



PICOSTRAIN

Evaluation Board for Measurements of
Strain and Capacitance

PSA21

Manual

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Precision Time Interval Measurement



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1. Introduction

1.1 General

PICO STRAIN stands for a new concept in measuring strain gages and capacities. The key features are:

- Digital measuring principle
- Easy realization of complete System-on-Chip solutions
- Standard CMOS process technology
- Very low current consumption
- Programmable resolution
- High temperature stability
- Temperature measurement implemented
- Wide offset span, no need for matching strain gages

1.2 System Overview

- PC supported system
- Modular system:
 - PSA21 main board
 - Three different plug in modules for standard, Wheatstone and capacity measurement.
- Easy to use Windows based configuration software
- User-friendly solder pads (J12, J13) for connecting strain gage load cells
- A serial interface (J18) to connect module to PC when working in system mode
- A test point (TP3) for ground connection
- Two test points (TP1, TP2) to measure PSØ21 supplies HVDD (Vsg) and LVDD (Vcc)

1.3 System Components

The complete PSA21 evaluation system consists of the following components:

- PSA21 main board
- PSA21mini modules (Standard, Wheatstone and Capacitor)
- CD with complete PSA21 software and documentation
- RS-232-cable
- 12 VDC power supply
- Capacitors 33 nF, 68 nF, 82 nF, 100 nF, 5 x each

The PSA21 evaluation system is structured as follows:

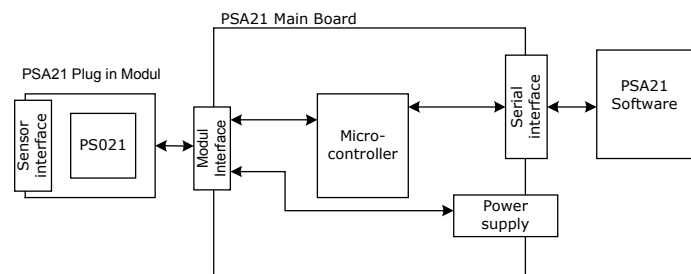
The main board is connected to the PC's serial port via 9-pin serial cable. Due to the modular system design the main board provides a slot for three different plug in modules. Thus the system can be adapted easily to different measurement applications. For strain gage

The PSA21 evaluation system provides a hardware module, that consists of a main board, up to three plug-in modules and a windows-based software which allows extensive and user-friendly configuration of the system.

For a proper use of the evaluation system it is strongly recommended to refer to the current PSØ21 datasheet. You can download this datasheet from www.acam.de.

- A jumper (J2) to measure SG current for PSØ21 supply HVDD (Vsg)
- A jumper (J8) to measure the core current for PSØ21 supply LVDD (Vcc)
- A serial SPI (J19) interface for connection of an external PSØ21
- A green LED (D2) which signals correct polarity of power supply input
- A red LED (D3) which signals elementary error in user code of µController
- A press-button switch (SW1) which generates a hardware reset for the module

applications a standard and a Wheatstone module is available. Furthermore acam provides a capacity module for the PSA21 system that allows test and evaluation, e. g. with pressure sensors, capacitive sensors.



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EMI

PSA21 is an evaluation board. It requires the user to assemble a strain gage sensor before operation. This will have a big impact on the electromagnetic behavior of the overall system

2 How to connect the Strain Gages

This chapter will present you the necessary information about how to connect strain gages to the standard- and Wheatstone plug-in module.

Important note!

The **PICOSTRAIN** measuring principle provides an unprecedented degree of flexibility. For this reason we abstained from assembling fixed discharging capacitors to the strain gage plug-in modules.

2.1 Standard Plug-in Module

The standard plug-in module is designed for strain gage applications that use the full advantage of **PICOSTRAIN**. It is possible to measure up to 4 half bridges or 2 full bridges. Due to the **PICOSTRAIN** measurement principle the system does not need a full bridge. Two resistors, below called a halfbridge are sufficient. This makes the PSA21 a powerful tool in developing, analyzing and evaluating custom specific solutions for strain gage applications. The following chapters describe various possibilities to connect the strain gages to the PSØ21 as well as the appropriate operating modes exemplified with a strain gage load cell.

2.1.1 Capacitor Selection and Assembly

Capacitor Choice

The **PICOSTRAIN** measurement principle is based on measuring the discharge time of a capacitor. For this reason the correct size and material of the capacitors is significant to achieve best measuring results. In general we recommend a discharging time in the range of

$$\tau = 0.7 * R * C = 50 \text{ to } 60 \mu\text{s.}$$

As material we recommend CFCAP (Multilayer ceramic from Taiyo-Yuden), COG, NPO or Polystyrol.

Table 1 Recommended capacitor values for 1 kΩ strain gages for up to 2 kHz update rate:

	Pads	Value
Bridge 1	CD1, CD2, CD3	68nF to 82nF
Bridge 2	CD4, CD5, CD6	68nF to 82nF

Table 2 Recommended capacitor values for 350 Ω strain gages for up to 2 kHz update rate:

	Pads	Value
Bridge 1	CD1, CD2, CD3	180nF to 220 nF
Bridge 2	CD4, CD5, CD6	180nF to 220 nF

The given values are suitable up to 2 kHz update rate. At higher update rates the discharge time has to be reduced. Please also refer to the PSØ21 datasheet for a better understanding of how to dimension the capacitors for different sensors and operating modes.

Assembly

The discharging capacitors CD1, CD2, CD3, CD4, CD5 and CD6 are not assembled on the plug-in modules as delivered. This has to be done by the customer. The shipment includes a set of typical capacitance values (Taiyo-Yuden CFCAP series). This allows free and application specific dimensioning of the capacitor value. The standard plug-in modules supports 2 x 3 paralleled discharging capacitors. Figure 1 shows where to solder them.

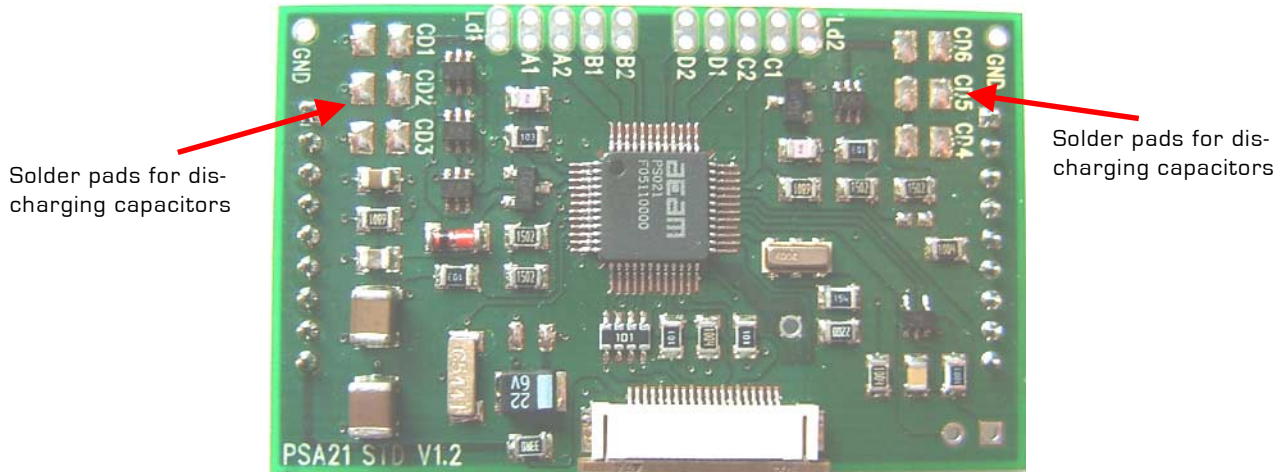


Figure 1 Capacitor pads for standard plug in module

2.1.2 Halfbridge

A halfbridge is sufficient to run the PSA21 evaluation system. The following picture shows a halfbridge attached to port 1 (pads A and B). In this case the PSA21 must be configured to run in operation mode "halfbridge 1" (see also 2.1.2 Halfbridge). Of course it is also possible to connect it to with port 2 (pads C and D). Then operation mode "halfbridge 2" has to be selected. Take care that the resistors are connected to two pads in parallel (A1 & A2, B1 & B2).

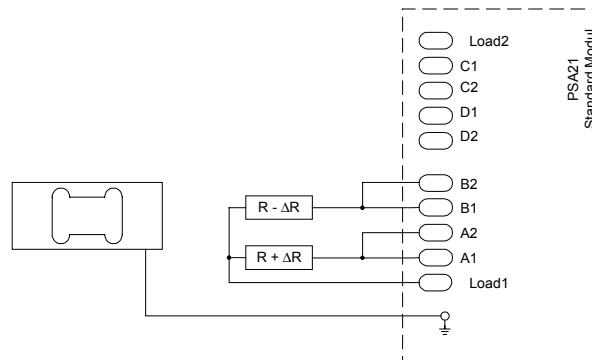


Figure 2 Connecting a half bridge

2.1.3 Fullbridge

This chapter describes how to connect a fullbridge to the PSA21 standard module. Two different modes are available, depending on whether a single comparator is used for both halfbridges or each halfbridge has its own comparator.

2.1.3.1 One-sense Mode

In one-sense mode both halfbridges are connected to the same comparator via Load1 pin. The PSA21 can treat the sensor as one fullbridge or two separate halfbridges. Connecting the strain gages as a fullbridge will be the most common solution because of the lowest temperature drift. This is shown in Figure 3. The connection between Pads A1 & A2, B1 & B2, C1 & C2 and D1 & D2 has to be done by the user. For further information please have a look at PS021 datasheet, Chapter 4.1.

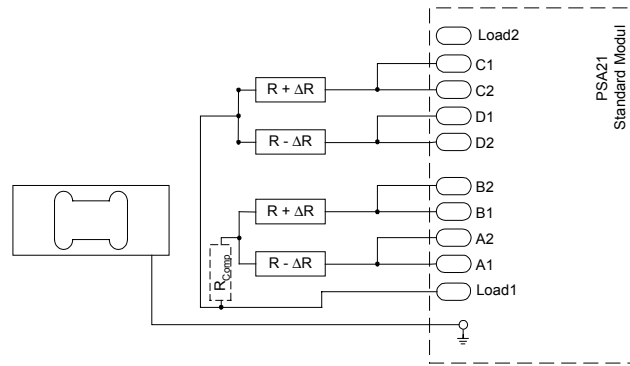


Figure 3 Connecting a fullbridge in One sense mode

2.1.3.2 Alternating Mode

In Alternating Mode every halfbridge is connected to a separate comparator. Main advantage for this operation mode is the redundancy and tolerance against failure. Furthermore it is possible to measure two halfbridges with different resistance values. In general we recommend to use “One sense mode”, especially for applications that do not need two comparators. For detailed information please consider the PS021 datasheet, chapter 4.1.

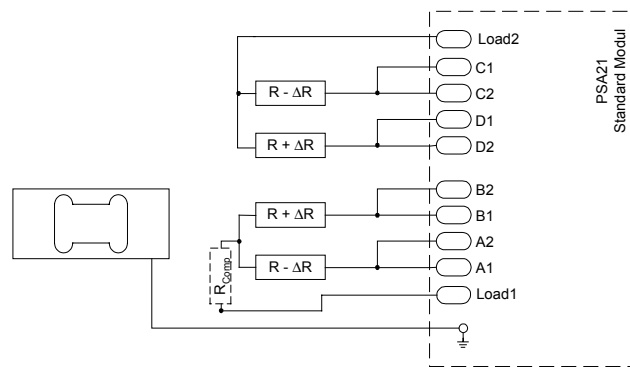


Figure 4 Connecting a fullbridge in Alternating mode

2.1.4 Doublebridge Mode

In Doublebridge mode the PSA21 can measure up to 4 halfbridges and 2 doublebridges. The doublebridge mode also supports One-sense mode and Alternating mode. Regarding One-sense mode as the most common option Figure 5 shows a configuration for the connection of four halfbridges or two fullbridges.

Connecting 4 half-bridges:

R2, R4, R6, R8 = + ΔR

R1, R3, R5, R7 = - ΔR

Connecting 2 full-bridges:

R2, R3, R6, R7 = + ΔR

R1, R4, R5, R8 = - ΔR

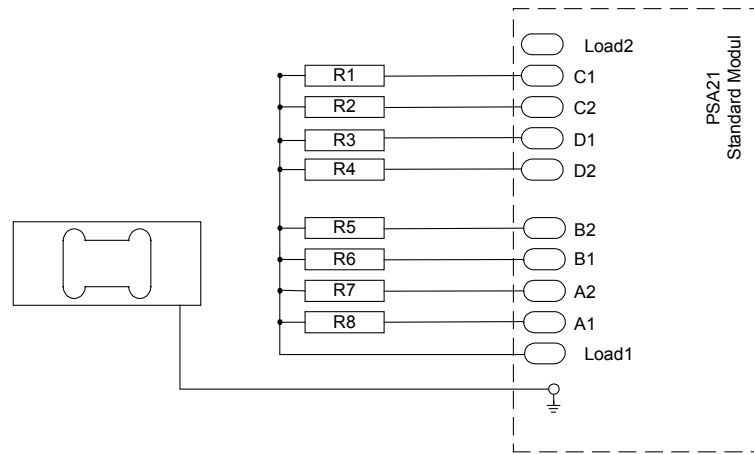


Figure 5 Connecting four halfbridges or two fullbridges in One sense mode

Furthermore the PSA21 offers two different modes with respect to averaging/resolution (see also 4.3.2 Operation modes). In Mode 1 the fullbridges are measured alternately on the basis of one and the same averaging rate specified in the software's PSØ21 sheet.

In Mode 2 the two fullbridges may have different averaging rates and therefore a different resolution. For further information please refer the PSØ21 data sheet.

2.2 Wheatstone Plug-in Module

The Wheatstone plug-in module is also designed for strain gage applications and is capable of measuring up to 2 Wheatstone bridges. The following chapters describe various wiring facilities for the strain gages to the PSØ21 and the appropriate operating modes, considering a strain gage load cell as an example.

2.2.1 Capacitor / Resistor Selection and Assembly

When using the Wheatstone module it is necessary to select and assemble not only the discharge capacitors CD1, CD2 and CD3 but also the compensation resistors R1 and R2.

Selection

In Wheatstone mode it has to be considered that the strain gage resistance is reduced by 25%. As a consequence the discharge capacitor's value is increased compared to section 2.1.1 as shown in Table 3. Furthermore the use of one comparator in combination with an analog multiplexer is sufficient for operating in Wheatstone mode. For this reason only three discharging capacitors are needed to run the evaluation system.

Table 3: Recommended capacitor values when using 1kΩ and 350Ω strain gages

Capacitance	Using 350 Ω strain gages	Using 1kΩ strain gages
CD1 + CD2 + CD3	270 nF to 330 nF	82 to 100 nF

The compensation resistors R1 and R2 have a significant influence on the quality of temperature compensation. Therefore the resistance value is application specific and has to be selected carefully. From our experience, choosing a compensation resistor in the range of 75% of the strain gage resistor will be a good choice. Both resistors have to be attached even with a single wheatstone bridge. We recommend the following resistor values:

Table 4: Recommended compensation resistor values

R _{comp}	Using 350 Ω strain gages	using 1kΩ strain gages
R1	270 Ω	680 Ω
R2	270 Ω	680 Ω

Note that the discharging capacitors and the compensation resistors are important parts and directly influence the measuring result. Therefore we recommend to refer to the PS021 datasheet for a better understanding of how to dimension the compensation resistors and discharging capacitors.

Assembly

Figure 6 shows where to solder the capacitors and resistors.

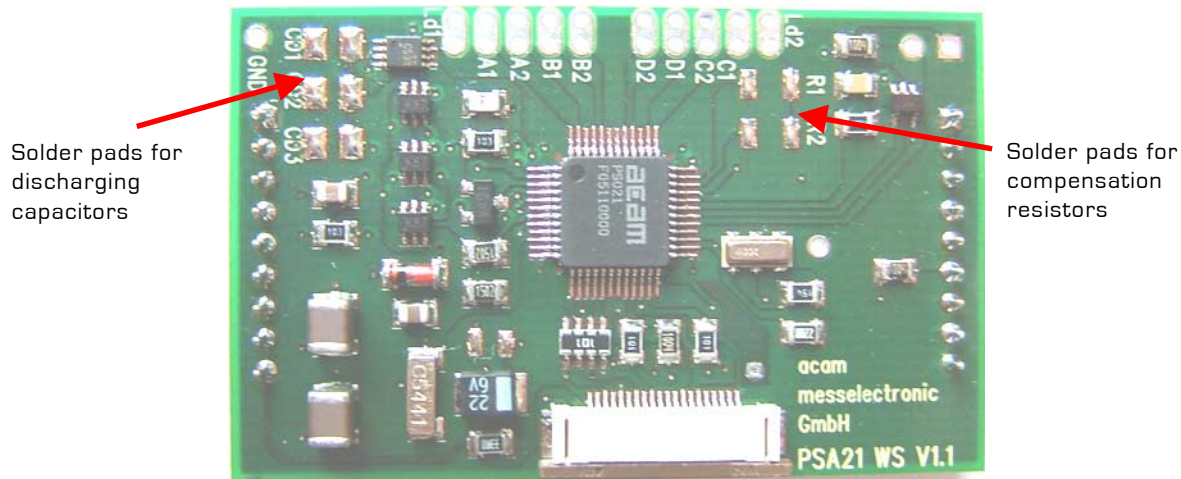


Figure 6 Paralleled solder pads for discharging capacitors and compensation resistors

2.2.2 Connecting Diagram

The Wheatstone module allows connecting a classical Wheatstone bridge to the PSA21. The module is capable of measuring up to 2 full bridges. The configuration options are the same as for the standard module. The following figures show how to connect the Wheatstone bridge.

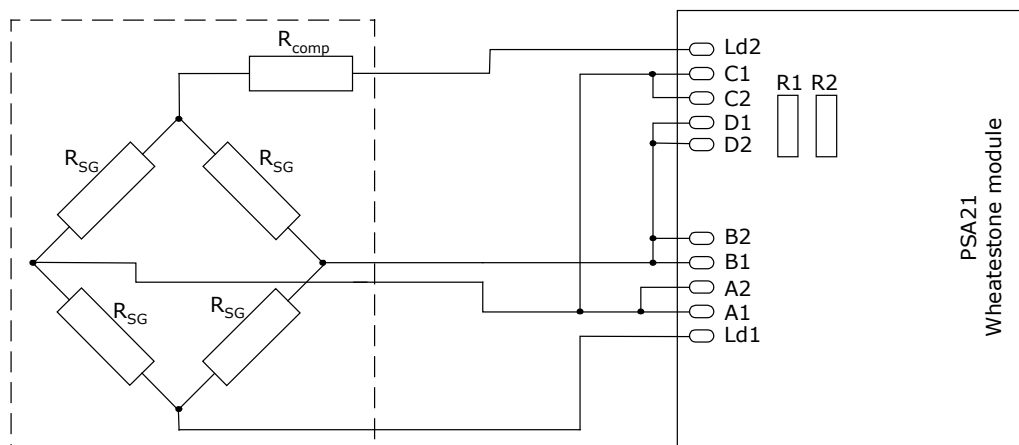


Figure 7: Connecting a Wheatstone bridge to the PSA21 Wheatstone module

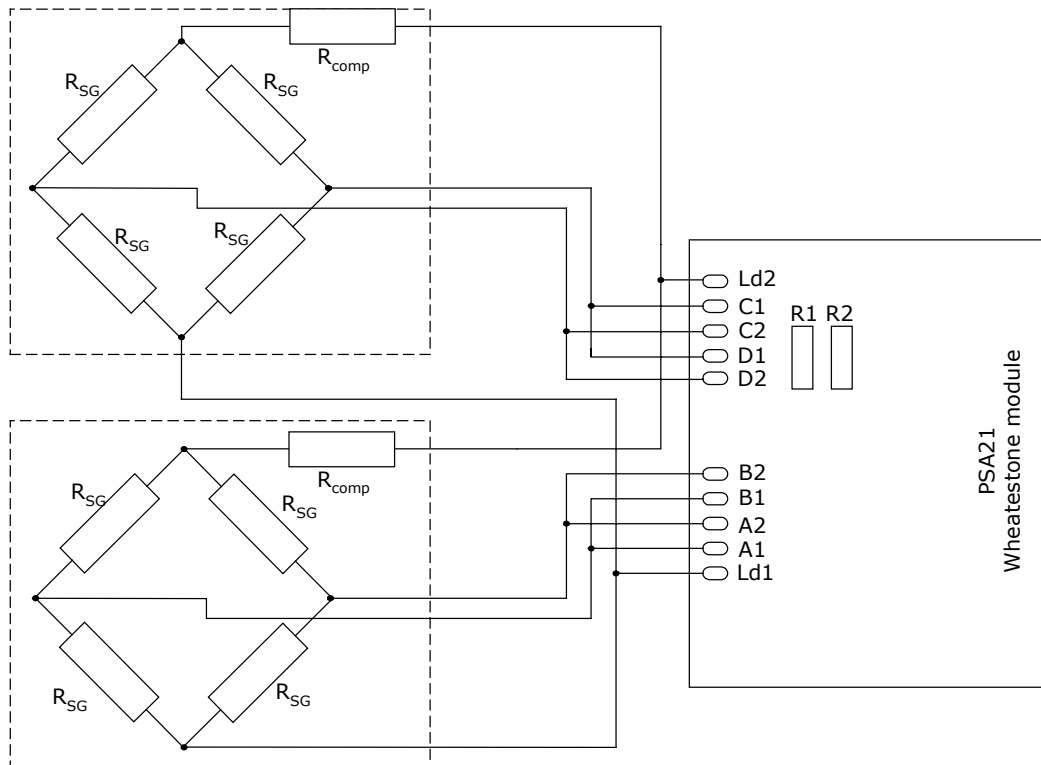


Figure 8 Connecting two Wheatstone bridges

The Wheatstone module allows the evaluation of current Wheatstone bridges without modification. This provides technical advantages when the application needs a long cable between sensor and electronics. In comparison with the standard module, only 66% of the standard performance can be achieved in this mode. Also the resolution is reduced by 0.6 bit.

For further information concerning the Wheatstone module please refer to the PS021 datasheet.

2.3 Temperature compensation

The k-factor of strain gages depends on temperature. For this reason the measurement results of the PSØ21 are also temperature sensitive. Therefore the PSA21 offers an additional temperature measurement with an external sensor for error correction. The following figure shows the configuration of the temperature port. Capacitor C43 and the resistor R43 are part of the PSA21 plug-in module.

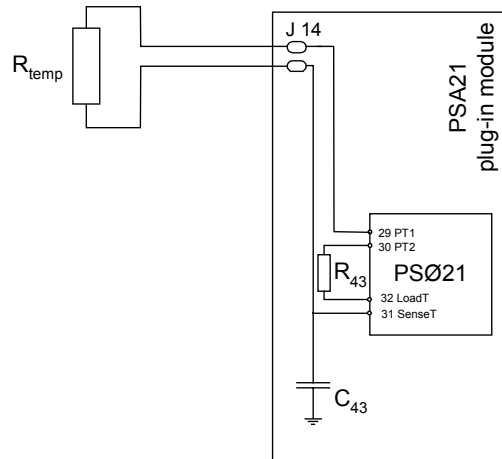


Figure 9 Connecting diagram for temperature measurement

The reference resistor R43 and the temperature dependent resistor (PTC, KTY) should have the same value. The default values of the temperature port of PSA21 are:

Component	Value
C43	6,8 nF
R43	1 kOhm

3 Capacitance measurement

In combination with the capacity plug-in module the PSA21 provides a powerful development tool for testing and evaluating capacitance measurement applications. The PSA21 offers two different ways to measure capacities that cover high precision applications as well as for low power systems or very fast systems.

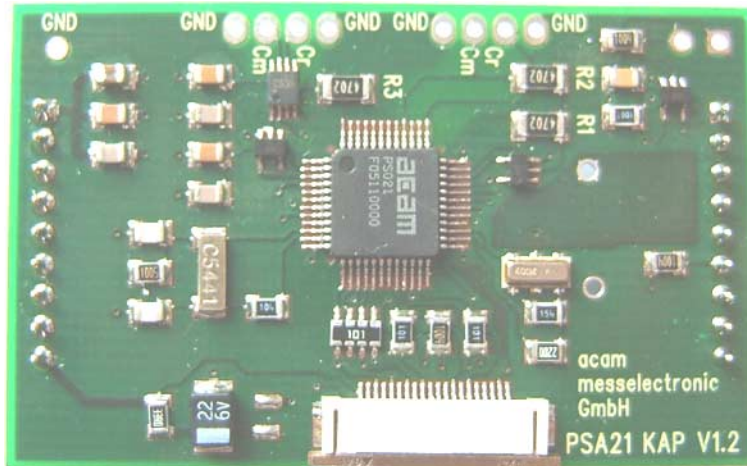


Figure 10 Capacity module

Working with the capacity plug-in module the AVRatRdson has to be switched to "0" (see chapter 3 Capacitance measurement) and the GainCompRate has to be switched off. The system generally works in single-bridge mode. This means that it is possible to measure the ratio C_{sense}/C_{ref} of up to two sensors on port 1 and port 2. Principally the PS021 is able to treat up to 4 sensors in double bridge mode, but this is not supported by the evaluation system. See also PS021 datasheet, chapter 6.3.2.. For measurements with two sensors port 2 is connected in the same manner as port 1. The residual pins are not used and internally connected to ground.

3.1 Grounded capacitors

Grounded capacitors are used for all applications where the measuring capacitors are directly connected to ground. In this case, the connecting diagram as shown in Figure 11 should be used.

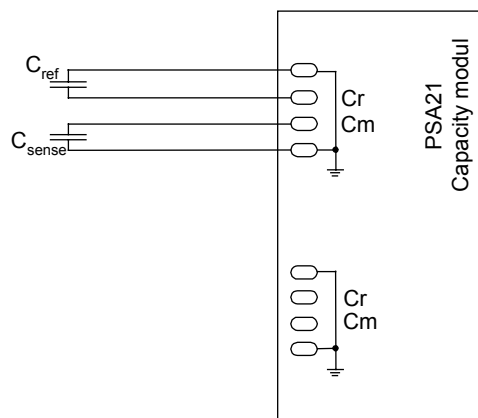


Figure 11 Measuring grounded capacitors

This mode runs like the usual strain gage measurement besides the configuration for AVRRateRdson and GainCompRate. It doesn't support additional compensation algorithms ($C_{meas2} = 0$, compensated measurement mode off, see also the following section) and is not recommended for solutions that require high resolution with low offset, gain and temperature drift.

3.2 Compensated capacity measurement

In compensated capacity measurement mode the PSA21 is capable of solving highest resolution applications with low offset and gain drift. Here, too, the capacitors are connected to ground, but now they are switched alternately to a resistor by an analog switch. The PSA21 is able to measure the ratio C_{sense}/C_{ref} of one sensor.

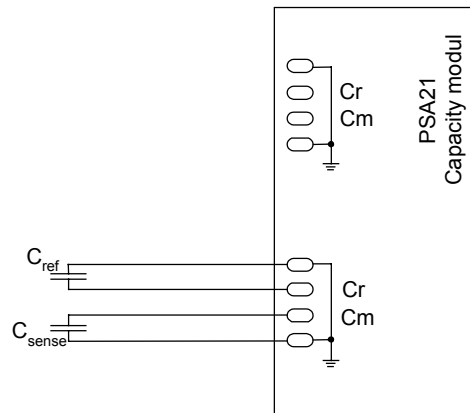


Figure 12 Compensated capacity measurement

This mode offers additional compensation algorithms to correct for parasitic capacities and the comparator propagation delay and is divided in the following submodes:

- $C_{meas2} = 0$ Mode off
- $C_{meas2} = 1$ Mode on, compensation disabled
- $C_{meas2} = 2$ Mode on, compensation enabled

Configuration of these submodes has to be done via configuration software as described in chapter 4.4.10.1 CMeas1.

For further information please refer to the PS021 datasheet.

3.3 Temperature compensation

The relative permittivity of capacities also depends on temperature. Therefore the temperature measurement described in chapter

2.3 Temperature compensation is used for error correction, too. For detailed information please refer to this section and also to the PSØ21 datasheet.

For additional information concerning capacity measurement we recommend to consider the PSØ21 datasheet.

4 Evaluation board software

4.1 Installing the PSA21 Software

The PSA21 software is running under the following operating systems

- Windows 95/98
- Windows NT
- Windows 2000
- Windows ME
- Windows XP

To install the PSA21 evaluation board software please follow these instructions:

- Install first the NI VISA drivers, running NIVisa-2.6\visa3260runtime.exe
- Install the main software running PSA21 Main\Installer\setup.exe. The window shown in Figure 13 appears.
- Please follow the instructions on screen to install the software.

For further information also refer to the install.txt file on the CD.



Figure 13 Evaluation kit software installation

4.2 Running PSA21 Software

After installation the PSA21 Software is started by selecting "PSA21" from the "PicoStrain PSA21" folder in Windows program menu. The following window appears:

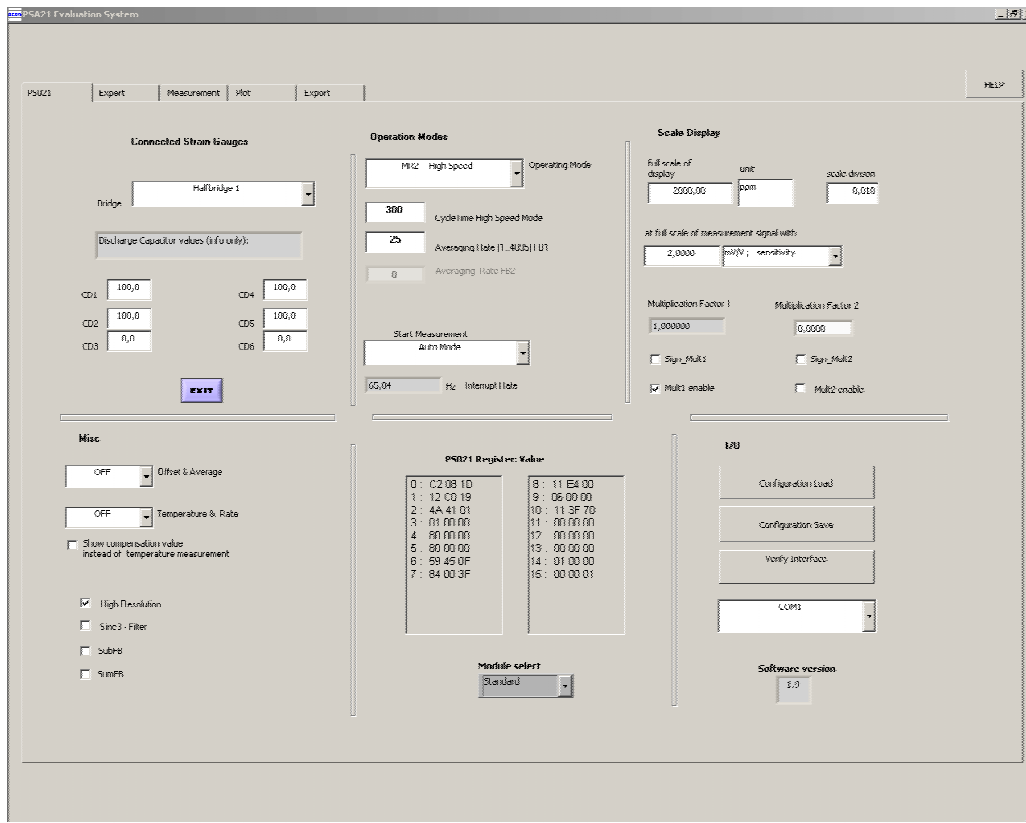


Figure 14 Main window of the PSA21 software

The PSA21 main window is divided into 5 sheets. Every sheet enables the customer to configure a set of parameters:

- PS021: Configuration window for all basic measurement parameters.
- Expert: Setup for advanced measurement parameters.
- Measurement: Enables Start/Stop of measurement and provides a display window for measurement results in alphanumeric numbers.
- Plot: Displays the measurement results in a graphical plot window.
- Export: User interface to export the recorded data into a file.

The user can get a detailed description of each control and indicator element of the window by pressing the "Help"-Button. Then a "Context Help"- window is opened. This window shows a description of the element which has the cursor's focus.

4.3 Configuration of PS021

As mentioned the PS021 window enables to configure the basic settings of the PSA21 Evaluation system. It is divided into six sections. Every section represents a set of parameters that has to be configured by the customer. The following chapters describe the user specific configuration of this parameters.

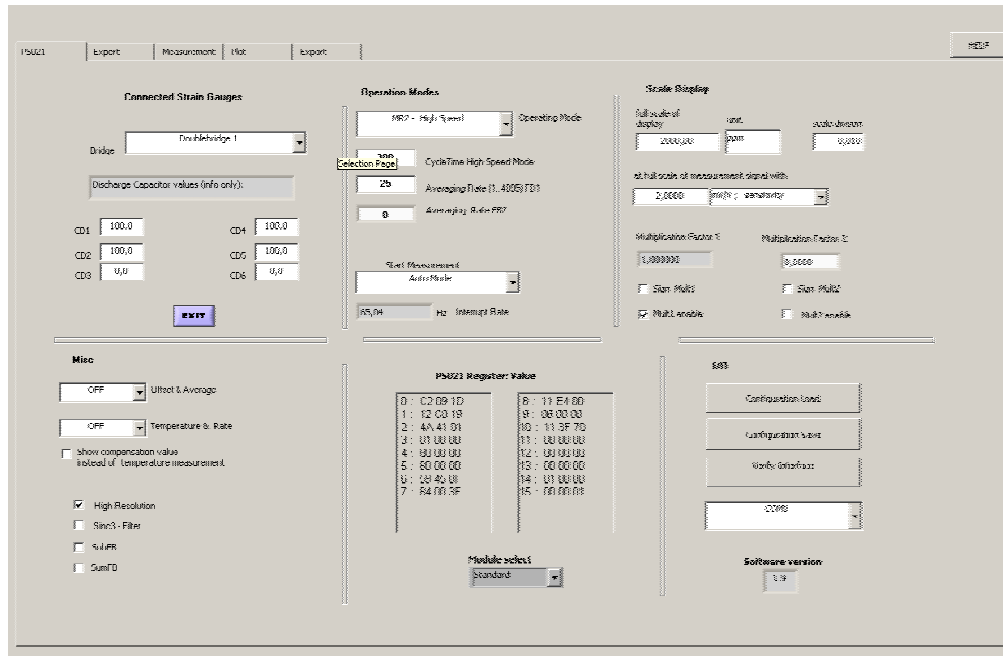


Figure 15 Basic settings of PS021

4.3.1 Connecting Sensors

4.3.1.1 Configuration for the standard plug-in module

The standard module can be operated in single-bridge or in doublebridge mode. The selection is made in the sheet "Expert settings" as described in chapter 4.4.1.1 Single bridge. Due to the selected operation mode, the following settings have to be made.

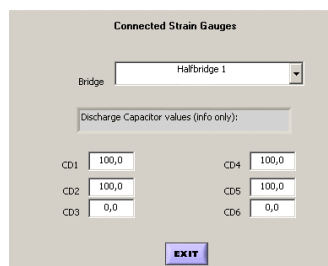


Figure 16

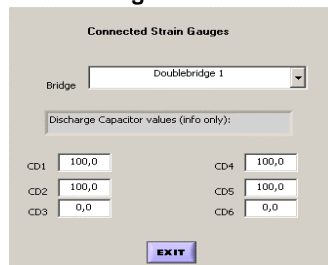


Figure 17

In single-bridge mode the different operation modes are selected with the pull-down menu shown in Figure 16. The customer can select between the following operation modes that are described in chapter 0.

- Halfbridge one
- Halfbridge two
- Halfbridge one/two alternating mode
- Halfbridge one/two one sense mode

Further the values of the discharge capacitors are displayed. Note that the display of these values is only for information. Modification by editing the text fields have no consequences.

For operation in doublebridge mode in combination with the standard module the configuration has to be done as described above. The following operation modes are supported:

- Double bridge one
- Double bridge two
- Double bridge one/two alternating mode
- Double bridge one/two one sense mode

4.3.1.2 Configuration for the Wheatstone module

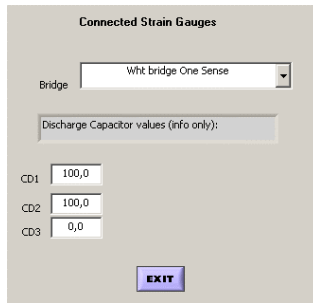


Figure 18

Using a Wheatstone module the PSA21 only supports one-sense mode as shown in Figure 18. In Wheatstone mode only three discharging capacitors are needed. Their values are displayed in the related text fields.

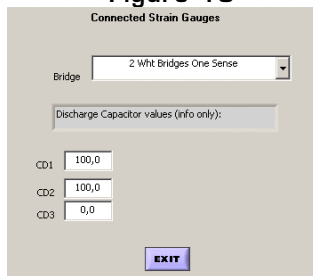


Figure 19

When operating in doublebridge mode in combination with the Wheatstone plug-in module the PSA21 evaluation system provides the following settings:

- Wheatstone bridge one
 - Wheatstone bridge two
 - Two Wheatstone bridges in one sense mode
- This settings are also done by the pull down menu.

4.3.1.3 Configuration for capacity measurement



Figure 20

For capacity measurement the PSA21 only supports single bridge mode. Due to the measuring principle no fixed discharging capacitors are used. Because of that no values are displayed and the settings are disabled.

4.3.2 Operation modes

In this field the user sets parameters that specify the basic operating mode.

Figure 21 Operation Modes

4.3.2.1 Operating mode

Basically the PS021 offers two different operating modes with two possible choices of the source for the clock signal. The selection is done with the pull down menu "Operating mode".

Running the PSA21 in measurement range 2 ("MR2") is recommended for applications that require high resolution or low power consumption.

The advantage of measuring rate 1 ("MR1") is that no additional high speed clock is needed when working with a 32kHz reference for cycle clock. This minimizes the number of external components. In measurement range 1 it is further possible to achieve update rates up to 50 kHz. This makes measurement range 1 applicable for applications with low resolution and high measurement frequency or if minimum part number is required.

4.3.2.2 Cycle time high speed mode

The cycle time represents the sum of charging and discharging time. It is defined in multiples of the reference clock CLKHS and can be modified per entry in the text field shown in Figure 21 Operation Modes. As the discharge time is defined by the RC-network it is necessary to guarantee a long enough recharge time.

Important note!

For a correct operation it is mandatory that the cycle time is not too short!!

As a minimum we recommend $T_{cycle-min} = 1.4 * (0.7 * (C+20pF) * R)$

The setting for the cycle time defines the number of single measurements per second and as a consequence the precision/update rate of the PSA21 evaluation system. It is therefore a very important value and requires some attention.

4.3.2.3 Averaging Rate FB1

The precision of the measurement results can be internally improved by averaging. The averaging rate of fullbridge 1 is set by value in the appropriate text field, shown in Figure 21 Operation Modes. This measuring principle guarantees that no significant systematic errors affect the result and the standard deviation is improved by the square root of the averaging rate.

4.3.2.4 Averaging rate FB 2

This value sets the averaging rate for fullbridge 2. Modification is only permitted in "doublebridge"-operating mode.

4.3.2.5 Start measurement

This pull down menu, also shown in Figure 21 Operation Modes, provides three different possibilities to configure the start conditions of the PS021. In "Autorunning"-mode, the PSA21 automatically restarts for a new measurement after calculating the measurement value and setting an interrupt. Running with "Single Conversion by external start"-mode (BNC- J15 on PSA21 board) the PSA21 enables the synchronization of the PS021 update rate with an external device. Of course it is necessary to ensure that the external frequency is lower than the maximum possible update rate of the PS021 in its current setup. Operating in "Single Conversion by μ C-Timer [ms/sec]"-mode, the automatic restart of a new measurement is disabled. The microcontroller (PIC16874) on the PSA21-board starts the new measurement with the selected timer value that is set with an 8 bit opcode via SPI interface. This mode is for lowest current consumption at very low measurement rates.

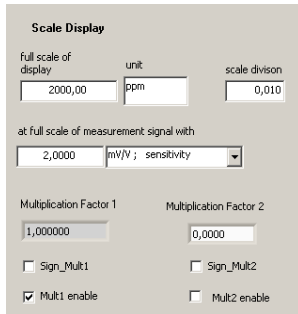


Figure 22

4.3.2.6 Interrupt rate

In auto-mode, the interrupt rate is strictly related to the cycle time and the averaging rate. Additional measurements due to gain compensation (GainCorRate), temperature measurement (TempRate) and fake measurements (MFake) are added. The value is displayed in a text field as shown in Figure 21 Operation Modes. Operating in

timer mode and external mode the update rate is given by the timer period which starts a new PS021 measurement. Please note that the cycle time of the PS021 has to be shorter than this time grid. Otherwise the update rate is limited by the PS021 measuring rate to the same as in auto mode.

4.3.3 Scale display

The parameters in this section offer user specific scaling of the measurement results that are displayed in the

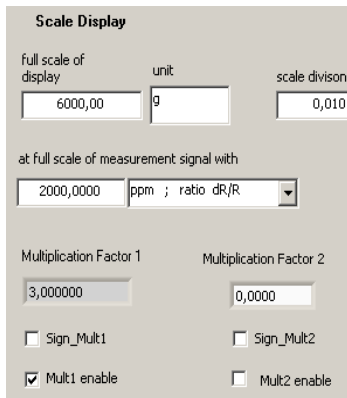


Figure 23

"measurement sheet". The text field "full scale of display" defines the value that will be displayed at max. sensor output signal. Further the customer is able to determine the requested unit of measurement and the step of scale width for his application.

The example below describes an application for a 6000 g scale. The input values for this section strongly depend on the used strain gages. Hence they are described by means of the following example, considering a 6 kg scale.

Gage factor: $k = 2$

Max. elongation: $\epsilon_{max} = 1000 \mu$

Sensitivity: 2mV/V

At maximum elongation this sensor shows a resistance variation of $\Delta R/R = k * \epsilon_{max} = 2000ppm$ (this would correspond to 10 mV at 5 V supply for a classical bridge).

To achieve direct display of weight, the output data are scaled with the requested resolution of 6000 by entering this value in the "full scale of display"-

text field. "Multiplication Factor 1" represents the internally used scaling factor which is 3 in this example.

Note that this application is an example that is only used to describe the scaling functions of the PSA21 software. In real applications noise effects have to be considered. In this case please refer to our application notes or to PS021 datasheet, chapter 7.

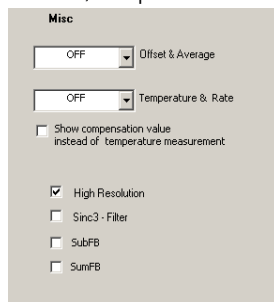


Figure 24

4.3.4 Miscellaneous

In this chapter several parameters concerning offset and temperature compensation will be described.

4.3.4.1 Offset & average

This pull down menu sets the number of measurement cycles used for offset calculation in the PSØ21. The offset compensation improves with the increasing number of measurements used for compensation, but note that the time required will also rise.

4.3.4.2 Temperature & rate

Enables temperature measurement of the PSA21 with an external temperature sensitive resistor. The value selected with the appropriate pull down menu belongs to the frequency of the temperature measurement. The context is shown in the following table.

Table 5 Temp. measurement frequency

Value	Frequency of temperature measurement
OFF	Temp. measurement disabled
1	Temp. measurement at each measurement sequence
2	Temp. measurement at each 6 th measurement sequence
3	Temp. measurement at each 9 th measurement sequence

Further you can display the compensation value instead of the temperature measurement by activating the checkbox shown in Figure 254.

4.3.4.3 High resolution

Activating this checkbox will double the resolution of the measurement unit of the PSØ21. Depending on measuring mode and discharge time the precision of your measurement will also increase.

4.3.4.4 Sinc3-filter

Activating the sinc3-filter reduces the noise of strain gage values output data. On the other hand the reaction time on changes in strain will slow down.

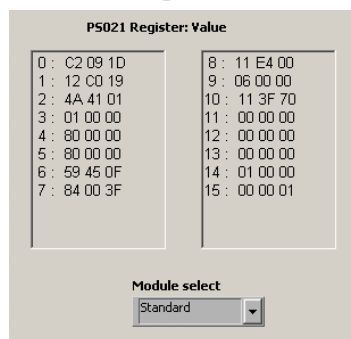
4.3.4.5 SubFB

Enabling this checkbox will cause that the PSØ21 internally calculates the difference HB2-HB1 between the measurement values of both halfbridges.

4.3.4.6 SumFB

If this checkbox is selected, the PSØ21 internally calculates the sum of both measurement value for each half-bridge.

4.3.5 Register values / Module select



PSØ21 Register value

The current configuration of the PSØ21 is shown in the main window. Note that the displayed register configuration will be used for the next start of measurement.

Please also note that the display is not affected by configuration changes during a measurement

Module select

This box allows the user to select the PSØ21 plug-in module that is currently connected to the PSA21 main board. The PSA21 software adjusts the configuration settings to a default set of parameters.

Figure 26

4.3.6 I/O-settings

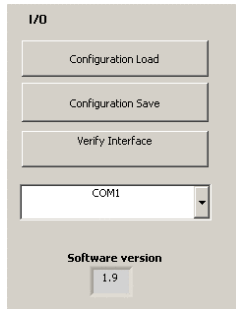


Figure 27

Configuration load

Pressing this button loads a previously saved configuration set for a certain measurement application from a file.

Config save

Saves a configuration set for a certain measurement in a file.

Verify interface

Shows the status of the communication interface between the PS021 plug-in module and the PSA21 main board and displays firmware and software versions.

COM-port

Shows the COM-port of the PC that is connected with the evaluation system.

4.4 Expert settings for PS021

The “Expert”-settings represent an advanced level configuration of the evaluation system. Therefore the PSA21 offers various parameter groups as shown in Figure 28. The following chapter describes the setting of these parameters due to custom specific applications. Please also refer to PS021 datasheet for more details.



Figure 28 Expert settings

4.4.1 Sensor

4.4.1.1 Single bridge

In single-bridge mode the standard module offers the possibility to measure 1 halfbridge or 2 halfbridges (= 1 full-bridge). The Wheatstone module supports one sensor, connected as a classical Wheatstone bridge as shown in Figure 7. The Capacity module offers the possibility to measure 1 or 2 capacitive sensors.

In single-bridge mode each resistor/capacitor is connected to a pair of pads like A1 & A2 to increase the driver output power.

4.4.1.2 Doublebridge

In doublebridge mode the standard module offers the possibility to measure 4 halfbridges (= 2 fullbridges). The Wheatstone module supports two sensors, connected as a classical Wheatstone bridge.

In doublebridge mode each resistor is connected to only one pad like A1. The driver output power is lower than in single-bridge mode.

It is also possible to measure only one fullbridge in Doublebridge mode, but this option is only implemented for testing. The use in real applications is not recommended.

Please note that double-bridge mode is not available in combination with the capacity module.

4.4.1.3 CLKHS select

Enabling this check box will activate the high-speed oscillator of the PSØ21. The following options are available:

- **External**
Enables the ceramic oscillator X4 mounted on the PSA21 main board as an external clock source at pin 21 of the PSØ21 for the high speed oscillator .
- **Internal**
Activating this checkbox switches on the internal oscillator circuit of the PSØ21 and the external ceramic resonator X2. They are running continuously. A measurement starts immediately after receiving opcode "start measurement" or an external trigger.
- **Start delay 640µs**
The internal oscillator is immediately started after opcode "start measurement" or an external trigger. The measurement starts with a delay of 640µs. At the end of the measurement the oscillator is switched off. The delay guarantees that the oscillator has settled before the measurement starts. Note that the "start delay" option is only available in combination with the use of the 32 kHz oscillator and running the system in single conversion mode.
- **Start delay 1280µs**
The internal oscillator is immediately started after opcode "start measurement" or an external trigger. The measurement starts with a delay of 1280µs. At the end of the measurement the oscillator is switched off. The delay guarantees that the oscillator has settled before the measurement starts. Note that the "start delay" option is only available in combination with the use of the 32 kHz oscillator and running the system in single conversion mode.

4.4.1.4 High-speed divider

The high-speed divider is used as a prescaler for the external high-speed clock to limit the internal frequency of the PSØ21 in the range of 2 - 10 Mhz. The divisor is selected via pull down menu. Regarding to the maximum divisor the external high-speed clock is limited in the range of 2 - 80 MHz. To achieve best measuring results we recommend an internal frequency between 2 and 5 MHz. In this case the high-speed divider must be set to one.

4.4.1.5 CLKHS frequency

Displays the current high-speed clock frequency.

4.4.2 Rdson and gain compensation

4.4.2.1 AvRateRdson

Sets the averaging rate for the Rdson compensation. Selecting a high averaging rate will decrease the noise of the correction value. But in the same way the adaptation to changes will slow down. We recommend to use the default values.

4.4.2.2 RdsonModify

Speeds up the adaptation of Rdson after initialization. The use of the default value "4" is recommended.

4.4.2.3 AvRateGain

The comparator circuit introduces a propagation delay that is added to the result of measurement and will cause a gain error. The PS021 is capable of measuring this delay for gain error correction. For noise reduction the correction data can be averaged.

4.4.2.4 GainCompRate

Defines the frequency of the gain compensation measurement that is done after a measurement. Selecting "1" adds a gain compensation measurement to every measurement, "15" adds this compensation measurement to every 15th measurement. Selecting "0" switches the gain compensation off.

4.4.3 Measuring Range 2

In measurement range 2 the calibration of the high-speed unit can be controlled through several parameters that are explained in this chapter.

4.4.3.1 CalDel

The calibration measurement is done during the discharging phase. CalDel gives the number of periods of ClkHS between start of discharging and start of calibration. This allows to control the point in time of the calibration measurement.

4.4.3.2 CalcCycle

Gives the number of cycles between the calibration measurements. Note that this number has strong influence on the current consumption. Using high values may reduce the current consumption of the PS021 core by 15 - 20 %.

4.4.3.3 Mb2_loaddel

4.4.3.4 AvRate_Cal

The noise of the calibration values can be reduced by averaging. This option is useful to achieve low current consumption in combination with high resolution of strain gage measurement.

4.4.4 Comparator

The comparator can be switched off for applications that require very low current consumption. The following parameters have to be adjusted:

4.4.4.1 Comp_ConOn

Activating this checkbox enables the use of the "switched comparator"

4.4.4.2 Comp_Control

Using the "switched comparator" the behaviour can be controlled like:

- 0: The comparator is always switched on
- 1: The comparator is switched off during the load phase
- 2: Using single conversion mode together with the oscillator running in pulsed mode, the comparator switches on for the time the oscillator is running.

3: Operating in single-conversion mode with the oscillator running in pulsed mode, the comparator is only active together with the oscillator. Additionally the comparator is switched off during load cycle.

4.4.5 Anti Aliasing

One method to suppress aliasing frequencies using the PICOSTRAIN principle is to introduce additional noise to the cycle time. This increases the bandwidth of the sampling rate and suppresses sinusoidal interferences. The configuration has to be done by different parameters, described as follows:

4.4.5.1 EN_spread

Enables the internal pseudo-random generator for adding noise to the cycle time.

4.4.5.2 Spread source

This parameter selects the source clock for the random generator.

Spread source	Source clock
0	Each cycle
1	Each 8 th cycle
2	Each interrupt
3	Each interrupt

Table 6 Spread source

4.4.5.3 Spread range

The spread range defines the noise range of the cycle time. The selected value will be added to the initial cycle time value.

Spread range	Number of noisy cycles
0	0
1	4
2	8
3	16

Table 7 Spread range

4.4.6 PS021 adjustment

4.4.6.1 Warm up

Warm-up function adds dummy measurements directly after initialization or power on reset before the first measurement is done. This "warm up" measurements preload the capacitor to avoid an additional offset at the start of the measurement.

4.4.6.2 Mfake

Both independently working ALU's of the PS021 have access to one and the same RAM. To avoid deadlocks it is possible to introduce fake measurements. These measurements are done after a measurement without data post processing.

4.4.6.3 SpeedALU fast

Enabling this option minimizes the calculating time of the arithmetic logic units to achieve highest measuring rates. Generally we do not recommend to use this function especially when operating with low core supply voltage or at highest temperature range because of malfunction.

4.4.6.4 PS021 adjust 1

Internal adjust bits. Recommended values are 17 or 45.

4.4.6.5 PS021 adjust 2

Internal adjust bits. Recommended values for adjust 2 are 0 or 8.

4.4.7 Miscellaneous

4.4.7.1 NegSens1

Reverses Sense1 input in case of using a inverting preamplifier. Not necessary in PSA21 evaluation system

4.4.7.2 NegSens2

Reverses Sense2 input in case of using a inverting preamplifier. Not necessary in PSA21 evaluation system.

4.4.7.3 NegSensT

Negates the SensT input of the PS021 in case of using an inverting preamplifier. This function has to be set when using the temperature measurement unit together with a HC14 Schmitt-Trigger as recommended for the PSA21 evaluation system.

4.4.7.4 Rdson Reconfig

Activating this function will provide better start values for Rdson compensation and reduces the ramp-up behaviour following a start measurement.

4.4.7.5 TDC diagnosis

Reads out and displays the TDC parameters.

4.4.8 Working with temperature compensated strain gages

4.4.8.1 Mod Rspan on

Activates the Rspan compensation. If "Replace Rspan by Temp" is not selected the PS021 measures the span compensation resistors and multiplies them with the parameters "Mult Rspan 1" and "Mult Rspan 2". Note that "Mult Rspan 2" is only used in double bridge mode as multiplication factor for the second fullbridge.

4.4.8.2 Replace Rspan by temp

Provides a second option for span compensation that uses the result from the separate temperature measurement instead of the compensation register. The span compensation resistor is no longer effective.

4.4.8.3 Fullbridge 1

The elements in this section enable the configuration of a multiplication factor and an offset correction value for Rspan compensation. Both values refer to fullbridge 1. The multiplication factor can be optionally signed.

4.4.8.4 Fullbridge 2

Provides the multiplication factor and offset correction value, as mentioned above, for fullbridge 2. These options are only used for applications running in doublebridge mode.

4.4.9 Port selection

The PSA21 output pins can be freely assigned to the PS021 driver ports via four independent port switches. Each port switch corresponds to one PS021 driver port. The configuration is shown in the following table.

PortSw_value	Logical port
0	A1, A2
1	B1, B2
2	C1, C2
3	D1, D2

Table 8 Port assignment

4.4.10 Measurement modes

4.4.10.1 CMeas1

Provides additional compensation algorithms to correct for parasitic capacities and the comparator propagation delay and is divided in the following submodes:

Cmeas2 = 0	Compensated measurement mode off
Cmeas2 = 1	Compensated measurement mode on, compensation disabled
Cmeas2 = 2	Compensated measurement mode on, compensation enabled

Note that this element only appears in the “expert settings”- sheet when the capacity module in “PS021” -sheet is selected.

4.4.10.1 CMeas2

This option is used for measuring floating capacities and is not supported by the PSA21 evaluation system.

4.4.10.3 EN_Wheatstone

Enables Wheatstone mode.

4.4.10.4 PP_Separate

Switches on measurement with separate resistors for gain compensation.

4.4.10.5 Quarterbridge

The quarterbridge mode is recommended for the use of halfbridges where only one strain gage resistance is variable. In this case the internal calculation algorithm of the PS021 is based on a linear function.

4.4.10.6 Load_Startdel

Activating this checkbox will increase the start delay time of the PS021 to 140 ns. Without enabling this option, the start delay time is 25 ns.

4.4.10.7 Start_by_Load

Starts measurement over the “Load”- pin instead of using port pins.

4.5 Controlling the measurement

The 'Measurement'-sheet allows the user to start and stop measuring and displays the measurement results. The appearance of this window depends on whether single-bridge or doublebridge mode is selected. It looks like the following pictures.

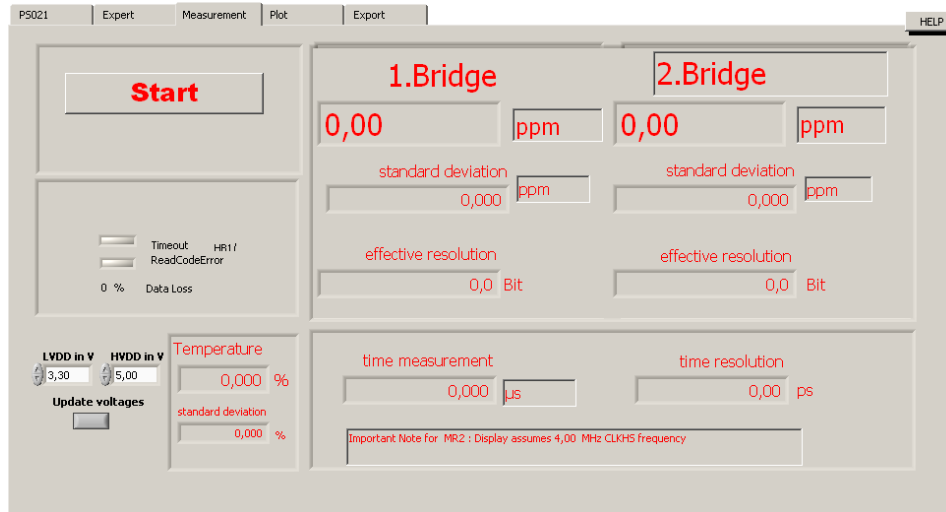


Figure 29 Measurement sheet using Single-bridge-Mode

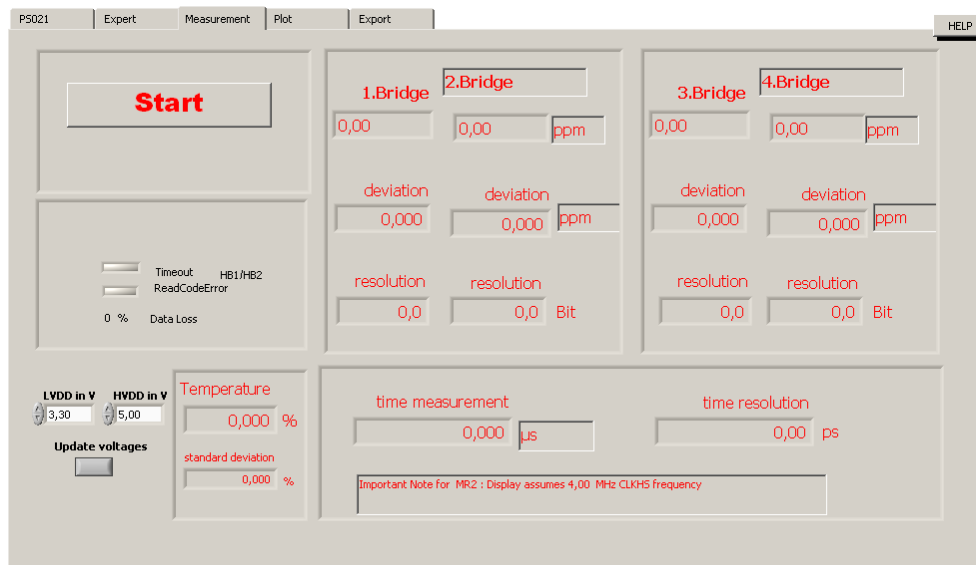


Figure 30 Measurement sheet using Doublebridge Mode



Figure 31

Start/Stop

Pushing this button controls start and stop of a measurement. Before a measurement starts the current configuration data is downloaded to the PSA21 microcontroller and the PS021 is initialized with this new set of configuration data.



Figure 32

Timeout

Indicates a timeout of the PS021. A timeout occurs if the measurement range of the TDC unit or the pre-counter are exceeded. Possible reasons may be a wrong dimensioning of the discharging capacitors or a hardware defect which is mainly due to the following components:

- Timeout for halfbridge 1
- Timeout for halfbridge 2
- Timeout of pre-counter
- Timeout of TDC

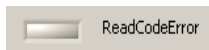


Figure 33

ReadCodeError

Informs about an error in serial data communication via RS232. This can be caused by problems in the serial connection. In this case the software tries to find a new synchronization start in the byte stream. Another reason might be a timeout when receiving data on RS232. The software keeps on waiting for data until the stop button is pressed.

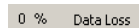


Figure 34

Data loss

Using a very fast PS021 interrupt rate (hardware average < 10) a loss of measurement results due to the restricted bandwidth of serial communication occurs.

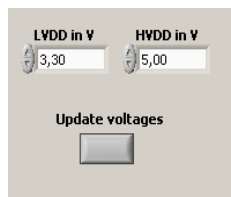


Figure 35

LVDD (Vcc)

The core voltage for the PS021 is generated via D/A-converter on the PSA21 main board. It can be adjusted in a range from 0 to 3.6V. When the value of LVDD is changed while there is no measurement running, the PSA21 board automatically adjusts the voltage to the new setting.

HVDD (Vsg)

The voltage for the sensor circuits can also be adjusted via D/A-converter in the range from 0 to 5.5V. When the value of LVDD is changed while there is no measurement running, the PSA21 board automatically adjusts the voltage to the new setting.

Update voltages

Pushing this button sets LVDD and HVDD to the respective values displayed in the window.

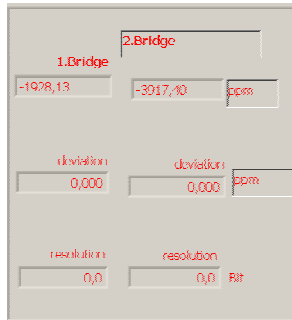


Figure 36

1. Bridge/2. Bridge...

Displays the measurement value per halfbridge and the unit selected in PS021-sheet. [see chapter 4.3]

Deviation

Shows the standard deviation of the related halfbridge

Resolution

Displays the effective resolution of the related halfbridge. The effective resolution is specified in bits, calculated from the number of LSB's as follows:

$$ENOB = \ln(\# \text{ of LSB}) / \ln 2$$

The number of LSB's is determined by the standard deviation of the measurement. For more details please refer to the PS021 datasheet sections 3.1 and 7.1.

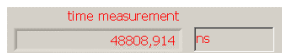


Figure 37

Time measurement

Displays the time measurement result of the PS021, provided that the TDC-diagnosis in "Expert-settings" sheet is activated. Running with measuring range 2 result is displayed in microseconds. For a good measuring quality the value should be in the range of 50 μs to 70 μs. Otherwise the discharging capacitor should be adjusted. To display correct results it is necessary to match the CLKHS setting in the "Expert"-Sheet to the value of the resonator, equipped on the PSA21 board. The default value is 4 MHz.

In measuring range 1 the result is displayed as multiple of the time resolution of the TDC, represented as least significant bits (LSB). For proper measurement this time should be adjusted to 160 000 ... 330 000 LSB in normal resolution or 320 000 ... 660 000 LSB in High resolution mode (equal to 8 ... 10 μs) by choosing the appropriate discharging capacity.

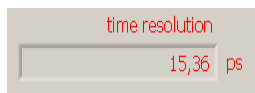


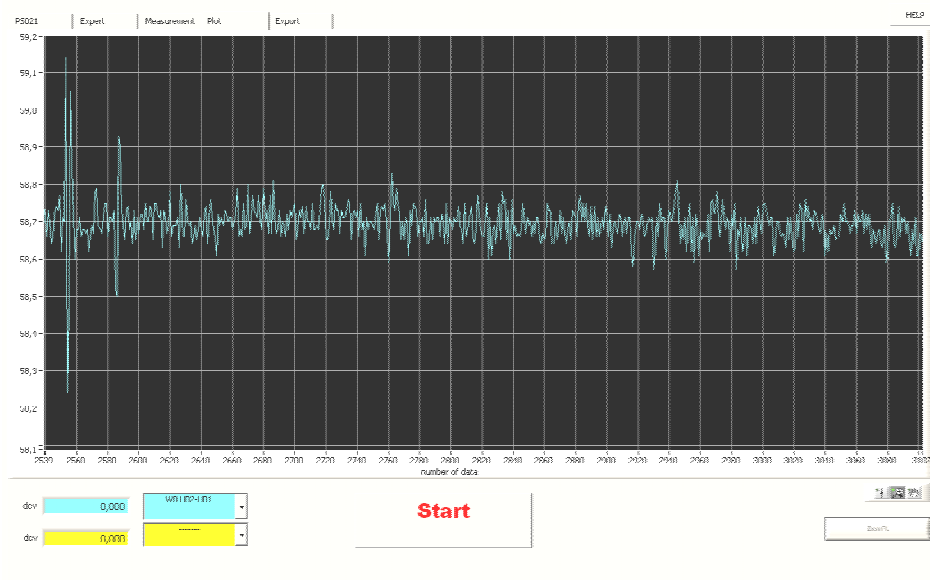
Figure 38

Time resolution

The time resolution represents the quantization step of the build-in time-to-digital converter (TDC) of the PS021. This value ranges between 14 to 25 ns in high resolution and 30 to 50 ps in normal resolution, depending on the current supply voltage and device temperature. The display only works in measurement range 2 and needs the correct CLKHS frequency as input. As mentioned before the default value is 4 MHz. In measuring range 1 the time resolution of the TDC is not calculated.

4.6 Plot Data

The "Plot"-sheet is used to indicate the measurement results in a graphical window. Two different output channels can be selected and up to 8000 samples can be displayed while measurement is running or in idle state. When the last field is written during measurement the routine starts from the beginning and overwrites the first field element.



The following elements for controlling and displaying the measurement data are provided:



Figure 39

Start/stop

Controls start and stop of the measurement.

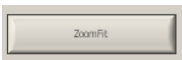


Figure 40

Zoomfit

Pressing the ZooFit button zooms the plot in y-scale.



Figure 41

Select displayed data

Opens a setup window that enables plot selection of the graphical display. The appearance of this window depends on the provided measurement data per channel and is specific to the used module and the operation mode. Figure 42 shows the setup windows using a standard module running in single-bridge mode.

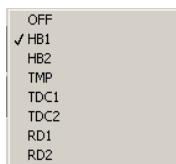


Figure 42

Zoom – tool

The Zoom – tool shows three different buttons that are explained in order from left to right.



Figure 43

- Cursor Movement Tool: Not supported in PSA21 Evaluation System
- Zoom – button: Enables zoom in and out of the display. The zoom button enables several options as shown in Figure 44.
- Panning Tool: Use the panning tool to pick up the plot and move it around on the display.

Zoom options

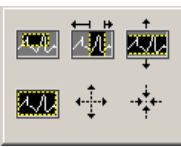


Figure 44

- Zoom to rectangle: This option enable to select a rectangular via mouse pointer. Therefore click a point on the display and drag the tool until the rectangle covers the requested zoom area.
- X-zoom: scales up the display along the x-axis
- Y-zoom: scales up the display along the y-axis
- Zoom out: scales up the display in x- and y- direction, referred to a center that is selected via mouse click.
- Zoom in: scales down the display in x- and y- direction, referred to a selected center.
- Undo zoom: Use this function to return to previous view after zoom in or out

4.7 Export Data

The 'Export'-Sheet is used to store measurement data in a file. The suggested filename is made out of the current date and time and a '* .txt'- extension. Additionally, the user can define a header with some specific information.

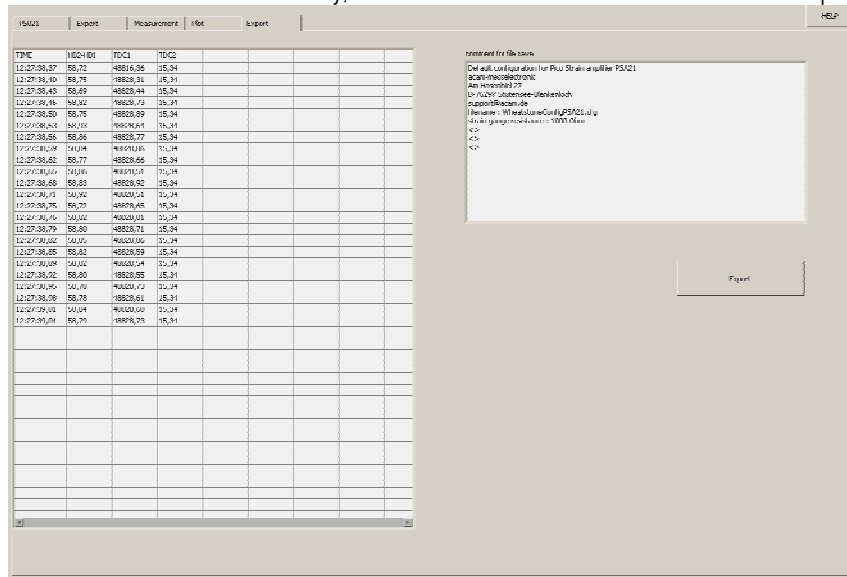


Figure 45 „Export“- sheet

Due to his internal record size the configuration software allows to handle up to 8000 measurement results. These values are used for displaying them in a plot window or for storing them in a file. After stopping a measurement the last records will be displayed in a table together with the user specific header and the configuration settings as shown in Figure 45.

Further the software supports the possibility to handle TDC measurement data. For this case the checkbox for "TDC diagnosis" must be activated.

4.8 Temperature Investigations

When the PSA21 board is used for temperature investigation it is necessary to remove the resistors R34 to R41 (see schematics PS021_SENSOR_IFC) from the board. Otherwise their temperature drift will disturb the measurement.

5 Additional Functions

5.1 Running PSA21-Tools Software

To install the PSA21 Tools software please follow these instructions:

1. Insert the PSA21 Evaluation Kit CD in the CD-ROM drive of your PC and start setup.exe. The window of Figure 46 appears.
2. Please follow the instructions on the screen to install the software.

For further information also refer to the install.txt file on the CD.



Figure 46 Installation window

After installing the PSA21-Tools software invoke it by selecting "PSA21-Tools" from the "PicoStrain PSA21" folder in the Windows Program menu.

The user can get a detailed description of each control and indicator element of the window by pressing the "Help"-Button. Then a "Context Help"- window is opened. This window shows a description of the element that has the cursor focus.

The settings for the serial interface (port, baud rate) has to match with the settings of the PSA21 module. The baud rate should not exceed 57600 baud.

5.2 Upgrading Firmware

The firmware running in the μ C of the PSA21 module consists of two parts:

- Bootloader Code with functions for downloading user code (not downloadable by user)
- User Code with all functions for measurement purposes

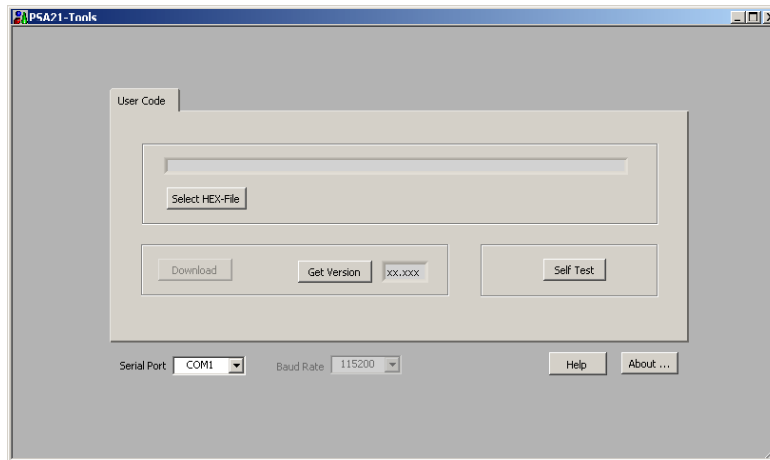


Figure 47 Main window for ´firmware update

The user code can be downloaded to the PSA21 by pressing “Download”-Button after selecting the appropriate “*.HEX”-file. The current user code version in the PSA21 module is available by pressing “Get Version”-Button. The self-test indicates weather the communication with PSØ21 is working.

Please visit our web page <http://www.acam.de/> for downloading the latest version of the PSA21 firmware.

6 Troubleshooting

Serial ports COM1, COM ... not available

If in the I/O-Port selection field the communication ports COM1, COM2... are missing:

- Make sure that the VISA runtime engine from the CD is properly installed
- The port COM10 is usually a printer port and not suitable for PSA21

Communications cannot be established with the PSA21 software

If you cannot establish communications with the PSA21 software, follow these steps:

- Make a hardware reset by pressing switch SW1.
- Press “Verify Interface” and check whether a firmware version is displayed
- Check the connection between the PSA21 module and the host computer. When using a long RS-232-cable choose a lower baud rate.

The red LED on PSA21 module is blinking

If the red LED on the PSA21 module is blinking a user code error has occurred. Follow these steps:

- Make a hardware reset by pressing switch SW1.
- Start the PSA21-Tools software and download the current user code firmware.

The “Timeout PSØ21”- LED is set in PSA21 software

The “Timeout PSØ21”- LED in PSA21 software is set if a timeout in the PSØ21 has occurred. Follow these steps:

- Make sure that the strain gage load cells are connected correctly to the solder pads.
- Control the charging time constant. Adjust cycle time, if necessary. Also refer to PSØ21 datasheet for more details.

The “Read Code Error”- LED is set in PSA21 software

The "Read Code Error"- LED in PSA21 software is set if the communication between PSA21 module and the host computer is failed. In this case please check the RS232 hardware connection between the PSA21 module and the host computer.

The measurement cannot be restarted in PSA21 software

If the measurement cannot be restarted by PSA21 software execute a hardware reset by pressing switch SW1 and try again. This may occur if the PSA21 software is terminated during a running measurement. The hardware reset stops the currently running measurement before the PSA21 software is terminated.

7 Appendix A: Schematic Diagrams PSA21

This section contains the following schematic diagrams:

- PSA21 main board
- PSA21 standard module
- PSA21 Wheatstone module
- PSA21 capacity module

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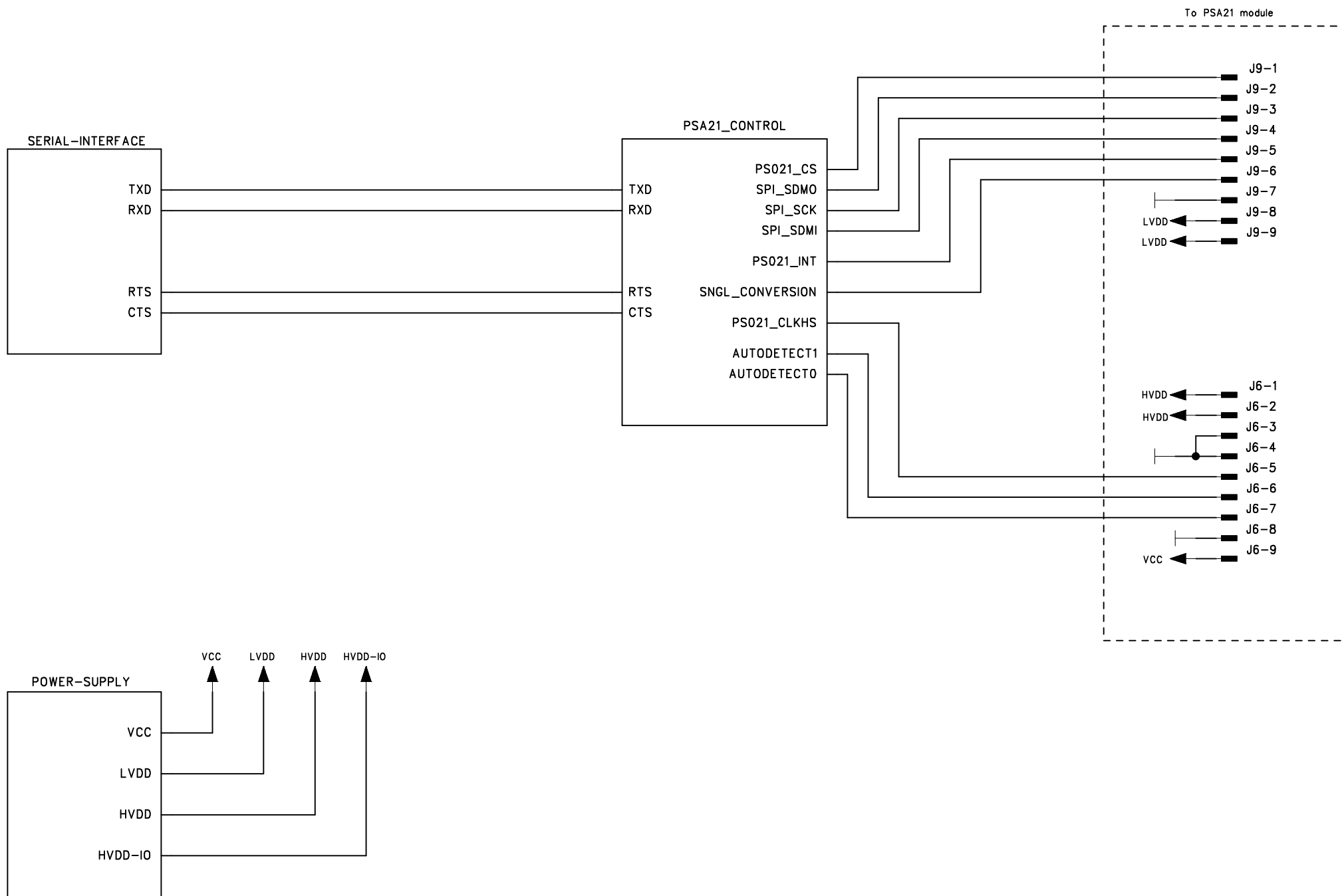
E

D

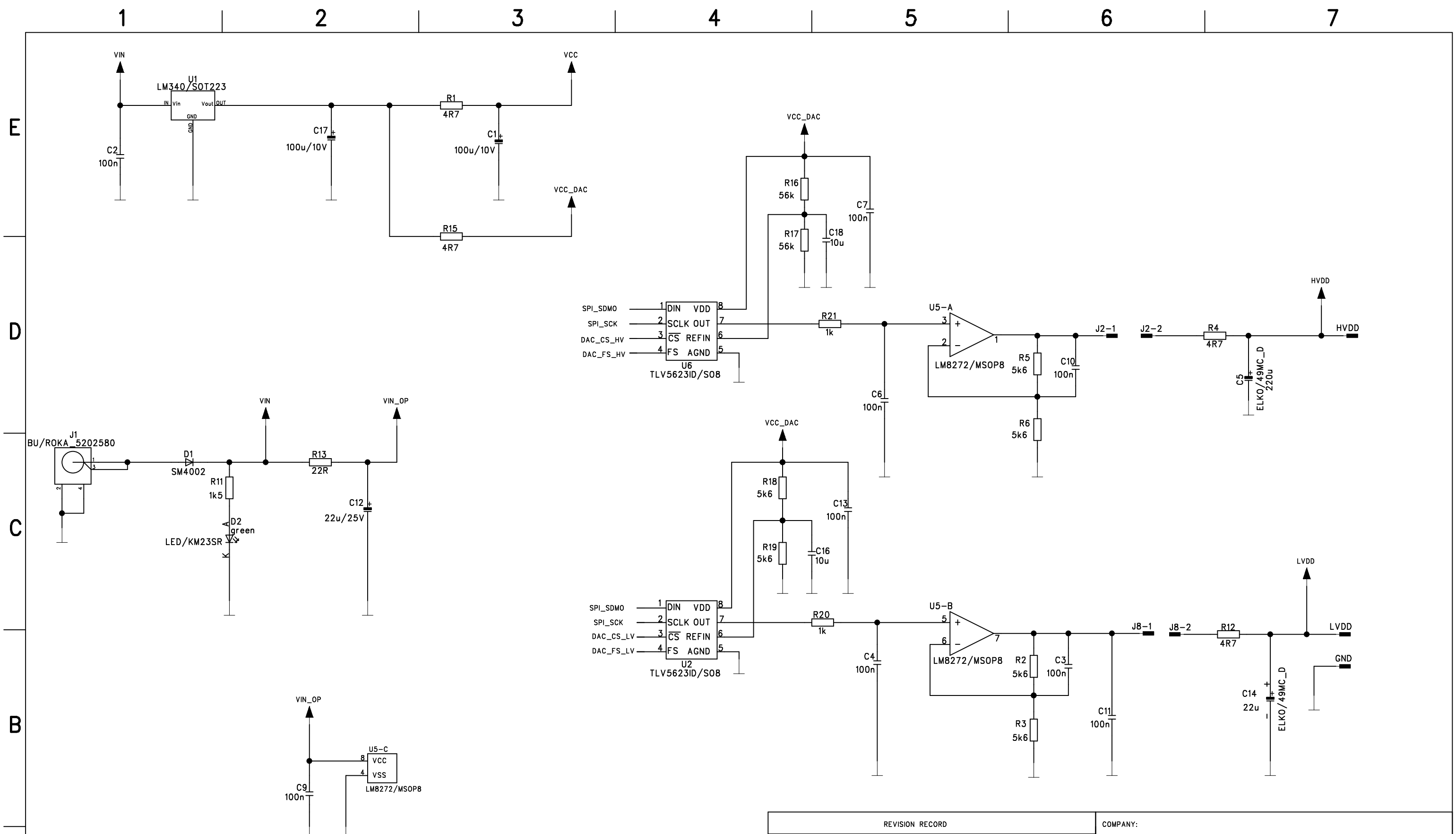
C

B

A



REVISION RECORD				COMPANY:			
LTR	ECO NO:	APPROVED:	DATE:	acam messelectronic GmbH			
1.1			04.04.2005	TITLE: PSA21 PSA21-Top			
1.2			18.04.2005				
1.4			16.01.2006				
DRAWN:		UTG		CODE: SIZE: DRAWING NO: REV: 1.04 A3 PSA21_22			
CHECKED:							
QUALITY CONTROL:							
RELEASED:							
SCALE:				SHEET: 1 OF 4			



REVISION RECORD				COMPANY:			
LTR	ECO NO:	APPROVED:	DATE:	acam messeletronic GmbH			
1.0			14.02.2005				
1.1			4.04.2005				
1.2			18.04.2005				
DRAWN: UTG				TITLE: PSA21			
CHECKED:				PSA21-Power-Supply			
QUALITY CONTROL:				CODE:	SIZE: A3	DRAWING NO: PSA21_22	REV: 1.03
RELEASED:				SCALE:		SHEET: 2 OF 4	

1

2

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4

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6

7

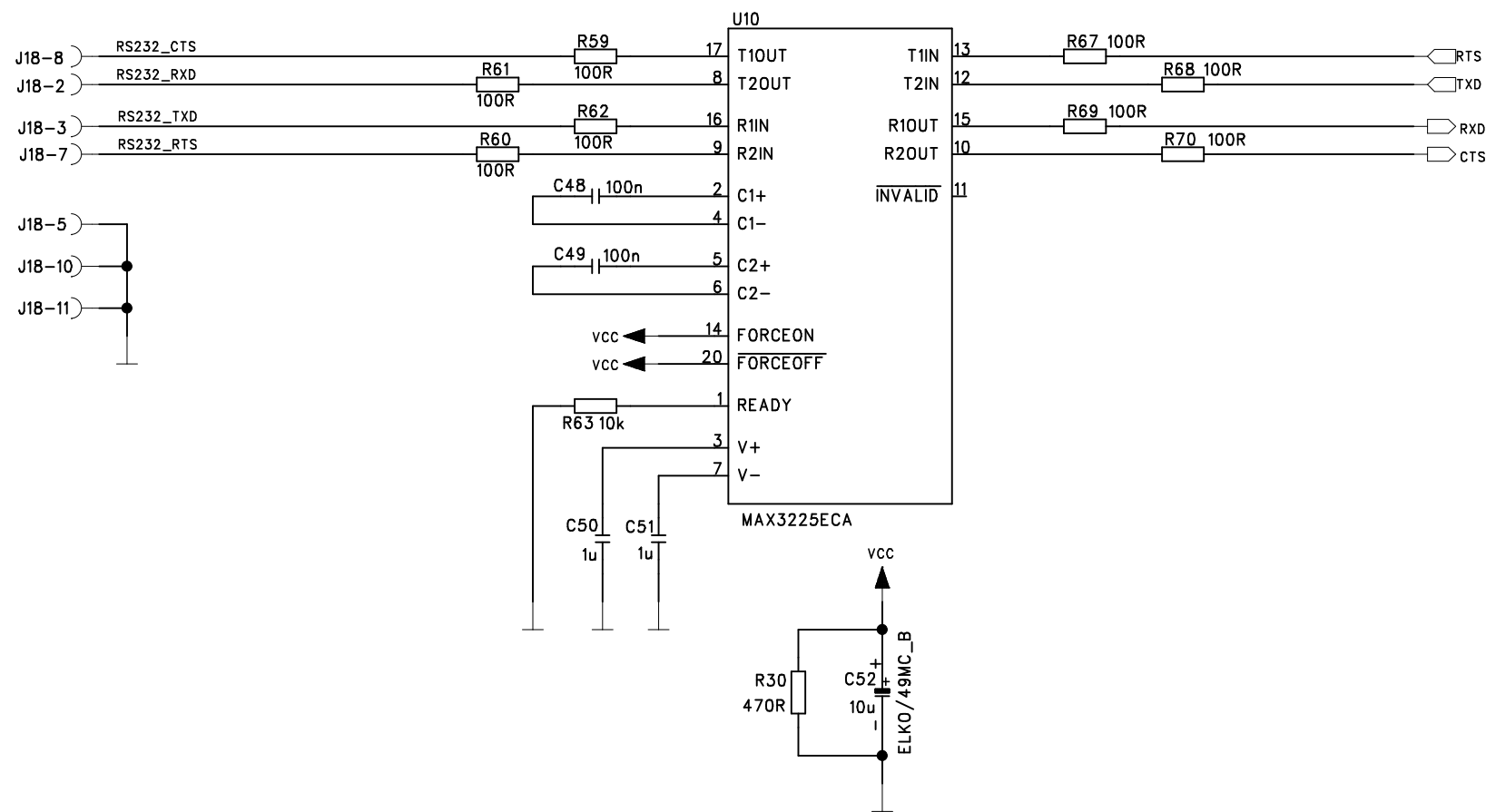
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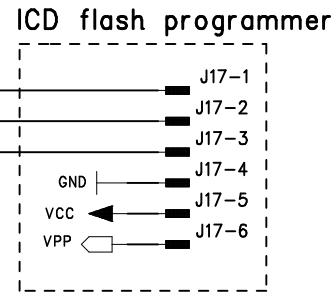
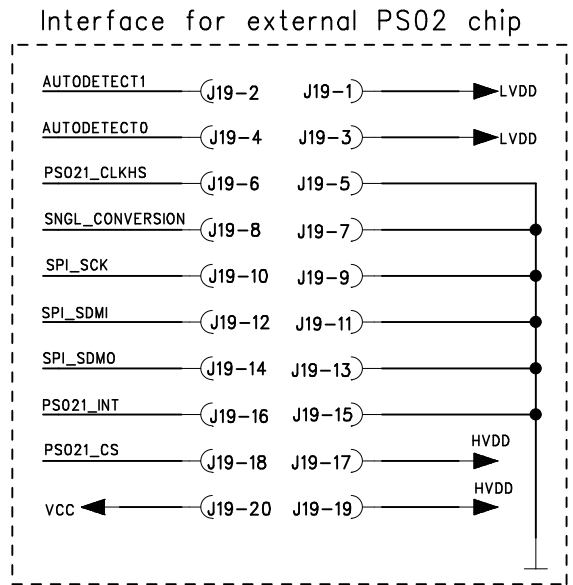
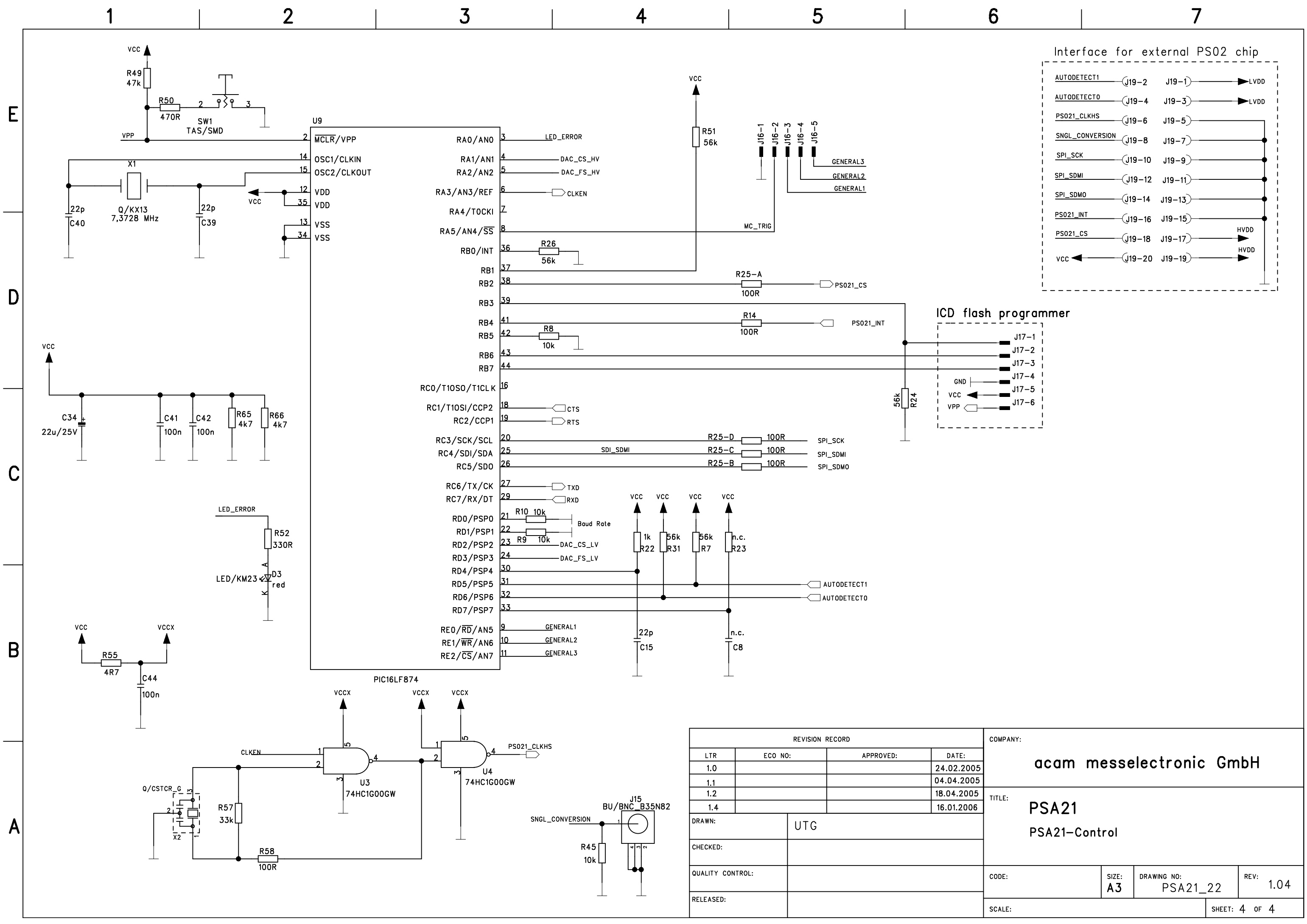
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B

A



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LTR	ECO NO:	APPROVED:	DATE:	acam messelectronic GmbH			
1.0			14.02.2005	TITLE: PSA21 PSA21-Serial-Interface			
1.1			4.04.2005				
1.2			18.04.2005				
DRAWN:		UTG		CODE: SIZE: A3 DRAWING NO: PSA21_22 REV: 1.03			
CHECKED:							
QUALITY CONTROL:							
RELEASED:							
SCALE:				SHEET: 3 OF 4			



REVISION RECORD			
LTR	ECO NO:	APPROVED:	DATE:
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1.1			04.04.2005
1.2			18.04.2005
1.4			16.01.2006

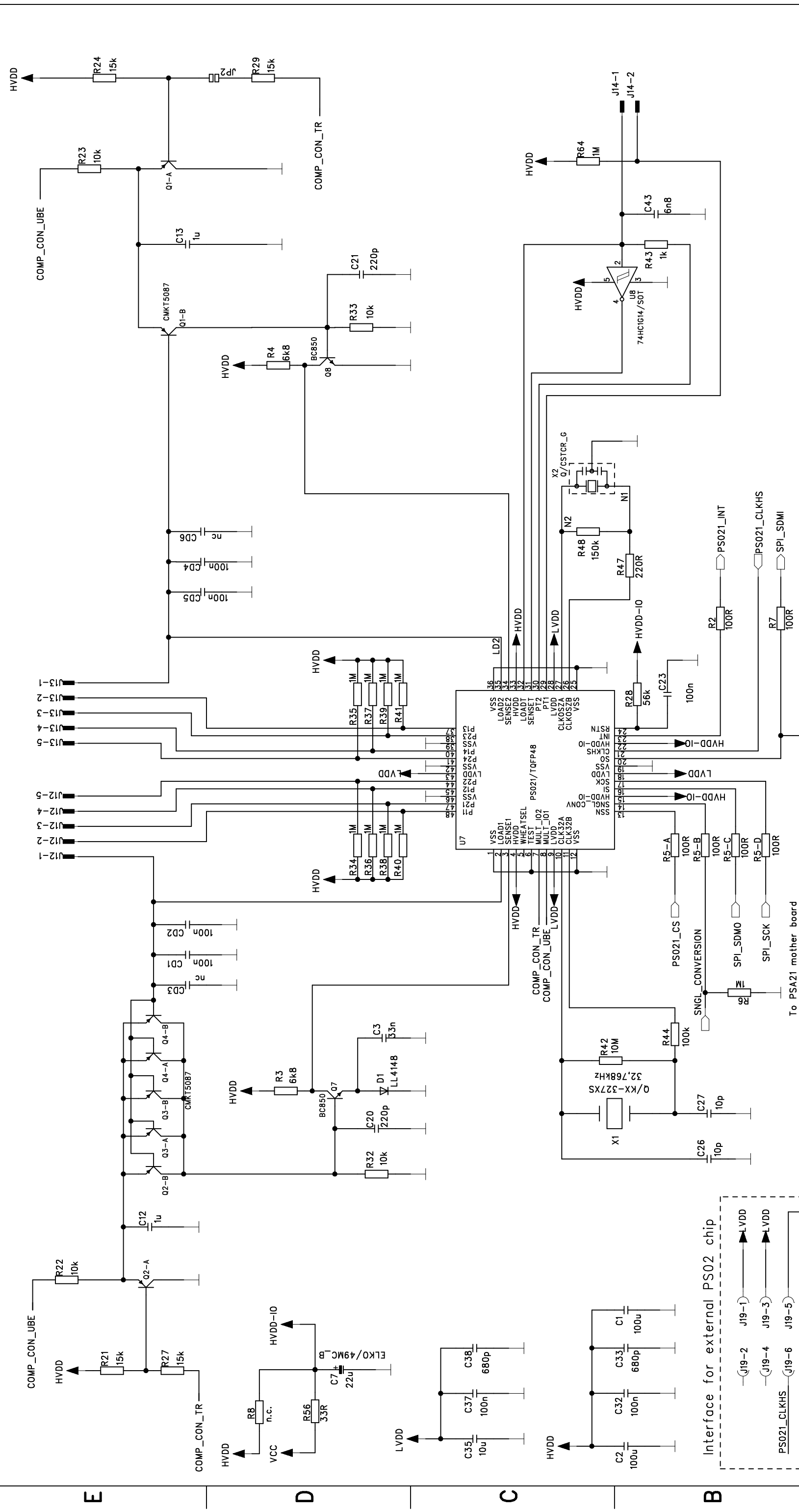
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QUALITY CONTROL:

RELEASED:

COMPANY:			
acam messeletronic GmbH			
TITLE:			
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	A3	PSA21_22	1.04
SCALE:			SHEET: 4 OF 4



COMPANY: acam messeletronic GmbH

TITLE: Standard Module for PSA21

REVISION RECORD	
LTR	DATE:
1.0	11.02.2005
1.1	4.04.2005
1.2	18.04.2005

ECO NO:	APPROVED:

DRAWN: UTG

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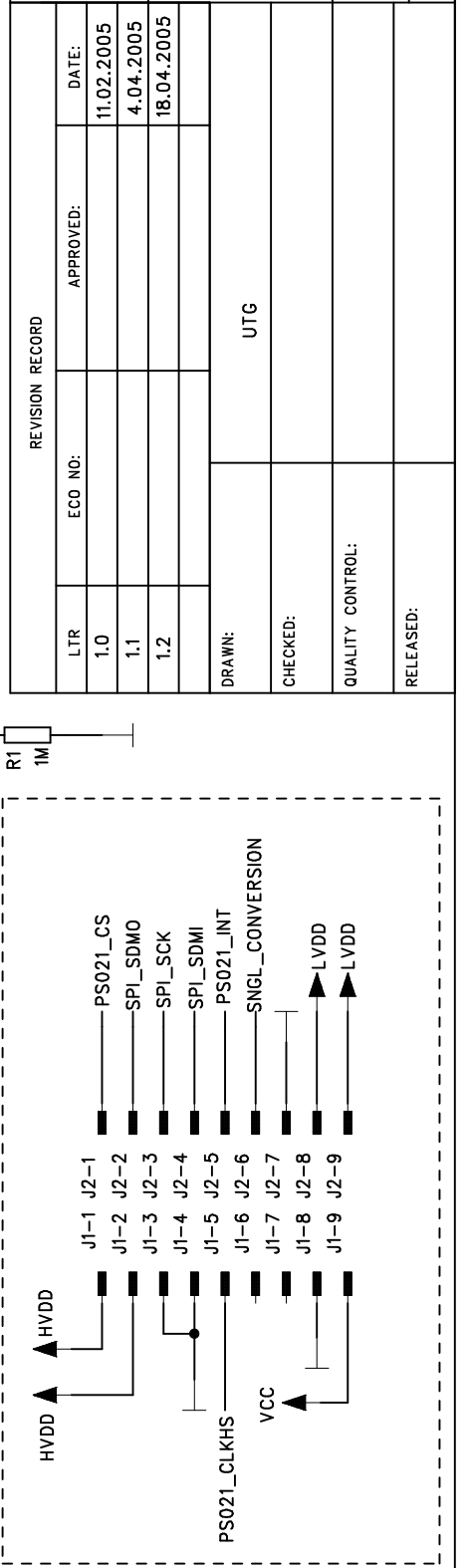
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REV: 1.02

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SHEET: 1 OF 1



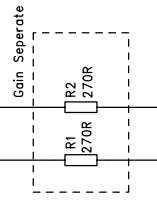
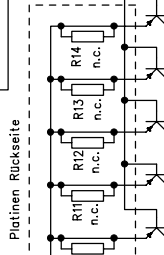
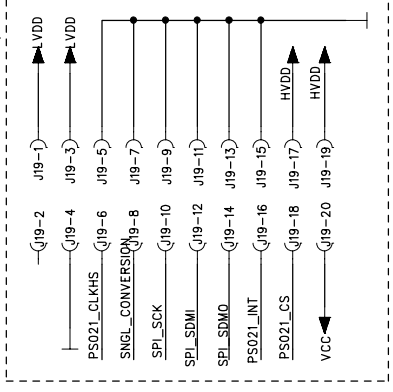
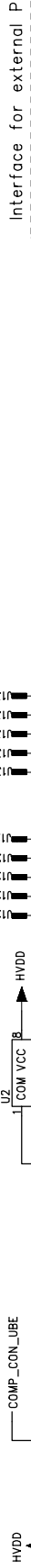
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D

C

B

A



COMPANY: **acam messeletronic GmbH**

TITLE: **Wheatstone Module for PSA21**

REVISION RECORD	ECO NO:	DATE:	APPROVED:
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1.1		04.04.2005	
1.2		18.04.2005	

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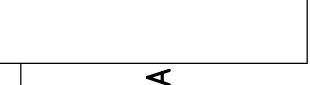
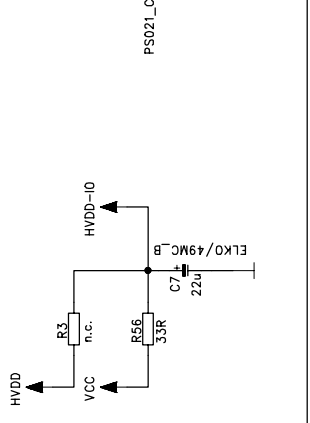
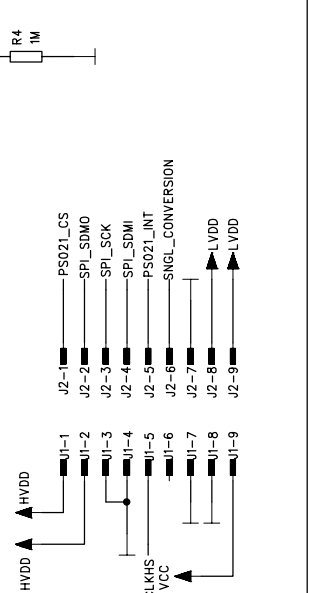
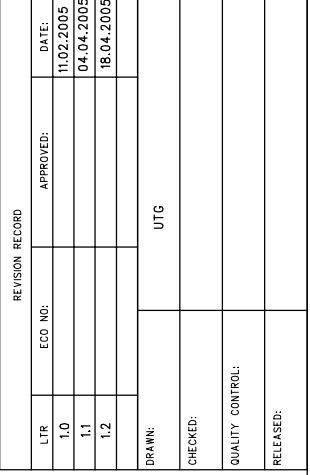
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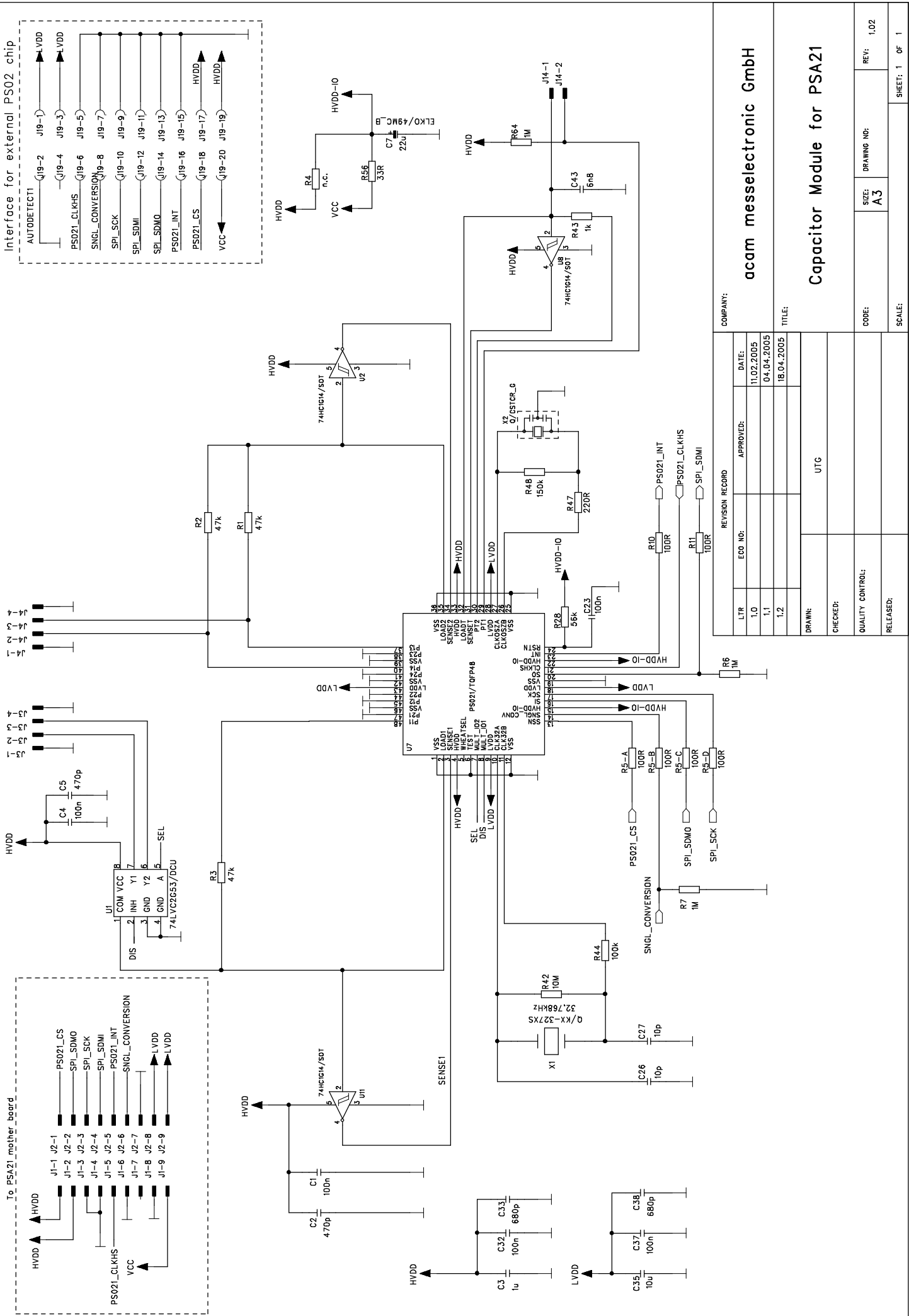
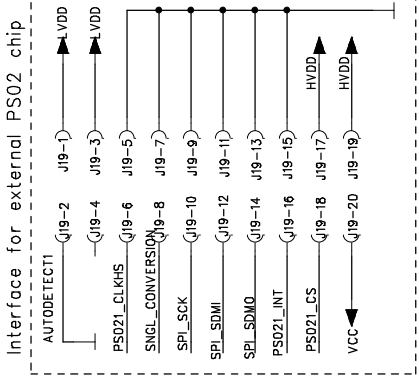
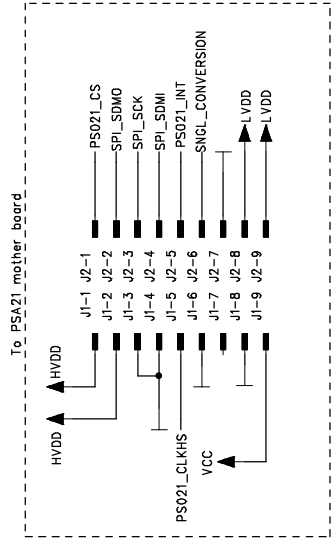
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SCALE: **1 OF 1**



To PSA21 mother board



COMPANY: acam messeletronic GmbH

TITLE: Capacitor Module for PSA21

REVISION RECORD	
LTR	ECO NO.
1.0	11.02.2005
1.1	04.04.2005
1.2	18.04.2005

APPROVED:	
DATE:	DATE:
11.02.2005	04.04.2005
04.04.2005	18.04.2005

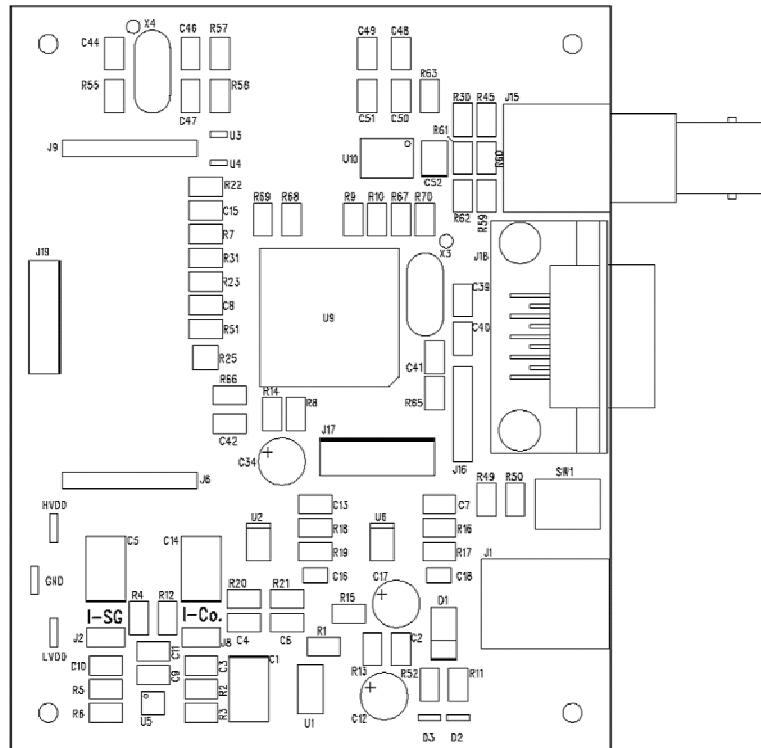
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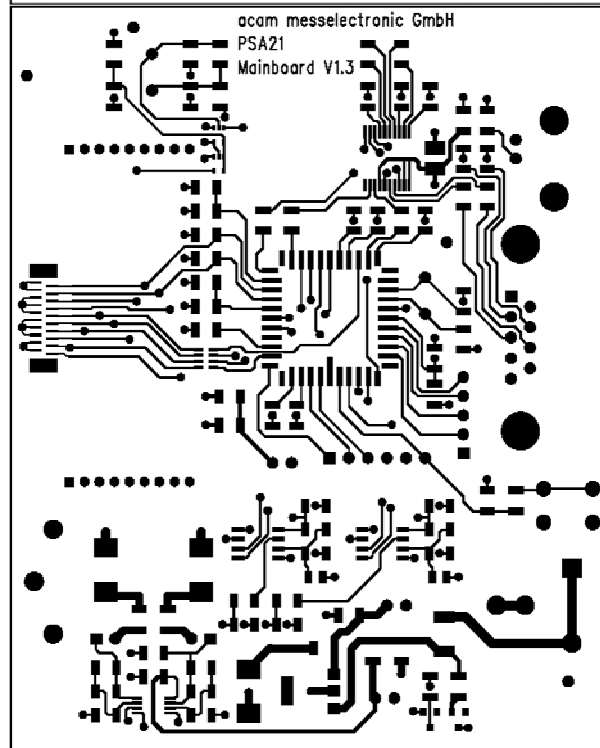
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	1	1

Appendix B: Layout Mainboard

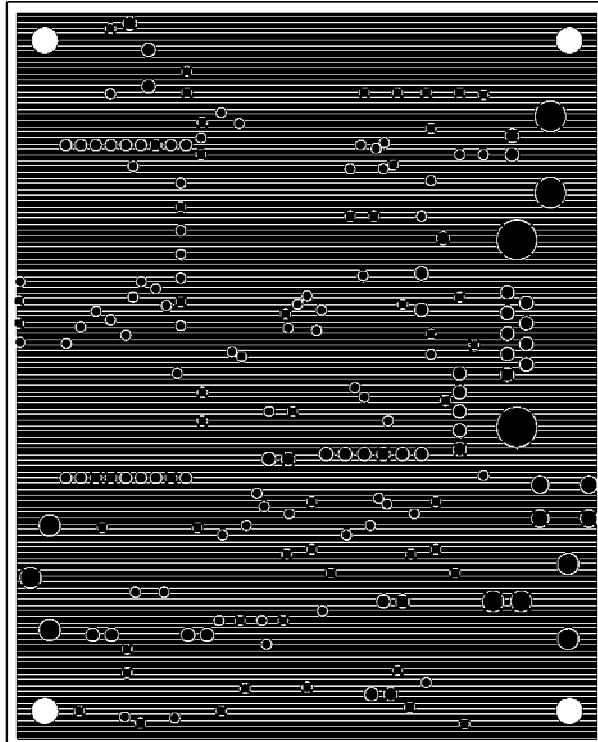
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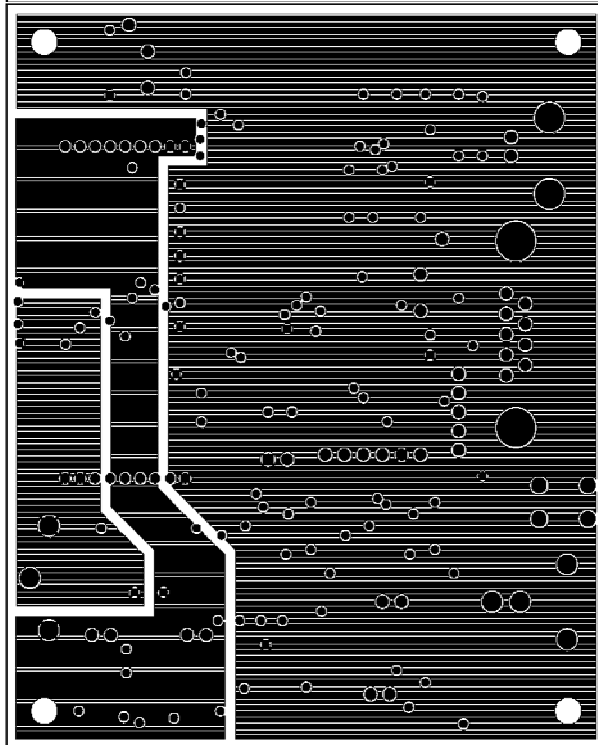
Layer 1



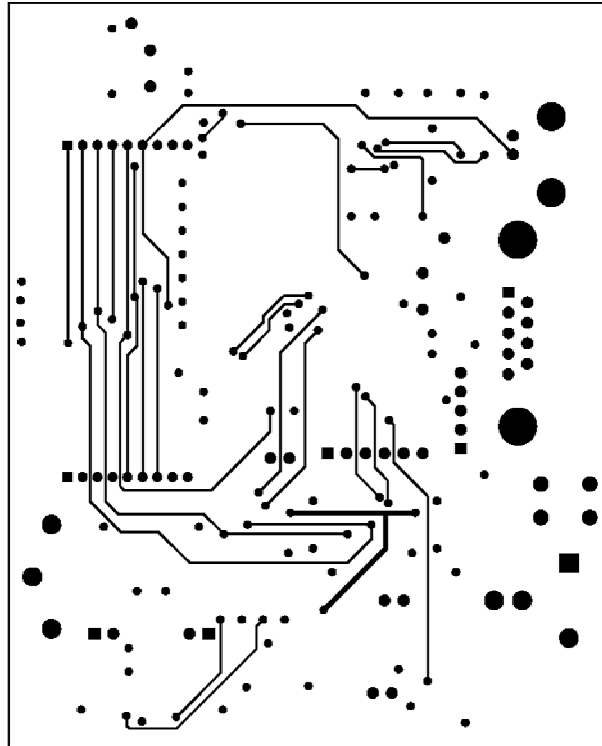
Layer 2



Layer 3



Layer 4

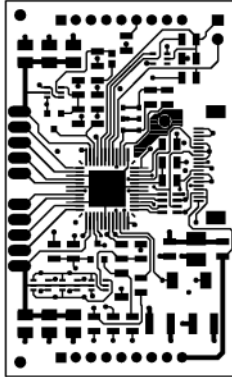


Appendix C: Layout Standard Module

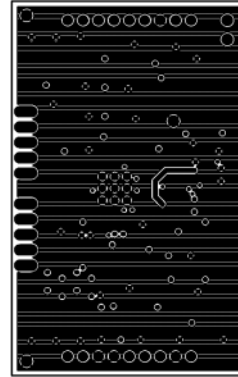
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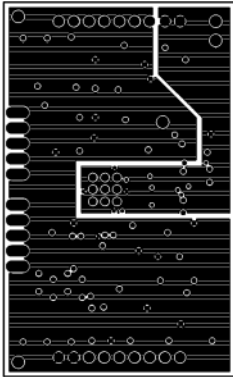
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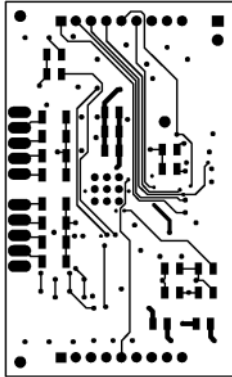
Layer 2



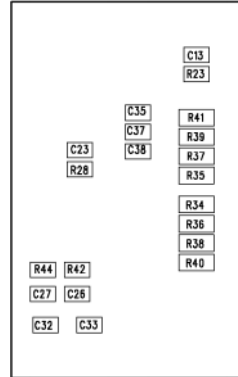
Layer 3



Layer 4

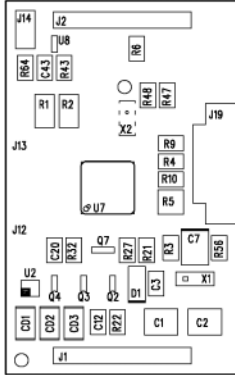


Bottom Layer

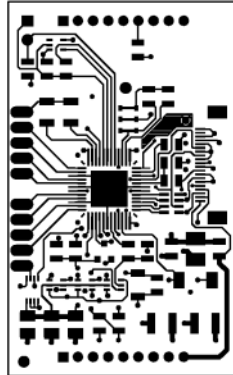


Appendix D: Layout Wheatstone Module

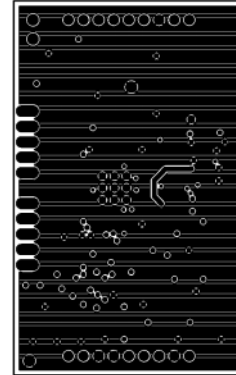
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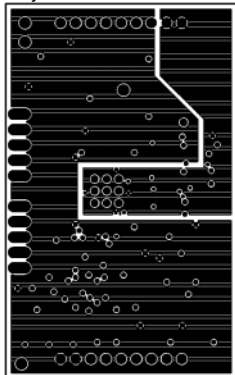
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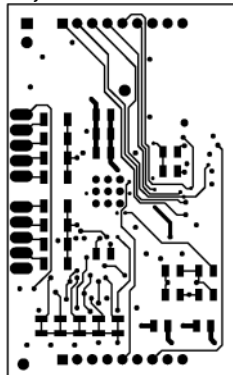
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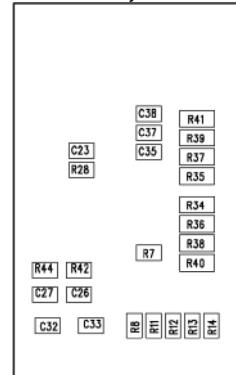
Layer 3



Layer 4

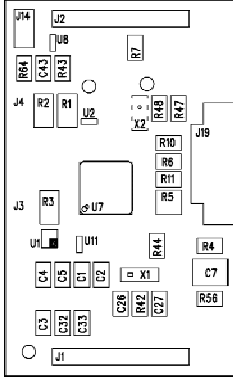


Bottom Layer

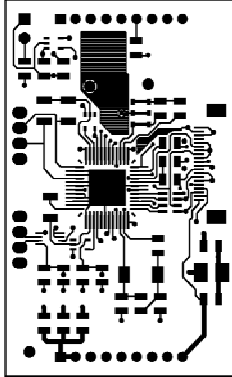


Appendix E: Layout Capacity Module

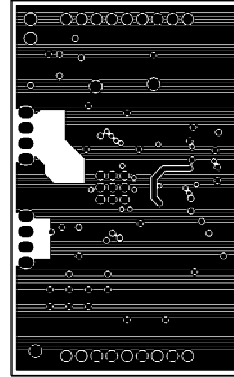
Top Layer



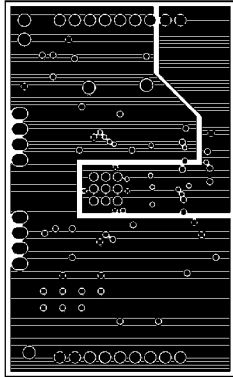
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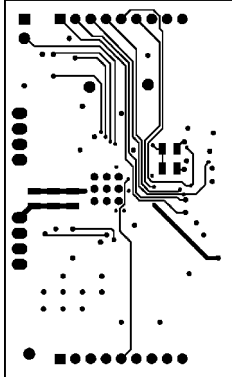
Layer 2



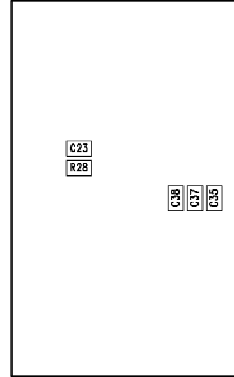
Layer 3



Layer 4



Bottom Layer



Last Changes:

23. June 2005 First release version
 02. August 2007 Correction wiring diagrams (pin description)

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