

FITS Extractor – Quick User Guide

This short manual describes how to use the FITS Extractor tool for batch extraction and interpolation of spectra from FITS binary tables. It assumes the reader is already familiar with standard FITS formats.

1. Start the application

Run the command

```
fits_extractor.py
```

to execute the script. The graphical interface will open automatically. The script requires some non-standard python packages to be installed. To install them, run the command

```
pip install -r requirements.txt
```

in the according directory or install the required packages by yourself. Check the provided “requirements.txt” file for information about the packages you need to install.

2. Load FITS files or directories

Drag and drop a FITS file or a directory containing multiple FITS files into the drop area. The application shows the number of files and total size.

3. Load column key values

Click “**Load Key Values**” to scan the FITS files for available binary table columns. Detected column names will populate the dropdown boxes on the right-hand side. This process can take some time. Column names are featured in the dropdown boxes as soon as one of the provided FITS files features such a column.

4. Select the relevant FITS keys

From the dropdown boxes, select the columns corresponding to wavelength, flux, and flux error. Optionally, enable and select continuum or status columns if your data includes them.

FITS files with altering column names cannot be read by the application and will be skipped.

5. Optional: Enable plotting

Check “Plot Extracted Spectra” if you want to view a matplotlib preview for each extracted spectrum. The preview will show after each extracted spectrum, essentially stalling the workflow until it is closed.

6. Extract spectra

Click **“Extract .fits Spectra”**. Each file is processed sequentially. The tool performs the following steps:

1. Reads wavelength, flux, and error arrays from the FITS binary table.
2. Optionally filters data using the STATUS column (if selected).
3. Interpolates the data to a uniform wavelength grid using linear interpolation.
4. Creates new FITS Primary HDUs for flux and flux error.
5. Writes both files into the subfolder 'extracted/'.

7. Output

Two files per input FITS are created:

- *_interp_spec.fits* – the interpolated spectrum
- *_interp_err.fits* – the interpolated flux error

The file names consist of the input file name, the object name as stated in the FITS header, a five-letter identifier, and the ending explained above, each separated by an underscore.

If an input file is skipped, no output files will be created. Files are skipped for one of three reasons, each throwing their own unique error message in the console:

- “warn: File is not compatible!” – The input file is not a FITS file.
- “err: File is not loading correctly!” – The FITS data cannot be read from the file, likely due to a corrupted file.
- “err: File throws error when extracting!” – The FITS file does not meet the previously set binary table column requirements.

Additional Notes

Pressing the **“Show Files”** button will show the file names of all input files for easy verification that the right files are loaded into the application.

After successfully extracting all spectra, the application will close automatically.

© 2025 Julius Richard Dreisbach – FITS Extractor Utility

Designed for rapid spectrum extraction and normalization.

You may use, copy, and modify this software for personal or educational purposes.
Commercial use is not allowed without permission from the author.
No warranty is provided.