



Flow Cytometry Core Facility

Blizard Institute

Core Facility Manager: Dr Gary Warnes

Ext 2402

Email: g.warnes@qmul.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/>

Blizard Flow Cytometry Core Facility

Flow cytometry is a powerful tool for the multiparameter analysis of cells of all types. Three [high powered high speed flow cytometers are available](#) including a BD Aria IIIu cell sorter, as well as two simpler cytometers and a three colour [LED upright Fluorescence microscope](#) in the Blizard Institute. The analyser instrumentation is open 24/7 with a troubleshooting guide and contact number for instrument problems outside of working hours.

The Core Facility also trains new beginners and gets all Users up to speed by offering a Training Course (compulsory) which includes use of all analyzers, software, and the practicalities of colour compensation. This introductory training helps the user set up experimental templates so that they can obtain optimal results from their experiments.. The Core Facility Staff have over 30 years' experience and gives practical help, advice and support in experimental design. The Core Facility also offers the possibility of designing new assays or improving known techniques as well as free FACS tubes, range of viability dyes, Comp Beads and other reagents for free, see Reagent Shop for full list <http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/shop/index.html>

Website

The Flow Cytometry Core Facility website has multiple examples of methods with full protocols with expert Guides on instrument use, how to correctly set compensations (highlighting some of the mis-information about this dark art), cell cycle guide and lots more about Flow Cytometry and how it works. <http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/index.html>

Range of New Assays Developed at the Blizard

FRET Applications (**J Cell Sci 2012**), ER stress assay (**manuscript in preparation, 2016**), 6 Autophagy assays (**J Clin Exp Imm 2012, Intech Publication 2013 & 2016, Cytometry 2014, Journal of Cell Science, 2014, Current Cytometry Protocols 2014, Autophagy 2016**), a real-time differential necrosis-apoptosis assay (**Cytometry 2011**), receptor quantification (**BJH 1998**), Flow FISH for telomere length semi-quantification, soluble analyte bead assays, protein translocation assay (**Apoptosis 2007**), NADH analysis, neuron analysis, exosome analysis and sorting, antibody binding real-time analysis, multiplexing of apoptosis assays (**Cell Res 2009, Macromolecular Bioscience 2011**), cell cycle phase sorting (**Nature Cell Biology 2006, Cell Cycle 2007**), single cell cloning (**EMBO 2001**), bacterial viability assay (**J Med Microbiol 1993**).

Instruments & Charges

All instruments are bookable on the Quartzzy <https://www.quartzzy.com/login>

Invitations to join Quartzzy are extended by the Core Facility Manager. Grant Codes are required. Assistance with data acquisition is charged at £50/h.

Cell Sorting



The Blizzard Aria IIIu has 4 lasers & detects 15 colours (Blue, Violet, Yellow-Green & Red HeNe). The instrument can analyze 2 colours from the Blue laser (FITC, PerCP or PerCP-Cy5.5), 6 colours from the Violet laser (Pacific Blue or BV421, AmCyan or BV511, BV605, BV655, BV711, BV786), 4 colours from the Yellow Green laser (PE, PE-CF595, PE-Cy5.5, PE-Cy7) and 3 colours from the Red HeNe (APC, Alexa700 or APC-Cy5.5, APC-Cy7). The instrument can sort 4 populations at 20,000 cells/sec (lymphocytes) or 10,000 cells/sec for cells larger than 7µm. The instrument can single clone into any TC plate in a sterile manner under cool conditions. The charge rate is £50/h without setup or cancellation charges.

BD LSRII



The BD LSRII can analyse 14 colours with 4 lasers. The Blue laser can detected 6 colours from the (FITC, PE, CF590, PerCP or PE-Cy5, PE-Cy5.5 or PerCP-cy5.5, PE-Cy7), 3 colours from the violet laser (Pacific Blue or BV421, AmCyan or BV 511, BV605), 2 colours from the UV laser (Hoechst 33342 or DAPI, Indo-1 Green, BUV395, BUV737) and 3 colours from the Red HeNe (APC, Alexa700 and APC-Cy7). The charge rate is £30/h without cancellation or time change charges – you pay for what you use.

ACEA Novocyte



The ACEA Novocyte can analyse 13 colours with 3 lasers. The Blue laser can detect 5 colours (FITC, PE, CF590, PerCP or PE-Cy5.5 or PerCP-cy5.5, PE-Cy7), 6 colours from the violet laser (Pacific Blue or BV421, BV570, BV605, BV655, BV786), and 2 colours from the Red HeNe (APC, or APC-Cy7). The instrument is a 7 log decade instrument removing the need to set PMT voltages. The instrument is fitted with an Auto-sampler allowing Users to analyse 24 FACS tubes, 24, 48 or 96 well TC plates. The charge rate is £30/h without cancellation or time change charges – you pay for what you use.

BD FACSCanto II



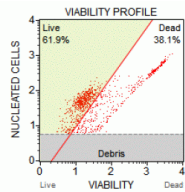
The Blizard BD FACSCANTO II can analyze 4 colours from the argon laser (FITC, PE, PerCP or PerCP-Cy5.5 or PE-Cy5.5, PE-Cy7), 2 colours from the violet laser (Pacific Blue or BV421, AmCyan or BV511) and 2 colour from the red HeNe (APC, APC-Cy7). The charge rate is £30/h without cancellation or time change charges – you pay for what you use.

BD FACScan



The Blizard BD FACScan can analyse 3 colours from the argon laser (FITC, PE, PerCP or PE-Cy5.5 or PE-Cy7). The charge rate is £5/h without cancellation or time change charges – you pay for what you use.

Millipore Muse



The Blizard Millipore Muse can analyze 2 colours from the 532nm Green HeNe (PE, PI, 7-AAD, LDS751, RFP, mCherry, Alexa546 or 555). This instrument is of a new simple design without the need to set voltage or compensation by the User. The instrument can perform simple FACS assays, such as cell viability and absolute counts, annexin V assay, PI cell cycle analysis, mitochondrial & caspase function by the purchase of reasonable priced kits from Millipore. The charge rate is £10/h without cancellation or time change charges – you pay for what you use. This instrument is easy to use for beginners and occasional users.

LED Epi-Fluorescent Upright Microscope



The Flow Cytometry Core Facility has a five colour LED epi-fluorescent upright microscope with UV, violet, Green, Blue and Bright Field illumination. This instrument can take jpg of DAPI, FITC, TRITC and violet excitation probes, which can be overlaid in other supporting software. This allows FACS Users to have a quick look at their cells for free.

Software & Data

The Core Facility has two large screen Apple computers for data analysis with FlowJo software version 8 and 10, all bookable on Quartzly. All data is backed up every 3 months by the Core Facility onto removable hard drives, at which time some data is removed from the instruments Database, but users usually have easy access to 3-6 months of data. Older data can be re-installed onto instruments computers as required if the user can provide the date of the original experiment. Finally, the user is ultimately responsible for ensuring their data is backed up and held safely.

Assistance

The Managers time is bookable on Quartzly for expert help and advice with setting up experiments, and to run samples if required. The Core Facility tries to encourage Users to ask questions and ask for help with experimental design, instrument setup, sample collection and data analysis when required; most of this advice is given free of charge but for more complex use of the instrument a charge of £50/h is made.

Flow Cytometry Standards & Publications

For NEW MIFlowCyt criteria for good practice in data publication see Cytometry, the scientific journal for the International Society for the Advancement of Cytometry, [ISAC](#), see details and [download form](#) in [Flow Cytometry Guides](#). All such data for publication in Cytometry has to be uploaded to [FlowRepository.org](#)

These standards include the quoting of voltage & compensation values as well as controls used (FMO, isotype as appropriate), as well as gating strategies. These standards have been accepted in numerous journals such as Nature, Science & Cell.

Projects & Collaborations

Currently the Flow Cytometry Core Facility offers under and post-graduate (MSc) student place for projects studying autophagy by flow cytometry. The Core Facility also collaborates with PIs.

Flow Cytometry Methods

Immunophenotyping

The use of directly fluorescently conjugated tagged monoclonal antibodies has historically been carried out on lymphocytes and the Core Facility instruments can detect commonly used fluorophores *e.g.* FITC, PE, PerCP, PerCP-Cy5.5, PE-Cy7, APC, AF700, APC-Cy7 & Pacific Blue. These instruments can also detect new fluorophores such as Horizon V450 & 500, Pacific Orange & Green, CF590, BV421, BV511, BV570, BV605, BV655, BV711, BV786 as well as BUV dyes. The only Alexa Fluor dyes that can be used are Alexa405, 488 and 647. Alexa 546, and 555 can now be analysed on the Aria cell sorter.

The Muse instrument can analyse Alexa546 and 555 but these can only be run in single colour mode. There are numerous other techniques associated with immunophenotyping including intracellular cytokine analysis as well as PhosFlow protein analysis

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/multicolouranalysis/index.html>

Viability Dyes

The Core Facility has a free supply of commonly used viability dyes such as DAPI, PI, 7-AAD and DRAQ7. A useful tip when using the LSRII, is that DAPI can still be used with the Pacific Blue fluorophores as this dye is only excited by the violet laser, whilst DAPI is excited by the UV & Violet and hence dead cells can be excluded on the UV parameter and Pacific Blue events gated on the Violet parameter. The new live fix stains from BD and Biolegend can also be used. The Muse instrument is supplied with a cell viability dye for absolute counts for rapid analysis

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/viability/index.html>

Cell Cycle Analysis

Cell cycle analysis of DNA content can be made with DAPI, PI & 7-AAD as well as with live cells using Hoechst 33342 (only on the LSRII). More complex analysis can also be used to show DNA content versus antigens using the Click-IT kits from Invitrogen; as well as standard Brdu analysis for investigating cell proliferation rates. DNA breaks can also be investigated using anti-H2AX antibody, as well as PARP, histone H2 to determine m phase. Rapid cell DNA content can be performed using a rapid Triton X-100 method allowing the user to rapidly analyse DNA content with DAPI even with Violet laser excitation rather than

UV. Polyploid cells can also be analysed flow cytometrically, as well as cell quiescence using RNA probe, Pyronin Y

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/cellcycleanalysis/index.html>

Fluorescent Proteins

The Core Facility analysers can detect CFP, GFP, YFP & DsRed. The new Muse instrument, with its Green HeNe, can detect RFP & Cherry Fluorescent proteins.

Routinely, GFP, YFP, CFP, mRFP and mCherry can be sorted by the Aria IIIu <http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/fluorescentproteins/index.html>

Flow FISH

Telomere length can also be rapidly analysed flow cytometrically using the DAKO commercial kit for estimations of relative telomere lengths

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/flowfish/index.html>

Cell Death - Apoptosis, Autophagy, Oncosis & Necrosis

Cell death includes various recognized processes including classic apoptosis, which is studied by a wide variety of techniques *e.g.* SubG₁ DNA analysis, annexin V assay, mitochondrial function and active caspase detection. Autophagy or Type II apoptosis is a cell survival mechanism when the cell is under environmental pressure due to lack of nutrients. The archetypal double membrane structure, the autophagosome, is formed to sequester cytoplasm, misfolded protein and cell organelles; this then fuses with lysosomes to form a single membrane structure, the autolysosome, in which the contents are digested by hydrolases, releasing energy in the form of ATP thus helping the cell to survive. If nutrient starvation persists then the cell dies. Autophagy has only recently been studied by flow cytometry, and our Flow Cytometry Core Facility has been at the leading edge of assay development in this area of science. Quantification of autophagy marker, LC3II or B and lysosome mass has been demonstrated to measure autophagy in live and fixed cells. Flow cytometric organelle phagy assays have also been published. The 15 year old problem of not being able to differentiate cells dying via apoptosis or necrosis (oncosis) has been solved by the use a real-time mitochondrial function assay as well as a method that distinguishes early and late necrotic cells.

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/apoptosis/index.html>

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/autophagy/index.html>

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/oncosis/index.html>

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/necrosis/index.html>

Calcium Flux

Calcium flux into cells or release from internal stores is indicative of cell activation. The Core Facility provides Indo-1 for Ratiometric analysis of calcium flux using the UV laser on the BD LSRII. The use of Indo-1 allows the use of most available antibody fluorophores including Pacific Blue. Organelle (ER & mitochondria) calcium flux can also be analysed using calcium indicator dye, Rhod-2

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/functionalanalysis/calciumflux/index.html>

Cell Proliferation

CFSE is supplied free by the Core Facility for proliferation generation analysis after cell stimulation. Other colours of CFSE, such as violet, orange and red are available from Invitrogen and more economically from eBioscience. Data can be analysed using the special Platform within FlowJo Software available for Users of the Core Facility <http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/functionalanalysis/cellproliferation/index.html>

Bead Assays

BD and eBioscience are manufacturers of soluble protein analyte capture beads for the detection of a large range of cytokines and other soluble proteins. This method is setup to run on the BD FACSCanto II and the Core Facility provides expert help in the use of these expensive kits

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/cba/index.html> <http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/flowcytomix/index.html#>

FRET

Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET) allows the analysis of protein interactions (<10nm) rapidly by flow cytometry and provides an easy mechanism of providing a second method of FRET analysis to combine with microscopic analysis of FRET. Donor and Acceptor fluorophores have to be within 10nm and also lie in parallel for energy to transfer to occur. This energy transfer occurs typically from the Donor fluorophore with a lower wavelength than the Acceptor, (<50nm lower) in order for the Acceptor to be excited by the Donor fluorophores. This results in detectable increase fluorescence in the intensity of Acceptor fluorophore. Flow cytometry can also use FRET to detect the presence of:-

BRDU (without antibody)

gene transfer reporting by CCF2/4 reagents (Invitrogen)

cell hybridoma formation by use of green & red carbocyanine dyes

protein interactions in live cells using Fluorescent Proteins *e.g.* CFP-YFP

Antibodies can also be used to detect homo-hetero dimer receptor levels as well as kinetic measurement of second messenger interactions

<http://www.icms.qmul.ac.uk/flowcytometry/uses/fret/index.html>