IMSERC User Manual for Agilent GCMSD HEADSPACE with FFAP Column

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Use of this instrument is allowed only by qualified users after receiving training by a staff member. Do not run this instrument without approval from IMSERC staff. Failure to do so may cause damage to the instrument, produce invalid data, and result in additional fees and/or removal of all IMSERC privileges.

This short set of instructions is meant to serve as a guide for 'routine' data collection on the instrument. Please read this standard operating procedure and acquaint yourself with the instrument. At every step of the operation, please pause, think, then proceed. If while using the system, something happens that you do not understand, please **stop** and **get help**. In any event, be completely prepared to justify your actions. The cost of even minor repairs is considerable.

The GCMSD-HEADSPACE is a general use instrument capable of analyzing volatile polar and non-polar molecules. It allows separation of volatile compounds and ionizes those compounds using electron impact (EI). The mass range for this instrument is limited to 800 Da. To keep the system simple and useful for a group of diverse users, a default method is designed to run routine samples (samples which are simple mixtures, are easily volatilized, and are in standard GC friendly solvents) in order to obtain a quick analysis of sample composition.

If there is a need for method further development such as resolution of sample components, contact IMSERC-MS staff and assistance will be provided to optimize the default method.

 Your Analyte must:

1.   Be volatile.
2.   **NOT have a boiling point** exceeding 240 °C.
3.   Be compatible with FFAP column on instrument. See IMSERC-MS staff for questions/details.

You are responsible for maintaining instrument quality prior to and post sample analysis. It is best lab practice to always run a blank prior to running your sample. It is also good lab practice to inject a blank post sample analysis to ensure no carry over for the next user. The injection of the wash should be calculated in your time on the instrument. Do NOT leave the instrument and end your reservation while the instrument is running as it affects other users' reservations. If you are unable to reduce contamination, file a "Bug Report" and place a "Stop Sign" on the keyboard to notify subsequent users.

SAFETY

All users of IMSERC must review the general safety policies at http://imserc.northwestern.edu/about-policies.html.

Familiarize yourself with the location of standard safety stations like eye wash and shower stations found in just outside of BG76. Protective eyewear is required in this room, and gloves should be removed when using the computer.

Hazard	Location	PPE Required/Hazard Mitigation
Samples	BG75 – GCMSD autosampler	Eye Protection, Gloves
Methanol, Dichloromethane	BG75 – GCMSD rinse solvents on sample carousel	Eye Protection, Gloves
High Temperature	BG75 – GCMSD Inlet/Column oven	Do not touch

To become an independent user of this instrument, you must have the following safety training and certificates which are offered at https://learn.northwestern.edu:

- Laboratory Safety
- Personal Protective Equipment

Upon completion of the certificate, it will take an overnight to filter through the different systems and get into the files that NUCore uses.

Additionally, familiarize yourself with the location of standard safety stations like eye wash and shower stations found in the northwest corner of the room. Protective eyewear is required in this room, and gloves should be removed when using the computer.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Your personal data folder is created during training which must be located under your supervisor's group folder. See a staff member if you do not have a personal folder on this instrument yet. Your personal file folder must contain your Lastname_Firstname. Inside your personal folder is a folder for the year's data, which references the year the data was collected.

Every new year, you are responsible to create a new data folder and copy over your sample table. Be sure to also change your data file path to the new year, so that the data is collected in the new annual folder. See IMSERC staff if you require assistance.

Over time, files from previous years will be archived to a larger file server to save space on the local drive. If you do not use the designated file structure as outlined in this manual, it may result in a failure to back up your data. See IMSERC staff for clarification if you have any questions.

Once inside the 'annual' folder, you may label/identify your sample data according to your needs.

Example: PI name > Your Lastname_Firstname > YYYY> sampleinfo

Specific Example: Einstein > Currie_Marie > 2020 > test-abc-20200316

Data on this instrument are copied on 'imsercdata.northwestern.edu' under 'MS/GC_MSD' every 1 hour. Please follow instructions at http://imserc.northwestern.edu/about-general-faq.html#data for details about data access. Please remember to use the northwestern VPN when accessing data from a personal computer and disconnect from the drive after use when using public computers.

SOFTWARE

Data acquisition can be performed with Agilent Chemstation, and analysis is performed using Agilent's Chemstation processing software. Both icons to access each software are located on the instrument in the upper right corner of the computer screen.

You have the option to use the instrument computer for analyses, but you must reserve instrument time through NUCore.

SAMPLE PREPARATION

The table below outlines recommendations to ensure proper instrument care and sample analysis.

Detail	Recommendation	Consideration
Vials	20 mL Headspace vial Agilent Part No. 5182-0837 20 mm Headspace Caps Agilent Part No. 5183-4477	The Autosampler picks up the vial. With the wrong vial dimensions, the sample will drop during transport.
Solvents	Variable / NA	Check with IMSERC staff for Solid versus liquid sample handling
Concentration / Purity	≤ 1 mg/mL	No ACIDS, BASES. Acceptable Range for column is pH 5-9
Volume	Variable / NA	Check with IMSERC staff for Solid versus liquid sample handling
Labeling	Name and solvent	Sample identification & safety / proper disposal

QUICK START ACQUISITION CHECKLIST

1. Begin your reservation in NUcore.

2. Load your Method.

3. Load your Sequence.

4. Confirm Data File Path is correct in the Sequence table.

5. Add sample(s) to your Sequence table.

    a. Update name of your Sample Name.

    b. Update the Vial position.

    c. Update the Date File.

        i. Should be an exact match of the 'Sample Name.'

6. Click "Okay."

7. *Save the sequence*.

8. Load your samples onto the sample tray.

9. Make sure BOTH the Headspace unit and the GCMS are ready (check Status).

10. Run Sequence. (or POSITION and RUN for a subset of the sequence).

    a. Select the start position of the sample list and click OK.

11. Window prompt appears, click "Run Sequence."

12. Window prompt appears, "Process keywords before Starting Sequence?" Click, "Yes."

13. Injection of sample.

    a. If experiencing issues, see 'Instrument Troubleshooting' of User Manual.

14. Instrument will default to standby mode after the last sample run.

15. Analyze data using sample analysis software, Chemstation.

16. Save processed data, print.

17. End Reservation in NUcore.

DATA ACQUISITION

1. The computer screen is by default, deactivated. You must start your reservation through NUCore in order to be able to turn on the computer screen. If screen is already on, start your reservation through NUCore.

2. Make sure the GCMS acquisition software is open. You can select the GCMS icon located on the top right screen or on the lower tool bar if it is open. Or double click the icon on the desktop to open the software.

3. **Load your method** by clicking "Method" and selecting "Load Method" on the top left tool bar. You can also select the load method icon from the main window.

   IMPORTANT NOTE:

   a. If you need to modify/edit your existing method, please see Appendix A after loading it, for instructions on how to edit it. Please get assistance from IMSERC staff if you have questions.

   b. If you do **not** have a method set up, IMSERC staff will need to assist you through method setup. GC/MS parameters will be covered and their effect on analysis. The method development instructions to be covered are found in Appendix A.
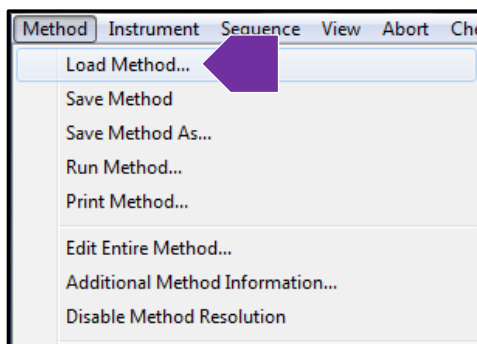
4. Locate your method. Then click "OK".
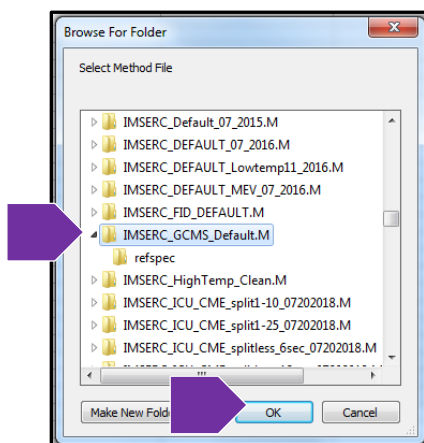
5. **Load your Sequence** table by clicking on "Sequence" on the top toolbar. Then click "Load Sequence." Or select the "Open Sequence" icon on the main window.
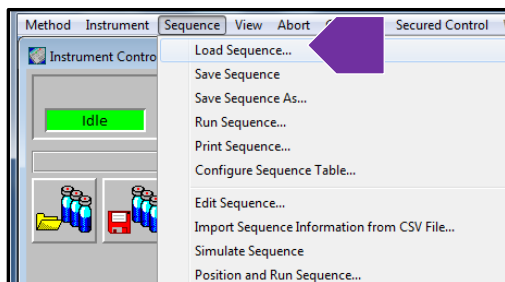
6. Select your own Sequence table or use the default Sequence table, "IMSERC_GCMS_Default_Seq." Then click "Select."
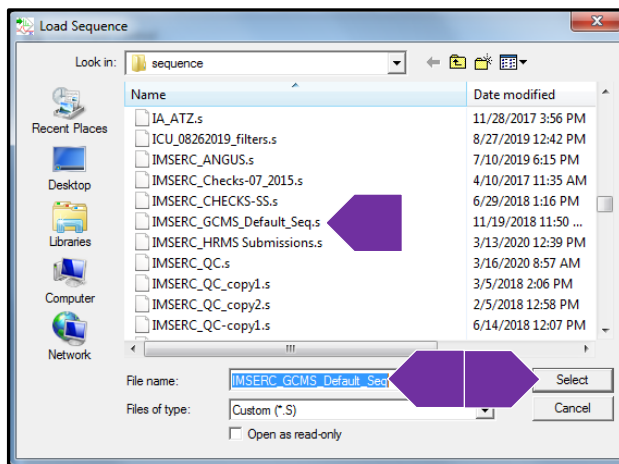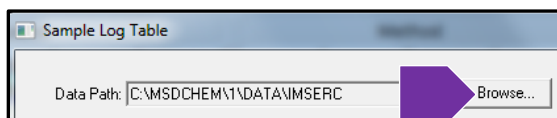
7. **Edit your sequence** table: Once you have loaded your Sequence table, you can edit it by clicking "Sequence" on the top toolbar. Then click "Edit Sequence." Or simply select the "Edit Sequence" icon on the main window.
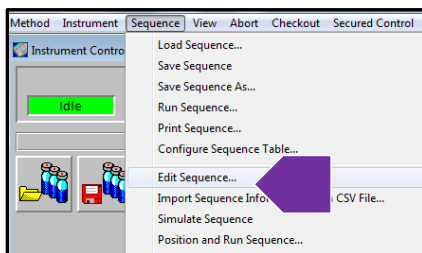
8. **Choose your Data Path.** Once inside your Sequence table, click "Browse." You will select the data path were your files will be collected.

   a. Confirm the data path for your files are to be stored in the proper location as outline below. Then click "OK."

      i.   C:\MSDCHEM\1\Data\PI Name\UserLastName_UserFirstName\YYYY.

      ii. In the example below The PI Name is "Einstein," the username is Curie_Marie, and the data was collected in the year 2020. Create a new folder or ask IMSERC-MS staff if assistance is needed to create the correct data path.

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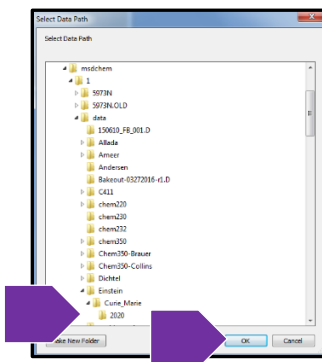
9. To **set up sample information**, in the Sequence table, you are required to enter / select:

   a. Sample 'Type'

      i. Either select 'Blank' or leave as 'Sample'

   b. 'Vial' position

   c. 'Sample' Name

   d. 'Method / Keyword'

   e. 'Data File' name

      i. It is recommended to copy the sample name and paste it over to the file name for consistency.
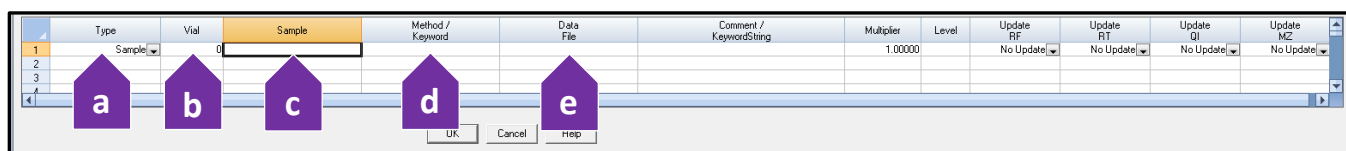
   f. To select your method, right click the Method / Keyword cell of your sample, then click "Browse for Method…"
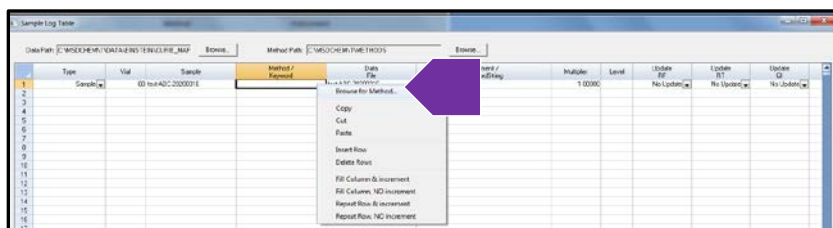
   g. All methods are located under MSDCHEM\1\Methods. Locate then select your method, then click "OK." If you do not have a method, select the default IMSERC method labeled, "IMSERC_GCMS_Default.M."

      i. Do **NOT** save/ load a method from anywhere other than MSDCHEM\1\Methods folder.
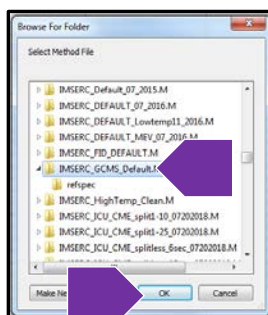
10. To **add another sample**, (a) right click the column you would like to copy and select "Copy." Then (b) right click on the next available column, then click "Paste." Remember to make necessary changes to vial number, sample name, data file, and method, if necessary.
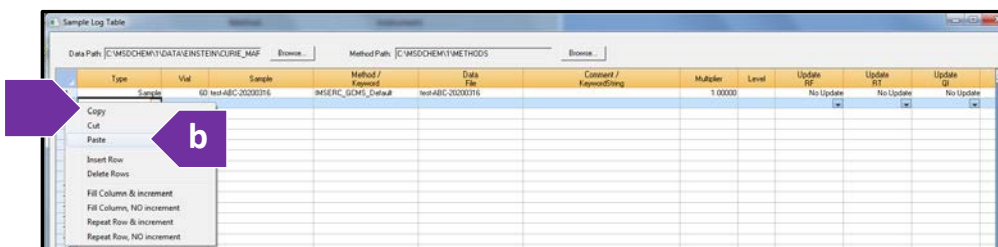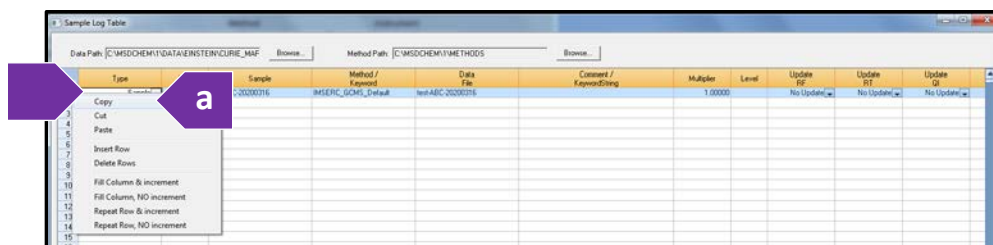
11. Alternatively, another quick way to add a sample is to right click the sample, then click "Repeat Row, and Increment" or "Repeat Row, NO increment."
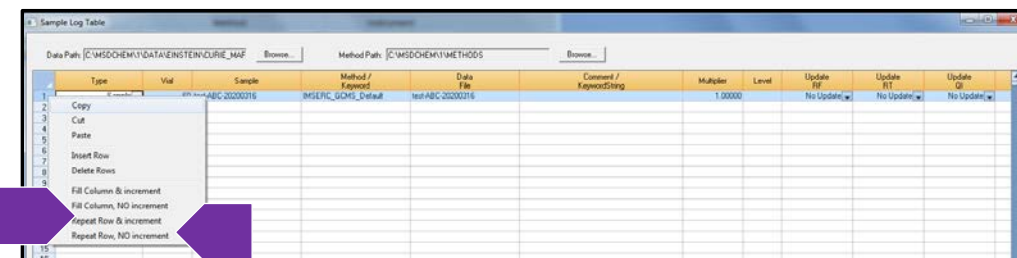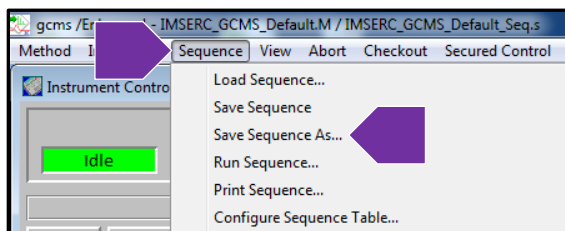

12. Once you completed all changes to your Sequence table, click "OK."
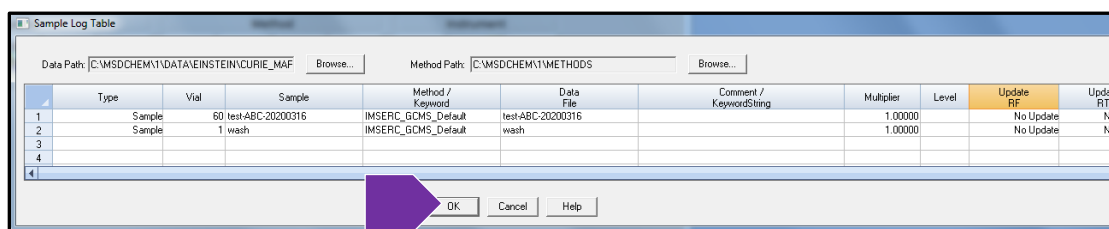
13. To **save your sequence** table, click "Sequence" on the top toolbar, then select "Save Sequence As…"
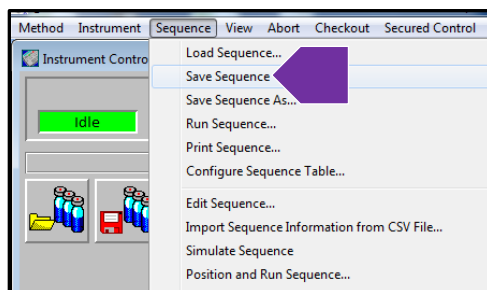

a. Enter a new File Name specific to you, then click "Save."

   i. It should be saved under Local C:\msdchem\1\sequence.
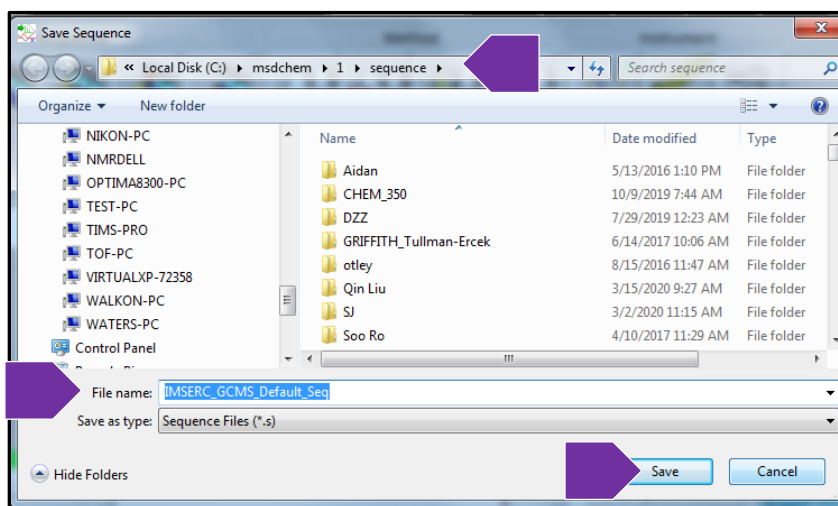
14. If you have already saved your sequence table under your specific name, you can simply click on "Sequence" on the top toolbar, then select "Save Sequence." Or alternatively, you can click on the 'Save Sequence' icon from the main window.

15. **IMPORTANT: Before running the sequence**, you will perform a quick check on the instrument:

    a. Check that the samples are place correctly in the Sample Tray.

    b. Check that the Sample Trays are securely in place. Please **do not** remove the sample trays.

    c. Check that Both the HEADSPACE module and the GC are "Ready" (Not Ready lights are OFF)

16. **To run your sample(s)** click "Sequence" then select "Position and Run Sequence."
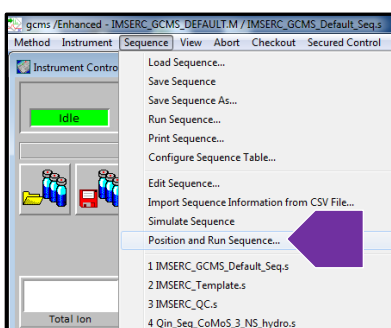

17. A window will appear. Click on the line where you would like the sample list to start running. Then click "OK."
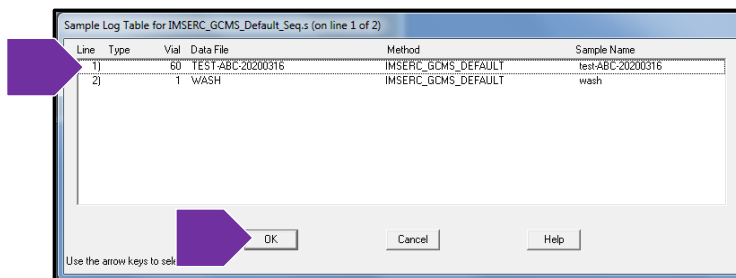
18. Another window will appear. Confirm the selections match what is listed below. (a) Check "Overwrite Existing Data Files" based on whether you want to do so or preserve them. (b) Confirm the Data File Directory follows the mandatory file path for data collection. (c) Click "Run Sequence."
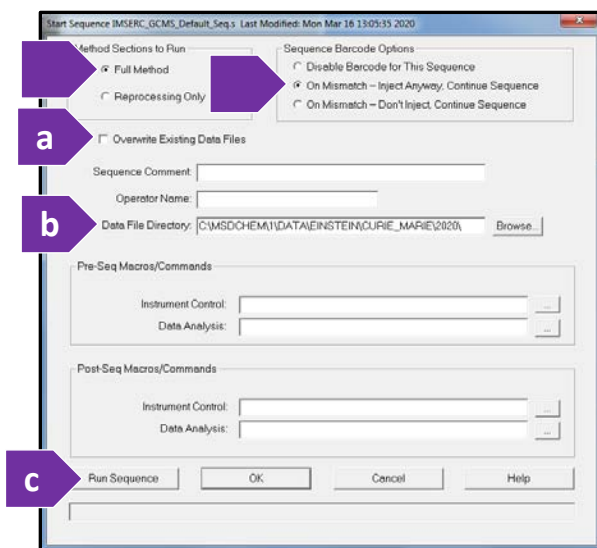
19. Another window appears, "Process Keywords before Starting Sequence." Click "Yes."
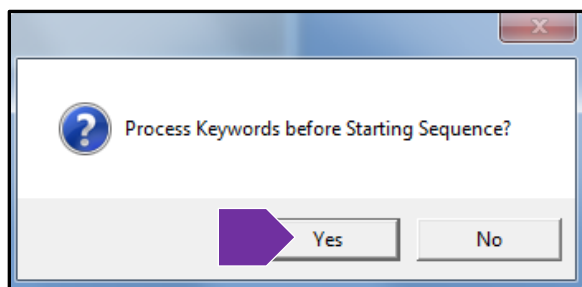
20. The instrument status will change from "Waiting on GC…" to "Loading Vial…" It will pick up your sample and move it to the carousel for injection within a few seconds of Loading vial message appearing. If you experience any issues, see 'Instrument Troubleshooting' of User Manual.
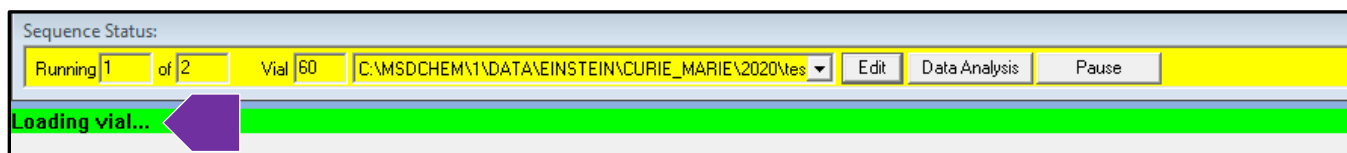
21. A final window appears asking, "Override solvent delay (X.XX minutes)? Click "NO" or Leave it alone.

    a. **NEVER** override the solvent delay. Failure to comply will result in damage to GCMSD filament.

    b. The solvent delay is also programed into your method. Doing nothing / not clicking, will run the method default, utilizing the solvent delay.
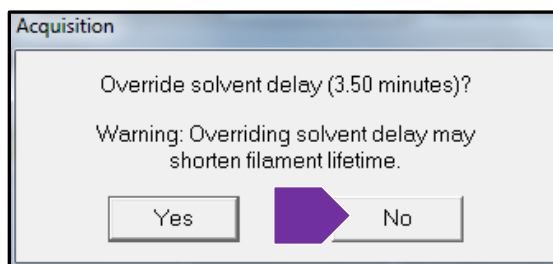
DATA PROCESSING

OPENING A DATA FILE

1. Open the GCMS Data Analysis by clicking on the icon on the top right of the computer screen, or check if it is already open

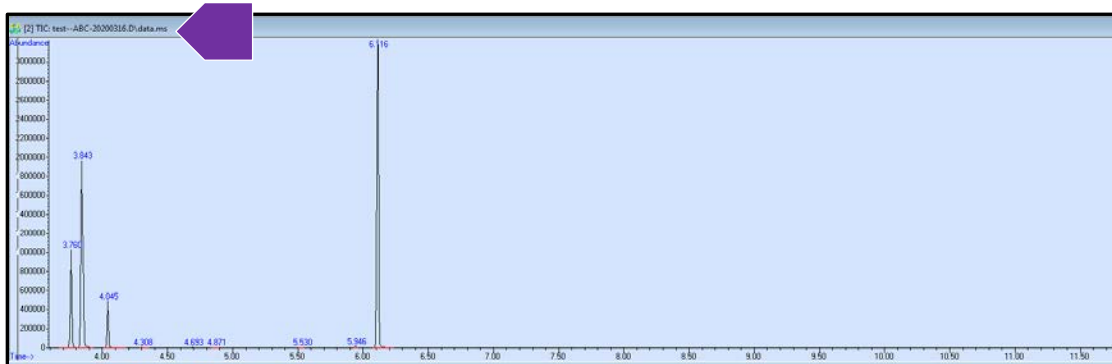2. You have 2 ways to look at your data: **Snapshot** and **Open File**.

   a. To preview an actively running sample, you can click on the **snapshot** icon . You will be unable to see any data for the duration of the solvent delay, since no data is being collected.

   b. To open an acquired sample file, click on the '**open file**' icon .

3. Locate your sample file by selecting the data file path that was chosen in you sequence table. Highlight you file, then click "OK."
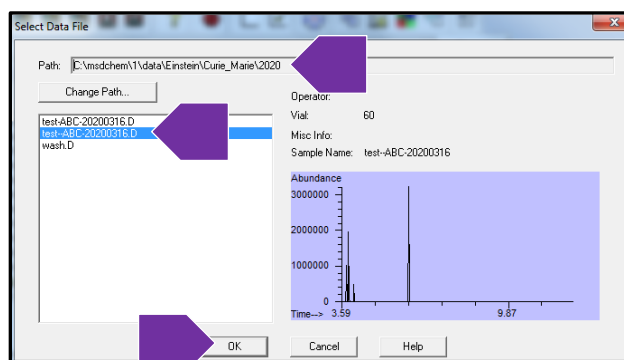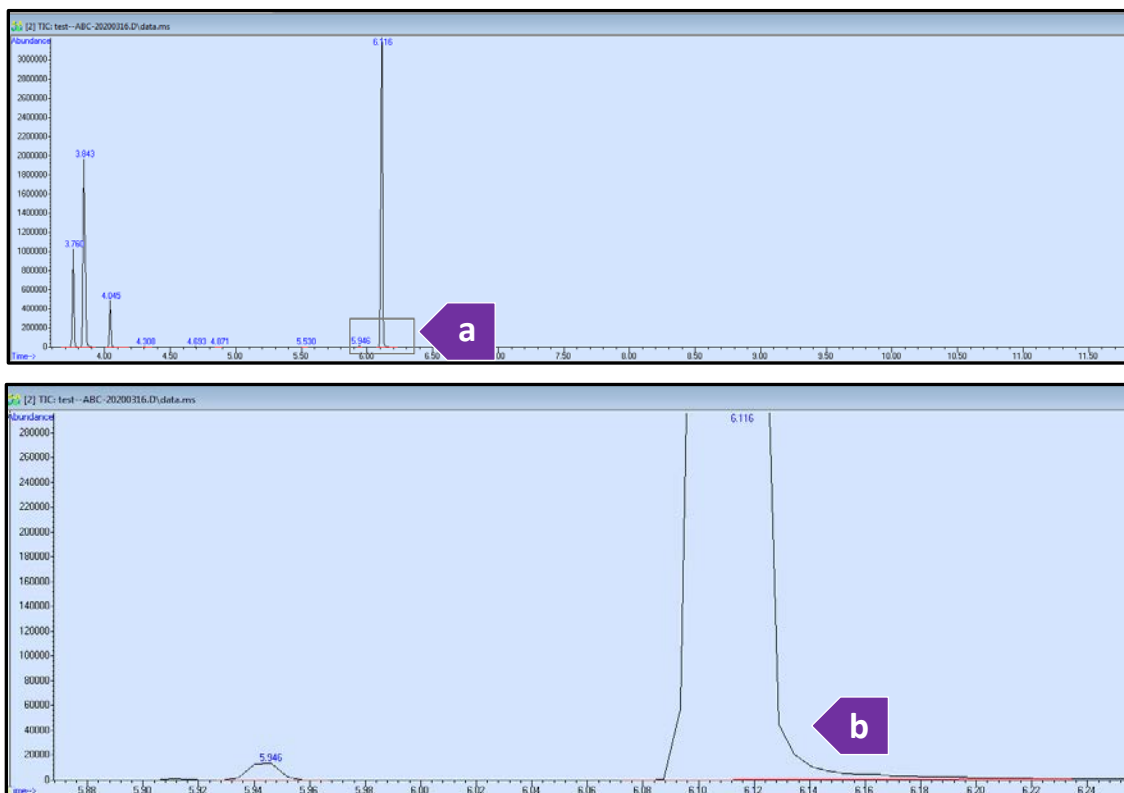

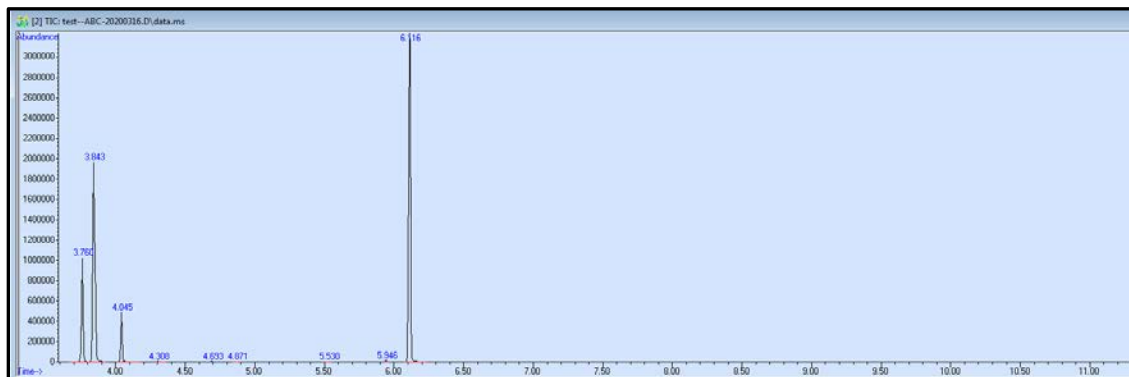4. Once you open your file, the Total Ion Chromatogram (TIC) will appear.

ZOOM / UNZOOM

To Zoom, (a) start from an area you would like to zoom into. Hold down the left mouse button. While still holding the left mouse button, highlight your area of interest. (b) After you release the left mouse button, you will see the zoomed in area.
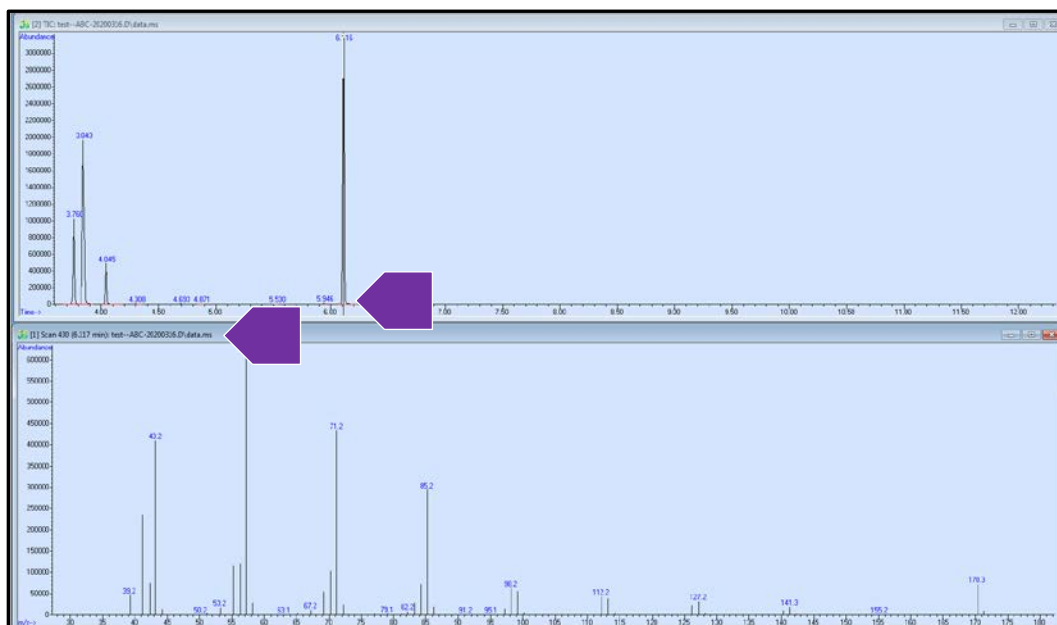

To Unzoom, double click the left mouse button. Each time you double click, it will return to the previously zoomed in view, until the full TIC is displayed again.
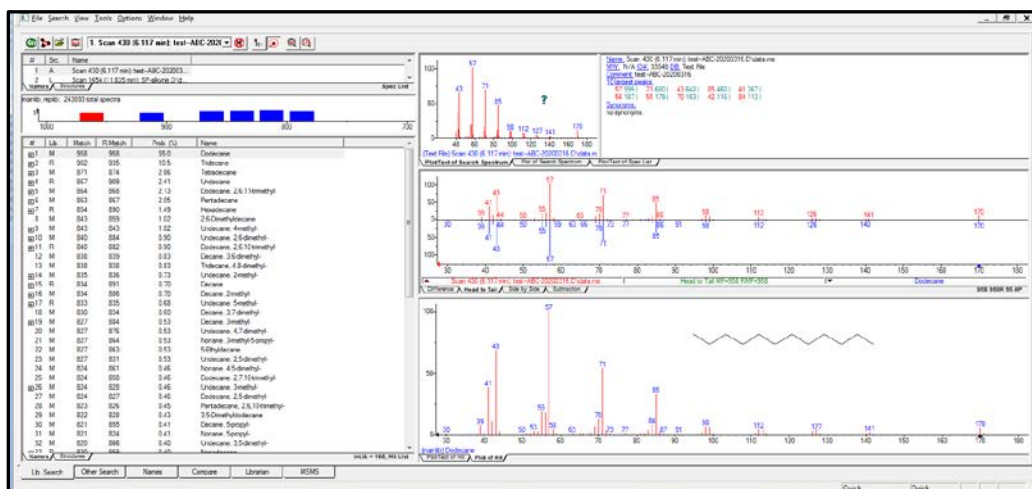
EXTRACT SPECTRA

To obtain a spectrum, double click the right mouse button on the peak of interest. You can click the right mouse button, hold down, and drag the mouse across to collect and sum multiple scans.
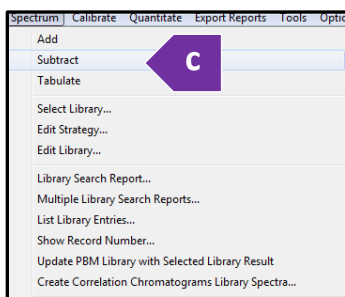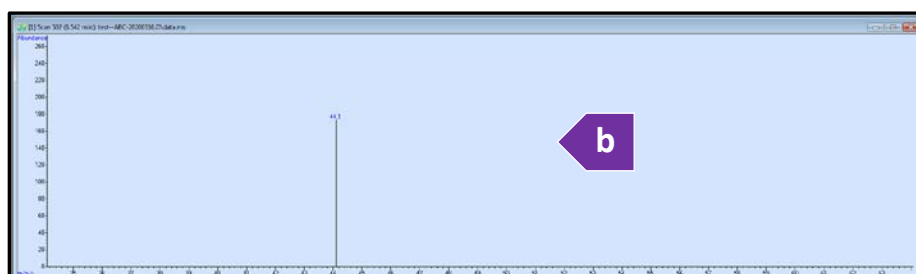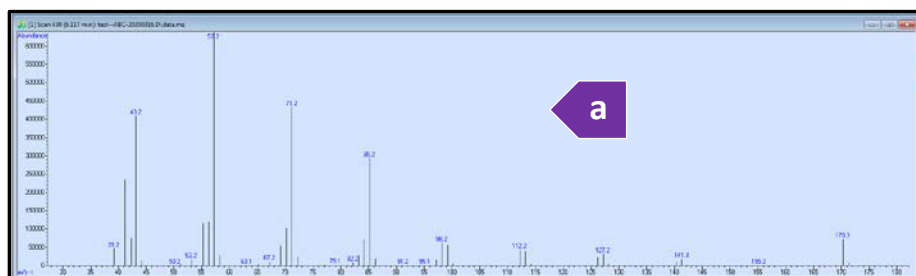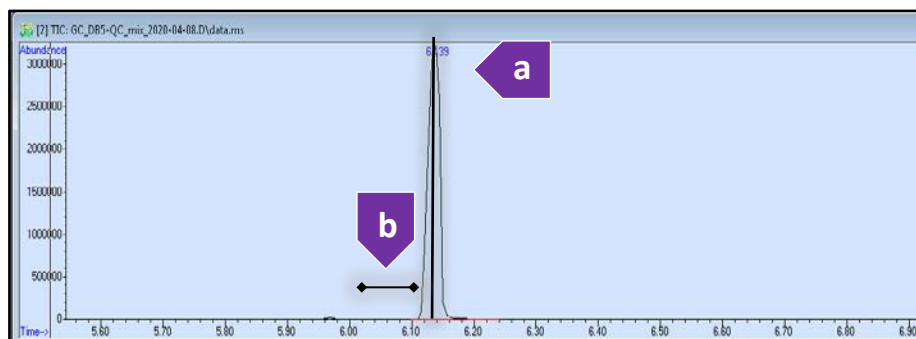

GC LIBRARY

To view the GC Library database match, double click the right mouse button in the spectrum window. The Library match will appear in a new window. See Appendix B for more details regarding the GC Library.

BACKGROUND SUBTRACT

To background subtract, (a) Double click the right mouse button on the chromatogram at the peak of interest to obtain the spectrum. (b) Double click using the right mouse button on the background to get the background spectra. (c) Then click on "Spectrum" at the top of the toolbar. And select "Subtract."

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EXTRACTED ION

To view specific targeted ions otherwise known as "extracted" ion in the chromatogram, (a) click on "Chromatogram" at the top of the toolbar, then select "Extracted Ion Chromatogram." (b) Enter the time range or you can select the entire length of the TIC. (c) Enter ions you want to view, (d) then click "OK." (e) The ions will appear in separate windows. This is useful if you would like to integrate them separately.
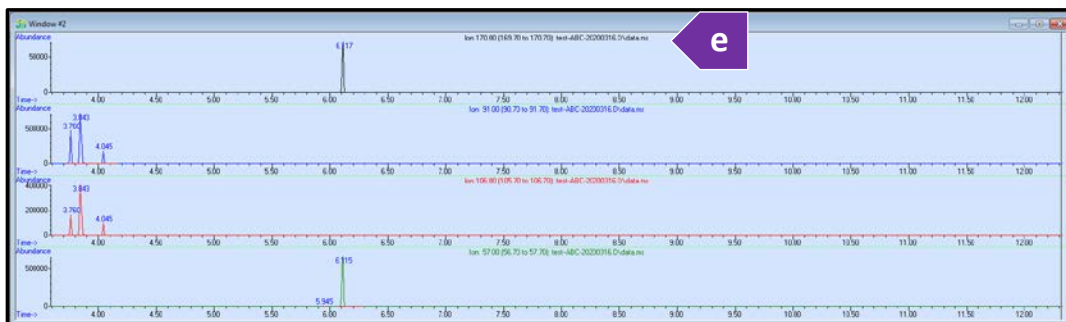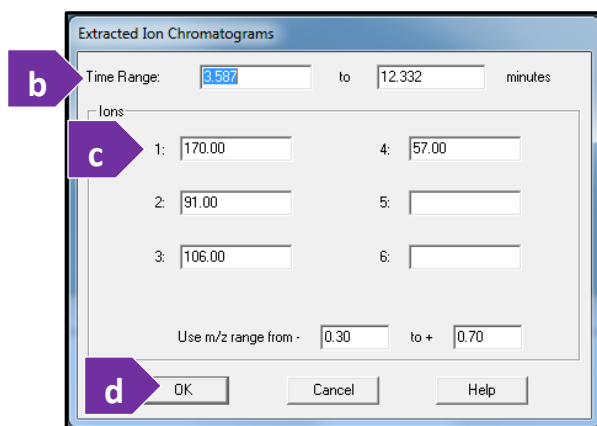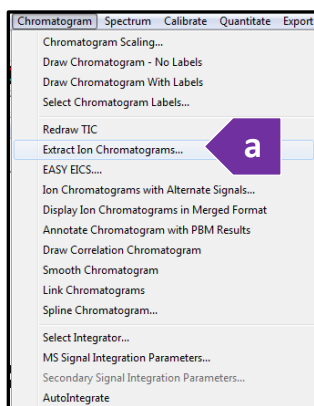
IMSERC User Manual for Agilent GCMSD with DB5 Column (V1.0)

To view the ions together, overlaid on top, (a) click on "Chromatogram" on the top toolbar, then select "Display Ion Chromatogram in Merged Format." (b) You will be able to view the overlaid extract chromatograms, which are color coded. Your selected list of ions will appear at the top.

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INTEGRATION / PEAK LABELING

To integrate peaks, (a) Click "Chromatogram" at the top toolbar, then select "Autointegrate." (b) The peaks will now have labeled retention times above them.

To view the peak areas from the integration, (a) click "Chromatogram," then select "Integration Results..." (b)

The integration results will be displayed for each peak, and you will have the option to print or close.

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PRINTING CHROMATOGRAM AND SPECTRA

1. To print the chromatogram (TIC, EIC) and/or the Spectra, click the print icon 🖨.

2. A window will appear. You can choose to print both TIC and the visible Spectrum together in one page, or Choose "Selected Window", then choosing which one to print. Choosing selected window, will allow you to print only the TIC (window 2) or only the spectrum (window 1). After you confirm your print choice, click okay to print.

Print

○ Selected Window
● TIC & Spectrum
○ Method
○ Select Printer

OK   Cancel

PUBLICATION

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

Mass Spectrum data was collected on the Agilent 6890 Series GCMSD using processed using Enhanced Chemstation Version E.02.02.1431 for data acquisition. Data was processed using Agilent Chemstation. The mass spectrometer was configured with an Agilent 7683 Series Injector and auto sampler, and 5973 Network Mass Selective Detector.

The GC utilized helium carrier gas fitted with a 30M, J&W-FFAP column with an internal diameter of 250 μm and film thickness of 0.25 μm. The sample was run using Headspace sampling , with Sample being heated to ***<<insert your Headspace Oven temperature here >> for <<insert your Headspace Oven Time here >>*** .

Please note: *You may want to add GC Oven temperature program: Initial temperature, Hold time, Temperature ramp, Final temperature, and hold time at Final temperature.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TROUBLESHOOTING

NUCORE / RESERVATION

1. The instrument shows an error - The lower right corner has red error label, and/or the instrument front lights turn red:

    a. Fill in Bug Report.

    b. CONTACT IMSERC STAFF:

Saman Shafaie	sepehr@northwestern.edu
Arsen Gaisin	arsen.gaisin@northwestern.edu
Gabby Allison	gabrielle.allison@northwestern.edu
Ben Owen	benjamin.owen@northwestern.edu

    c. Put "Stop Sign" on instrument keyboard if staff is unavailable.

2. The computer Screen will not Turn On?

    a. Begin Your reservation in NUcore to initiate access to the instrument

3. There is an error with my reservation?

    a. If you have already started your reservation using NUcore, please logoff by selecting the error reporting option and a brief description about the issue.

    b. If you have not started your reservation using NUcore, please report problems with the instrument at http://imserc.northwestern.edu/contact-issue.html add place the 'Stop' sign near the instrument computer. 'Stop' signs are located at XXXX and online at the link above.

    c. Email or talk to a staff member.

INSTRUMENT

1. I started my sequence. The software is saying LOADING VIAL in the status message line, but the instrument appears to be frozen and won't injection my sample?

    a. This is a common error when the instrument is in standby over a long period of time.

        i. Make sure to SAVE your sequence.

        ii. Restart the computer and log back onto the IMSERC account.

        iii. Open your sequence, and start your sequence again adhering to all prompts as listed in the protocol.

            1. 1. Make sure to choose override existing data file in the sequence run pane before clicking Run Sequence, because the instrument errored and technically collected data on your first sample.

SOFTWARE

For issues with software, contact IMSERC-MS Staff. Or file a "Bug Report" and place a "Stop Sign" on keyboard.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EDITING METHODS

1. Open the GCMS acquisition software, or check that it is already open. To open the software, you can select

   the GCMS icon ![gcms icon] located on the top right screen or on the lower tool bar.

2. Load your method by clicking "Method" on the top left tool bar, or by clicking on the "edit method" icon

   ![edit method icon] on the main screen.
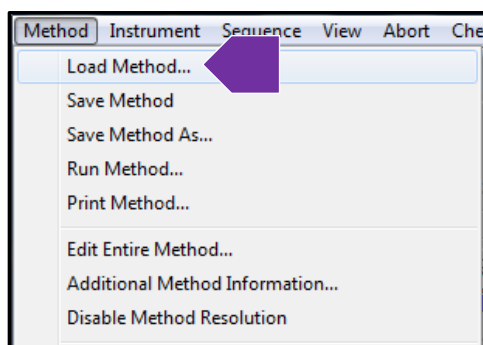
3. You may **only edit your own method.** If you are using the default method named "IMSERC_GCMS_Default," you must immediately "Save as" and rename the method unique to you.

4. Locate and select your method. Then click "OK."
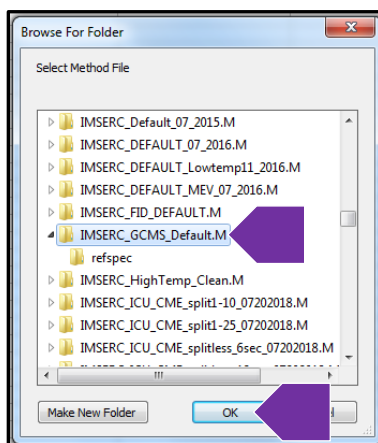
5. In the next window, only select "Instrument / Acquisition." Then click "OK."
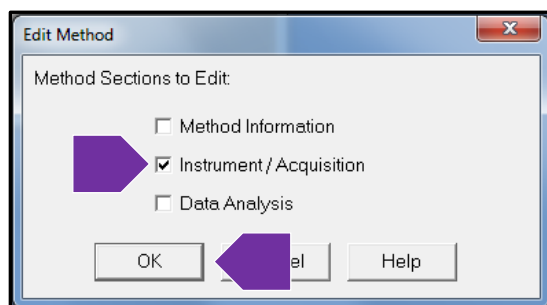
6. Confirm the settings in the "Inlet and Injection Parameters" window, then click "OK."

    a. Sample Inlet, Select '*GC*'
    b.   Injection Source, should be '*Headspace*' (For liquid injection, this would be GC ALS.)
    c. Check 'Use *MS*'
    d. Inlet location is '*Rear*.'
    e. MS Connected to 'Rear Inlet.'
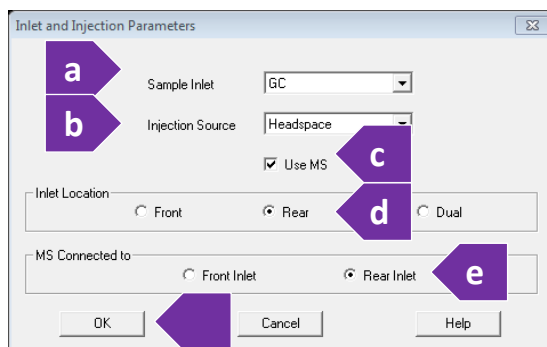
7. The "Headspace Edit Parameters" will appear. In this window you will notice several tabs that allow you to edit different components that make up the Headspace parameters. The tabs you will edit consist of the "Temperature," "Times," and "Vial and Loop." As you make changes to the method, **do NOT click "OK" until all changes to the Headspace parameters are done**, otherwise the method editing window will close.

    a.   Select the **Temperatures** Tab.

      i.   These values need to be adjusted based on volatility and the thermal stability of the analyte being studied.
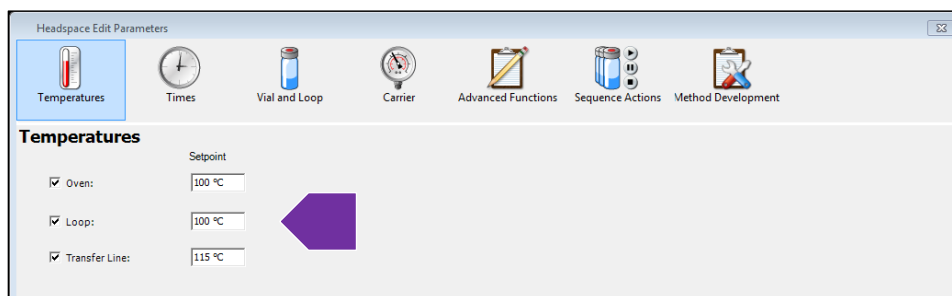
      ii.   **Oven** Temperature: Refers to the headspace oven, not the GC oven. This will need to be set at a temperature that will volatilize all the analytes _of interest_ and if need be minimize the volatilization of unwanted solvent or other components. Please consult with IMSERC staff to set the proper temperatures.

      iii.   Temperatures are set with increasing values from **Oven**, to **Loop** (injection loop filled with volatilized sample) to **Transfer Line** (from Headspace unit to GC). This will facilitate volatilization of the analytes in the sample, and then proper transfer of these to the GC column, by passing through progressively warmer temperature zones, so there will be no condensation along the way.

b. Select the **Times** tab.
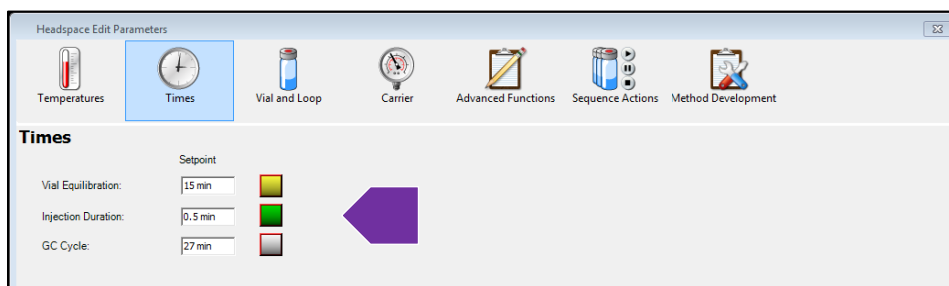
i. **Vial Equilibration**: The higher the selected oven temperature, above, the longer it will take for the vial to come into equilibrium to that temperature. Also, some time is needed to build a headspace of the solid sample in the vial. Partial heating could result into under-estimation of the residual solvent. Vial Equilibration of 10 minutes (or 15minutes for higher boiling point analytes) is standard for most run.

ii. **Injection Duration**: This is the time which the sample is extracted from the Headspace vial. Too short of extraction time will result in partial extraction of sample, or creating a vacuum in the vial. An injection duration of 0.25-0.5 is standard.

iii. **GC Cycle time**: This will be the GC method duration (GC temperature method length of time) *plus* the time it takes for the GC oven to cool back down to the initial temperature. If this time is underestimated the Headspace injections and the GC runs will become out of sync.

1. For example, for a GC method ramping up to 240°C, with the initial temperature of 50°C, 7 minutes of cooling time must be allowed.

iv. Standard addition techniques (spiking the sample with known amounts of a standard and testing the recovery) may be used to validate the protocol.

c. Select the **Vial and Loop** tab.
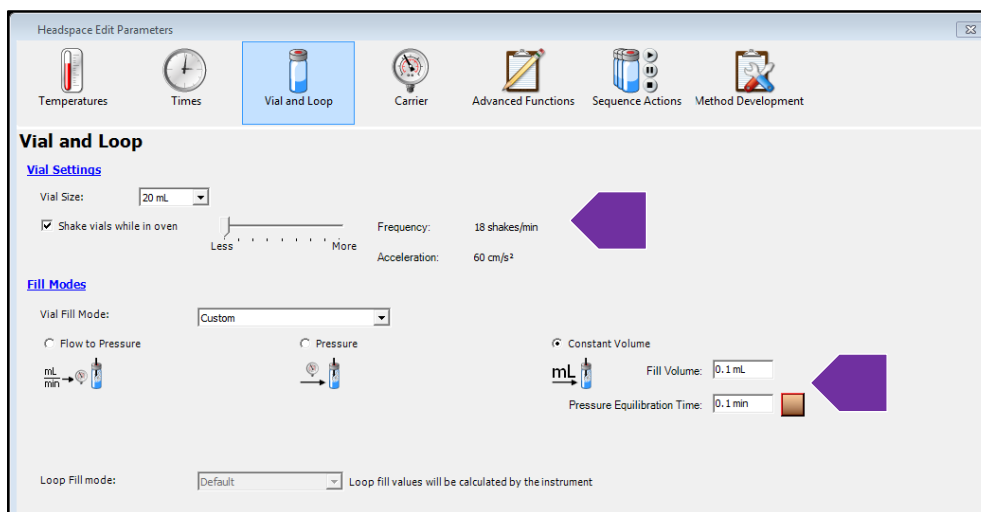
i. **Vial Settings**: *20 mL* headspace vials are currently used. They can be shaken will heating in the Oven to facilitate volatilization. Use "*Less*" shaking- it is adequate for most usage.

ii. **Fill mode**: Constant Volume should be selected.

iii. **Fill volume** is set based on the expected concentration of analytes in the test samples and the calibration method. 0.1 mL is used as starting point. This can be increased up to 0.5ml for lower concentrations. Please consult IMSERC staff if you feel you may need to go higher.

iv. **Pressure equilibration Time**: This should be adjusted based on the Fill Volume. The Higher the volume (amount sample extracted), the more time is needed to prevent a vacuum in the vial. Pressure equilibration Time of 0.1 min for a Fill Volume of 0.1 mL is appropriate. It should be ramped up with same relationship (e.g. 0.2 for 0.2; etc.).

v. Please Note: You may need to *increase the Injection Duration* in the previous step for large Fill volumes.

d. You may skip the remaining panels (Carrier, Advanced Features, Sequence Actions, and Method Development). Please contact IMSERC staff if you want to use any of these options.

e. Save these settings by pressing OK and proceed to the GC parameters.

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8. The "GC Edit Parameters" window will appear. In this window you will notice several tabs that allow you to edit different components that make up the GC method. Injector, Valve, Inlet, etc. The only tabs you will edit consist of the "Injector," "Inlet," and "Oven." You should skip the Injection, Valve, and Inlet tabs. These have been superseded by the Headspace Parameters. You will _only_ need to choose "Oven" to set the temperature program.
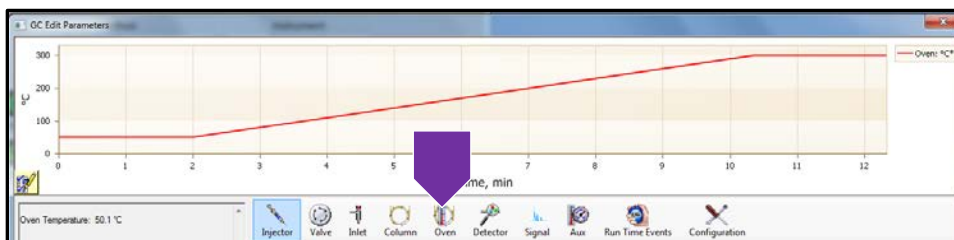

9. Select the "Oven" tab. Here you can adjust the temperature settings of your gradient.

    a. The initial settings tell you the starting temperature of the gradient. The hold time is how long (in minutes) that temperature will hold.

    b. Depending on the rate of temperature increase (°C) per minute, will determine how the long method will be to reach the final temperature set in the method.

    c. _(1)_ Click "Apply" after you have made your edits, and then _(2)_ click "OK."
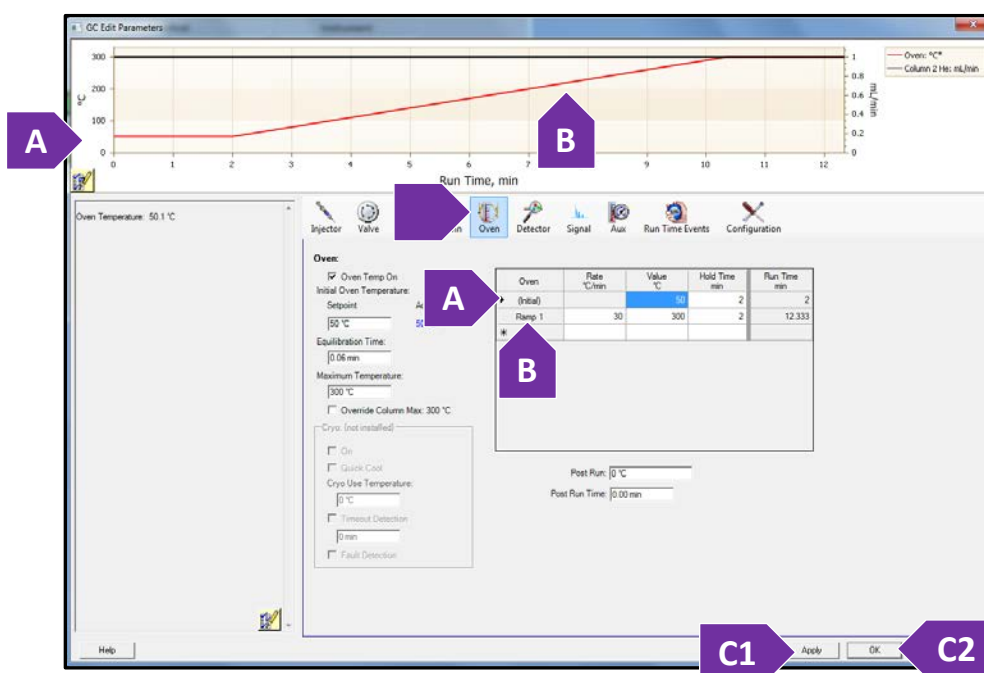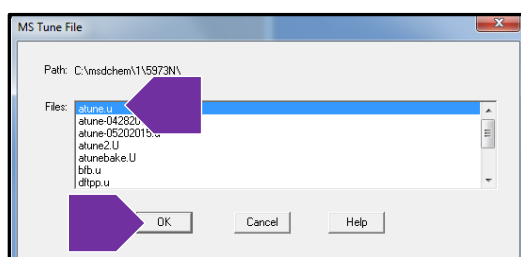
10. The "GC Detector Data" window appears. No changes need to be made here since we are not using the GC detector, but the Mass Spectrometer instead. Select "OK."
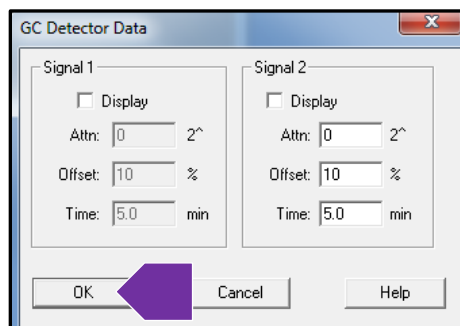

11. The "MS Tune File" window appears. Select "atune.u" and click "OK."

12. The "MS SIM/Scan Parameters" window appears. Verify the length needed for your 'Solvent Delay.' Then click "OK." Note that, 3.5 minutes is the method default. 2.5 minutes is appropriate for lower boiling point solvents like methanol, dichloromethane, ethanol, and hexane.

   a. The solvent delay shuts off the detector to protect the MS filament from the effects of high concentration of solvent introduced to the source from your sample. The detector will be inactive for this amount of time until it has passed through the column. Depending on your choice of solvent, you may need to adjust this time. **ALWAYS use the solvent delay**. Failure to use the solvent delay will results in damage to the filament.

   b. **<u>IMPORTANT NOTE:</u>** With Headspace analysis, given the nature of volatility of analytes and the solvents, and their low molecular weights, we may have to make a wide range of changes to both the solvent delay, but also introduce other "Timed Events", and change the default mass range in "Edit Parameters" to detect your analytes, while avoiding damage to the instrument. Please talk to IMSERC staff to make these adjustments or set up for solvents and analyte mixtures.
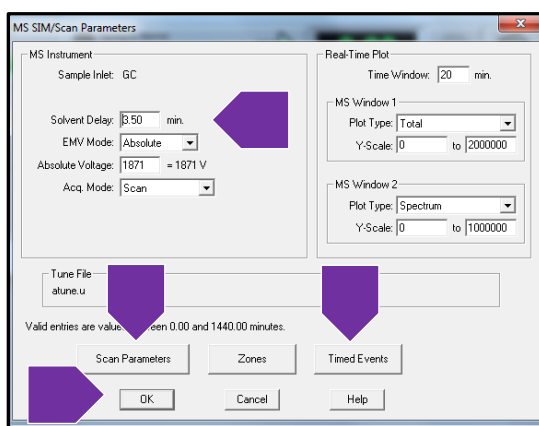
13. Here you will have another opportunity to save your edited method. **All methods must be saved in the methods folder**. If you do not save your method in this folder, the instrument will fail and lock up when you attempt to run your sample. **DO NOT save over the default method.** It is at your discretion to uniquely name your edited method.
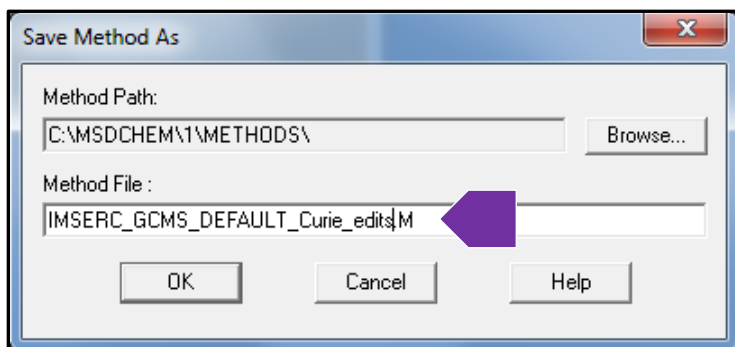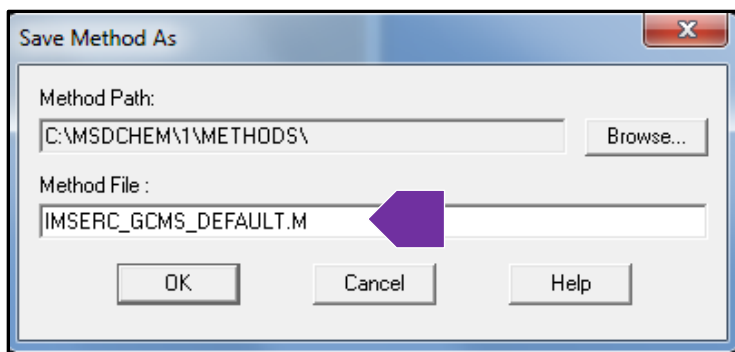
APPENDIX B: GC LIBRARY

How do I use the GC Match Library?

1. Look at the compound list and the match probability (Prob. %). The match probability is NOT decisive:

    i. Because, it will match your spectrum to the closest entry. Your compound may not be in the library, but the library will still produce the closest match.

    ii. The closest entry however, may give you part of the structure, or it may be unrelated, if it is a very poor match.

2. Check the actual comparison of your spectrum (red spectrum) with the library match (blue spectrum). Compare which peak lines match up as well as the expected intensities from head to tail.

    i. You will be able to pick up small differences, which are not expressed in the matching algorithm used on the Prob. %.

3. You need a good spectrum for a good match. This means:

    i. A robust signal.

    ii. Resolved compounds (no overlap or coelution with other compounds).

    iii. A clean background.

4. The Prob. % may provide more than one entry for a compound. Review all entries and perform a comparison. This will provide and idea of what is potential variability of fragmentation data.

    i. You will notice slight variations on the intensities when comparing the entries. Using the data in this fashion will eliminate the habit of making judgments on the data based on just a probability % without looking at the raw data.
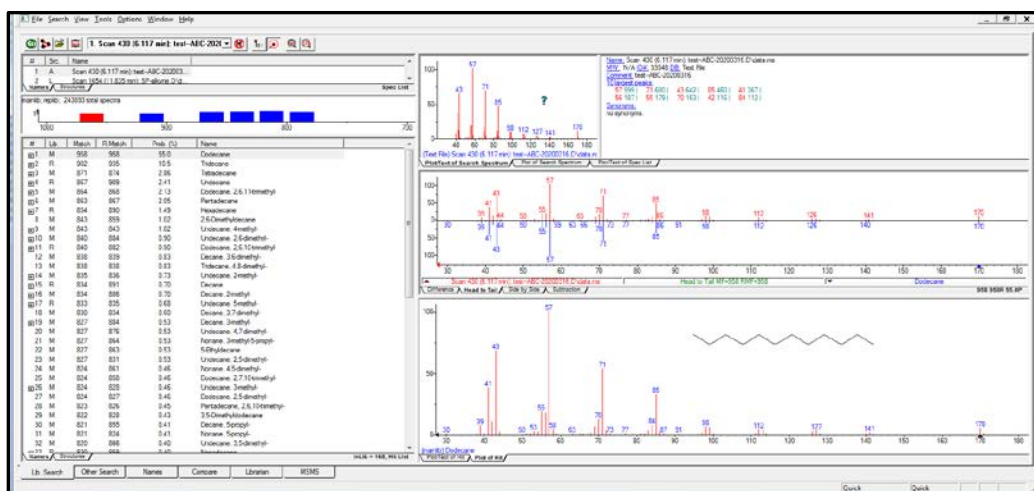
APPENDIX C: QUANTITATION METHODS

See IMSERC-MS staff.

REVISIONS

V1.0 2020/04/14	• SOP conversion to new template. New graphics uploaded; additional information added.