Lab 1

• Open GNU Radio Companion:
  – Open a Terminal/Console/Command Prompt
  – Run 'gnuradio-companion'
Lab 1

Canvas (the flowgraph construction area)

Log window – keep an eye on this, as well as your terminal!

Drag blocks from the Block list onto the canvas.

Connect ports by clicking on the chosen port of one block, and then click on the port of the other block. You can delete connections by clicking on the connection's line and pressing the Delete key.

Block list – Press CTRL+F to search for a name.
Create a sine wave & inspect the generated samples with a (time-domain) Scope Sink
Lab 1

'Options' block is used to set global parameters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>top_block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Size</td>
<td>1280, 1024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate Options</td>
<td>WX GUI ▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run</td>
<td>Autostart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Number of Output</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realtime Scheduling</td>
<td>Off ▼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Name of generated Python file**: top_block
- **Title of main GUI window, or name of Hierarchical block**: Not specified
- **GRC canvas size**: 1280, 1024
- **Type of code to generate (see next)**: WX GUI
- **How to start & stop the flowgraph**: Autostart
- **Advanced: limit the number of samples output from each iteration of every block's work function**: 0
- **If code is run as 'root' (e.g. with 'sudo') ask OS kernel to prioritise this process**: Off ▼
Lab 1

- GUI app using WX toolkit (use WX GUI blocks)
- GUI app using Qt toolkit (use Qt GUI blocks)
- Command-line app without GUI (text-based, run in a console)
- Create a Hierarchical block that will appear in the block list (a reusable component, not an app – use Pad Source/Sink blocks to expose ports, and Parameter blocks to expose configuration variables)
Lab 1

Automatically start flowgraph

Do not automatically start flowgraph
Lab 1

- ID: top_block
- Title: [Title]
- Author: [Author]
- Description: [Description]
- Window Size: 1280, 1024
- Generate Options: No GUI
- Run Options: Run to Completion
- Max Number of Output: [Max Number of Output]
- Realtime Scheduling: Off

- Will automatically exit if/when done
- Pressing ENTER will exit
Lab 1

'samp_rate' is always added by default in a new flowgraph.

Variable: a block that contains an arbitrary Python expression.

You can refer to it in another block by its ID.
Lab 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>samp_rate</td>
<td>32000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ID**: (Python) variable name  
**Value**: arbitrary Python expression, e.g.

- 32000 (the default): an integer
- 32e6: 32000.0 (floating-point number)
- int(32e6): 32000 (integer cast of floating-point number)
Another example of a simple arbitrary Python expression.

Hover the cursor over any parameter field and the tooltip will show you the expression's evaluated result (here $5 + 6 = 11$)

**Note:** arbitrary expressions can only be written into fields that have a white background (‘raw’ fields).

'label' is just for show here (it doesn't actually do anything useful in this flowgraph).
Lab 1

**GUI widget to control the generated frequency**

- **Signal Source**
  - **ID:** samp_rate
  - **Sample Rate:** 32k
  - **Waveform:** Cosine
  - **Frequency:** 1k
  - **Amplitude:** 1
  - **Offset:** 0

- **Throttle**
  - **Sample Rate:** 32k

- **WX GUI Slider**
  - **ID:** freq
  - **Label:** Frequency
  - **Default Value:** 1k
  - **Minimum:** 0
  - **Maximum:** 16k
  - **Converter:** Float

- **WX GUI Scope Sink**
  - **Title:** Scope Plot
  - **Sample Rate:** 32k
  - **Trigger Mode:** Auto
  - **Y Axis Label:** Counts

**Synthesises a sine wave**

**GUI widget to plot samples in the time-domain**

Will throttle the rate at which samples pass through this block (thus setting the rate at which samples pass through the whole flow graph).
Lab 1

Any processing block's 'Sample Rate' parameter is used for DSP calculation, **not** for controlling the rate at which samples are produced. This is distinct from a hardware (or Throttle) block where it **is** used to control sample flow.

An underline indicates changing the parameter via any dependent variable will cause the block to trigger an internal callback and update its state (i.e. perform a real-time parameter change).
Sample Rate (DSP)

- If calculating a sine wave where a given frequency *in Hertz* is desired, you actually need to know the sample rate too. This is because the mathematical representation requires both values to calculate the individual sample amplitude at any specific point in time.

- The actual sample rate value used can be anything. It just so happens you'll usually use the same value as in the rest of your flowgraph so that everything will be consistent (operate in the same sample rate domain).
Sample Rate (DSP)

- Think of it as being used to calculate the discrete step size from one sample to the next within a DSP operation (e.g. the time step when calculating the amplitude of the next sample in the sine wave generator)
Sample Rate (Hardware)

- Distinct from mathematical (DSP) calculation, sample rate also refers to the rate at which samples pass through the flowgraph.
- If there is no rate control, hardware clock or throttling mechanism, the samples will be generated, pass through the flowgraph and be consumed as fast as possible (i.e. the flowgraph will be CPU bound).
- This is desirable if you want to perform some fixed DSP on stored data as quickly as possible (e.g. read from a file, resample and write it back).
Sample Rate (Hardware)

• Only a block that represents some underlying hardware with its own clock (e.g. USRP, sound card), or the Throttle Block, will use 'Sample Rate' to set that hardware clock, and therefore have the effect of applying rate control to the samples in the flowgraph.

• A Throttle Block will simply apply host-based timing (against the 'wall clock') to control the rate of the samples it produces (i.e. samples that it makes available on its outputs to downstream blocks).
Sample Rate (Hardware)

• A hardware Sink block will consume samples at a fixed rate (relative to the wall clock)

• The Throttle Block, or a hardware Sink block, will apply 'back pressure' to the upstream blocks (the rate of work of the upstream blocks will be limited by the throttling effect of this rate-controlling block)

• A hardware Source block will produce samples at a fixed rate (relative to the wall clock)
Sample Rate (Hardware)

• In general, there should only ever be one block in a flowgraph that has the ability to throttle sample flow.

• Otherwise you need to be very careful with multiple, unsynchronised clock sources: they will eventually go out of sync and cause overflows/underruns as their production/consumption rates will differ.
  - This is the 'two clock' problem (discussed later)
  - Work arounds: allow non-blocking I/O, and/or tweak resampling rates to account for the clock offsets
Lab 1

A port’s colour indicates the type of samples flowing through the port. The colours also apply to block parameter fields.

Tip:
After single-clicking on block, press the up/down arrow keys to change the type (this actually steps through options in the block’s first available parameter).
Lab 1

The slider's ID is 'freq', which is also the Python variable name. This is used to set the 'Frequency' parameter of the Signal Source. Since 'Frequency' is underlined, moving the slider (and therefore changing the value of 'freq') will trigger the callback in the Signal Source, which will make it update its internal DSP calculations.
Lab 1

Whether 'freq' should be a floating-point number, or an integer 1000.0 in scientific notation

Label next to widget in the GUI

Whether 'freq' should be a floating-point number, or an integer
Lab 1

Rate at which to throttle samples through this block. Just happens to be the same as the sample rate we use for DSP/display in the other blocks!

Vectors & tags will be covered another time.
Lab 1

These will be covered later, but for now have a look at the Documentation tab where they are discussed.

Plot multiple signals (they may not be synchronised when drawn!)

0 will cause the plot to auto-scale to the incoming signal. Entering any other value will set it to a fixed scale/offset in that dimension.

This is purely for generating the correct step sizes on the drawn X-axis!

Plot two Float streams in sync by changing Scope's Type to Complex, and use Float to Complex block beforehand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>V Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>V Offset</td>
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<td>T Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trigger Mode</td>
<td>Auto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y Axis Label</td>
<td>Counts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lab 1

Generate Python code

Generate Python code and execute the code
Lab 1

```python
import analog
import blocks
import eng_notation
import gr
import wxgui
import fir
import fir.py
import scopesink2
import grc
import wx
import wxgui
import OptionParser
import GRC

class top_block(GRC.wxgui.top_block_GUI):
    def __init__(self):
        super().init(self, title="Top Block")

        # Variables
        self.samp_rate = 32000
        self.my_var = 5 + 6
        self.freq = 1e3

        # Blocks
        fsize = max(2, self.samp_rate / self.freq / 2)
        self.sizer = wx.BoxSizer(wx.VERTICAL)
        self.freq_text_box = forms.text_box(
            parent=self.GetWin(),
            size=fsize,
            value=self.freq,
            label='Frequency',
            converter=forms.float_converter(),
            proportion=0,
            style=wx.SL_HORIZONTAL,
            cast=float,
        )
        self.freq_slider = forms.slider(
            parent=self.GetWin(),
            size=fsize,
            value=self.freq,
            callback=self.set_freq,
            minimum=0,
            maximum=16e3,
            num_steps=1000,
        )

    def set_freq(self):
        self.freq = self.freq_slider.GetValue()
```
Lab 1

Control frequency of sine wave by dragging slider, or entering a value in the text box.

Sine wave of amplitude 1

X-axis scale

Y-axis control (available when auto-scaling is disabled)

Horizontal offset

Toggle auto-scaling

Toggle DC removal

Draw style (line, points, none)
Lab 1

Scientific notation works here too, but you can also append SI units. The default 'freq' is 1000, so we see '1k'. You could enter '1e3', which would result in the same value. Similarly '2340' is equivalent to '2.34k' and '2.34e3', but WX widgets will always show the SI version. **Note:** you cannot enter SI units into the parameter fields in GRC!
Generate a sine wave & some noise, add both, and plot the resulting signal in the frequency domain.
Lab 2

Options
ID: top_block
Generate Options: WX GUI

Variable
ID: samp_rate
Value: 1M

WX GUI Slider
ID: freq
Label: Frequency
Default Value: 1k
Minimum: -500k
Maximum: 500k
Converter: Float

Signal Source
Sample Rate: 1M
Waveform: Cosine
Frequency: 1k
Amplitude: 1
Offset: 0

Noise Source
Noise Type: Gaussian
Amplitude: 316.228n
Seed: 0

WX GUI Slider
ID: noise_amp
Label: Noise Amp
Default Value: -130
Minimum: -150
Maximum: 0
Converter: Float

Add a number of streams together

Noise source simulates noise floor (amplitude controlled by slider)

Throttle
Sample Rate: 1M

WX GUI Scope Sink
Title: Scope Plot
Sample Rate: 1M
Trigger Mode: Auto
Y Axis Label: Counts

WX GUI FFT Sink
Title: FFT Plot
Sample Rate: 1M
Baseband Freq: 0
Y per Div: 10 dB
Y Divs: 10
Ref Level (dB): 0
Ref Scale (p2p): 2
FFT Size: 1.024k
Refresh Rate: 15
Freq Set Varname: None

GUI widget to draw an FFT plot
'noise_amp' is the slider value, which (here) we interpret in dB, as opposed to a linear sample amplitude value (e.g. '1.0').
Therefore we need to convert the value in dB to an actual linear amplitude value ('volts') for use by the block (i.e. reverse the 'log10' function). The decimal points are added to force Python to compute with floating-point values (otherwise it would round and produce integers).
Lab 2

**Options**
ID: top_block
Generate Options: WX GUI

**Variable**
ID: samp_rate
Value: 1M

**Signal Source**
Sample Rate: 1M
Waveform: Cosine
Frequency: 1k
Amplitude: 1
Offset: 0

**WX GUI Slider**
ID: freq
Label: Frequency
Default Value: 1k
Minimum: -500k
Maximum: 500k
Converter: Float

**Properties: Add**
ID: blocks_add_xx_0
IO Type: Complex
Num Inputs: 2
Vec Length: 1

Number of input streams
Lab 2

Sets the range on the Y-axis
Value added to rendered Y-axis values
Time relative to Sample Rate!

Used to control how the computed FFT is scaled and 'fit' to the available plot area.

Name of an existing GRC Variable that will be set to the frequency you click on if clicking in the FFT plot area.
**Tip:**
If your FFT Sink will show your baseband signal, you can use 'Freq Set Varname' to have your flowgraph process a specific signal-of-interest at the frequency you click on (e.g. with the Freq Xlating FIR filter). More on this later...
Lab 2

Simulated noise floor is below what is currently shown on the plot.

Peak corresponding to 1 kHz tone

Scale adjustment

Offset adjustment
Lab 2

Noise amplitude has been increased

Peak moved as 'Frequency' has been adjusted
Averaging enabled, which has the effect of smoothing/flattening the noise floor.
Tip: Hovering your mouse over the plot area will show this tooltip (right-click to enable/disable it).

**Frequency** is calculated from the mouse cursor's horizontal component (and is approximate).

**Amplitude** is calculated from the mouse cursor's vertical component.

**FFT** is calculated from the amplitude of the FFT bin that corresponds to **Frequency**.
Use a Scope Sink in XY Mode so we can observe the characteristics of an IQ (quadrature) signal.
Lab 2: XY Mode

Since we use the same sample rate consistently across blocks, 'Frequency' will also be the rate at which the IQ sample (complex phasor) will rotate around the XY plot (e.g. here it'll be once a second).

The plot will collect a group of samples and display them using the sample's I value for the X coordinate, and Q value for the Y coordinate. The group will appear to rotate counter-clockwise in a circle with a fixed distance of 1 from the origin (the 'Signal Amp').

Scope Plot
Lab 2: XY Mode

To return to normal scope mode, click on any of the other 'Channel Options' tabs. Here we recall what a quadrature sine wave looks like (Y-axis scale has been adjusted).
Lab 2: XY Mode

Zooming in on the sine wave along the Y-axis, we see the individual I and Q values that make up each IQ sample. Each of these pairs (taken together along the vertical) becomes a point on the XY plot. The I and Q values here determine the instantaneous angle (argument) of the phasor.

To show the individual samples, the 'Marker' draw style has been changed.
Lab 2: XY Mode

Since the frequency has been increased, but the number of samples collected by the plot remains constant, the samples will span a greater angular (arg) range.
Lab 2: XY Mode

Now the frequency has been increased significantly and the discrete samples can be seen. In fact they are overlapping in the plot.

Tip: You can manual enter values that are outside the slider's preset range via the text box. E.g. you could enter -2 and observe the sample group rotate in the opposite (clockwise) direction. This is what happens when you have a 'negative frequency' (have a look at the FFT plot).
Lab 2: XY Mode

To join the discrete sample points on the plot, 'Line Link' can be selected.
Lab 2: XY Mode

Increasing 'Noise Amp' adds noise to each sample, which can be seen in the slight offset of each sample point in the noisy circle.
A Notebook can be used to organise GUI widgets in tabs.

The Notebook parameter syntax is:
<notebook ID>, <zero-based tab index>
Lab 3: Audio

Output a single tone from the computer's soundcard
Lab 3: Audio

The sample rate has been changed to 48 kHz, which generally supported on all audio hardware.

Instead of generating a tone, you can also generate noise.

Floating-point sample values should be normalised to be between -1.0 and 1.0. The Audio Sink will scale incoming samples appropriately for the hardware. Therefore we should choose an amplitude (0.7) that is a little less than 'full scale' (i.e. < 1.0). This is generally good practice (for USRPs too).
Lab 3: Audio

Identifier that is platform-specific. Blank implies the default. E.g. on ALSA with pulse audio installed, you could write 'pulse'. Run "aplay -L" in a Linux terminal to see possible ALSA options.

Set to the number of channels you wish to stream to on your audio hardware (e.g. 2 for stereo)

Depending on the underlying implementation, this will instruct the hardware's usermode API to return immediately after being passed a buffer of audio samples (non-blocking mode), or wait until they are consumed (blocking mode). See next page for details.
Lab 3: Audio

- Blocking mode ('OK to Block') will apply upstream backpressure, which is good when the Audio Sink is the only hardware device in the flowgraph.

- This can be problematic if the flowgraph source is, for example, a USRP. The source is then also hardware that has its own internal clock and will be throttling the sample production rate while the Audio Sink is throttling consumption with its own unsynchronised clock. This is called the 'two clock' problem.
Lab 3: Audio

- To workaround this two clock problem, set the Audio Sink to non-blocking mode (not 'OK to Block') so that it will never hold up the flowgraph (i.e. not apply backpressure). It will consume samples as normal, but if there is ever an excess (e.g. the USRP is producing samples a little faster than the Audio Sink can consume) it will drop the samples (might cause audio glitches).

- This does not solve the case where samples are being produced slower than the Audio Sink's consumption rate (this will produce an underrun: audio will sound choppy and 'aU' will be printed).
Lab 3: Audio

Same sine wave as before, but now we hear it emanating from the computer's speakers.
Lab 3: Audio

Visualise the audio sampled by a soundcard on a time-based scrolling FFT (waterfall/spectrogram).
Lab 3: Audio

Parameters are identical to the Audio Sink.
Lab 3: Audio

Parameters are identical to the FFT Sink
Running the sine wave generator program at the same time, and changing the frequency. This is a rough 'loopback' test where the computer's microphone listens to its speakers.
Receive a baseband signal using a USRP and listen to it using a narrow- or wide-band FM demodulator.
Lab 4: FM RX

'samp_rate' has been a Variable block, but now is a Text Box whose value can be changed at runtime.

The USRP Source block will produce baseband samples by sampling RF on a selected antenna at a particular frequency, sample rate and gain.

A Rational Resampler will adapt the notional rate of a stream by interpolating/decimating overall, as needed. This is necessary here because USRP rates are not integer multiples of Audio Sink rates.

The two FM receiver blocks accept complex baseband samples and output demodulated audio. They differ mainly in terms of their internal filter bandwidths.

Disable 'OK to Block' to work around 'two clock' problem.
Lab 4: FM RX

Tip: usually all parameters can be left as they are (except for sample rate, frequency, gain and antenna).

Sample type on output port
Sample type from USRP
RX streamer options
Same as UHD device args
These will be covered later
Selects a 'side', e.g. A:A or A:B
Valid range depends on hardware
Valid range depends on hardware
Valid range depends on hardware
Usually 'TX/RX' or 'RX2'
Usually 0

Tip: To be certain about any of the possible parameter values, consult the online documentation for your device and/or daughterboard. You can also run 'uhd_usrp_probe' in a terminal for hardware specs. Watch your console during runtime for any warning messages from UHD regarding invalid settings!

Mapping from physical (USRP) channel index to logical (GRC port) channel index (zero-based). Leave as the empty list '[]' for the default linear mapping.

Sets the number of output ports and duplicates the channel-specific parameters accordingly.
Lab 4: FM RX

- This example uses the USRP B200
- Valid ranges:
  - Antenna: TX/RX, RX2
  - Frequency: 70 MHz – 6 GHz
  - RX Gain: 0 – 73 (default of ~25 is a good starting point)
  - Sample Rate: 62.5 ksp – 56 Msp (62.5e3 - 56e6)
    - Default **Master Clock Rate** = 32e6 (max: 61.44e6)
    - (MCR / sample rate) **must** be an integer, and **should** be divisible by 4 for the best RF performance (flat spectrum)
    - MCR can be changed with “master_clock_rate=X” in Device Addr, where X is new MCR in Hz (e.g. 40e6)
- A 'O' on the console indicates an overrun, and occurs when the host is not able to consume samples quickly enough.
Lab 4: FM RX

We need to adapt the USRP rate to something suitable for the Audio Sink. The default 'samp_rate' value is 250e3, which sets the rate at which the USRP produces samples. The Audio Sink is configured for a sample (consumption) rate of 48e3, but (250000 / 48000) is not an integer. We can cheat here and set Decimation to be the incoming notional sample rate (250000), and the Interpolation to be a different (non-divisible) outgoing notional sample rate (192000*). The code will calculate the GCD. Since the parameters must be integers, and 'samp_rate' is a floating-point number, we use the Python function 'int' to convert it to an integer.

* 'audio_rate' is multiplied by 4 ('audio_interp') because the demodulator blocks will perform additional decimation (by 4). Specifically the WBFM block should be given a high rate (i.e. high bandwidth signal since FM broadcast channels are 200 kHz wide).
The Wide Band FM block makes it easy to listen to stations in the normal Broadcast FM band.

Incoming notional sample rate (192e3)

Decimation factor: outgoing rate is (incoming / decimation) = 48000
Lab 4: FM RX

The Narrow Band FM block makes it easy to listen to narrow analog and digital channels that use FM or FSK.

To switch between modulators in this example, simply enable one block and disable the other.

'audio_interp' is changed to 1 here as NBFM doesn't need such a high bandwidth signal.

*Incoming* notional sample rate (48000)

*Outgoing* notional sample rate (48000)

FM de-emphasis factor (more on Wikipedia)

Maximum amount signal will deviate from center (0 Hz). This determines output value scaling (e.g. here +5 kHz will be 1.0, -5 kHz will be -1.0).
Lab 4: FM RX

The baseband spectrum (a local radio station) is shown on the FFT plot, and the signal at the center of the spectrum is demodulated producing audio coming out of the host's soundcard.
Repeat the Narrow Band FM reception example, but perform the individual demodulation steps.
Power Squelch will squelch (or mute) the baseband signal when its amplitude is below the threshold. This means we can avoid listening to noise.

The Quadrature Demodulator is the key part of demodulating an FM signal. The 'deviation' is the maximum frequency shift we expect.

The unfiltered (raw) FM-demodulated signal will pass through the Low Pass Filter, which will keep the voice frequency range we'd like to hear, and attenuate anything higher.

The Scope Sink will plot both the unfiltered and filtered signal.
Lab 4: Manual FM RX

- **Options**
  - ID: top_block
  - Generate Options: WX GUI

- **Variable**
  - ID: samp_rate
  - Value: 32x

- **WX GUI Text Box**
  - ID: samp_rate
  - Label: Sample Rate
  - Default Value: 250k
  - Converter: Float

- **UHD: USRP Source**
  - Samp Rate (SpS): 250k
  - Ch0: Center Freq (Hz): 90M
  - Ch0: Gain (dB): 40
  - Ch0: Antenna: TX/RX

- **WX GUI Text Box**
  - ID: freq
  - Label: Frequency
  - Default Value: 96M
  - Converter: Float

- **WX GUI Slider**
  - ID: gain
  - Label: Gain
  - Default Value: 40
  - Minimum: 0
  - Maximum: 90
  - Converter: Float

- **Rational Resampler**
  - Interpolation: 48k
  - Decimation: 256k
  - Taps: Fractional BW: 0

- **Power Squelch**
  - Threshold (dB): -80
  - Alpha: 1m
  - Ramp: 0
  - Gate: No

- **Low Pass Filter**
  - Decimation: 1
  - Gain: 1
  - Sample Rate: 48k
  - Cutoff Freq: 3.5k
  - Transition Width: 500
  - Window: Hamming
  - Beta: 6.76

- **NBFM Receive**
  - Audio Rate: 48k
  - Quadrature Rate: 48k
  - Alpha: 1m
  - Tau: 4
  - Max Deviation: 5k

- **Audio Sink**
  - Sample Rates: 48k

- **Variable**
  - ID: audio_rate
  - Value: 48k

- **WX GUI FFT Sink**
  - Title: FFT Plot
  - Sample Rate: 256k
  - Baseband Freq: 0
  - Y per Div: 10 dB
  - Y Divs: 10
  - Ref Level (dB): 0
  - Ref Scale (p2p): 2
  - FFT Size: 3.024k
  - Refresh Rate: 15
  - Freq Set Varname: None

- **WX GUI Scope Sink**
  - Title: Scope Plot
  - Sample Rate: 88k
  - V Scale: 250m
  - Trigger Mode: Auto

---

Actually the 'alpha' of a single-pole IIR filter

Threshold above which the signal should be allowed to pass through

Averaging factor applied to the measured signal amplitude used for detection

Length (in number of samples) of attack and decay windows (see next)

No: generate zero samples while squelched.
Yes: don't produce any samples while squelched.
Lab 4: Manual FM RX

Alpha must be between zero and one. One means no averaging will be applied, and zero means the signal will never change (always stay at zero). The smaller the value, the longer it will take for the squelch to open when a signal of a particular amplitude is present. You should experiment until you find a suitable value that works well for your application (e.g. minimal number of false 'unmuts').

**Note:** Alpha only applies to the signal detection process, not to the signal that is output when the block is in the unmuted state.

Having a non-zero Ramp will also improve the performance of this block. When Ramp is 0, the signal will be unmuted immediately once its averaged amplitude exceeds the threshold. When non-zero, the block will transition through an attack phase when unmuted, and a decay phase when muting once more. The Ramp value is the number of samples the attack and decay phases should last. During these phases, the input signal will be multiplied by a smooth ramp function (actually the part of a sine wave), which has the effect of fading in/out the original signal.
This block effectively outputs the instantaneous frequency change in the incoming quadrature baseband signal as a real floating-point output (in essence pure Frequency de-Modulation). Gain is a scaling factor applied to this calculation. The equation calculates the gain such our output will ideally vary between -1.0 and 1.0, where each extent represents the maximum frequency deviation we expect in our signal. Usually this deviation is set by the transmitter.
Lab 4: Manual FM RX

- Determine the sample format, and whether the filter will decimate (reduce the notional sample rate) or interpolate (increase the notional sample rate).
- The decimation or interpolation rate (depending on the FIR Type).
- Gain applied by the FIR filter itself.
- Notional incoming sample rate (48000).
- Frequency of the end of the passband (3.5 kHz).
- Width from the end of the passband to the beginning of the stop band.
- Select the appropriate Window function when generating filter taps.
- Additional value used by the Kaiser window.
The Filter Design Tool (run 'gr_filter_design') is a GUI that allows you to interactively design different types of filters. Once you're happy with your design, you can place an Interpolating/Decimating FIR Filter block into your GRC flowgraph and set its taps using the filter coefficients output by the designer.
Lab 4: Manual FM RX

The baseband signal will be demodulated as before, however audio will only be heard if there is a strong-enough signal present at the center of the spectrum to open the squelch. The Scope Sink shows the raw demodulated signal (a whistle) in blue, and the low-pass filtered (and therefore slightly delayed) signal in green, which is output to the Audio Sink.
GNU Radio:
http://gnuradio.org/

CGRAN:
http://cgran.org/

Ettus Research:
http://ettus.com/

UHD Docs:
http://files.ettus.com/uhd_docs/doxymanual/html/