

PHonon User's Guide (v. 6.3)

(only partially updated)

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1 Introduction

This guide covers the usage of the PHonon package, a part of the QUANTUM ESPRESSO distribution. Further documentation, beyond what is provided in this guide, can be found in the directory PHonon/Doc/, containing a copy of this guide.

Important notice: due to the lack of time and of manpower, this manual is only partially updated and may contain outdated information.

This guide assumes that you know the contents of the general User's Guide for QUANTUM ESPRESSO and of the User's Guide for PWscf. It also assumes that you have already installed QUANTUM ESPRESSO (PHonon is not a stand-alone package: it requires PWscf to be compiled

and used). If not, please locate the general User's Guide in directory Doc/ two levels above the one containing this guide, and the User's Guide for PWscf in PW/Doc/; or consult the web site: http://www.quantum-espresso.org. It is also assumed that you know the physics behind QUANTUM ESPRESSO, the methods it implements, and in particular the physics and the methods of PHonon.

PHonon has the following directory structure, contained in a subdirectory PHonon/ of the main QUANTUM ESPRESSO tree:

Doc/ : contains the user_guide and input data description

examples/ : some running examples

PH/ : source files for phonon calculations and analysis Gamma/ : source files for Gamma-only phonon calculation

Important Notice: since v.5.4, many modules and routines that were common to all linear-response QUANTUM ESPRESSO codes are moved into the new LR_Modules subdirectory of the main tree. Since v.6.0, the D3 code for anharmonic force constant calculations has been superseded by the D3Q coda, available on http://www.qe-forge.org/gf/project/d3q/.

The codes available in the PHonon package can perform the following types of calculations:

- phonon frequencies and eigenvectors at a generic wave vector, using Density-Functional Perturbation Theory;
- effective charges and dielectric tensors;
- electron-phonon interaction coefficients for metals;
- interatomic force constants in real space;
- Infrared and Raman (nonresonant) cross section.

Phonons can be plotted using the PlotPhon package. Calculations of the vibrational free energy in the Quasi-Harmonic approximations can be performed using the QHA package. *Note:* since v.5.4, these two packages are separately distributed and no longer bundled with PHonon. Their latest version can be found in the tarballs of PHonon v.5.3.

2 People

The PHonon package was originally developed by Stefano Baroni, Stefano de Gironcoli, Andrea Dal Corso (SISSA), Paolo Giannozzi (Univ. Udine), and many others. We quote in particular:

- Michele Lazzeri (Univ.Paris VI) for the 2n+1 code and Raman cross section calculation with 2nd-order response;
- Andrea Dal Corso for the implementation of Ultrasoft, PAW, noncolinear, spin-orbit extensions to PHonon;
- Mitsuaki Kawamura (U.Tokyo) for implementation of the optimized tetrahedron method in phonon and electron-phonon calculations;
- Thibault Sohier, Matteo Calandra, Francesco Mauri, for phonons in two-dimensional systems.

The PlotPhon and QHA packages were contribute by the late Prof. Eyvaz Isaev.

Other contributors include: Lorenzo Paulatto (Univ. Paris VI) for PAW, 2n+1 code; William Parker (Argonne) for phonon terms in dielectric tensor; Tobias Wassmann (Univ. Paris VI) for third-order derivatives of GGA potential. Weicheng Bao (Nanjing University) and Norge Cruz Hernandez (Universidad de Sevilla) helped debugging the phonon code.

We shall greatly appreciate if scientific work done using the QUANTUM ESPRESSO distribution will contain an acknowledgment to the following references:

P. Giannozzi, S. Baroni, N. Bonini, M. Calandra, R. Car, C. Cavazzoni, D. Ceresoli, G. L. Chiarotti, M. Cococcioni, I. Dabo, A. Dal Corso, S. Fabris, G. Fratesi, S. de Gironcoli, R. Gebauer, U. Gerstmann, C. Gougoussis, A. Kokalj, M. Lazzeri, L. Martin-Samos, N. Marzari, F. Mauri, R. Mazzarello, S. Paolini, A. Pasquarello, L. Paulatto, C. Sbraccia, S. Scandolo, G. Sclauzero, A. P. Seitsonen, A. Smogunov, P. Umari, R. M. Wentzcovitch, J.Phys.: Condens.Matter 21, 395502 (2009)

and

P. Giannozzi, O. Andreussi, T. Brumme, O. Bunau, M. Buongiorno Nardelli, M. Calandra, R. Car, C. Cavazzoni, D. Ceresoli, M. Cococcioni, N. Colonna, I. Carnimeo, A. Dal Corso, S. de Gironcoli, P. Delugas, R. A. DiStasio Jr, A. Ferretti, A. Floris, G. Fratesi, G. Fugallo, R. Gebauer, U. Gerstmann, F. Giustino, T. Gorni, J. Jia, M. Kawamura, H.-Y. Ko, A. Kokalj, E. Küçükbenli, M. Lazzeri, M. Marsili, N. Marzari, F. Mauri, N. L. Nguyen, H.-V. Nguyen, A. Otero-de-la-Roza, L. Paulatto, S. Poncé, D. Rocca, R. Sabatini, B. Santra, M. Schlipf, A. P. Seitsonen, A. Smogunov, I. Timrov, T. Thonhauser, P. Umari, N. Vast, X. Wu, S. Baroni J.Phys.: Condens.Matter 29, 465901 (2017)

Note the form QUANTUM ESPRESSO for textual citations of the code. Please also see package-specific documentation for further recommended citations. Pseudopotentials should be cited as (for instance)

[] We used the pseudopotentials C.pbe-rrjkus.UPF and O.pbe-vbc.UPF from http://www.quantum-espresso.org.

3 Installation

PHonon is a package tightly bound to QUANTUM ESPRESSO. For instruction on how to download and compile QUANTUM ESPRESSO, please refer to the general Users' Guide, available in file Doc/user_guide.pdf under the main QUANTUM ESPRESSO directory, or in web site http://www.quantum-espresso.org.

Once QUANTUM ESPRESSO is correctly configured, PHonon can be automatically downloaded, unpacked and compiled by just typing make ph, from the main QUANTUM ESPRESSO directory.

3.1 Compilation

Typing make ph from the root QUANTUM ESPRESSO directory, or make from the PHonon directory, produces the following codes:

- PH/ph.x: Calculates phonon frequencies and displacement patterns, dielectric tensors, effective charges (uses data produced by pw.x).
- PH/dynmat.x: applies various kinds of Acoustic Sum Rule (ASR), calculates LO-TO splitting at **q** = 0 in insulators, IR and Raman cross sections (if the coefficients have been properly calculated), from the dynamical matrix produced by **ph.x**
- PH/q2r.x: calculates Interatomic Force Constants (IFC) in real space from dynamical matrices produced by ph.x on a regular q-grid
- PH/matdyn.x: produces phonon frequencies at a generic wave vector using the IFC file calculated by q2r.x; may also calculate phonon DOS, the electron-phonon coefficient λ , the function $\alpha^2 F(\omega)$
- PH/lambda.x: also calculates λ and $\alpha^2 F(\omega)$, plus T_c for superconductivity using the McMillan formula
- PH/alpha2f.x: also calculates λ and $\alpha^2 F(\omega)$. It is used together with the optimized tetrahedron method (occupations="tetrahedra_opt" in pw.x) and shifted q-grid (lshiftq=.true. in ph.x).
- PH/fqha.x: a simple code to calculate vibrational entropy with the quasi-harmonic approximation
- Gamma/phcg.x: a version of ph.x that calculates phonons at $\mathbf{q}=0$ using conjugate-gradient minimization of the density functional expanded to second-order. Only the Γ ($\mathbf{k}=0$) point is used for Brillouin zone integration. It is faster and takes less memory than ph.x, but does not support USPP and PAW.

Links to the main QUANTUM ESPRESSO bin/directory are automatically generated.

4 Using PHonon

Phonon calculation is presently a two-step process. First, you have to find the ground-state atomic and electronic configuration; Second, you can calculate phonons using Density-Functional Perturbation Theory. Further processing to calculate Interatomic Force Constants, to add macroscopic electric field and impose Acoustic Sum Rules at $\mathbf{q}=0$ may be needed. In the following, we will indicate by \mathbf{q} the phonon wavevectors, while \mathbf{k} will indicate Bloch vectors used for summing over the Brillouin Zone.

The main code ph.x can be used whenever PWscf can be used, with the exceptions of DFT+U, hybrid functionals, external electric fields, constraints on magnetization, nonperiodic boundary conditions. USPP and PAW are not implemented for higher-order response calculations. See the header of file PHonon/PH/phonon.f90 for a complete and updated list of what PHonon can and cannot do.

Since version 4.0 it is possible to safely stop execution of ph.x code using the same mechanism of the pw.x code, i.e. by creating a file prefix.EXIT in the working directory. Execution can be resumed by setting recover=.true. in the subsequent input data. Moreover the execution can be (cleanly) stopped after a given time is elapsed, using variable max_seconds. See example/Recover_example/.

4.1 Single-q calculation

The phonon code ph.x calculates normal modes at a given q-vector, starting from data files produced by pw.x with a simple SCF calculation. NOTE: the alternative procedure in which a band-structure calculation with calculation='phonon' was performed as an intermediate step is no longer implemented since version 4.1. It is also no longer needed to specify lnscf=.true. for $q \neq 0$.

The output data files appear in the directory specified by the variable outdir, with names specified by the variable prefix. After the output file(s) has been produced (do not remove any of the files, unless you know which are used and which are not), you can run ph.x.

The first input line of ph.x is a job identifier. At the second line the namelist &INPUTPH starts. The meaning of the variables in the namelist (most of them having a default value) is described in file Doc/INPUT_PH.*. Variables outdir and prefix must be the same as in the input data of pw.x. Presently you can specify amass(i) (a real variable) the atomic mass of atomic type *i* or you can use the default one deduced from the periodic table on the basis of the element name. If amass(i) is not given as input of ph.x, the one given as input in pw.x is used. When this is 0 the default one is used.

After the namelist you must specify the **q**-vector of the phonon mode, in Cartesian coordinates and in units of $2\pi/a$.

Notice that the dynamical matrix calculated by $\mathtt{ph.x}$ at $\mathbf{q} = 0$ does not contain the non-analytic term occurring in polar materials, i.e. there is no LO-TO splitting in insulators. Moreover no Acoustic Sum Rule (ASR) is applied. In order to have the complete dynamical matrix at $\mathbf{q} = 0$ including the non-analytic terms, you need to calculate effective charges by specifying option $\mathtt{epsil=.true.}$ to $\mathtt{ph.x}$. This is however not possible (because not physical!) for metals (i.e. any system subject to a broadening).

At $\mathbf{q}=0$, use program dynmat.x to calculate the correct LO-TO splitting, IR cross sections, and to impose various forms of ASR. If $\mathtt{ph.x}$ was instructed to calculate Raman coefficients, dynmat.x will also calculate Raman cross sections for a typical experimental setup. Input documentation in the header of PHonon/PH/dynmat.f90.

See Example 01 for a simple phonon calculations in Si, Example 06 for fully-relativistic calculations (LDA) on Pt, Example 07 for fully-relativistic GGA calculations.

4.2 Calculation of interatomic force constants in real space

First, dynamical matrices are calculated and saved for a suitable uniform grid of **q**-vectors (only those in the Irreducible Brillouin Zone of the crystal are needed). Although this can be done one **q**-vector at the time, a simpler procedure is to specify variable ldisp=.true. and to set variables nq1, nq2, nq3 to some suitable Monkhorst-Pack grid, that will be automatically generated, centered at q=0.

Second, code q2r.x reads the dynamical matrices produced in the preceding step and Fourier-transform them, writing a file of Interatomic Force Constants in real space, up to a distance that depends on the size of the grid of q-vectors. Input documentation in the header of PHonon/PH/q2r.f90.

Program matdyn.x may be used to produce phonon modes and frequencies at any q using the Interatomic Force Constants file as input. Input documentation in the header of PHonon/PH/matdyn.f90.

See Example 02 for a complete calculation of phonon dispersions in AlAs.

4.3 Calculation of electron-phonon interaction coefficients

Since v.5.0, there are two ways of calculating electron-phonon coefficients, distinguished according to the value of variable electron_phonon. The following holds for the case electron_phonon='interpolated' (see also Example 03).

The calculation of electron-phonon coefficients in metals is made difficult by the slow convergence of the sum at the Fermi energy. It is convenient to use a coarse k-point grid to calculate phonons on a suitable wavevector grid; a dense k-point grid to calculate the sum at the Fermi energy. The calculation proceeds in this way:

- 1. a scf calculation for the dense **k**-point grid (or a scf calculation followed by a non-scf one on the dense **k**-point grid); specify option la2f=.true. to pw.x in order to save a file with the eigenvalues on the dense **k**-point grid. The latter MUST contain all **k** and k+q grid points used in the subsequent electron-phonon calculation. All grids MUST be unshifted, i.e. include k=0.
- 2. a normal scf + phonon dispersion calculation on the coarse k-point grid, specifying option electron_phonon='interpolated', and the file name where the self-consistent first-order variation of the potential is to be stored: variable fildvscf). The electron-phonon coefficients are calculated using several values of Gaussian broadening (see PHonon/PH/elphon.f90) because this quickly shows whether results are converged or not with respect to the k-point grid and Gaussian broadening.
- 3. Finally, you can use matdyn.x and lambda.x (input documentation in the header of PHonon/PH/lambda.f90) to get the $\alpha^2 F(\omega)$ function, the electron-phonon coefficient λ , and an estimate of the critical temperature T_c .

See the appendix for the relevant formulae. **Important notice**: the $q \to 0$ limit of the contribution to the electron-phonon coefficient diverges for optical modes! please be very careful, consult the relevant literature.

4.4 DFPT with the tetrahedron method

In order to use the tetrahedron method for phonon calculations, you should run pw.x and ph.x as follows:

- 1. Run pw.x with occupation = "tetrahedra_opt" and K_POINT automatic.
- 2. Run ph.x.

There is an example in PHonon/example/tetra_example/.

4.5 Calculation of electron-phonon interaction coefficients with the tetrahedron method

When you perform a calculation of electron-phonon interaction coefficients with the tetrahedron method, you have to use an offset q-point grid in order to avoid a singularity at $q = \Gamma$; you can perform this calculation as follows:

1. Run pw.x with occupation = "tetrahedra_opt" and K_POINT automatic.

- 2. Run ph.x with lshift_q = .true. and electron_phonon = "" (or unset it) to generate the dynamical matrix and the deformation potential (in _ph*/{prefix}_q*/) of each q.
- 3. Run ph.x with electron_phonon = "lambda_tetra". You should use a denser k grid by setting nk1, nk2, and nk3. Then lambda*.dat are generated; they contain $\lambda_{q\nu}$.
- 4. Run alpha2f.x with an input file as follows:

```
&INPUTPH
! The same as that for the electron-phonon calculation with ph.x
:
/
&INPUTA2F
   nfreq = Number of frequency-points for a2F(omega),
/
```

Then λ , and ω_{ln} are computed and they are printed to the standard output. $\alpha^2 F(\omega)$ and (partial) phonon-DOS are also computed; they are printed to a file prefix.a2F.dat.

There is an example in PHonon/example/tetra_example/.

4.6 Phonons for two-dimensional crystals

The extension of DFPT to two dimensional crystals, in particular gated two-dimensional heterostructure, s described in the following paper:

T. Sohier, M. Calandra, and F. Mauri, Phys. Rev. B 96, 075448 (2017), https://doi.org/10.1103/PhySee example PHonon/example/example17/.

5 Parallelism

We refer to the corresponding section of the PWscf guide for an explanation of how parallelism works

ph.x may take advantage of MPI parallelization on images, plane waves (PW) and on k-points ("pools"). Currently all other MPI and explicit OpenMP parallelizations have very limited to nonexistent implementation. phcg.x implements only PW parallelization. All other codes may be launched in parallel, but will execute on a single processor.

In "image" parallelization, processors can be divided into different "images", corresponding to one (or more than one) "irrep" or **q** vectors. Images are loosely coupled: processors communicate between different images only once in a while, so image parallelization is suitable for cheap communication hardware (e.g. Gigabit Ethernet). Image parallelization is activated by specifying the option <code>-nimage N</code> to <code>ph.x</code>. Inside an image, PW and <code>k-point</code> parallelization can be performed: for instance,

```
mpirun -np 64 ph.x -ni 8 -nk 2 ...
```

will run 8 images on 8 processors each, subdivided into 2 pools of 4 processors for **k**-point parallelization. In order to run the **ph.x** code with these flags the **pw.x** run has to be run with:

```
mpirun -np 8 pw.x -nk 2 ...
```

without any -nimage flag. After the phonon calculation with images the dynmical matrices of q-vectors calculated in different images are not present in the working directory. To obtain them you need to run ph.x again with:

```
mpirun -np 8 ph.x -nk 2 ...
```

and the recover=.true. flag. This scheme is quite automatic and does not require any additional work by the user, but it wastes some CPU time because all images stops when the image that requires the largest amount of time finishes the calculation. Load balancing between images is still at an experimental stage. You can look into the routine image_q_irr inside PHonon/PH/check_initial_status to see the present algorithm for work distribution and modify it if you think that you can improve the load balancing.

A different paradigm is the usage of the GRID concept, instead of MPI, to achieve parallelization over irreps and **q** vectors. Complete phonon dispersion calculation can be quite long and expensive, but it can be split into a number of semi-independent calculations, using options start_q, last_q, start_irr, last_irr. An example on how to distribute the calculations and collect the results can be found in examples/GRID_example. Reference:

Calculation of Phonon Dispersions on the GRID using Quantum ESPRESSO, R. di Meo, A. Dal Corso, P. Giannozzi, and S. Cozzini, in Chemistry and Material Science Applications on Grid Infrastructures, editors: S. Cozzini, A. Laganà, ICTP Lecture Notes Series, Vol. 24, pp.165-183 (2009).

6 Troubleshooting

ph.x stops with error reading file The data file produced by pw.x is bad or incomplete or produced by an incompatible version of the code. In parallel execution: if you did not set wf_collect=.true., the number of processors and pools for the phonon run should be the same as for the self-consistent run; all files must be visible to all processors.

ph.x mumbles something like *cannot recover* or *error reading recover file* You have a bad restart file from a preceding failed execution. Remove all files recover* in outdir.

ph.x says occupation numbers probably wrong and continues You have a metallic or spin-polarized system but occupations are not set to 'smearing'.

ph.x does not yield acoustic modes with zero frequency at $\mathbf{q} = 0$ This may not be an error: the Acoustic Sum Rule (ASR) is never exactly verified, because the system is never exactly translationally invariant as it should be. The calculated frequency of the acoustic mode is typically less than $10~\mathrm{cm}^{-1}$, but in some cases it may be much higher, up to $100~\mathrm{cm}^{-1}$. The ultimate test is to diagonalize the dynamical matrix with program dynmat.x, imposing the ASR. If you obtain an acoustic mode with a much smaller ω (let us say $< 1 \mathrm{cm}^{-1}$) with all other modes virtually unchanged, you can trust your results.

"The problem is [...] in the fact that the XC energy is computed in real space on a discrete grid and hence the total energy is invariant (...) only for translation in the FFT grid. Increasing the charge density cutoff increases the grid density thus making the integral more exact thus reducing the problem, unfortunately rather slowly...This problem is usually more severe for GGA than with LDA because the GGA functionals have functional forms that vary more

strongly with the position; particularly so for isolated molecules or system with significant portions of "vacuum" because in the exponential tail of the charge density a) the finite cutoff (hence there is an effect due to cutoff) induces oscillations in rho and b) the reduced gradient is diverging." (info by Stefano de Gironcoli, June 2008)

ph.x yields really lousy phonons, with bad or "negative" frequencies or wrong symmetries or gross ASR violations Possible reasons:

- if this happens only for acoustic modes at $\mathbf{q} = 0$ that should have $\omega = 0$: Acoustic Sum Rule violation, see the item before this one.
- wrong data file read.
- wrong atomic masses given in input will yield wrong frequencies (but the content of file fildyn should be valid, since the force constants, not the dynamical matrix, are written to file).
- convergence threshold for either SCF (conv_thr) or phonon calculation (tr2_ph) too large: try to reduce them.
- maybe your system does have negative or strange phonon frequencies, with the approximations you used. A negative frequency signals a mechanical instability of the chosen structure. Check that the structure is reasonable, and check the following parameters:
 - The cutoff for wavefunctions, ecutwfc
 - For USPP and PAW: the cutoff for the charge density, ecutrho
 - The **k**-point grid, especially for metallic systems.
- For metallic systems: it has been observed that the convergence with respect to the k-point grid and smearing is very slow in presence of semicore states, and for phonon wave-vectors that are not commensurate i with the k-point grid (that is, $\mathbf{q} \neq \mathbf{k}_i \mathbf{k}_j$)

Note that "negative" frequencies are actually imaginary: the negative sign flags eigenvalues of the dynamical matrix for which $\omega^2 < 0$.

Wrong degeneracy error in star_q Verify the q-vector for which you are calculating phonons. In order to check whether a symmetry operation belongs to the small group of \mathbf{q} , the code compares \mathbf{q} and the rotated \mathbf{q} , with an acceptance tolerance of 10^{-5} (set in routine PW/eqvect.f90). You may run into trouble if your q-vector differs from a high-symmetry point by an amount in that order of magnitude.

A Appendix: Electron-phonon coefficients

The electron-phonon coefficients g are defined as

$$g_{\mathbf{q}\nu}(\mathbf{k}, i, j) = \left(\frac{\hbar}{2M\omega_{\mathbf{q}\nu}}\right)^{1/2} \langle \psi_{i,\mathbf{k}} | \frac{dV_{SCF}}{d\hat{u}_{\mathbf{q}\nu}} \cdot \hat{\epsilon}_{\mathbf{q}\nu} | \psi_{j,\mathbf{k}+\mathbf{q}} \rangle. \tag{1}$$

The phonon linewidth $\gamma_{\mathbf{q}\nu}$ is defined by

$$\gamma_{\mathbf{q}\nu} = 2\pi\omega_{\mathbf{q}\nu} \sum_{ij} \int \frac{d^3k}{\Omega_{BZ}} |g_{\mathbf{q}\nu}(\mathbf{k}, i, j)|^2 \delta(e_{\mathbf{q},i} - e_F) \delta(e_{\mathbf{k}+\mathbf{q},j} - e_F), \tag{2}$$

while the electron-phonon coupling constant $\lambda_{\mathbf{q}\nu}$ for mode ν at wavevector \mathbf{q} is defined as

$$\lambda_{\mathbf{q}\nu} = \frac{\gamma_{\mathbf{q}\nu}}{\pi\hbar N(e_F)\omega_{\mathbf{q}\nu}^2} \tag{3}$$

where $N(e_F)$ is the DOS at the Fermi level. The spectral function is defined as

$$\alpha^2 F(\omega) = \frac{1}{2\pi N(e_F)} \sum_{\mathbf{q}\nu} \delta(\omega - \omega_{\mathbf{q}\nu}) \frac{\gamma_{\mathbf{q}\nu}}{\hbar \omega_{\mathbf{q}\nu}}.$$
 (4)

The electron-phonon mass enhancement parameter λ can also be defined as the first reciprocal momentum of the spectral function:

$$\lambda = \sum_{\mathbf{q}\nu} \lambda_{\mathbf{q}\nu} = 2 \int \frac{\alpha^2 F(\omega)}{\omega} d\omega. \tag{5}$$

Note that a factor $M^{-1/2}$ is hidden in the definition of normal modes as used in the code. McMillan:

$$T_c = \frac{\Theta_D}{1.45} \exp\left[\frac{-1.04(1+\lambda)}{\lambda(1-0.62\mu^*) - \mu^*}\right]$$
 (6)

or (better?)

$$T_c = \frac{\omega_{log}}{1.2} \exp\left[\frac{-1.04(1+\lambda)}{\lambda(1-0.62\mu^*) - \mu^*}\right]$$
 (7)

where

$$\omega_{log} = \exp\left[\frac{2}{\lambda} \int \frac{d\omega}{\omega} \alpha^2 F(\omega) \log\omega\right]$$
 (8)