at least double the exposure time. The impact on the EPU workflow is minimal and the user can switch back and forth between zero-loss and plasmon imaging without encountering error messages or having to change modes, spot sizes, and exposure times.

Electron Counting Mode

The best plasmon images can be achieved when using electron counting mode. It is recommended to use electron counting mode for plasmon imaging to avoid low dose rates in the plasmon preset leading to grainy images. This can be set in the *Camera Settings* flap-out for each preset. Note that the spot size will differ between linear and counting mode, but the dose protector will prevent damage to the hardware in case of overexposure.

Spot Size

It is recommended to find the right spot size without an HT offset. Start at a high spot size (e.g. 8) and gradually lower the spot size until the lowest spot size which does not engage the dose protector is found.

Exposure Time

To avoid encountering the dose protector during routine use (when switching back to zero-loss imaging in TEM UI), adjusting exposure levels is best done by increasing exposure time rather than lowering spot size. As a starting point, doubling the exposure time of the plasmon image relative to the zero-loss image is recommended.

Defocus

The sharpness of the plasmon image is sensitive to defocus, and images will appear blurry if a large defocus is used. If the image is not sharp and a sufficient dose rate was used, ensure that diffraction astigmatism was corrected, and then perform autofocus calibration, with the Grid Square preset selected, before then running autofocus in the same preset. Quantifoil or crossgrating are suitable specimens for this calibration. This ensures that no image aberrations are present, and the image was really taken at eucentric focus.

Slit Width

Plasmon imaging can be done with a 10eV slit, although a slit width of 20eV tends to give better exposures due to the increased signal.

Magnification

Plasmon imaging works at virtually all low and intermediate magnifications, from Atlas to Hole/Eucentric preset magnifications. At Atlas preset magnifications, it may still be difficult to differentiate between thin ice and empty holes, and therefore it is advisable to still individually image squares of interest.

Other Optical Aberrations

Diffraction astigmatism can contribute to the blurring of images in focus. It is therefore recommended to correct LM diffraction astigmatism in the TEM UI if the plasmon images are blurry even if the total dose is high and the image is in focus. This is best done on the fluorescent screen by an experienced operator.

Crossover Correction

If the energy slit does not remain centered whenever changing magnifications, it is advisable to contact service and request a full crossover correction to be done on your system. For individual mismatches, if the Zero-loss peak does not remain centered when changing magnifications, ensure that the slit is centered and the energy filter is fully tuned at the highest SA magnification, then switch to the mis-centered preset and perform crossover correction in Sherpa for the misaligned preset by clicking on *Correct One*. This must be done without specimen loaded. It is important that the highest SA magnification acts as the reference, and all other magnifications' crossovers are corrected relative to it.

Template Definition Task for Quantifoil Specimens

The purpose of the Template Definition task is to assign the areas in and around a Foil Hole where the Autofocus function, the (optional) Drift Measurement function, and one or more Data Acquisitions are executed. During the Automated Acquisition run, the Foil Hole template is executed at every selected Foil Hole.

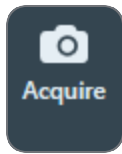
The Foil Hole image that is used to define the Foil Hole Template remains available in the Template Definition task. If the template requires an adjustment at any later time, then it is not necessary to acquire a new Foil Hole image.

Perform the Template Definition Procedure

To set up a Foil Hole Template, follow the procedure below:

1. In the **Hole Selection** task, right-click on an included Foil Hole and select **Move stage to location**.
2. Select the **Template Definition** task.

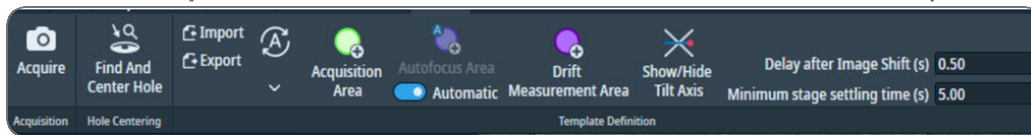
3. Select **Acquire** to acquire a Hole/EucentricHeight image.



4. Select **Find And Center Hole**.



5. Use the **Template Definition** functions to define the Foil Hole Template.



- a. If the **A-tilt** is not 0 degrees, then select **Show/Hide Tilt Axis**
On Tundra systems, Show/Hide Tilt Axis is not available. The stage can not be tilted.
- b. Automatically or manually create one or more **Acquisition Areas** as described in:
 - [Automatically generate a pattern of Acquisition Areas.](#)
 - [Manually define one or more Acquisition Areas.](#)
- c. Define a **Defocus List** as described in [Define the Defocus List for one or more Acquisition Areas.](#)
- d. Define an **Autofocus Area** as described in [Define the Autofocus Area.](#)
- e. Optionally, define a **Drift Measurement Area** as described in [Define the Drift Measurement Area.](#)
- f. Specify the **shift and delay parameters** as described in [Specify the Maximum Image Shift and Delay Timers.](#)

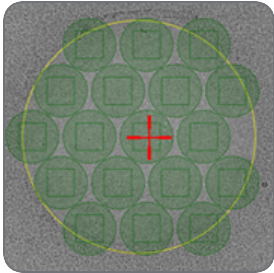
When an Acquisition, Autofocus or Drift Measurement Area is selected in the image display, an additional Ribbon Bar section appears to specify the values for the selected area. The Template Definition section may change to a more compact layout to make room for the additional Ribbon Bar sections.

Instead of creating a new Foil Hole Template for every new session, it is also possible to import the Template Areas and their settings from an earlier session. See [Import and export a Foil Hole Template.](#)

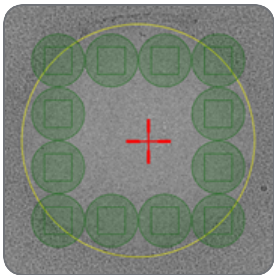
Define One or More Acquisition Areas

Automatically Generate a Pattern of Acquisition Areas

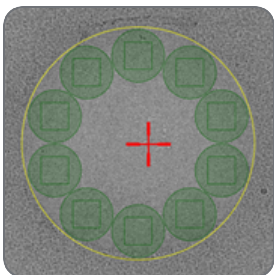
EPU can automatically generate a pattern of Acquisition Areas in the Foil Hole Template.



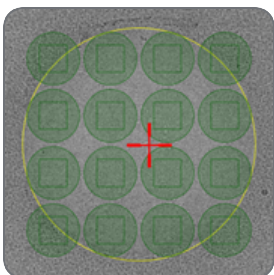
Hexagonal pattern



Rectangular pattern



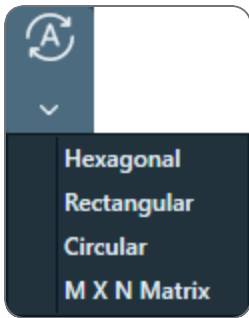
Circular pattern



M X N Matrix

To generate a pattern of Acquisition Areas:

1. Select **Auto** > select the **desired pattern**.



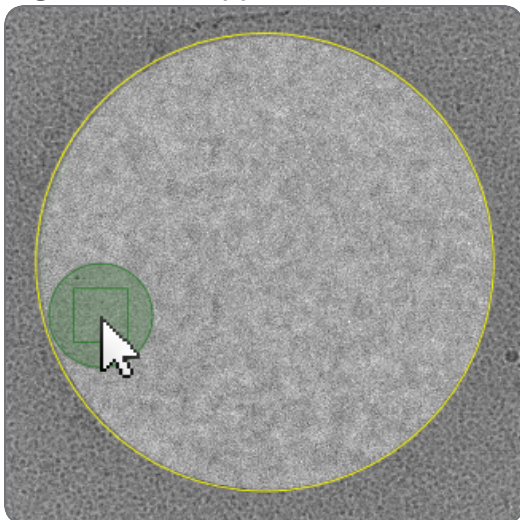
EPU adds as many Acquisition Areas as possible according to the selected pattern.

2. Define the **Defocus List** as described in [Define the Defocus List for one or more Acquisition Areas](#).

Manually Define One or More Acquisition Areas

1. Select **Template Definition** > **Add Acquisition Area**.
2. In the image display, select the **location for the first Acquisition Area**.

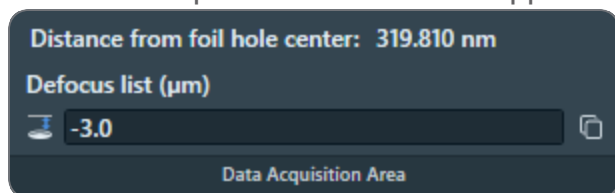
A green circle appears in the Foil Hole Template with its center at the selected position.



- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Acquisition Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset.
- On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the size of the Acquisition Area is defined as the beam diameter at the Data Acquisition Preset magnification.

3. In the image display, select the **Acquisition Area**.

The Data Acquisition Area section appears in the Ribbon Bar.



4. Specify a **Defocus List** as explained in [Define the Defocus List for one or more Acquisition Areas](#).
5. (Optional) Add more Acquisition Areas in the Foil Hole Template:
 - a. If the new Acquisition Area must use the same Defocus list as the first Acquisition Area, then select the **first Acquisition Area**.
The Defocus List of the selected Acquisition Area will be copied to the new Acquisition Area(s). Each Acquisition Area has its own Defocus List. Modifications to the Defocus List of one Acquisition Area are not shared with the other Acquisition Areas.
 - b. Select **Add Acquisition Area** and select the **location for the new Acquisition Area**.
6. (Optional) Adjust the **location** of an Acquisition Area by dragging it with the mouse.
7. (Optional) Modify the **Defocus List** for one or more individual Acquisition Areas.

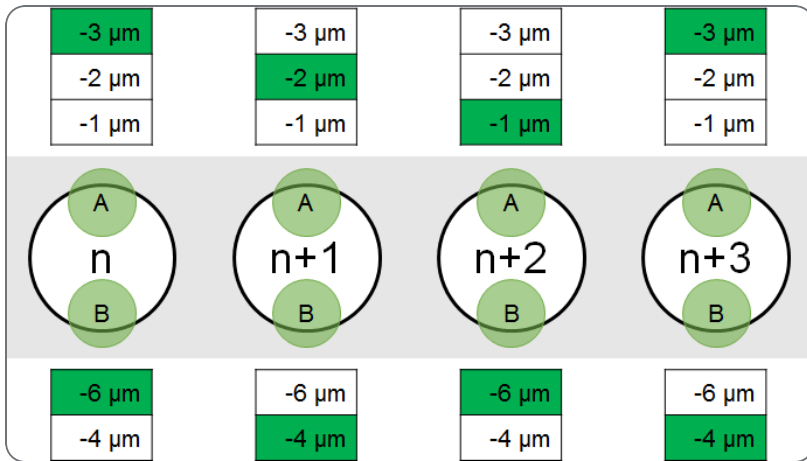
Define the Defocus List for One or More Acquisition Areas

EPU acquires one image per Acquisition Area. By default, this image is acquired with the Defocus value that is specified in the Data Acquisition Preset. To use a different defocus, specify one or more defocus values in the Defocus List. During the Automated Acquisition run, EPU cycles through the Defocus List to acquire images with different defocus values. On Quantifoil specimens, the Foil Hole Template can contain multiple Acquisition Areas. Each Acquisition Area has its own Defocus List.

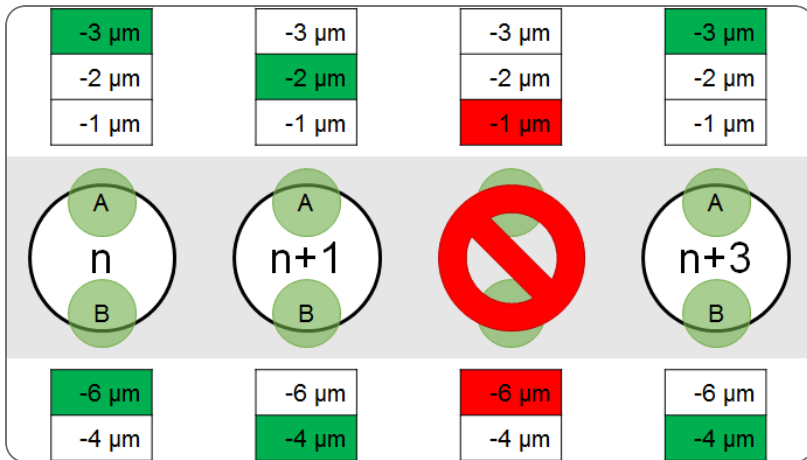
The example below describes a Foil Hole Template with two Acquisition Areas:

- Acquisition Area *A* has a Defocus List with three values.
- Acquisition Area *B* has a Defocus List with two values.

As the Foil Holes are processed one after the other, EPU steps through the Defocus Lists for each of the Acquisition Areas.

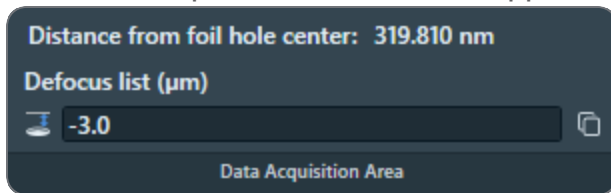


If a Foil Hole is skipped by EPU or by the user, then the defocus values that were planned for the acquisitions on that Foil Hole are also skipped.



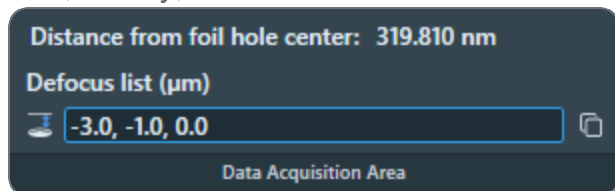
To add or remove Defocus values for the currently selected Acquisition Area, follow the instructions below:

1. In the image display, select an **Acquisition Area**.
The Data Acquisition Area section appears in the Ribbon Bar.



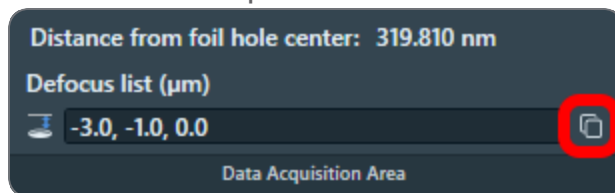
2. Select the **Defocus list**

3. Add, modify, or remove values from the Defocus List.



Use a **comma** or a **space** to separate multiple values.

4. Select **Enter** or click outside the list to store the updated Defocus List. EPU validates the list. If invalid values are present, then EPU corrects or removes the invalid values.
5. (Optional) Select **Copy defocus list to all areas** to apply the Defocus List to all Acquisition Areas in the Template.



After the Defocus List is applied to all Acquisition Areas, it is still possible to modify the Defocus List for an individual Acquisition Area.

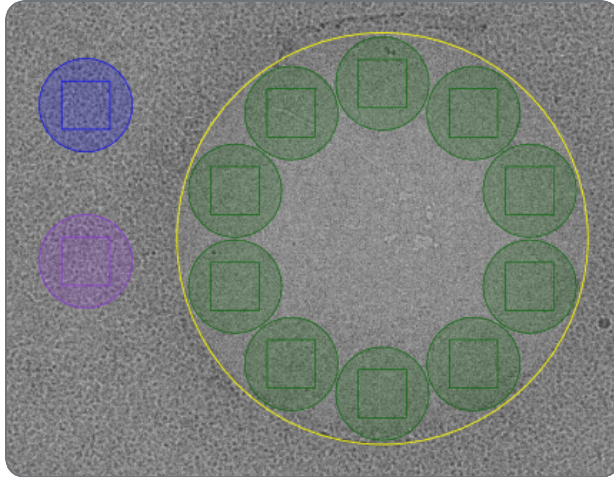
It is not possible to modify the Defocus List while an Automated Acquisition run is ongoing or paused. To modify the Defocus List, the run must first be stopped.

Define the Autofocus Area

The Foil Hole Template contains one Autofocus Area.

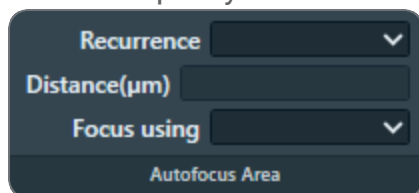
1. Add an Autofocus Area to the Foil template:
 - a. Select **Template Definition > Add Autofocus Area**.
 - b. In the **image display**, select the **location** for the Autofocus Area.
 - Select an area with only carbon foil, no ice and no particles.
 - If the A-tilt is not 0 degrees, then select a location on the Tilt Axis.

A blue circle appears at the selected position.



- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Autofocus Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Autofocus Preset.
 - On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the size of the Autofocus Area is defined as the beam diameter at the Autofocus Preset magnification.
2. In the image display, select the Autofocus Area

3. Select or specify the Autofocus Area settings:



a. Select **Recurrence**:

- **Never**: Do not perform the Autofocus function at all.
- **Always**: Autofocus is performed at every Foil Hole.
- **After Distance**: Autofocus is performed only when the distance between the current Foil Hole and the most recent Autofocus location is larger than a specified value.
- **After Centering**: Autofocus is performed after a cluster of Foil Holes is centered. Only available when *Session Setup > Acquisition Mode* is *Faster Acquisition*.

b. If *Recurrence* is set to *After Distance*, then specify the *Distance*.

c. Select **Focus using**:

- **Objective Lens**: EPU adjusts the focal plane to the Z-position of the specimen.
- **Stage Z axis**: EPU adjusts the Z-position of the specimen to the focal plane.

Automatic Placement of the Autofocus Area

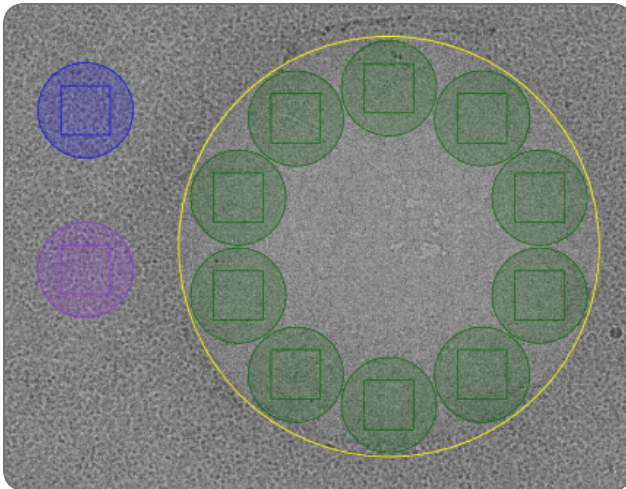
When the "automatic" option for the autofocus area is set to ON, EPU will automatically place the autofocus area at a suitable position (at the support film at the cross-section in between the foil holes) for sample carriers with a foil hole pattern with square or hexagonal geometry. During data collection with session type "automated" the autofocus area will be placed on the fly. This removes the need to reload each grid of a multigrid queue to generate the optimal template. During data collection with session type "manual", the autofocus area will be placed when the user performs the "template definition" task. The user could adjust the position manually, which automatically deactivates the feature. Re-enabling the feature places the autofocus area back to the automatically determined position and resets the autofocus settings to the default values.

The status of that feature is saved as part of session preferences, and landing page favorites, and propagated to new EPU sessions, when basing them on the previous EPU session and when using the "autofill queue" feature for EPU multigrid. Furthermore, the feature is enabled by default for landing page-advised preferences.

Define the Drift Measurement Area

The Foil Hole Template contains at most one Drift Measurement Area. If a Drift Measurement Area is present, then EPU executes the Drift stabilization function instead of counting down the Delay after Stage Shift timer. The Drift stabilization function pauses the Automated Acquisition run as long as the actual drift speed is higher than a specified threshold value. This threshold value is specified in **Auto Functions** tab > **Auto Functions (TEM): Drift stabilization task > Max. Remaining Drift**.

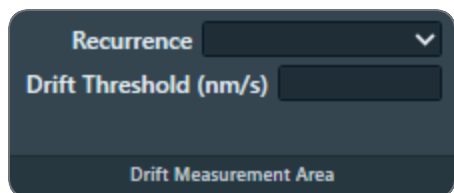
1. Add an Drift Measurement Area to the Foil Hole Template:
 - a. Select **Template Definition > Add Drift Measurement Area**.
 - b. In the image display, select the location for the Drift Measurement Area.
A purple circle is placed in the Foil Hole Template with its center at the selected position.



The Drift Measurement Area is best placed outside the Foil Hole perimeter, on the carbon foil. This way no valuable specimen material is exposed.

- On microscopes with a Three Lens Condenser system, the size of the Drift Measurement Area is defined by the Illuminated Area which is specified in the Drift Measurement Preset.
 - On microscopes with a Two Lens Condenser system, the size of the Drift Measurement Area is defined as the beam diameter at the Drift Measurement Preset magnification.
2. In the image display, select the **Drift Measurement Area**.

3. In the **Drift Measurement** section of the Ribbon bar:



a. Specify the **Recurrence**.

- **Always:** The Drift Measurement function is executed after every CompuStage move. In practice this means every time the Automated Acquisition run moves to the next Foil Hole.
- **Once per Grid Square:** The Drift Measurement function is executed only after moving to another Grid Square. For long moves like this, the actual drift speed can vary more than for the relatively short moves between Foil Holes within the same Grid Square. For the short hole-to-hole movements, the Delay after Stage Shift timer is used. If the **Maximum Image Shift** is set smaller than the distance between the Acquisition Areas, then the **Once per Grid Square** option is the only valid choice.

b. Specify the **Drift Threshold**.

This is the maximum allowed drift speed for data acquisition. If the specified threshold is not achieved within 600 seconds, then the Foil Hole will be skipped and the Automated Acquisition run continues with the next Foil Hole.

Specify the Maximum Image Shift and Delay Timers

The use of Image Shift to navigate between Template Areas is a trade-off between accuracy and throughput. Image Shift is typically faster than moving the specimen with the stage, but it also induces coma and astigmatism. The required resolution for 3D reconstruction limits the maximum acceptable coma.

The Maximum Image Shift depends on:

- The presence and calibration status of Aberration Free Image Shift (AFIS). AFIS drastically reduces coma at large Image Shift values.
- The presence of an Image Corrector. An Image Corrector significantly improves image resolution near the optical axis, but it also limits the available Image Shift range.

- The use of Phase Plates. With Phase Plates, Image Shift must be limited so the beam does not shift outside the activated Phase Plate area.
- The Session Setup > Acquisition mode. When *Session Setup > Acquisition Mode* is *Faster acquisition* and the conditions for Foil Hole navigation by Image Shift are met, then EPU locks the Maximum Image Shift value at a predetermined value, and disables the Maximum Image Shift input field.

Follow the steps below to specify the Image Shift and delay values.

1. If not disabled, specify the **Maximum Image Shift** distance. The *Maximum Image Shift* distance determines if a Template Area can be visited by applying an Image Shift, or if it is necessary to move the stage.
2. Specify the **Delay after Image Shift** time. The *Delay after Image Shift* timer postpones image acquisition until the image shift deflectors have settled at their new values.
3. Specify the **Minimum stage settling time**. The *Minimum stage settling time* postpones image acquisition until:
 - The stage mechanics have relaxed and are settled at their new positions.
 - Thermal expansion due to heat from the motors has decreased below an acceptable threshold.

The countdown starts when the most recent stage move is completed. The *Minimum stage settling time* is ignored when the Foil Hole Template contains a Drift Measurement Area. The delay after a stage move is then no longer a fixed time.

The values for the delay timers can be determined with the **Auto Functions > Drift stabilization** autofunction.

Guidelines for the Drift Measurement Function and the Delay After Stage Shift Time

There are circumstances in which Drift Measurement function may not always be as accurate and fast as desired. The appearance of the specimen can change due to the accumulating damage that is caused by repetitive exposure. This may make it difficult to accurately determine the image shift between consecutive images. In extreme cases, this could even cause the Drift Measurement function to time out at 10 minutes.

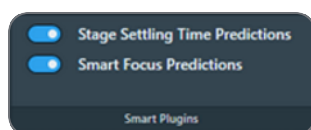
Under these circumstances:

- Adding a *Drift Measurement Area* and selecting *Recurrence: Always* would significantly slow down the Automated Acquisition run, and make the predictions in the *Progress* panel less reliable. It may also result in a relatively large number of skipped Foil Holes due to failed Drift Measurements.
- Adding a *Drift Measurement Area* and selecting *Recurrence: Once per Grid Square* decreases the chance of occurrence and impact of a time out. At the same, the Automated Acquisition run is not paused longer than necessary after moving on to the next Grid Square.
- If a predictable throughput is most important, it can be better to *not* add a Drift Measurement Area to the Foil Hole Template, and use the *Delay after Stage Shift* timer for all moves.

Run the **Auto Functions > Auto-Functions (TEM) > Drift stabilization** autofunction to determine a usable value for **Delay after Stage Shift**. For instructions, see [Run the Drift Stabilization autofunction](#).

Enable the Smart Plugins in the Template Definition

Note: Only available on systems with *Smart EPU* and either *EQM* or Embedded CryoSPARC Live.

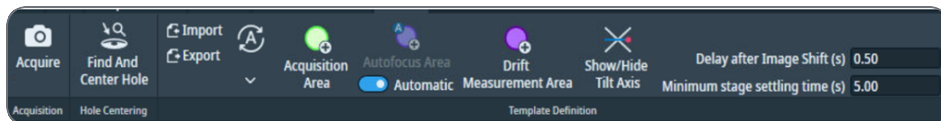


For the Template Definition, the following Smart Plugins are available:

- *Stage Settling Time Predictions* provides a stage settling time that is derived from the acquired data. When a stage move is executed, EPU can request a stage settling time from Smart EPU. The stage settling time that is provided by this Smart Plugin overrides the *Template Definition > Minimum stage settling time* value. This Smart Plugin can only be enabled when *Session Setup > Acquisition* mode is *Accurate*.
- *Smart Focus Predictions* provides a focus value that is derived from the acquired data. Instead of executing the Autofocus auto function, EPU can request a focus value from Smart EPU. If the Smart Plugin can provide a focus value, then EPU skips the execution of the Autofocus function and uses the provided value.

Import and Export a Foil Hole Template

With the Import and Export functions it is possible to archive the current Template Definition as a file, and to load a Template Definition that has been created in an earlier EPU session. This way, setting up an Automated Acquisition run for a regularly used grid type is much faster and easier.



Export

Select **Export** to write the current Foil Hole Template to a file (**.epuTemplate*).

The Template file contains:

- The type, location and *all* settings of *all* Template Areas.
The Template file does not contain the size of the Template Areas. The size is determined by the pertaining Presets.
- The Maximum Image Shift, Delay after Image Shift and Delay after Stage Shift values.
- The Defocus list for the Acquisition Area(s).

The Template file also contains the Foil Hole diameter. The Foil Hole diameter is only used as a reference value for the Import functionality.

Import

The Foil Hole diameter of the loaded specimen does not have to be the same as the Foil Hole diameter in the Template file. EPU calculates the ratio of the Foil Hole diameters to proportionally adjust the positions of the Template Areas. If the ratio is too large, then EPU shows a warning. In that case, the Focus and/or Drift Area may be located outside the field of view of the Hole/Eucentric Preset.

1. Select **Import** and select a previously stored Template file.
2. If necessary or desirable, reposition the Template Areas and/or adjust their settings.

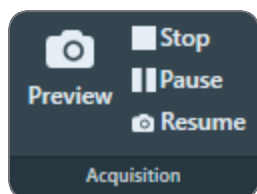
Template Execution Task for Quantifoil Specimens

The purpose of the Template Execution task is to validate the Foil Hole Template, including finding and centering the Foil Hole that is nearest to the center of the camera field of view.

Validate the Foil Hole Template

To validate the Foil Hole Template, follow the procedure below. First perform this procedure at an ideal Foil Hole. If the result is good, also perform the procedure at one or two Foil Holes that are not ideal, but still good enough for high quality data acquisition.

1. Select a Foil Hole:
 - a. Select the **EPU** tab > **Hole Selection** task.
 - b. Select **Acquire**.
 - c. Right-click on a Foil Hole and select **Move stage to location**.
2. Prepare the starting conditions for Template Execution:
 - a. Select **Hole Selection** > **Auto Eucentric**.
 - b. Select **Auto Functions** tab > **Auto-Functions (TEM): Autofocus**.
 - c. Select the appropriate **Handpanels** > **User Button** to **Reset Defocus**.
 - d. Insert the **FluScreen**.
 - e. Move the **specimen**, so that the Foil Hole is still fully visible but not exactly centered in the camera field of view.
This will test the *Find And Center Hole* function during Template Execution.
 - f. Change the **Defocus** a little.
This will test the *Autofocus* function during Template Execution.
3. Select the **EPU** tab > **Template Execution** task.
4. Select **Preview** to execute the Foil Hole Template, including the *Find and Center Hole* and *Autofocus* functions.



5. Verify that the *Preview* procedure is executed successfully. If the Template Execution procedure is *not* completed successfully, then:
 - a. Solve any issues.
 - b. Repeat this procedure from *step 1*.

The time it takes to complete a *Preview* run of the Foil Hole Template is a good estimate for the *Session Information* panel > *Exposures per hour*. Keep in mind that the Foil Hole Template can contain multiple Acquisition Areas.

Automated Acquisition Task

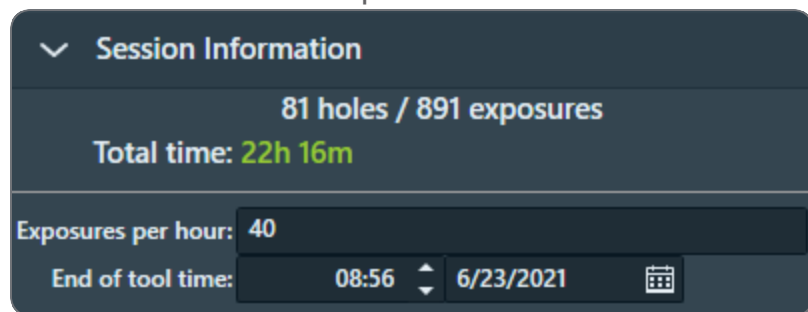
This section describes the Automated Acquisition task for a single specimen. For a description of this task in the EPU Multigrid workflow, see: [The Automated Acquisition task in the EPU Multigrid workflow](#).

To successfully complete an Automated Acquisition run, the following prerequisites must be fulfilled:

- The tasks in the Preparations tab and the Auto Functions tab must be completed.
- An Atlas of the specimen must be available.

How to Plan for High Microscope Utilization

The Session Information panel indicates how efficient the available time is utilized.



To maximize utilization, follow these guidelines:

1. Specify the time and date for the **End of tool time**.
2. Specify the **Exposures per hour**.
This number is an estimate. It can be based on experience with similar Automated Acquisition runs.
On Quantifoil specimens, the time that is needed to complete a *Template Execution* > *Preview* also provides a good indication. Keep in mind that a Foil Hole Template can contain multiple Acquisition Areas.

3. Check the **Holes / Exposures** numbers.

- **Holes:** The number of Foil Holes (Quantifoil) or Acquisition Areas (Lacey Carbon).
 - For an *Automated* session, this number is an estimation. Among others, it is based on the number of Grid Squares that is selected in the Square Selection task, and the spacing between the Foil Holes or Acquisition Areas.
 - For a *Manual* session it is the number of selected holes.
- **Exposures:** The number of Acquisition Areas.
 - On Lacey Carbon specimens the number of exposures is the same as the number of holes.
 - On Quantifoil specimens, the number of holes is multiplied by the number of Acquisition Areas in the Foil Hole Template.

The estimated number of exposures assumes that no Grid Squares are skipped and no holes are skipped.

4. Check the Total time.

This is the duration of the Automated Acquisition run. It is calculated by dividing the number of exposures by the number of Exposures per hour.

The color indicates whether or not the available tool time is fully used, assuming that no Grid Squares or holes are skipped:

- **Red:** poor utilization. When the Total time is spent, there is still a significant amount of tool time left.
- **Yellow:** Adequate utilization, there is room for improvement. When the Total time is spent, there is a small amount of tool time left. If the *Session type* is *Manual*, add a few more holes to the selection so all available tool time is used for data acquisition.
- **Green:** Maximum utilization. When the Total time is spent, there is no tool time left.

Verify that there is Sufficient Free Disk Space and Sufficient Liquid Nitrogen (LN2)

Before starting the Automated Acquisition run, check the following:

1. Make sure there is sufficient available **disk space**.

- On the **Microscope PC**.

Session related data and images are stored in the **Session Setup > Output folder**. In case no more data can be stored in this location, EPU pauses the Automated Acquisition run and requests another storage location. If this happens, select a new **Output folder** and resume the Automated Acquisition run.

- On the **Storage Server or Gatan PC**.

Dose Fractions are stored on the Storage Server or Gatan PC. Data volumes of several hundreds of Gigabytes per day are no exception. If there is no more space to store Dose Fraction images, the Automated Acquisition run will stop.

2. Make sure the **Liquid Nitrogen (LN2)** dewars are full.

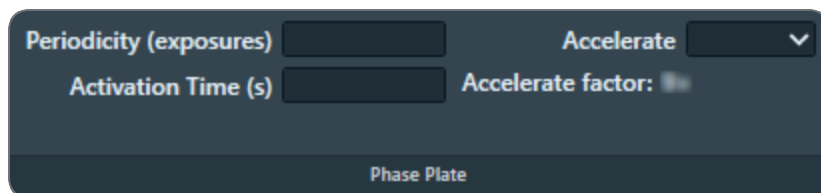
To avoid failure of an unattended run, make sure that the LN2 supply is sufficient to finish the run. EPU frequently checks if a refill of the dewars is required and will request a refill if needed. EPU cannot detect if the main LN2 supply runs out. If the LN2 is not refilled, the Automated Acquisition run keeps going while the sample temperature slowly increases.

Activate a New Phase Plate before an Automated Acquisition Run

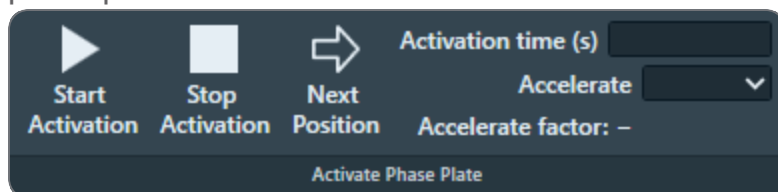
The instructions below are only applicable when **EPU > Session Setup > Use Phase Plate** is ticked.

To prepare a fresh Phase Plate, follow the instructions below:

1. In the **Phase Plate** section:



- a. Specify **Periodicity (exposures)**: The number of acquisitions after which the Objective aperture mechanism moves to the next Phase Plate position to start the activation of a new Phase Plate area. The interval is typically between 50 and 80 exposures.
 - b. Specify **Activation Time (s)**: The time that is needed to activate a new Phase Plate.
 - c. If desired, select **Accelerate: Yes**. The Accelerate function temporarily moves the specimen to an area that has been exposed already, and selects the largest C2 aperture to increase the beam current. After the phase plate activation is completed, the C2 aperture mechanism and the specimen are returned to their initial positions. The Accelerate function does not change any optics settings. The Accelerate factor is the area ratio between the initial C2 aperture and the largest C2 aperture.
2. Retract the FluScreen.
The beam will be blanked now.
 3. Select the **Preparation** tab > **Activate Phase Plate** task.
 4. Select **Next Position** to move the Objective aperture mechanism to a fresh area on the phase plate.



5. Wait for the drift of the aperture mechanism to settle.
For a small move, this takes about 30 seconds.

Note: After a large move with the aperture mechanism, for example a move to a different Phase Plate, it may take up to 5 minutes for drift to settle.

6. Specify the **Activation time (s)** value.

7. (Optional) Select **Accelerate: Yes**.

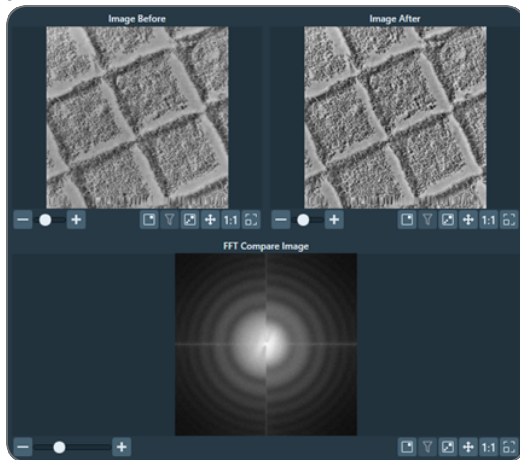
8. Select **Start Activation**.

An image is acquired and displayed in the top left section of the Task Execution panel.

9. Wait for the Activation time to expire.

EPU acquires a new image and displays it in the top right section of the Task Execution panel.

The FFT of both images are displayed side-by-side in the bottom section of the Task Execution panel, so they are easy to compare. If the Thon rings are shifted inward by half a period, then Phase Plate activation is completed successfully.



Bottom left half: FFT of an image at the beginning of the activation.

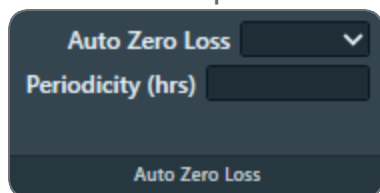
Bottom right half: FFT of an image at end of the activation.

Start the Automated Acquisition Run

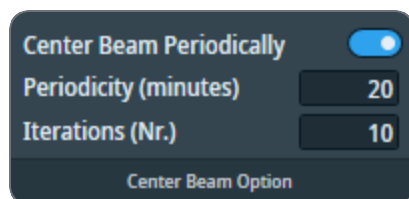
To start the Automated Acquisition, follow the procedure below:

1. Select **Automated Acquisition** task.

2. If the microscope is in EFTEM mode, then specify the Auto Zero Loss settings:



- Select Auto Zero Loss: Yes to enable periodic execution of the Auto Zero Loss function during the Automated Acquisition run.
 - Specify the Periodicity
3. For a Glacios FFI system in TEM or EFTEM mode, make sure that the Center Beam Option settings are specified accordingly:

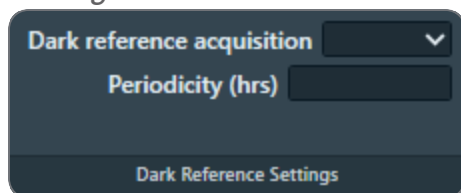


- Toggle the Center Beam option to Yes to enable the periodic execution of the Center Beam function during the Automated Acquisition run.
- Periodicity in minutes: The function will be executed after the specified periodicity value.
- Iterations (nr.): The function will execute for the specified number of iterations.



The Center Beam function can only be executed for carbon grids and is currently disabled for gold grids.

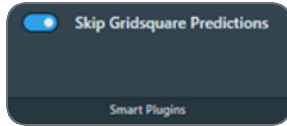
4. If the system has a Gatan filter with Gatan K3 camera, then specify the *Dark Reference Settings*:



- Select **Dark reference acquisition**: **Yes** to enable periodic acquisition of Dark Reference images during the Automated Acquisition run.
- Specify the **Periodicity**.

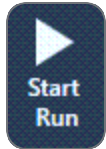
5. (Optional) If available, enable the **Smart Plugins > Skip Grid Square Prediction** plugin.

i **Note:** Smart Plugins is available only in a Smart EPU configuration with EQM or Embedded CryoSPARC Live.



This Smart Plugin uses the data acquired during the Automated Acquisition which is evaluated by EQM or Embedded CryoSPARC Live. If the quality of the acquired data is deemed insufficient, the plugin tells EPU to skip all remaining acquisitions on the current Grid Square. Note that this plugin will never recommend to skip the first Grid Square.

6. Select **Start Run**.

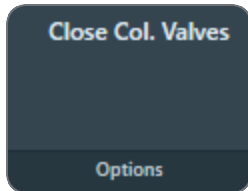


The *Start Run* button changes into a *Stop* button.

Before the automated acquisition starts, EPU runs a preconditions check.

- If no issues are found, then the automated acquisition run starts.
- If issues are found, then EPU displays these in the Messages side panel, and the automated acquisition run is not started.

7. Monitor the Automated Acquisition run during the first few data acquisitions.
8. If there are no irregularities, select the desired *Options*:

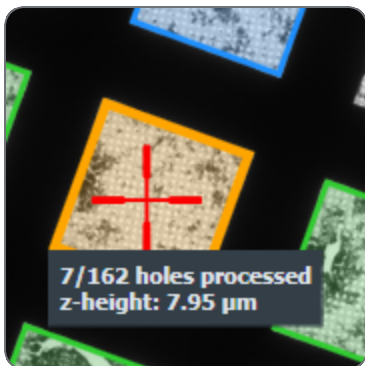


- a. Select **Close Col. Valves**. When active, EPU closes the Column Valves after the Automated Acquisition run is completed.
- b. On systems with a thermionic gun, select **Switch Off Emission** (*not shown in the image above*). When active, EPU switches off the emission, or brings the electron source to a safe standby state after the Automated Acquisition run is completed.

Monitor the Progress of the Automated Acquisition Run

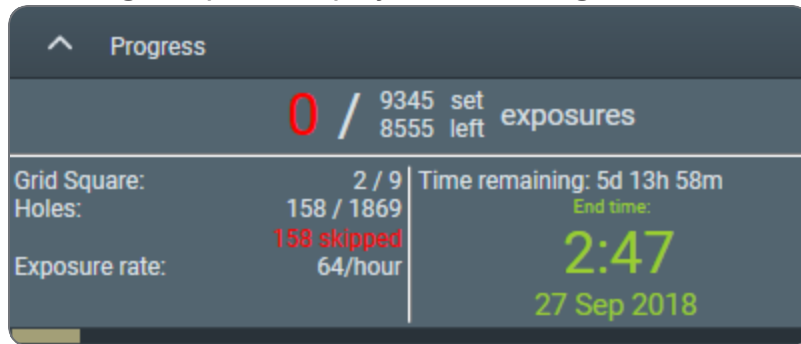
EPU provides two to monitor the progress of an Automated Acquisition run:

- The **EPU** tab > **Automated Acquisition** task > **Progress** panel.
The contents of the Progress panel are described below.
- The tooltip that appears when hovering over a Grid Square in the **EPU** tab > **Square Selection** task



On a Lacey Carbon specimen, the counters apply to the number of defined and processed Acquisition Areas.

The Progress panel displays the following information:



Exposures

- Number of completed data acquisitions. If too many acquisitions are skipped, the number of exposures will appear yellow or red.
- Number of planned data acquisitions (set).
- Number of remaining data acquisitions (left).

Grid Square

- Number of processed Grid Squares. The processing status of each Grid Square is also indicated by color coding in the Atlas.
- Number of planned Grid Squares.

Holes

Holey carbon only

- The number of processed Foil Holes.
- The number of planned holes.
- The number of skipped holes. When too many holes are skipped, the counter will turn red.

Exposure rate

The actual number of data acquisitions per hour, based on the statistics of the current session, including the skipped areas.

Time remaining

The estimated remaining duration, based on the actual Exposure rate and the number of remaining data acquisitions.

End time

The estimated end time of the run.

The color indicates whether or not the available tool time is fully used, assuming that no Grid Squares or holes are skipped:

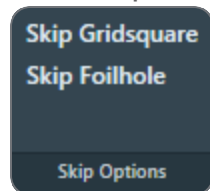
- **Red:** poor utilization. When the Total time is spent, there is still a significant amount of tool time left.
- **Yellow:** Adequate utilization, there is room for improvement. When the Total time is spent, there is a small amount of tool time left. If the *Session type* is *Manual*, add a few more holes to the selection so all available tool time is used for data acquisition.
- **Green:** Maximum utilization. When the Total time is spent, there is no tool time left.

A **progress bar** at the bottom side of the Progress panel indicates the overall progress.

Skip a Grid Square, Foil Hole or Acquisition Area

During the Automated Acquisition run EPU performs various automated functions. Depending on the results of the functions, EPU can decide to skip a Foil Hole or Acquisition Area, or even to skip an entire Grid Square. The number of skipped locations is reported in the Progress panel.

It is also possible to manually skip a location.



- If the quality of the current Grid Square results in too many skipped Foil Holes or Acquisition Areas, select **Skip Grid square** to move on to the next Grid Square.
- If the quality of the current Foil Hole or Acquisition Area causes a delay, or will surely result in failure of an automated function, select **Skip Foilhole** or **Skip Area**.
When the *Session Setup > Acquisition Mode* is *Faster acquisition* then EPU automatically recalculates the Foil Hole grouping.

Troubleshoot an Ongoing Automated Acquisition Run

If the automated run does not perform as expected, it is possible to adjust the settings:

1. Select **Stop**.



The Stop button changes into a *Start Run* button, and the processing status of the Grid Squares and the selected areas are stored in the EPU Session file.

2. Depending on the type of failures, adjust the **Preparations** tab > **Acquisition and Optics Presets** values.

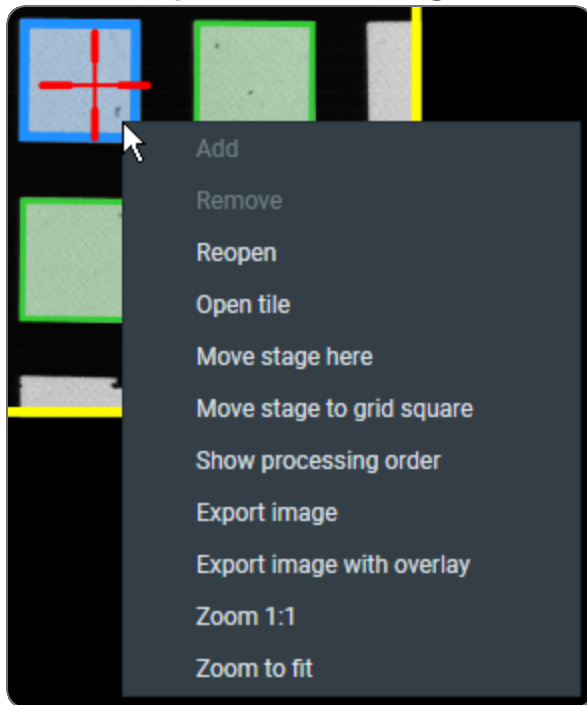
i **Note:** Be very careful! Some adjustments may invalidate certain calibrations. See the descriptions of the Presets, Calibrations and Auto Functions to check if additional updates are necessary.

3. For Holey carbon grids:

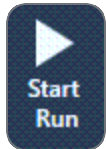
- If execution of the Foil Hole Template fails often, then return to the **Hole Selection** task, right-click on a Foil Hole in the Image Display and select **Move stage to location** to center a Foil Hole. Then select the **Template Definition** task to adjust the Foil Hole Template. If the Grid Square has been (partially) processed already, then the crosshair that marks the stage position may not move the exact center of the Foil Hole. See [The impact of Hole Position Refinement on the 'Move stage to location' function](#) for an explanation of such a possible offset.
- If the *Find And Center Hole* function fails often, use the **Hole Selection** task > **Measure Hole Size** tool to verify the Foil Hole diameter and spacing.
 - In a *Session type: Manual* session, the Foil Hole center positions are already defined by their XYZ-coordinates during the Hole Selection task, so an adjustment of the Foil Hole spacing will have no effect.
To update the Foil Hole positions, return to the *Square Selection* task and *Hole Selection* task to create a new selection of Foil Holes with more accurate coordinates.
 - In a *Session type: Automated* session, an adjustment of the Foil Hole diameter and/or spacing will have an impact on the Find And Center Hole function, but it may also have an impact on the Find Holes detection algorithm. These functions use the Hole/EucentricHeight Preset and the Grid Square Preset. If these Presets do not have a parallel beam and/or do not use little to no defocus, then the hole diameters in the acquired images may deviate significantly from the physical specimen.

4. (Optional) Change the processing status of one or more Grid Squares from *Processed* (blue) back to *Open* (green).

In **EPU > Square Selection**, right-click on a processed Grid Square and select **Reopen**.



5. Select Start Run



EPU reads the EPU Session file and starts the Automated Acquisition run from where it was stopped earlier. Even if the EPU software is closed and opened again, the Automated Acquisition run will start again from where it was stopped.

Phase Plate Position Logging

For each acquisition, the used Phase Plate positions are logged in the XML files that are associated with that acquisition.

This logging facilitates Phase Plate mapping in the post-processing pipeline, where the measured phase shift from the CTF estimation can be correlated with the used Phase Plate positions. The Phase Plate position logging itself does not qualify the used positions as *good* or *bad*.

Grouping by Image Beam Shift

Data generated during automated data collection using Acquisition mode "Faster" (AFIS) contain information about the image beam shift group in the filename (FoilHole_20007835_Data_20008808_nnn_20210420_154730), enabling easy state-of-the-art aberration correction.

The EPU Multigrid Option

Note: EPU Multigrid is a licensed option and might require a paid upgrade to your system. For more information, contact [<UpdateEM@thermofisher.com>](mailto:UpdateEM@thermofisher.com)

On a system with an Autoloader, the EPU Multigrid option makes it possible to prepare a queue of individual EPU Sessions, and then start data acquisition for the entire prepared queue. It is possible to prepare one EPU Session per specimen, but it is also possible to prepare multiple EPU Sessions for a single specimen. If the Multigrid queue involves specimens from multiple Autoloader slot positions, then EPU will automatically exchange the specimen between consecutive EPU Sessions.

The sections below explain how to create, edit and execute an EPU Multigrid experiment.

Create a queue with EPU Multigrid Sessions

This section describes the workflow for preparing an EPU Multigrid experiment through creating a Multigrid queue and adding manually-created sessions to it.

1. Perform the tasks in the **Preparation** and **Auto Functions** tabs.
There is no preference for a specific specimen to use for these tasks.

Note: Do not perform the Preparation > Calibrate I0 task.

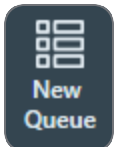
The Atlas Alignment function does not correct the coordinates of the I0 Calibration position. Because the specimens are unloaded and reloaded after the I0 Calibration is performed, the I₀ reference value measurements during the Automate Acquisition run may be less reliable.

2. In the **Preparation > Calibrate I0** task, select **Remove I0 Measurements**. If there is no calibrated value, then the *Remove I0 Measurements* button is not enabled.

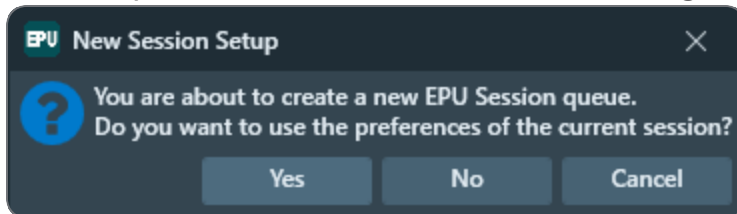
- In **Atlas > Screening**, acquire an Atlas for each specimen that will be included in the Multigrid experiment.

i **Note:** If you have picked the New Multigrid Queue option in the Home tab, skip the next two steps.

- Select **New Queue**.



- If a EPU (Multigrid) Session is currently active, then choose if the new EPU Multigrid Session uses the preferences from the current EPU Multigrid Session.



- Yes:** Create a new EPU Multigrid queue and create an EPU Multigrid Session that uses mostly the same settings and values as the currently active EPU Session. For an overview of the copied settings and values, see [The EPU Session Saved Preferences](#).
- No:** Create a new EPU Multigrid queue and EPU Multigrid Session without pre-selected settings and values.
- Cancel:** No new EPU Multigrid queue is created. The current EPU (Multigrid) Session stays as it is.

EPU creates an EPU Multigrid Session for the specimen that is currently loaded on the stage, and moves on to the *Session Setup* task.

The EPU Multigrid Option

6. Perform the *Preparation* tasks for the first EPU Session in the Multigrid queue.
If necessary, the settings and calibrations in the *Preparation* tab and/or *Auto Functions* tab can be updated.
 - a. Perform the **Session Queue** task. For instructions, see: [Session Setup task](#).
For an EPU Multigrid Session, the *Session type* is always *Automated*. Manual target selection is not supported.
 - b. Perform the **Square Selection** task. For instructions, see: [Square Selection task](#).
 - c. For a *Holey carbon* or *Holey gold* or *Hex* grid, perform the **Hole Selection**, **Template Definition** and **Template Execution** tasks. For instructions, see:
 - [Hole Selection task for Quantifoil specimens](#).
 - [Template Definition task for Quantifoil specimens](#).
 - [Template Execution task for Quantifoil specimens](#).
 - d. For a *Lacey Carbon* grid, perform the **Area Selection** task. For instructions, see: [Area Selection task for Lacey Carbon specimens](#).
7. (Optional) To store the preferences of the selected session, click the **Home > Saved**



Preferences > button. Next, type in a name of your choice for the new preference and click **Add**. The saved preference can be selected later for a similar specimen. See [The EPU Session Saved Preferences](#) for an overview of the stored settings and calibrations.

8. (Optional) Specify **Queue > Max Exposures** to limit the number of acquisitions in this EPU Multigrid Session.

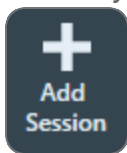
Queue					
Slot	Session Name	Status	Gridsquare Progress	Completed Exposures	Max Exposures
1	MultiGrid01	Planned	0/30	0	<input type="text"/>
2	MultiGrid02	Planned	0/45	0	<input type="text"/>

The *Max Exposures* value can be changed at any time during Preparation and Execution, also when a different EPU Session is active.

9. Create one or more new EPU Multigrid Sessions to be added to the queue.

a. For each new EPU Multigrid Session:

- If creating a new session on a different sample:
(Optional) Load a **different specimen** on the stage. For instructions, see [Load a specimen on the stage](#).
- If creating a new session on the same sample:
It is also possible to create multiple EPU Multigrid Sessions for a single specimen, for example for different sets of Grid Squares.
- Select **Add Session** to create a new EPU Multigrid Session for the specimen that is currently loaded on the stage.



b. Perform the **Preparation** tasks as described in step 6 above. If necessary, the settings and calibrations in the *Preparation* tab and/or *Auto Functions* tab can be updated.

c. (Optional) Store the preferences of the selected session using the **Home > Saved**

Preferences >  button.


d. (Optional) Specify **Queue > Max Exposures** to limit the number of acquisitions.

10. During a Multigrid session with a prepared single session using an Embedded CryoSPARC Live dataset (below parameters are newly introduced in the Embedded CryoSPARC Live workflow), when you click on the **Add Session** button in the **Session Queue** task to create a single session without selecting a dataset for the new single session. Then the new session (s) have a dataset automatically created with the same parameters as the prepared single session,

- Extraction Box Size
- Min & Max Particle Diameter
- Picking Shape
- Particle Downsampling (Desired Approx. Pixel Size).


Automatically Fill the Queue using Auto-Create Sessions

Once you have created a Multigrid queue, you can fill the queue with automatically-created sessions, i.e. without the need to load different specimens on the stage, through the following steps:

1. Have at least one session in the Multigrid queue.
2. Select a session from the Multigrid queue that you wish to use as a template for automatically-created sessions. Double-click the session to select it.
3. Make sure the selected session has the *Preparation complete* icon .

Slot	Session Name	Status
3	20220623_135710_20	Planned

Session parameters are configured

If a session in the queue has the *Preparation incomplete* icon , hover over the icon to reveal the incomplete task(s).

Slot	Session Name	Status
-	20220623_135710_20	Planned

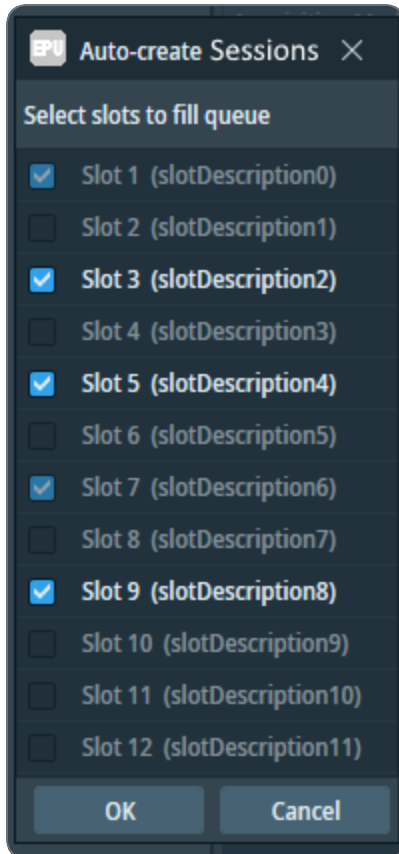
Session parameters are not configured
 - No grid squares selected.
 - No template defined
 - Hole size and spacing were never measured.

Perform the **Preparation** tasks as described in [Create a queue with EPU Multigrid Sessions](#).

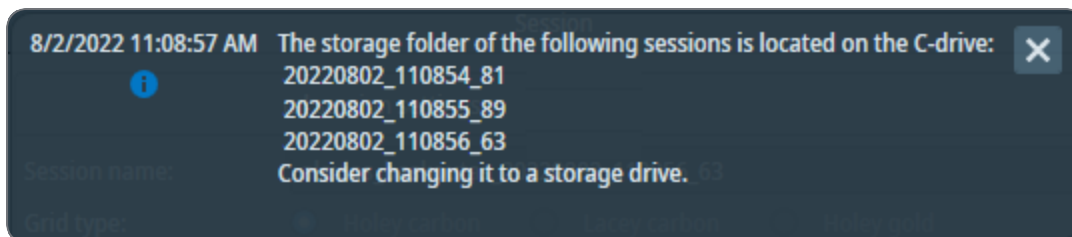
4. From **EPU > Preparation > Session Queue**, click **Auto-create Sessions**.



- The pop-up below appears showing a list of specimen slots. The slots with acquired Atlases will be selected by default. Untick the slots you wish to exclude from the Multigrid experiment. Then click **OK**. The Multigrid queue is populated with sessions corresponding to the selected slots.



After sessions are automatically added to the MultiGrid queue, a pop-up informs you of those sessions located on the C-drive. Consider changing the storage location of those sessions.



The EPU Multigrid Option

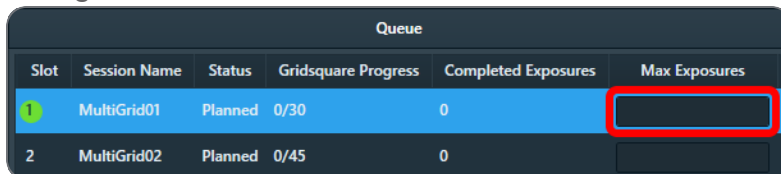
6. During a Multigrid session with a prepared single session using an Embedded CryoSPARC Live dataset (below parameters are newly introduced in the Embedded CryoSPARC Live workflow), when you click on the **Auto-create sessions** button in the **Session Queue** task to create sessions for all slots. Then the new session(s) have a dataset automatically created with the same parameters as the prepared single session,

- Extraction Box Size
- Min & Max Particle Diameter
- Picking Shape
- Particle Downsampling (Desired Approx. Pixel Size).

Edit an EPU Multigrid Session in the Queue

To update the settings of an EPU Multigrid Session, follow the steps below:

1. Select the **Queue > EPU Multigrid Session** that needs to be edited.
To select a session in the Queue, *double-click* on it.
2. (Optional) Specify **Queue > Max Exposures** to limit the number of acquisitions in this EPU Multigrid Session.



The screenshot shows a table titled "Queue" with the following columns: Slot, Session Name, Status, Gridsquare Progress, Completed Exposures, and Max Exposures. The first row is highlighted in blue and has a red box around the Max Exposures cell, which is currently empty. The second row is not highlighted.

Slot	Session Name	Status	Gridsquare Progress	Completed Exposures	Max Exposures
1	MultiGrid01	Planned	0/30	0	
2	MultiGrid02	Planned	0/45	0	

The *Max Exposures* value can be changed at any time during Preparation and Execution, also when a different EPU Session is active.

3. (Optional) In the Preparation tasks, change the desired **settings and values**.
If necessary, the settings and calibrations in the *Preparation* tab and/or *Auto Functions* tab can be updated.

4. Perform the Square Selection task, see [Square Selection task](#). Hole Selection, Template Definition and Template Execution tasks are not available. If the execution of these tasks are necessary, then load the corresponding grid on the stage.

Note: If the specimen of the selected EPU Multigrid Session not currently loaded on the stage, then all actions requiring a stage move or image acquisition are *not* available.

The *Slot* number of the currently loaded specimen has a green highlight.

5. (Optional) Store the preferences of the selected session using the **Home > Saved**

Preferences >  button.

Remove an EPU Multigrid Session from the Queue

Note: In the current EPU version it is not possible to remove an EPU Multigrid Session from the queue.

To exclude an EPU Multigrid Session from data acquisition,

- (Option1) From **EPU > Preparation > Session Creation**, click **Remove Session**.
- (Option2) Set **Queue > Max Exposures** to 0 (zero).

Change the Order of the EPU Multigrid Sessions in the Queue

To change the order in which the EPU Multigrid Sessions will be processed during the Automated Acquisition, drag and drop the EPU Multigrid Sessions to their desired position in the Queue.

It is *not* possible to change the order in the Queue while data acquisition is ongoing or paused. It is only possible to change the order in the Queue before data acquisition starts, or after data acquisition is stopped.

The Automated Acquisition Task in the EPU Multigrid Workflow

In the Multigrid workflow, the Automated Acquisition task offers functions to:

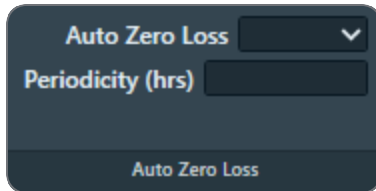
The EPU Multigrid Option

- Perform automated acquisition for the entire EPU Multigrid Queue.
- Perform automated acquisition for a single EPU Multigrid Session from the queue.

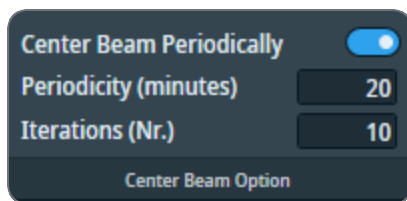
Perform Automated Acquisition for a Single EPU Multigrid Session from the Queue

To acquire data for only one of the prepared EPU Multigrid Sessions from the Queue, follow the steps below:

1. In the **Session Queue** task, select the **Queue > EPU Multigrid Session** for which data acquisition must be performed.
2. If the microscope is in EFTEM mode, then specify the Auto Zero Loss settings:



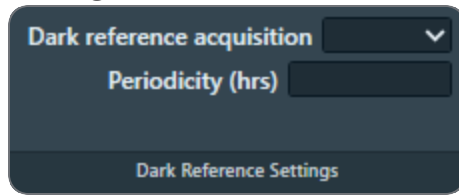
- a. Select Auto Zero Loss: Yes to enable periodic execution of the Auto Zero Loss function during the Automated Acquisition run.
 - b. Specify the Periodicity
3. For a Glacios FFI system in TEM or EFTEM mode, make sure that the Center Beam Option settings are specified accordingly:



- a. Toggle the Center Beam option to Yes to enable the periodic execution of the Center Beam function during the Automated Acquisition run.
- b. Periodicity in minutes: The function will be executed after the specified periodicity value.
- c. Iterations (nr.): The function will execute for the specified number of iterations.

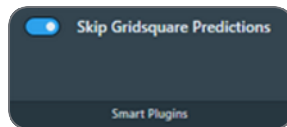
i The Center Beam function can only be executed for carbon grids and is currently disabled for gold grids.

4. If the system has a Gatan filter with Gatan K3 camera, then specify the *Dark Reference Settings*:



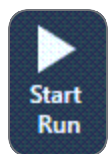
- Select **Dark reference acquisition: Yes** to enable periodic acquisition of Dark Reference images during the Automated Acquisition run.
 - Specify the **Periodicity**.
5. (Optional) If available, enable the **Smart Plugins > Skip Grid Square Prediction** plugin.

i Note: Smart Plugins is available only in a Smart EPU configuration with EQM or Embedded CryoSPARC Live.



This Smart Plugin uses the data acquired during the Automated Acquisition which is evaluated by EQM or Embedded CryoSPARC Live. If the quality of the acquired data is deemed insufficient, the plugin tells EPU to skip all remaining acquisitions on the current Grid Square. Note that this plugin will never recommend to skip the first Grid Square.

6. Select **Start Run**.



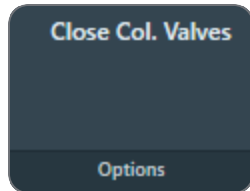
The *Start Run* button changes into a *Stop* button.

Before the automated acquisition starts, EPU runs a preconditions check.

- If no issues are found, then the automated acquisition run starts.
- If issues are found, then EPU displays these in the Messages side panel, and the automated acquisition run is not started.

The EPU Multigrid Option

7. Monitor the Automated Acquisition run during the first few data acquisitions.
8. If there are no irregularities, select the desired *Options*:



- a. Select **Close Col. Valves**. When active, EPU closes the Column Valves after the Automated Acquisition run is completed.
- b. On systems with a thermionic gun, select **Switch Off Emission** (*not shown in the image above*). When active, EPU switches off the emission, or brings the electron source to a safe standby state after the Automated Acquisition run is completed.

The actions and functions to pause, resume, stop and troubleshoot the Automated Acquisition run are the same as in a single specimen experiment. For descriptions and instructions, see: [The Automated Acquisition Task](#).

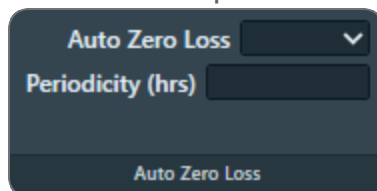
Perform Automated Acquisition for all EPU Multigrid Sessions in the Queue

To successfully complete an Automated Acquisition run in an EPU Multigrid experiment, the following prerequisites must be fulfilled for each specimen in the queue:

- The tasks in the Preparations tab and the Auto Functions tab must be completed.
- An Atlas must be available.

To perform an Automated Acquisition run for the entire Multigrid Queue, follow the steps below:

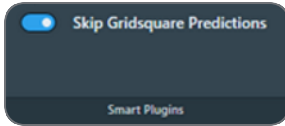
1. If the microscope is in EFTEM mode, then specify the Auto Zero Loss settings:



- a. Select Auto Zero Loss: Yes to enable periodic execution of the Auto Zero Loss function during the Automated Acquisition run.
- b. Specify the Periodicity

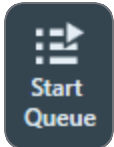
- (Optional) If available, enable the **Smart Plugins > Skip Grid Square Prediction** plugin.

Note: Smart Plugins is available only in a Smart EPU configuration with EQM or Embedded CryoSPARC Live.



This Smart Plugin uses the data acquired during the Automated Acquisition which is evaluated by EQM or Embedded CryoSPARC Live. If the quality of the acquired data is deemed insufficient, the plugin tells EPU to skip all remaining acquisitions on the current Grid Square. Note that this plugin will never recommend to skip the first Grid Square.

- (Optional) In the **Queue**, drag the **EPU Multigrid Session** for the currently loaded specimen to the top of the list.
Although it is not strictly necessary, this will save time because the Automated Acquisition doesn't have to start with a specimen exchange action.
- Select **Start Queue**.



The *Start Queue* button changes to a *Stop* button.

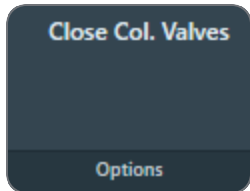
The *Start Run* button (for individual EPU Multigrid Sessions) changes to a *Skip* button.

Before the automated acquisition starts, EPU runs a preconditions check.

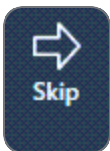
- If no issues are found, then the automated acquisition run starts.
- If issues are found, then EPU displays these in the *Messages* side panel, and the automated acquisition run is not started.

The EPU Multigrid Option

5. Monitor the Automated Acquisition run during the first few data acquisitions.
6. If there are no irregularities, select the desired *Options*:



- a. Select **Close Col. Valves**. When active, EPU closes the Column Valves after the Automated Acquisition run is completed.
 - b. On systems with a thermionic gun, select **Switch Off Emission** (*not shown in the image above*). When active, EPU switches off the emission, or brings the electron source to a safe standby state after the Automated Acquisition run is completed.
7. (Optional) Pause or skip or stop data acquisition.
 - To pause and resume the currently ongoing EPU Multigrid Session, see: [Pause and resume the Automated Acquisition run](#).
While acquisition is paused it is *not* possible to re-order the sessions in the Multigrid Queue.
 - To abort data acquisition from the current Grid Square, Foil Hole or Acquisition Area, see: [Skip a Grid Square, Foil Hole or Acquisition Area](#).
 - Select **Skip** to abort data acquisition for the currently ongoing EPU Multigrid Session, and move on to the next session in the Queue.



- Select **Stop** to abort data acquisition for the Multigrid Queue.



The *Stop* button changes to a *Start Queue* button.

After data acquisition for the Queue is stopped, it is possible to troubleshoot or to change the order of the Queue.

Inspect the Acquired Images

View and Post-Process MRC Images with Thermo Fisher Scientific Velox Software

MRC images can be viewed and post-processed:

- On the Microscope PC with the Thermo Fisher Scientific Velox Online Processing software.
- On any other computer with the Thermo Fisher Scientific Velox Offline software.

To open an MRC image in Velox:

1. Open **Velox Online Processing** or **Velox Offline**.
2. Drag and drop the **MRC image file** in the Velox window.

For detailed descriptions and instructions of the viewing and processing functionalities in Velox, see the Velox User Manual.

The Velox software does not provide 3D reconstruction functionalities.

Install the Thermo Fisher Scientific Imaging Codec Pack to Add Native Support for Common Microscopy Formats to Windows

The Thermo Fisher Scientific Imaging Codec Pack adds commonly used microscopy image formats to the natively supported image formats in Windows. After installation, the supported microscopy image formats can be opened in the Windows Photo Viewer, and the thumbnails and previews in Windows Explorer show the actual image, instead of a generic icon.

For an overview of the supported image formats, see the Imaging Codec Pack User Guide.

Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage

This chapter describes the preconditions that must be fulfilled for high quality data acquisition. Most preconditions involve microscope alignments and calibrations.

Unless the alignment or calibration procedure describes otherwise, make sure all alignments and calibrations are done:

- At a central stage position.
- At eucentric height.
- In focus.

Preconditions for the Specimen and Specimen Holder

Side entry holders must be cleaned and pumped down before insertion into the microscope. After insertion into the microscope:

1. Manually adjust the eucentric height of the specimen, preferably at or near the center of the specimen.
2. Roughly focus the specimen.

Preconditions for the Microscope

The microscope must meet the following conditions:

- The column alignments must be completed.
- Magnification Calibrations for LM and SA ranges must be completed.
- High Tension is stable.
- For Thermionic instruments, the gun saturation (heating) must be optimized and the emission chosen. If necessary, optimize the gun settings via the Gun Tilt and Gun Shift Direct Alignments.
- FEG registers, Alignment files and calibrations should form a consistent set.
- Apertures are properly centered.

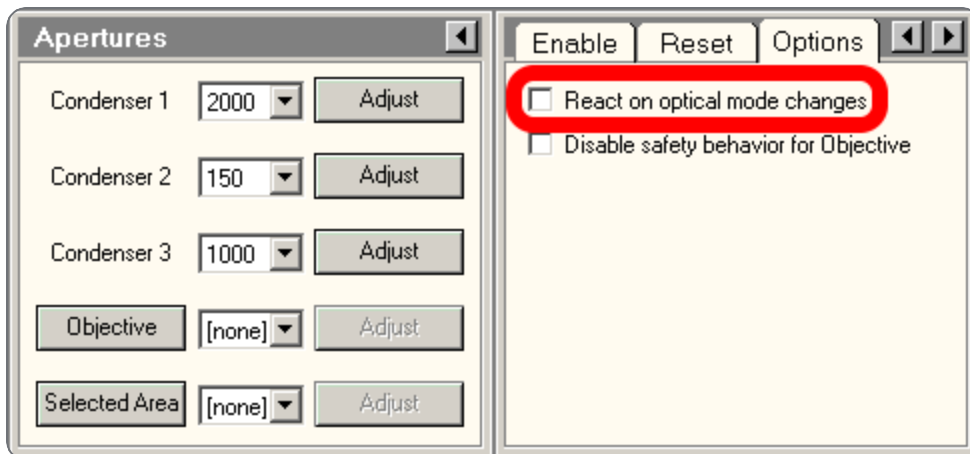
- Focus calibration must be completed. This task is performed in EPU.

Note: To work in both Nanoprobe and Microprobe modes, the focus calibration must be done separately for both modes.

- Direct alignments should be checked and, if necessary, adjusted in the modes that are used for EPU.
These include, but may not be limited to the LM and SA range, Nanoprobe and Microprobe modes.
- Bias/Dark and Gain Reference images are available and well averaged for all cameras.
- The camera is cooled and at a stable temperature.
- After any actions that may have introduced exceptionally strong drift, such as inserting a holder, enough time should be allowed for settling.

Clear the Apertures > Options > React on Optical Mode Changes Option

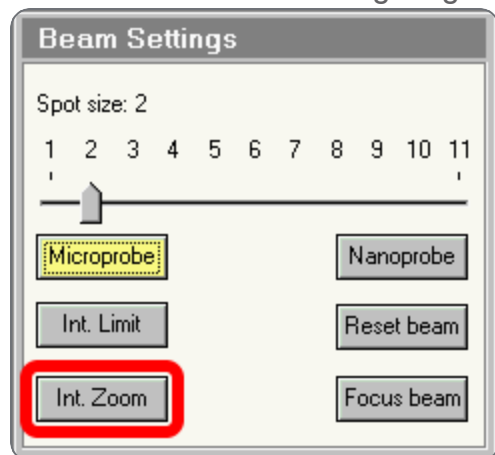
Note: Do not use the *React on optical mode changes* function to change the apertures automatically.



Among others, the *React on optical mode changes* function automatically returns to the C2 aperture that was selected the previous time that the optical mode was used. This may conflict with the *C2 Aperture* value in the *Acquisition and Optics Presets*.

Disable Beam Settings > Intensity Zoom

On systems with two condenser lenses, make sure that **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings > Int. Zoom** is off when using magnifications below 10.000X.



Use the Sherpa APM Function to Maintain the Microscope Alignments

On Krios systems with Titan 2.13 or later, and on Glacios systems with Talos 1.13 software or later, Sherpa APM is available to optimize and maintain the microscope alignments. Please see the Sherpa User Manual for instructions.

For Talos systems, APM is obsolete and replaced by MiCo. Refer to the MiCo manual for automated alignments.

Preconditions for the Microscope Alignments

High quality data acquisition relies on an accurate lens series alignment. The system alignments are generally quite stable and do not require frequent adjustment. Only adjust the system alignments when absolutely necessary.

Gun and Condenser

When switching between Acquisition and Optics Presets, the beam should ideally not change in position. This is achieved by the Spot Size Dependent Gun Shift alignment (gun part) and the Condenser (zoom) alignments.

Verify that the C2 aperture is centered before performing the tests described below.

Test the Gun Alignment

1. Select **Spot Size: 2**.
2. Adjust the **Intensity**, so that the beam diameter matches the smallest circle on the FluScreen.
3. Center the beam on the FluScreen.
4. Verify the Gun Alignment for Spot Sizes 2 to 11:
 - a. Increase the **Spot Size** number by one step.
 - b. Verify that the beam stays centered.

If the verification in step 4 fails:

- Perform all **Alignments** control panel > **Gun** alignments.
- Repeat steps 1 to 4.

5. When Spot Size 11 is checked, verify the Gun Alignment in reverse sequence:
 - a. Decrease the **Spot Size** number by one step.
 - b. Verify that the beam stays centered.

If the verification stays centered

- Perform all **Alignments** control panel > **Gun** alignments.
- Repeat steps 1 to 5.

Test the Condenser Alignment

1. Select the **highest SA magnification**.
2. Adjust the **Intensity**, so that the beam diameter matches the smallest circle on the FluScreen.
3. Center the beam.
4. In the **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings** control panel:
 - Titan: Enable **Auto Zoom**.
 - Talos: Enable **Intensity Zoom**.

Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage

5. Verify the Condenser Alignment for each SA magnification:

- a. Decrease the magnification by one step.
- b. Normalize all lenses.
- c. Verify that the beam stays centered.
- d. Verify that:
 - Titan: The beam size does not change.
 - Talos: The beam intensity does not change.

If the verifications in steps 5c and 5d fail, perform the **Align HM-TEM > All SA Magnifications** alignment.

6. In the **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings** control panel:

- Titan: Disable **Auto Zoom**.
- Talos: Disable **Intensity Zoom**.

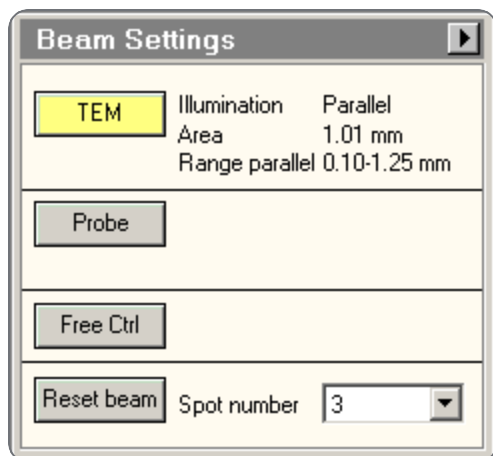
Test the Parallel Beam Range on Titan Systems

Perform this test in the following optical modes:

- TEM nP
- TEM uP

1. Insert the **FluScreen**.
2. If the system is not in Diffraction mode, select **Handpanels > Diffraction**.
3. Select **Camera Length: 800 mm**.
4. Select **Handpanels > Eucentric Focus**.

- Decrease the **Intensity** to the smallest value at which the **Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is **Parallel**.



- On the **FluScreen**, check that the **diffraction pattern circles** for gold are sharply defined.
- Take note of the **Area** value.
- Slowly increase the **Intensity** until the **Beam Settings** control panel > **Illumination** is no longer **Parallel**.
- Take note of the **Area** value.
- Decrease the **Intensity**, so that the **Area** value is the average of the lower and upper **Area** values that are noted in steps 7 and 9.
- On the **FluScreen**, check that the **diffraction pattern circles** for gold are sharply defined.

If the diffraction pattern circles are not sharply defined at step 11, perform the **Align HM-TEM > Basic SA** alignment.

Test the Condenser Zoom on Titan Systems

Perform this test in the following optical modes:

- TEM nP
- TEM uP

- Select the **lowest SA magnification**.
- With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, decrease the **Beam Settings** control panel > **Area**, so that the **Illumination** changes from **Parallel** to **Condensing**.
- Center the beam.

Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage

4. With the **Intensity** knob, slowly increase the illuminated area so that the **Illumination** is **Parallel** again.
5. Verify that the beam is still centered.
6. With the **Intensity** knob, slowly increase the illuminated area further.
7. Check that the beam stays centered for as long as **Illumination** is **Parallel**.

If the check at step 7 fails, perform the **Direct Alignments** control panel > **Condenser Zoom** alignment and repeat steps 1 to 7.

8. Center the beam on a feature of known size.
9. With the **Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter so that it matches the size of the feature.
10. Verify that the **Area** value corresponds with the known feature size.

If the check at step 10 fails, perform the **Direct Alignments** control panel > **Condenser Zoom** alignment and repeat steps 1 to 10.

Test the Condenser Focus Alignment

Perform this test in the following optical modes:

- TEM nP
 - TEM uP
1. With the **Handpanels** > **Intensity** knob, condense the beam to the smallest achievable spot.
 2. Verify that the **Beam Settings** control panel > **Area**, is 0 ± 100 nm. If this check 2 fails:
 - a. Perform the **Condenser** > **Condenser Preparation** alignment.
 - b. Depending the used optical mode, either:
 - Perform the **Focus + calib nP** alignment.
 - Perform the **Focus + calib nP** alignment.

Deflectors

The image/beam shift calibration must have been done carefully:

- To keep the illumination centered when some image shift is added.
- To shift the image when you want to move the beam to another area of the specimen.

Both Image and Beam Shift pivot points must be aligned accurately so the illumination conditions (coma, rotation center) and crossover shifts (GIF energy selection) do not change when applying image (beam) shift.

Test the Image/Beam Shift Calibration

1. Select a **high SA magnification**.
2. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter, so that it matches the largest circle on the FluScreen.
3. In the **TEM User Interface > Image Settings** control panel, select **MF knobs**.
4. With the **Handpanels > MF-X** and **MF-Y** knobs, shift the image roughly 50% of the beam diameter in the positive and negative **X** and in **Y** directions.
5. Check that the beam stays centered.
6. Select an **SA magnification** of approximately **50 kX**, so that the field of view spans approximately 15 grid squares.
7. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter, so that it matches the largest circle on the FluScreen.
8. In the **TEM User Interface > Image Settings** control panel, select **MF knobs**.
9. With the **Handpanels > MF-X** and **MF-Y** knobs, shift the image roughly 50% of the beam diameter in the positive and negative **X** and in **Y** directions.
10. Verify that the beam stays centered.

If the check at step 5 and/or step 10 fails, perform the **Calibrate HR-TEM > Image/Beam Calibration** alignment.

Projector

Test the Lens Series Magnification Center Alignment

The LM and HM lens series must be aligned accurately to ensure that a centered feature stays centered when switching to another magnification. The alignment must be performed accurately on the camera that is used for data acquisition.

Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage

1. With the **Handpanels > Magnification** knob, select the **highest Acquisition and Optics Presets magnification**.
2. In the **TEM User Interface > Image Settings** control panel, verify that no image shift is applied.
3. In the **TEM User Interface > CCD/TV Camera** control panel:
 - a. Select the **Camera** that is used for data acquisition.
 - b. Select **Search**.
4. Move the **specimen**, so that a feature is visible in the image center that is also recognizable on the camera at the Atlas Preset magnification.
5. Place a **marker** on the recognizable feature.
6. With the **Handpanels > Magnification** knob:
 - a. Step down through all Acquisition and Optics Presets magnifications and check if the feature stays aligned with the marker.
 - b. Step up again through all Acquisition and Optics Presets magnifications and check if the feature stays aligned with the marker.

This alignment is often done on the FluScreen, which might have a different magnification center. Perform the **Preparation** tab > **Calibrate Image Shifts** task to compensate for magnification center offsets.

Test the Eucentric Focus

The HM eucentric focus preset should not deviate more than a few microns from the true focus at stage eucentric height.

1. If not visible yet, add the **Defocus** value to the **TEM User Interface > Information Panels**.
2. Accurately bring the specimen to eucentric height by using the stage wobbler.
3. Select a **higher SA magnification** (approx. 150kX).
4. Select **Handpanels > Eucentric Focus**.

5. Reset Defocus.

Either:

- Select the **Handpanels > User** button that is assigned to **Reset Defocus**. This is often R2.
- Select **TEM User Interface > Image Settings** control panel > **Reset Def.**

6. Use the **Handpanels > Focus** knob to accurately focus the image.

7. Verify that the **Information Panel > Defocus** value is 0 ± 500 nm.

If the check at step 7 fails, either:

- Perform the **Align HM-TEM > Basic SA** alignment.
- Perform the **Auto Functions** tab > **Calibrations: Eucentric Correction** task to compensate for the eucentric offset.

Test the Magnification-Dependent Focus

The lens series alignment should be parfocal as much as possible, so switching magnification does not significantly affect (de-)focus. For the LM range and the lower magnifications of the HM series, this alignment is often not performed with maximum achievable accuracy.

1. Insert the **FluScreen**.

2. Select a **low LM** magnification.

3. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, condense the beam to the smallest achievable spot.

4. Select **Handpanels > Wobbler**.

5. With the **Handpanels > Focus** knob, adjust focus so that the spot does not move.

6. Reset Defocus.

Either:

- Select the **Handpanels > User** button that is assigned to **Reset Defocus**. This is often **R2**.
- Select **TEM User Interface > Image Settings** control panel > **Reset Def.**

Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage

7. For all LM magnifications, check the magnification-dependent focus:
 - a. Increase the **magnification** one step.
 - b. Reset **Defocus**.
 - c. Adjust **focus** so that the spot does not move.
 - d. Verify that the **defocus** value is **less than 1 mm**.

If the check at step 7d fails, perform the nP calibrations and/or LM uP calibrations.

8. For the **lower HM magnifications**, check the magnification-dependent focus:
 - a. Increase the **magnification** one step.
 - b. Reset **Defocus**.
 - c. Adjust **focus** so that the spot does not move.
 - d. Verify that the **defocus** value is **less than 2 μm** .
9. Select **Handpanels > Wobbler** to stop the beam wobbler.
10. For the **lower HM magnifications**, check the magnification-dependent focus:
 - a. Increase the **magnification** one step.
 - b. Reset **Defocus**.
 - c. Adjust **focus** so that the image has minimum contrast.
 - d. Verify that the **defocus** value is **less than 2 μm** .

If the checks at step 8d and/or 10d fail, perform the **nP calibrations** and/or **HM uP calibrations**.

Test the Magnification-Dependent Beam and Image Shift - TEM Mode

1. Insert the **FluScreen**.
2. Switch to **TEM MicroProbe**.
3. Select the **highest LM magnification**.
4. Move the **specimen**, so that an **easily recognizable feature** is located in the center of the FluScreen.
5. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter, so that it covers approximately 80% of the FluScreen.
6. Assign the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to **Image Shift**.

7. Use the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to shift the recognizable feature away from the center, to a location near the smallest circle on the FluScreen.
8. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Place a **marker** on the **recognizable feature**.
 - b. Place a **circle** around the **circumference of the beam**.
9. Increase the **magnification** one step to the **lowest SA magnification**.
10. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Measure the **distance** between the recognizable feature position and the marker.
 - b. Measure the beam shift:
Measure the largest **distance** from the circle to the beam circumference.

The image shift *and* the beam shift from highest LM to lowest SA magnification must be less than **2 μm** .

If the check at step 10 fails, perform the nP calibrations and/or LM uP calibrations, and repeat steps 1 to 10.

11. Select the **highest SA magnification**.
12. Move the **specimen**, so that an **easily recognizable feature** is located in the center of the FluScreen.
13. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter, so that it covers approximately 80% of the FluScreen.
14. Assign the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to **Image Shift**.
15. Use the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to shift the recognizable feature away from the center, to a location near the smallest circle on the FluScreen.
16. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Place a **marker** on the recognizable feature.
 - b. Place a **circle** around the beam.
17. Select the **lowest HM magnification**.

18. In the Flucam Viewer:

- a. Measure the **distance** between the recognizable feature position and the marker.
- b. Measure the beam shift:
Measure the largest **distance** from the circle to the beam circumference.

The image shift *and* the beam shift from highest SA to lowest HM magnification must be less than **50 nm**.

If the check at step 18 fails, perform the **nP calibrations** and/or **HM uP calibrations**, and repeat steps 1 to 18.

Test the Magnification-Dependent Beam and Image Shift - EFTEM Mode

1. Insert the **FluScreen**.
2. Switch to **EFTEM MicroProbe**.
3. Select the **highest LM magnification**.
4. Move the **specimen**, so that an **easily recognizable feature** is located in the center of the FluScreen.
5. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter, so that it covers approximately 80% of the FluScreen.
6. Assign the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to **Image Shift**.
7. Use the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to shift the recognizable feature away from the center, to a location near the smallest circle on the FluScreen.
8. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Place a **marker** on the **recognizable feature**.
 - b. Place a **circle** around the **circumference of the beam**.
9. Increase the **magnification** one step to the **lowest SA magnification**.
10. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Measure the **distance** between the recognizable feature position and the marker.
 - b. Measure the beam shift:
Measure the largest **distance** from the circle to the beam circumference.

The image shift *and* the beam shift from highest LM to lowest SA magnification must be less than **2 um**.

If the check at step 10 fails, perform the **nP calibrations** and/or **LM uP calibrations**, and repeat steps 1 to 10.

11. Select the **highest SA magnification**.
12. Move the **specimen**, so that an **easily recognizable feature** is located in the center of the FluScreen.
13. With the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob, adjust the beam diameter, so that it covers approximately 80% of the FluScreen.
14. Assign the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to **Image Shift**.
15. Use the **Multifunction X** and **Y** knobs to shift the recognizable feature away from the center, to a location near the smallest circle on the FluScreen.
16. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Place a **marker** on the recognizable feature.
 - b. Place a **circle** around the beam.
17. Select the **lowest HM magnification**.
18. In the Flucam Viewer:
 - a. Measure the **distance** between the recognizable feature position and the marker.
 - b. Measure the beam shift:
Measure the largest **distance** from the circle to the beam circumference.

The image shift *and* the beam shift from highest SA to lowest HM magnification must be less than **50 nm**.

If the check at step 18 fails, perform the **nP calibrations** and/or **HM uP calibrations**, and repeat steps 1 to 18.

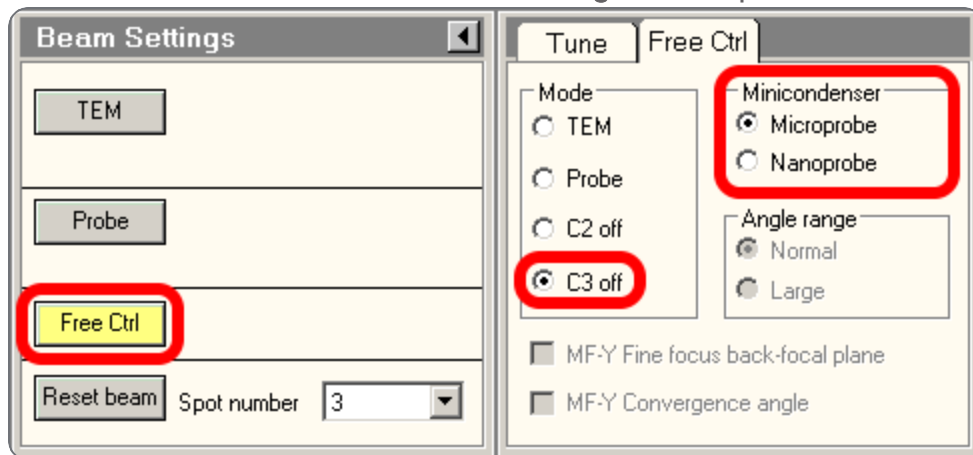
Aperture Alignments

Check the C2 Apertures Center Positions on Systems with a C3 Lens

Three Lens Condenser systems include all Titan systems.

Not all C2 apertures are used for the acquisition of the Atlas or during the Automated Acquisition run. Nonetheless, all C2 apertures must be properly centered in Microprobe and Nanoprobe mode. When the condenser is in Two Lens Condenser mode (C3 off), a centered beam should expand symmetrically without moving.

1. In the **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings** control panel:



- a. Select **Free Ctrl**.
 - b. Select **C3 off**.
 - c. Select **Microprobe**.
2. Use the **Handpanels > Multifunction** knobs or **Trackball** to center the beam.
 3. In the **TEM User Interface > Apertures** control panel:
 - a. Select the largest C1 aperture.
 - b. Select the **largest C2 aperture**.
 - c. If present, select the **largest C3 aperture**.
 - d. Retract the **Objective** and **Selected Area** aperture mechanisms.
 4. Turn the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob on the handpanel in both directions, and:
 - Check that the beam expands symmetrically.
 - Check that the beam remains centered.

If the beam does not expand symmetrically or does not stay centered, **adjust** the C2 aperture position.
 5. Repeat step 4 for **every C2 aperture**.
 6. Select **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings > Nanoprobe**.
 7. Repeat steps 4 and 5.

Check the C2 Apertures Center Positions on a System without a C3 Lens

Two Lens Condenser systems include all Talos and Tecnai systems.

Not all C2 apertures are used for the acquisition of the Atlas or during the Automated Acquisition run. Nonetheless, all C2 apertures must be properly centered in Microprobe and Nanoprobe mode. A centered beam should expand symmetrically without moving.

1. Switch to **Microprobe** mode.
2. Use the **Handpanels > Multifunction** knobs or **Trackball** to center the beam.
3. In the **TEM User Interface > Apertures** control panel:
 - a. Select the **largest C1 aperture**.
 - b. Select the **largest C2 aperture**.
 - c. Retract the **Objective** and **Selected Area** aperture mechanisms.
4. Turn the **Handpanels > Intensity** knob on the handpanel in both directions, and:
 - Check that the beam expands symmetrically.
 - Check that the beam remains centered.

If the beam does not expand symmetrically or does not stay centered, **adjust** the C2 aperture position.

5. Repeat step 4 for **every C2 aperture**.
6. Select **TEM User Interface > Beam Settings > Nanoprobe**.
7. Repeat steps 4 and 5.

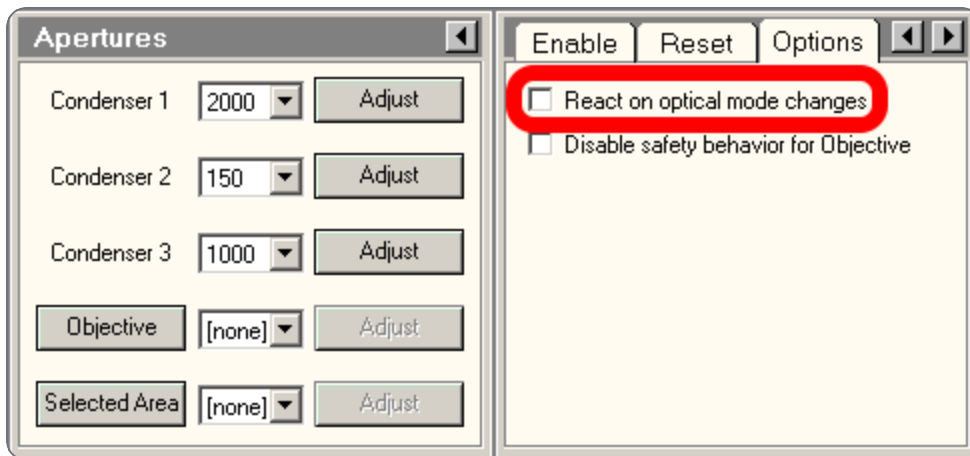
Check the Objective Apertures Center Positions

Not all apertures are used for the acquisition of the Atlas and during the Automated Acquisition run. Nonetheless, all Objective apertures must be properly centered in Microprobe and Nanoprobe mode.

Detailed Preconditions for Successful EPU Usage

1. Switch to **HM diffraction** mode.
2. Verify that all Objective apertures are accurately centered around the beam.
3. Switch to **LM mode**.
4. Select a **lower LM magnification**.
5. Verify that all Objective apertures are accurately centered around the beam.
6. Select a **lower SA magnification**.
7. Verify that all Objective apertures are accurately centered around the beam.

i **Note:** Do not use the *React on optical mode changes* function to change the apertures automatically.



Among others, the *React on optical mode changes* function automatically returns to the C2 aperture that was selected the previous time that the optical mode was used. This may conflict with the *C2 Aperture* value in the *Acquisition and Optics Presets*.

Direct Alignments and Astigmatism

Direct alignments must be checked regularly.

The preconditions below describe the direct alignments for uncorrected systems. Systems with image and/or probe correctors are not discussed here. Fine-tuning of the corrector eliminates coma, astigmatism, and other aberrations.

- **Beam Tilt Pivot Points**

These should be checked at the accurate eucentric height and focus. When the beam is tilted, the spot should not move. This is important for Autofocus and astigmatism.

- **Beam Shift**

Center the beam when no user beam shift is applied.

Perform this Direct Alignment at the highest magnification that will be used during the Automated Acquisition run.

- **Rotation Center**

When focusing, the central image features should stay on the optical axis and should not move.

Perform this Direct Alignment at the highest magnification that will be used during the Automated Acquisition run.

- **Coma-free Alignment X and Y**

For acquiring high resolution images, it is important that the illumination is coma-free. This procedure can only be done properly:

- On a thin carbon foil.
- With the camera in Search mode.
- With live FFT.

Image contrast and the FFT should not change when the beam is tilted.



Note: Coma free overwrites rotation center, but the difference should not be critical.

- **Astigmatism**

In a simple FFT it is very difficult to distinguish astigmatism from beam tilt induced coma. Make sure that the system is nearly coma-free before correcting astigmatism.

Use the objective stigmator to adjust astigmatism. This procedure can only be done properly:

- On a thin carbon foil.
- With the camera in Search mode.
- With live FFT.

Calibrations

Magnification Calibrations

The Magnification Calibrations do not only contain information about the magnification, but also about image rotation and how to transform shifts seen in the image to corresponding shift with stage and image/beam deflectors. The Magnification Calibrations are generally very stable. They only need to be renewed when the system alignments have changed significantly.

The calibrations must be present:

- For all cameras.
- For LM, SA and, if used, Mi ranges.

Use the **TEM User Interface > Calibrations** or **Magnification Calibration** control panel to perform the Magnification Calibrations and follow the instructions in the control panel.

Focus Calibration

The Focus calibration is executed in the **EPU > Auto Functions** tab > **Calibrations: Autofocus** task.

This calibration may need to be redone more frequently, as it may depend on changes in the direct alignments. Redo this calibration if the Autofocus function does not converge nicely any more. Follow the instructions in [The Autofocus Calibration Task](#).

Eucentric Correction Calibration (Optional)

The Eucentric Correction Calibration is executed in the **EPU > Auto Functions** tab > **Calibrations: Eucentric Correction** task. Follow the instructions in [The Eucentric Correction Calibration Task](#).

Troubleshooting: Symptoms and Solutions

Troubleshooting: Atlas

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>Atlas does not look consistent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiles do not match. • Grid bars do not continue across neighboring tiles. • Atlas contains a regular pattern of black areas. 	<p>The specimen may not be in focus. Large deviations in defocus will cause the images to rotate and, since illumination is not parallel in this step, the apparent magnification will also change.</p>	<p>Refocus.</p>
	<p>If the specimen is focused, the calibrations are probably not valid anymore and must be redone. (Has there been a big change in alignments or was another alignment file loaded?).</p>	<p>Recalibrate.</p>
	<p>Distortion can be inherent to images at very low magnification.</p>	<p>Acquire an atlas at increased magnification.</p>
	<p>The view is partly blocked (e.g., by an aperture) at the selected magnification.</p>	<p>Acquire an atlas at increased magnification; confirm with a preview (or TIA) that the field-of-view of a single tile is unobstructed.</p>
	<p>The system's beam and image shift are not well-aligned, causing loss of illumination.</p>	<p>Re-align the beam and image shifts for LM mode using the TEM User Interface (Alignments Control, Calibrate LM-Image/Beam calibration).</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>“Move to” command does not center feature or grid square.</p> <p>Check this at the magnification at which the Atlas is acquired. Use the camera, not the Flucam Viewer.</p>	<p>The specimen may not be in focus. Large deviations in defocus will cause the images to rotate and, since illumination is not parallel in this step, the apparent magnification will also change.</p>	<p>Refocus.</p>
	<p>If the specimen is focused, the calibrations are probably not valid anymore and must be redone. (Has there been a big change in alignments or was another alignment file loaded?)</p>	<p>Recalibrate.</p>
	<p>Distortion can be inherent to images at very low magnification.</p>	<p>Acquire an Atlas at increased magnification.</p>
	<p>The Image Shift calibration is not performed accurately.</p>	<p>Accurately perform the Image Shift Calibration.</p>

Troubleshooting: Grid Square

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>“Move to” command (in Atlas) does not center the Grid Square.</p> <p>Atlas looks OK, but navigation to the grid square is inaccurate. Grid square is not centered when acquiring an image in the Location / Area Selection view.</p>	<p>Some image shift is applied (check in the 'Image Settings' control panel in the TEM User Interface).</p>	<p>Reset it.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	<p>If you see the same problem at Atlas magnification (see above), specimen was not focused when taking the atlas (see above) or calibrations are not valid anymore.</p>	<p>Focus and/or redo the calibrations.</p>
	<p>Rotation center is off (any change in focus can result in image shifts). Usually, to enhance contrast you will have applied a defocus of a few mm during image acquisition.</p>	<p>Adjust rotation center.</p>
	<p>Nonparallel beam or excessive defocus is used. (This results in small centering errors.)</p>	<p>Work with a parallel beam and do not use excessive defocus. There may always be some small discrepancy because positions are calculated and not all stage characteristics may be taken into account.</p>
	<p>Imperfect LM lens series alignment and EPU image shift calibration. When changing magnifications, a feature should stay centered (especially true when switching between atlas and grid square magnifications).</p> <p>Test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the Preparation tab. • Select the Acquisition and Optics Settings task. • Use the Acquire buttons for easy switching with correct lens normalizations and image shift corrections. 	<p>Repeat EPU image shift calibration or when shifts are large, adjust the LM lens series alignment.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>“Move Stage to” command does not center Foil Hole or feature.</p> <p>If you see this while staying at the magnification used for imaging the grid square, check the causes and solutions in this table.</p> <p>If you see this problem only in the Template Definition view (at higher magnification), see “Move Stage to ...” command in Location Selection / Area Selection view does not center foil hole Foil Hole or feature in Template Definition view.”</p>	<p>Too much defocus can change image rotation. A non-parallel beam will lead to additional change in magnification.</p>	<p>Make sure to work with no or just a few mm defocus. (Focus specimen correctly by using the wobbler and specify the wanted defocus in the optics settings of EPU.) If possible, use a parallel beam.</p>
	<p>Mechanical play in stage.</p>	<p>Make sure that before taking the grid square image, the grid was centered with a Move Stage... command in the atlas (compensates for any backlash problems).</p>
	<p>Calibrations are no longer valid (microscope alignments have changed?).</p>	<p>Redo calibrations.</p>

i Note: Since the feature positions are calculated and not all characteristics of the stage are known exactly, a feature will not be centered 100% accurately. A micron deviation is not uncommon.

Troubleshooting: Template Definition

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>“Move Stage to ...” command in Location Selection / Area Selection view does not center Foil Hole or feature in Template Definition view.</p> <p>If you see this problem also at the magnification at which the grid square is imaged, see information under “Grid Square (Location Selection/ Area Selection View):”.</p>	<p>Some image shift is applied (check this in 'Image Settings' control panel in the TEM User Interface).</p>	<p>Reset it.</p>
	<p>Bad alignment of LM lens series against HM lens series and bad EPU image shift calibrations.</p> <p>Test: When switching between Location Selection view and Template Definition view magnifications, a feature should stay centered in the acquired images.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the Preparation tab in EPU. • Select the Acquisition and Optics Settings task. • Use the Acquire buttons for easy switching with correct lens normalizations and image shift corrections. 	<p>Repeat EPU image shift calibration or when the shifts are large, adjust LM lens series alignment.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
“Move Stage here...” command in Template Definition view does not center feature.	Mechanical play in stage.	Try at least twice to make sure that a backlash correction was performed.
	Working far from eucentric focus will render the magnification calibrations invalid. Large defocus will slightly rotate the image and (with a nonparallel beam) magnification changes.	Make sure the sample is at eucentric height, focused, rotation center is well corrected, and the defocus chosen in the Optics settings of EPU should not exceed 20 um.
	Calibrations are invalid (maybe the microscope alignment changed?).	Redo calibrations
	Stage may have a hardware problem and does not move correctly over these smaller distances	Call Service

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
Yellow circle does not match Foil Hole size.	Correct Quantifoil type was not selected at start of session or the size of the holes deviates from specification.	Set the size correctly in this view.
	Size of the holes deviates from specification.	Set the size correctly in this view.
	Measure Foil Holes/Find Foil Holes in the Location Selection view was not performed.	Return to Location Selection and do it.
	Specimen is not at eucentric height for the current sample position and not focused.	Bring specimen to eucentric height and focus it.
	Too large defocus is used and beam is not parallel. (The apparent magnification of the image may change under these circumstances.)	Select a defocus selected in the Template Optics settings of EPU of less than 20 μm . If possible, choose a parallel beam.
	The Measure Foil Hole step was inaccurate.	Repeat this step (Location Selection view) with a slight change in the size of the yellow glasses.
	Calibrations are invalid (maybe the microscope alignment changed?).	Redo calibrations

Troubleshooting: Symptoms and Solutions

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
“Find Foil Hole” does not succeed.	Does the yellow circle match the hole size? If not, see above, Yellow circle does not match Foil Hole size.	-

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	<p>Measure Foil Holes/Find Foil Holes in the Location Selection view not done. (The “find Foil Hole” algorithm uses information about hole size and spacing.)</p>	<p>Switch to the Location Selection view and perform Measure Foil Holes and Find Foil HoleFoil Holes.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	The circle size is wrong. (The algorithm of finding holes may be quite sensitive to the exact hole size.)	Repeat the Measure Foil Holes step (Location Selection view). Change the size of the yellow glasses slightly.
	Magnification is too high.	Use a magnification in which neighboring Foil Holes are at least partly visible. This will increase the stability of the algorithm since the spacing and orientation of the foil holeFoil Hole pattern can be exploited.
	Magnification is too low. (The current algorithm does not work with too many Foil Holes visible.)	Increase the magnification such that only the Foil Hole and its nearest neighbors are visible on the acquired image.
	The current specimen location contains too many features (crystalline ice, etc.) that cause the algorithm to fail.	Find a cleaner sample area.
	Contrast is too low.	Add or increase the defocus in the optics settings. (Make sure to start from focused specimen, specimen at approximately eucentric height).
	Image quality too bad (noise). The human eye is very good at integrating over features, so noise may easily be underestimated at this magnification	Take image with higher dose.
	Foil Holes appear dark when the Allow Dark Foil Holes option is not selected.	If the Foil Hole appears darker than the foil itself, select the option Allow Dark Foil HoleFoil Holes (in ribbon of Location Selection view).

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>Foil Hole centering fails (or hole is not correctly centered).</p> <p>Tracing this problem is a combination of tracing problems in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Find Foil Hole”: see “Find Foil HoleFoil Hole' does not succeed”. Can be tested separately. • “Move stage here”: see “Move Stage here...’ command in Template Definition view does not center feature”. Can be tested separately. 	<p>The Foil Hole was not fully visible initially and the fitted circle degenerated to an ellipse. In this case the centering will not be perfect.</p>	<p>Reduce the magnification.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>Pattern acquisition fails.</p>	<p>Foil Hole cannot be recentered. (Pattern acquisition requires the Foil Hole to be centered within 300 nm.)</p> <p>Test: Click Find and Center Foil Hole button.</p>	<p>See above, Foil Hole centering fails (or hole is not correctly centered).</p>
	<p>Auto Focus fails.</p>	<p>See below, “Pattern acquisition: Auto Focus fails.”.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
Pattern acquisition: Auto Focus fails.	Specimen is too far off from eucentric height and focus. Usually during an automatic run of EPU, after every move to a new grid square, the eucentric height is adjusted. During the setup phase, you moved to a grid square, but may not have adjusted eucentric height	Adjust eucentric height

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	<p>Cause: Auto focus does not converge because the beam is visible in the images. There maybe a couple of reasons for this.</p> <p>Test: Acquire a single image with the auto focus presets (from the Preparation tab). If the beam edge is visible on this image, then the beam shift was not aligned.</p>	<p>Use the Direct Alignments panel to align the beam shift at the auto focus or data acquisition magnification.</p> <p>Note: If the beam moves when you change Intensity of illuminated area, then you have to align apertures or condenser system as well. If the beam edge is not visible in the test, then it will become visible only when the beam is tilted or shifted.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	<p>Beam tilt pivot point misaligned.</p>	<p>Use Direct Alignments panel to align the beam tilt pivot point.</p> <p>Tip: Adjust eucentric height and focus first. There is a little problem in that the pivot point is well aligned only at a certain focus setting.</p> <p>You may have to allow for some inaccuracy by choosing a slightly larger beam diameter in the focus optics setting since in the automatic data acquisition you will not always start close to focus.</p>
	<p>The image/beam shift calibration is not done.</p> <p>Test: When you add some image shift in the Image Settings control cluster, do you then see the beam edge moving into the field of view?</p>	<p>Perform the Calibrate HM-TEM > Image/Beam calibration (use the 'Alignments' control panel in the TEM User Interface).</p>
	<p>Auto focus does not converge, although the beam edge is not visible; invalid focus calibration.</p> <p>Test with the standalone Auto Focus routine.</p>	<p>Redo focus calibration</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>Pattern acquisition: Beam edge visible in data acquisition</p>	<p>Acquire a single image with the Data Acquisition presets (Preparation tab).</p> <p>If the beam edge is visible on this image, this means Beam shift was not aligned correctly in the first place.</p>	<p>Use the Direct Alignments panel to align the beam shift data acquisition magnification.</p> <p>Note: If the beam moves when you change intensity of illuminated area, align apertures or condenser system as well.</p>
	<p>When you add some image shift in the Image Settings control cluster, do you then see the beam edge moving into the field of view? If so Image/beam shift calibration is not done.</p>	<p>Perform HM-TEM > Image/Beam calibration ('Alignments' control panel of the TEM User Interface).</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
<p>Pattern acquisition: Acquisition areas are not placed correctly.</p>	<p>You use Auto Focus by Stage Z Adjustment, maybe the first time Z had to be adjusted a lot, which leads to displacements in X and Y.</p>	<p>Try again. This time the Z adjustment should be small.</p>
	<p>If you use Auto Focus by Change of Objective Lens Current, focusing may shift the feature (hole) when the rotation center is not well aligned.</p>	<p>Use the Direct Alignments panel to align the rotation center.</p>
	<p>EPU image shift calibration no longer valid or not done.</p> <p>Use the Preparation tab to acquire images with the Hole/EucentricHeight preset and Data Acquisition preset. Does a given feature stay centered? If yes, then the lens series alignment is not well done and the deviations are not captured by the EPU image shift calibration.</p>	<p>Redo the EPU image shift calibrations. If the shift is very large, redo the microscope HM image shift alignment first.</p>
	<p>Image beam shift calibration not valid. (If you use image/beam shift only to place the acquisition areas, placement should generally be quite accurate.)</p>	<p>Perform HM-TEM > Image Beam calibration ('Alignments' control panel of TEM User Interface).</p>
	<p>Magnification calibration not valid.</p> <p>Test: Check the validity of the calibrations by using the Move Stage Here... feature. However, in these stage movements, some inaccuracy may have to be accepted due to the mechanics of the stage.</p>	<p>Redo the magnification calibrations.</p>

Troubleshooting: Automated Acquisition

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
Grid squares are all skipped.	<p>The eucentric height procedure is failing.</p> <p>The performance of the auto-eucentric height procedure can be tested standalone in the Auto Functions tab. During automated data acquisition, the procedure is performed with the Hole/Eucentric Height optical preset (a different defocus may be applied). The procedure used is the one that is based on a focus measurement and, therefore, a valid focus calibration is needed.</p>	<p>Increasing the number of counts per exposure may help if the images are very noisy. The focus calibration may have to be redone.</p>
	<p>No holes are found. A grid square image is acquired, and auto eucentric height succeeds, but then no Foil Holes were found. Measure Foil Holes procedure was not set up correctly.</p>	<p>Redo the “Measure Foil Holes” procedure that should have been done during the setup phase (Location Selection task).</p>
	<p>No Foil Holes are selected. A grid square image is acquired, holes are found, but none is selected by the ice thickness filters.</p>	<p>Redefine the filters (go to the Location/Area Selection). If the intensity changes due to an instability of the gun, use the I0 calibration in EPU in addition. It will periodically measure the intensity in a hole and correct the ice filters accordingly.</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
Too many Foil Holes: Target areas are skipped.	They are not found in the grid square image in the first place because step(s) were omitted in the setup phase.	Repeat setup steps

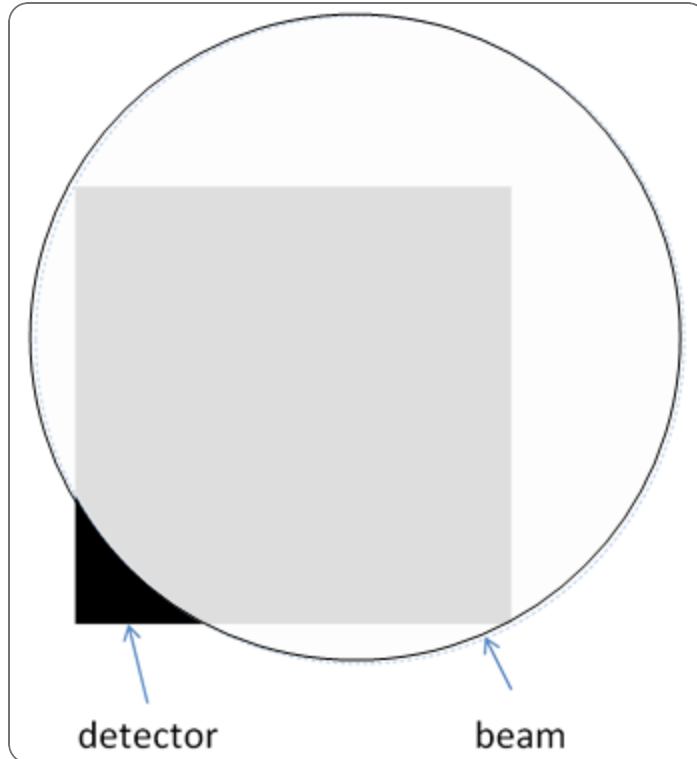
Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	<p>They do not pass the ice filtering. Either the illumination conditions or acquisition settings have changed after the filters have been selected or the filters were tuned on a grid square with too thin/thick ice.</p>	<p>Go to the Location/Area Selection view and adjust the ice filter settings</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
	<p>Foil Holes were selected in the grid square image, but could not be found or centered at the Foil Hole magnification. A Foil Hole is skipped if it could not be centered within certain accuracy</p>	<p>For troubleshooting, see “Find Foil Hole' does not succeed.” and “Foil Hole centering fails (or hole is not correctly centered)”.</p>
	<p>Auto focus fails. A Foil Hole is skipped if the focus could not be determined.</p>	<p>For trouble shooting, see “Pattern acquisition: Auto Focus fails.”.</p> <p>During the automatic data acquisition, auto focus may also fail if the lens series focus presets are (very) ill-defined. The routine is based on the measurement of beam tilt-induced image shifts that are proportional to the amount of defocus (it works like the wobbler on the hand panel).</p> <p>For valid measurements, the images must overlap by at least 60%, which means that the range that the auto focus can cover is limited, especially when run at high magnification. Initially, eucentric height and focus are adjusted at the magnification used for centering the Foil Hole (before an image of the grid square is acquired), but later the auto focus routine is run at a much higher magnification typical for data acquisition. If the magnification switch results in a large focus change, auto focus may fail. In this case, correct the objective lens presets of your lens series (part of the lens series alignment).</p>

Symptom	Possible Cause	Possible Solution
Acquisition areas are not placed correctly.	See "Pattern acquisition: acquisition areas are not placed correctly"	
	When you have chosen Z adjustment as the method of auto focus, Z adjustments will always induce some X and Y movements of the specimen. Big adjustments can be a consequence of a non-flat or tilted specimen ().	Little to nothing can be done to fix this.

Symptom	Possible Cause and Solution
---------	-----------------------------

Beam is shifted in Autofocus routine.



For high magnifications (> ~75 kX) and small beam sizes as shown in the image above, it can happen during the Autofocus routine that the beam seems slightly shifted, resulting in a not completely illuminated detector.

This is usually due to one or both of the following causes:

- Beam tilt pivot points not set correctly
- A too large value in Autofunctions > Autofocus > Iterate to:.

To resolve:

- Make sure you are at eucentric height (run Autofunctions > Eucentric Height or set manually).
- Select Eucentric focus on the hand panel; a well aligned TEM will now be in focus.
If not, carefully focus manually or use Autofunctions > Autofocus at a lower magnification.
- Select Reset defocus.
Defocus value in the TEM User Interface is now '0'.
- Perform Direct Alignments > beam tilt pivot points.
- Go to the desired optical settings for Autofocus.
- Check the number in Iterate to: in Autofunctions > Autofocus
- Manually change defocus to this number and check the movement of the beam.

The MRC2014 Image Format

The Main Header and Extended Headers in an MRC File

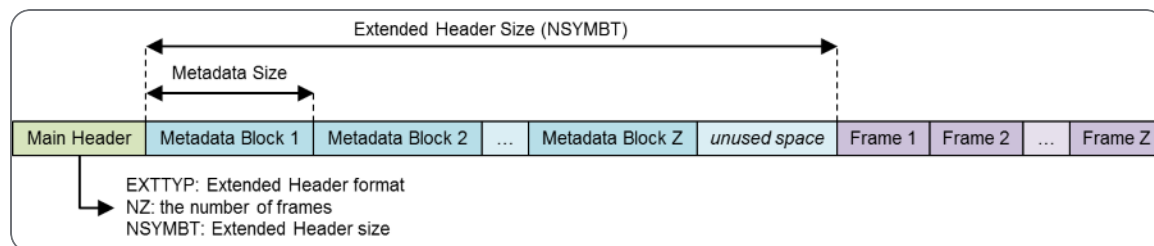
MRC files have a generic Main Header and an optional Extended Header.

- The Main Header contains generic image information, such as the image dimensions and the pixel format. For the specification of the main header, see [<MRC/CCP4 File Format for Images and Volumes>](#).
- The Extended Header contains application specific metadata. For Thermo Fisher Scientific and FEI products, the extended header contains information about:
 - The microscope state at acquisition time, such as magnification, accelerating voltage, stage position, beam shift and many other relevant parameters.
 - Image acquisition information, such as binning and exposure time.

Among others, the Main Header contains the following fields:

- *NZ*: the number of frames in the MRC file.
- *NSYMBT*: the reserved size for the Extended Header.
- *EXTTYP*: the format of the Extended Header: *FEI1* or *FEI2*.
The FEI2 format is an extended version of the FEI1 format.

For every frame in the file, the Extended Header contains one Metadata Block. The first element of each block contains the Metadata Block size. All Metadata Blocks in the Extended Header have the same size and contain the same fields. The sum of the Metadata Block sizes fits within the reserved size for the Extended Header.



The Extended Header Specification

The FEI1 and FEI2 Extended Header formats allow for the addition of new fields without breaking compatibility. When a new field is added, the *Metadata Size* and *Metadata Version* fields are updated. Image reading and processing software can use the *Metadata Size* value from the first Metadata Block to index the blocks for the other frames in the MRC file.

With the introduction of the FEI2 format, the format of the FEI1 Extended Header is frozen. For MRC files with an FEI1 Extended Header, image reading and processing software can assume the values of the *Metadata Size* and *Metadata Version* fields are 768 bytes and version number 0.

The tables below specify the content of the FEI1 and FEI2 Extended Headers for the MRC2014 file format. In these tables, the **Format** and **'IsPresent' flag** columns have to the following values:

Format:

- Bool: Boolean of 1 byte (0 = false, other value = true).
- Int32: Signed integer of 4 bytes.
- Int64: Signed integer of 8 bytes (only used in FEI2 Extended Header).
- UInt32: Unsigned integer of 4 bytes.
- Float64: Floating point number of 8 bytes.

IsPresent:

UInt32 value that is used as a 32-bit / little-endian bitmask. If a metadata field is set, then the value of the *IsPresent* bit in the bitmask is 1.

FEI1 Extended Header Specification

Image, System and Application

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	IsPresent	Description
Metadata size	0	0x0000	Int32	NA	<p>Metadata size [bytes] All Metadata Blocks in the file have the same size.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEI1: 768 bytes • FEI2: updated for each version.
Metadata version	4	0x0004	Int32	NA	<p>Version ID of the metadata format. All Metadata Blocks in the file have the same format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEI1: 0 • FEI2: initial value: 2 The value is updated for each new version.
<i>Bitmask 1</i>	8	<i>0x0008</i>	<i>UInt32</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Individual bits indicate which metadata fields are set.</i>

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	IsPresent	Description
Timestamp	12	0x000C	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #0	Time when the image was taken. The used format is the DATE data type that is used in OLE automation by Microsoft: <Microsoft OLE DATE data type specification>
Microscope type	20	0x0014	16 chars	Bitmask 1 - #1	Identifier for microscope type (Krios, Talos, Titan, Metrios, etc.)
D-Number	36	0x0024	16 chars	Bitmask 1 - #2	Microscope identifier
Application	52	0x0034	16 chars	Bitmask 1 - #3	Application name
Application version	68	0x0044	16 chars	Bitmask 1 - #4	

Gun

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
HT	84	0x0054	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #5	High tension [Volt]
Dose	92	0x005C	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #6	Dose [electrons/m ²]

Stage

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Alpha tilt	100	0x0064	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #7	Holder Alpha tilt along axis [degr.]
Beta tilt	108	0x006C	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #8	Holder Beta tilt along axis [degr.]
X-Stage	116	0x0074	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #9	Stage X position [m]
Y-Stage	124	0x007C	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #10	Stage Y position [m]
Z-Stage	132	0x0084	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #11	Stage Z position [m]
Tilt axis angle	140	0x008C	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #12	Angle of tilt axis in image [degr.]
Dual axis rotation	148	0x0094	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #13	Measured rotation angle after b flip [degr.] (Tomography only)

Pixel Size

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Pixel size X	156	0x009C	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #14	Pixel size X [m]
Pixel size Y	164	0x00A4	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #15	Pixel size Y [m]

Optics

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Defocus	220	0x00DC	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #22	Defocus [m]
STEM Defocus	228	0x00E4	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #23	STEM defocus [m]
Applied defocus	236	0x00EC	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #24	Relative defocus applied by application [m]
Instrument mode	244	0x00F4	Int32	Bitmask 1 - #25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: TEM • 2: STEM
Projection mode	248	0x00F8	Int32	Bitmask 1 - #26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Diffraction • 2: Imaging
Objective lens mode	252	0x00FC	16 chars	Bitmask 1 - #27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM • HM • Lorentz
High magnification mode	268	0x010C	16 chars	Bitmask 1 - #28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mi • SA • Mh
Probe mode	284	0x011C	Int32	Bitmask 1 - #29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: NanoProbe • 2: MicroProbe
EFTEM On	288	0x0120	Bool	Bitmask 1 - #30	TRUE when the magnifications are adapted to the energy filter

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Magnification	289	0x0121	Float64	Bitmask 1 - #31	Nominal magnification
<i>Bitmask 2</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>0x0129</i>	<i>UInt32</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Individual bits indicate which metadata fields are set.</i>
Camera length	301	0x012D	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #0	Nominal camera length [m]
Spot index	309	0x0135	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #1	-
Illuminated area	313	0x0139	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEM: beam diameter in meters • STEM: not used • Undefined on 2 lens condenser systems
Intensity	321	0x0141	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #3	Uncalibrated measure of beam diameter on 2 lens condenser systems
Convergence angle	329	0x0149	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #4	[degr.] Undefined on 2 lens condenser systems

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Illumination mode	337	0x0151	16 chars	Bitmask 2 - #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Parallel • Probe • Free • Undefined on 2 lens condenser systems
Wide convergence angle range	353	0x0161	Bool	Bitmask 2 - #6	Undefined on 2 lens condenser systems

EFTEM Imaging

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Slit inserted	354	0x0162	Bool	Bitmask 2 - #7	-
Slit width	355	0x0163	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #8	Slit width [eV]
Acceleration voltage offset	363	0x016B	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #9	[Volt]
Drift tube voltage	371	0x0173	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #10	[Volt]
Energy shift	379	0x017B	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #11	[eV]

Image Shifts

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Shift offset X	387	0x0183	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #12	Corrective image or beam shift relative to exposure preset (in logical units)
Shift offset Y	395	0x018B	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEM: pure image shift • STEM: image-beamshift
Shift X	403	0x0193	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #14	Applied shift due to optimized position and tracking (in logical units)
Shift Y	411	0x019B	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEM: image beam shift • STEM: beam shift

Camera

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Integration time	419	0x01A3	Float64	Bitmask 2 - #16	Camera or dose fraction exposure time
Binning Width	427	0x01AB	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #17	-
Binning Height	431	0x01AF	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #18	-
Camera name	435	0x01B3	16 chars	Bitmask 2 - #19	Name of the camera

The MRC2014 Image Format

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Readout area left	451	0x01C3	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #20	-
Readout area top	455	0x01C7	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #21	-
Readout area right	459	0x01CB	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #22	-
Readout area bottom	463	0x01CF	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #23	-
Ceta noise reduction	467	0x01D3	Bool	Bitmask 2 - #24	-
Ceta frames summed	468	0x01D4	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #25	Number of frames summed for dynamic range
Direct detector electron counting	472	0x01D8	Bool	Bitmask 2 - #26	-
Direct detector align frames	473	0x01D9	Bool	Bitmask 2 - #27	-
Camera param reserved 0	474	0x01DA	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #28	-
Camera param reserved 1	478	0x01DE	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #29	-
Camera param reserved 2	482	0x01E2	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #30	-

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Camera param reserved 3	486	0x01E6	Int32	Bitmask 2 - #31	-
<i>Bitmask 3</i>	<i>490</i>	<i>0x01EA</i>	<i>UInt32</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Individual bits indicate which metadata fields are set.</i>
Camera param reserved 4	494	0x01EE	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #0	-
Camera param reserved 5	498	0x01F2	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #1	-
Camera param reserved 6	502	0x01F6	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #2	-
Camera param reserved 7	506	0x01FA	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #3	-
Camera param reserved 8	510	0x01FE	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #4	-
Camera param reserved 9	514	0x0202	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #5	-
Phase Plate	518	0x0206	Bool	Bitmask 3 - #6	Indicates whether phase plate was used for data acquisition

STEM Detector

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
STEM Detector name	519	0x0207	16 chars	Bitmask 3 - #7	-
Gain	535	0x0217	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #8	-
Offset	543	0x021F	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #9	-
STEM param reserved 0	551	0x0227	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #10	-
STEM param reserved 1	555	0x022B	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #11	-
STEM param reserved 2	559	0x022F	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #12	-
STEM param reserved 3	563	0x0233	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #13	-
STEM param reserved 4	567	0x0237	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #14	-

Scan Settings

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Dwell time	571	0x023B	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #15	Dwell time per pixel [sec]
Frame time	579	0x0243	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #16	Frame time [sec] (currently it will not be used)

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Scan size left	587	0x024B	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #17	-
Scan size top	591	0x024F	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #18	-
Scan size right	595	0x0253	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #19	-
Scan size bottom	599	0x0257	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #20	-
Full scan FOV X	603	0x025B	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #21	Field of view [m]
Full scan FOV Y	611	0x0263	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #22	-

EDX Elemental Maps

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Element	619	0x026B	16 chars	Bitmask 3 - #23	-
Energy interval lower	635	0x027B	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #24	-
Energy interval higher	643	0x0283	Float64	Bitmask 3 - #25	-
Method	651	0x028B	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #26	-

Dose Fractions

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Is dose fraction	655	0x028F	Bool	Bitmask 3 - #27	-
Fraction number	656	0x0290	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #28	-
Start frame	660	0x0294	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #29	-
End frame	664	0x0298	Int32	Bitmask 3 - #30	-

Reconstruction

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	'Is Present' flag	Description
Input stack filename	668	0x029C	80 chars	Bitmask 3 - #31	-
<i>Bitmask 4</i>	<i>748</i>	<i>0x02EC</i>	<i>UInt32</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Individual bits indicate which metadata fields are set.</i>
Alpha tilt min	752	0x02F0	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #0	
Alpha tilt max	760	0x02F8	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #1	

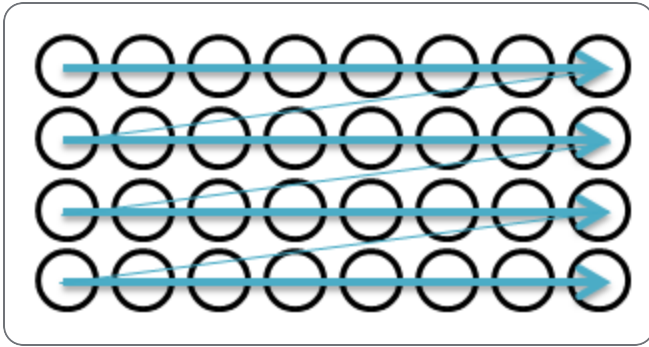
FEI2 Version 2 Extension to the Extended Header Specification

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	IsPresent	Description
Scan rotation	768	0x0300	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #2	Rotation of the scan pattern in STEM mode [radians]
Diffraction pattern rotation	776	0x0308	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #3	Rotation of the diffraction pattern in diffraction mode [radians]
Image rotation	784	0x0310	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #4	Rotation of the image in imaging mode [radians]
Scan mode enumeration	792	0x0318	Int32	Bitmask 4 - #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0: Other • 1: Raster • 2: Serpentine raster
Acquisition time stamp	796	0x031C	Int64	Bitmask 4 - #6	Microseconds since 1970-01-01T00:00:00Z at which the image was acquired
Detector commercial name	804	0x0324	16 chars	Bitmask 4 - #7	Commercial name of the detector or camera
Start tilt angle	820	0x0334	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #8	Start tilt angle of a tomography series [degr.]

Name	Offset (dec)	Offset (hex)	Format	IsPresent	Description
End tilt angle	828	0x033C	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #9	End tilt angle of a tomography series [degr.]
Tilt per image	836	0x0344	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #10	Tilt increment per image in a tomography series [degr.]
Tilt speed	844	0x034C	Float64	Bitmask 4 - #11	Tilt speed in a tomography series [degr./sec]
Beam center X pixel	852	0x0354	Int32	Bitmask 4 - #12	Beam center X on image [pixels]
Beam center Y pixel	856	0x0358	Int32	Bitmask 4 - #13	Beam center Y on image [pixels]
CFEG flash timestamp	860	0x035C	Int64	Bitmask 4 - #14	Microseconds since 1970-01-01T00:00:00Z of the most recent CFEG flashing
Phase plate position index	868	0x0364	Int32	Bitmask 4 - #15	Position index of the phase plate aperture
Objective aperture name	872	0x0368	16 chars	Bitmask 4 - #16	Name of the inserted objective aperture

Pixel Sequence in the MRC2014 Format

In the MRC2014 files, the image pixel data is stored as rows from top to bottom, where each row is stored from left to right.



Most image viewers and image processing applications use the same pixel position sequence as the MRC file. Some image viewing and processing applications such as IMOD and Fiji/ImageJ use a pixel position sequence. In these applications, the image display may be mirrored and/or rotated.

The MRC Image Pixel Data Encoding for Thermo Fisher Scientific Ceta Cameras

If the image is acquired with a Ceta camera, then the MRC image pixel data encoding depends on the presence of the Ceta Speed Enhancement (Ceta-2).

Camera	MRC Pixel Data
Ceta without Speed Enhancement	32-bit floating point
Ceta with Speed Enhancement	16-bit signed integer