XELA ROBOTICS

uSkin®

uSPa46

1 Overview

- Hall-effect-based tactile sensor
- Multi-taxel (distributed) sensing
- 3-axis force measurement per taxel
- Soft skin
- Up to 330 Hz of sampling rate
- Provides temperature data (e.g. for drift compensation)
- 2 different sensitivities (pre-programmed)



2 Technical specification

	Value	Unit
Power voltage (microcontroller)	5	V
Power voltage (sensor)	2.2–3.6	V
Current consumption (microcontroller)	11.6–26	mA
Current consumption (sensor)	52.1	mA
Sampling frequency	330	Hz
Dimensions (without cable)	30.60 x 45.10 x 5.1 $\sim$ 5.5	mm
Measurement range (x & y) *2	$\pm$ 1464	LSB
Measurement range (z) *2	$+16705$	LSB
Noise (x & y) *2	$\pm$ 0.14	$\%$ to max range
Noise (z) *2	$\pm$ 0.014	$\%$ to max range
number of taxels	24	$--$

*1 Without microcontroller

*2 In case of sensitivity H

3 Sensitivity/ Resolution

uSPa46 features two distinct sensitivity settings denoted by the letters "L" or "H". This sensitivity configuration dictates the measurement range of the sensor. Detailed information regarding the sensor's response for a single sensing point (i.e., when force is applied to one taxel) is provided in Fig.1 and 2. The default setting for sensitivity across all standard models is "H". For inquiries regarding sensor modules with alternative sensitivity settings, please contact XELA Robotics.

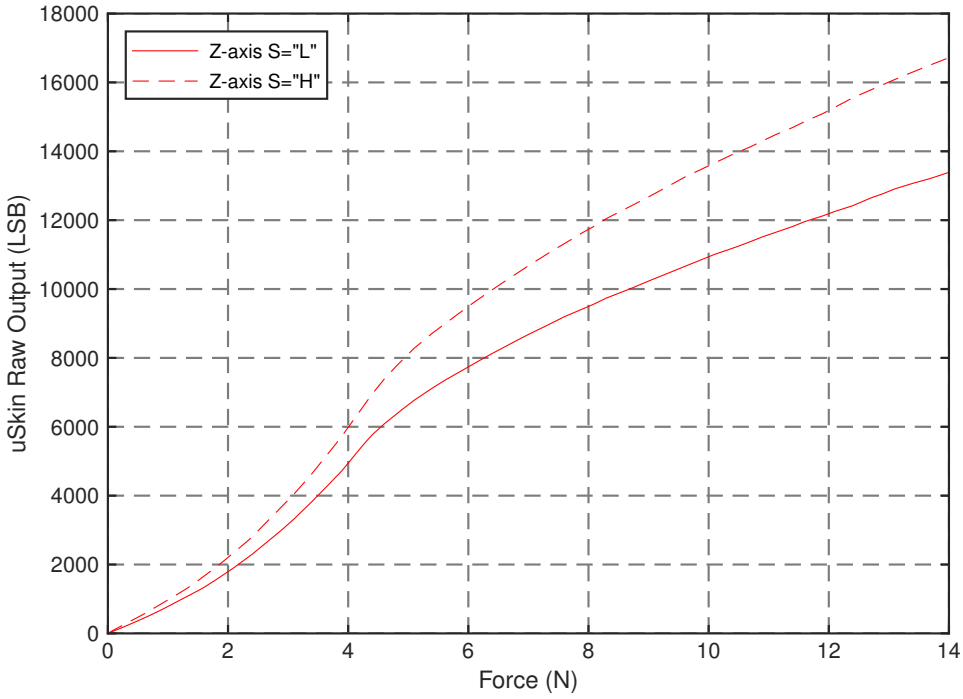


Figure 1: Sensor's normal force (z-axis) output with two sensitivity settings.

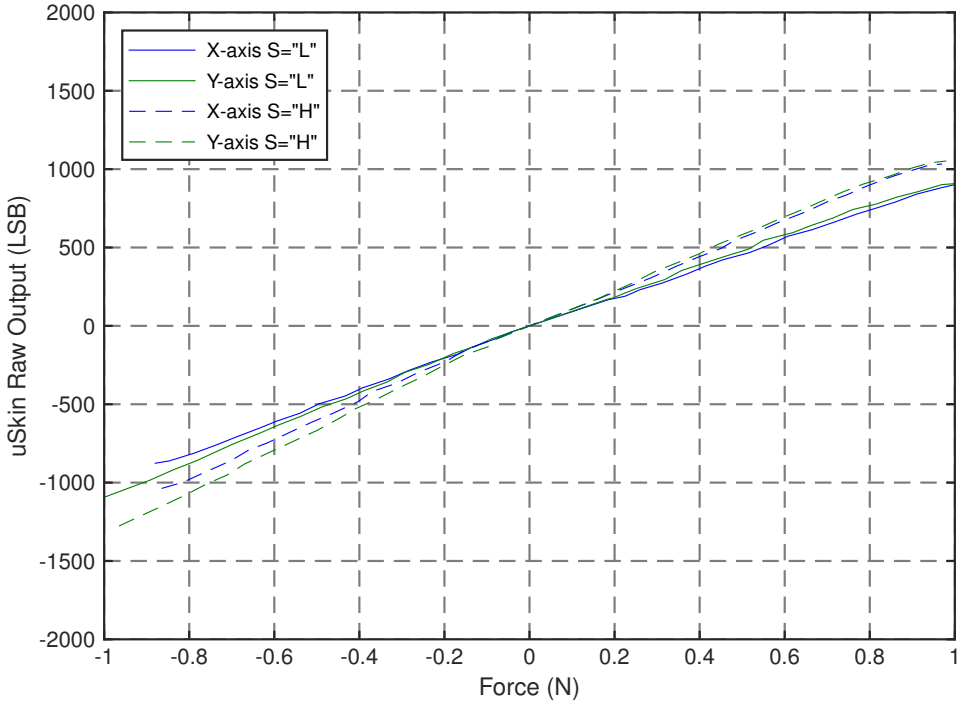


Figure 2:
Sensor's shear forces (x and y-axis) output with two sensitivity settings.

Sensitivity	Measurable Range				Resolution	
	Newton		LSB		N/LSB	
	x/y	z	x/y	z	x/y	z
L	±1.23	14.00	±1277	13404	0.000959	0.001045
H (default)	±1.15	14.00	±1464	16705	0.000786	0.000838

Table 1:
Summary of uSPa46's maximum measurable force and resolution according to the selected sensitivity.

4 Maximum Signal to Noise Ratio

Figure 4 and 3 show the output noise band of uSPa46 in two different sensitivity settings when there is no load applied. These 300 consecutive data for 3 seconds were used to calculate the noise of each axis which is represented in MSE (mean square error). The calculation result can be seen in Table 2.

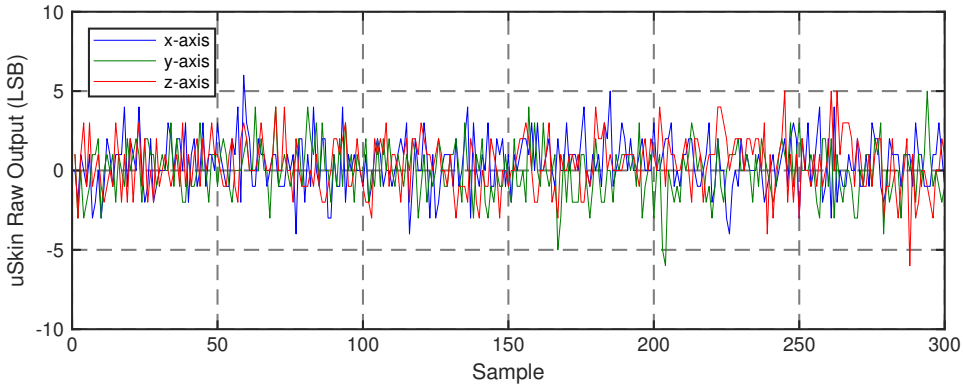


Figure 3: Output signal (low sensitivity) without load.

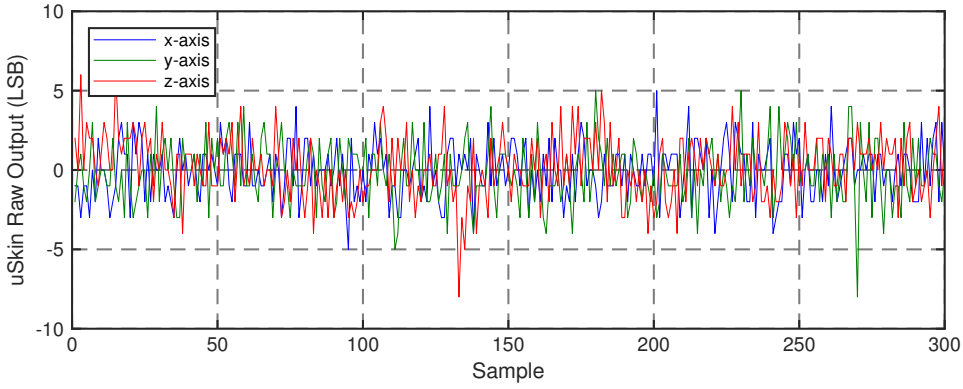


Figure 4: Output signal (high sensitivity) without load.

	Axis	MSE (LSB)	PSNR (dB)
Low	X/Y	3.1	63.89
	Z	3.3	77.29
High	X/Y	4.3	64.19
	Z	3.2	75.99

Table 2:
Peak signal to noise ratio of uSPa46.

The (MSNR) peak signal to noise ratio of uSPa46 was calculated by using equation 1. Here, MSE is the mean square error of 300 samples of uSkin reading when there is no load applied (see Fig. 4 and 3). MAX_I is the maximum measurable force (in LSB) taken from Table 1.

$$MSNR = 20 \cdot log_{10}(MAX_I) - 10 \cdot log_{10}(MSE) \tag{1}$$

5 Thermal Drift Compensation

The internal temperature of uSkin will rise after running the sensor for several minutes. As a result, uSkin sensor's output will also drift over time. As seen in Fig. 5, the z-axis is mostly affected with around 120 LSB drift when the temperature rises about 3.5 $^{\circ}C$.

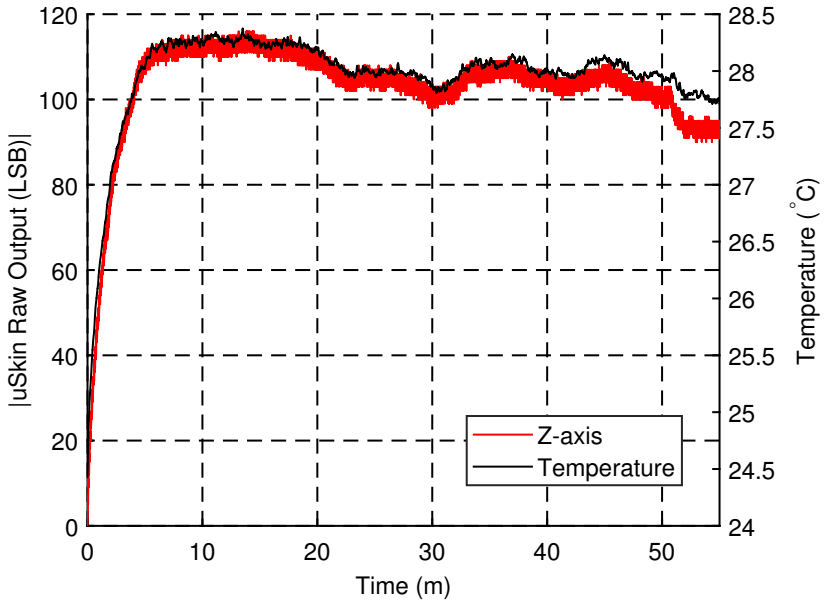


Figure 5:
Output fluctuation of uSkin (single taxel of S="H") due to temperature rise

To overcome this problem, uSkin sensor has a temperature compensation algorithm. The compensation result can be seen in Fig. 6.

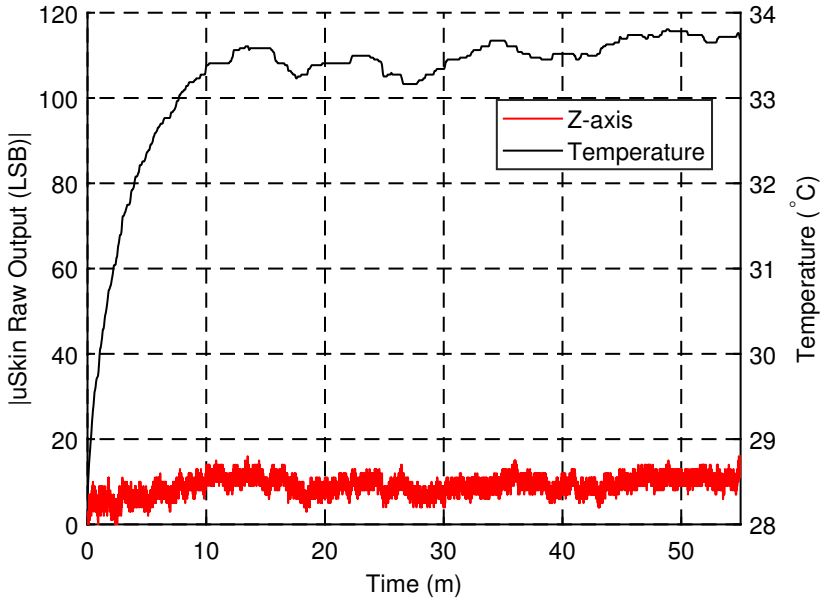


Figure 6:
Output of uSkin (single taxel) after compensation.

6 Hysteresis

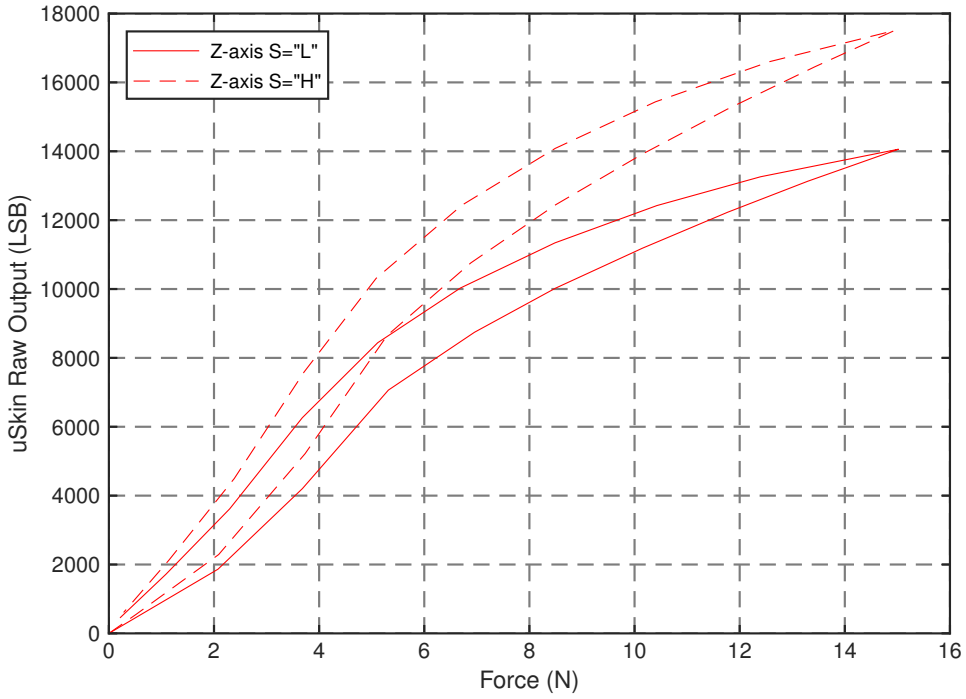


Figure 7:
uSPa46 loading and unloading response (z-axis).

Figure 7 shows the output of uSkin when loaded and unloaded with ten step-wise forces. Each step is about three seconds. The hysteresis value is measured by first calculating the difference of uSkin output during the loading and unloading cycles at the mid point of the maximum loading force. The absolute value of the difference then divided by the output of uSkin during the maximum loading force. The hysteresis value of the z-axis for sensitivity low and high are 8.08 and 7.86% respectively.

7 Calibration

Sensor calibration serves various critical purposes, including the enhancement of sensor characteristics to achieve greater linearity, the reduction of cross-talk between axes, the minimization of differences in sensor responses across individual taxels, and the conversion of sensor output from Least Significant Bits (LSB) to the Newton unit. For example, as illustrated in Figure 1, the steepness of the uSPa46 (low sensitivity) sensor's response curve exhibits notable shifts at two forces: 2N and 4.5N of applied force.

In certain applications, such as those focused on basic shear force measurements, contact detection, or pattern generation for machine learning, the need for precise calibration is less critical. However, when precision is of importance, our sensor can be calibrated. XELA Robotics offers two distinct calibration options: standard and individual calibrations. The standard calibration is included with the sensor as a complimentary package. It involves the collection of data from multiple identical sensor models, followed by the computation of shared calibration parameters through advanced machine-learning techniques.

In contrast, individual calibration parameters are tailored exclusively for a specific sensor point. This individualized approach ensures a higher degree of calibration accuracy compared to the standard calibration parameters. Should you require individual calibration, we kindly encourage you to reach out to XELA Robotics for further details on associated fees and services.

8 Dimensions

The uSPa46 model has its cables routed from the underside of the PCB. Mounting it therefore requires a custom base plate with a pocket that clears the cables and the soldering pad area (see Fig. 8 for the location). The pocket must be at least 1 mm deep to fit the cable and solder joints. For example, a base plate 1.5 mm thick with a flat bottom would have a 1 mm pocket, leaving 0.5 mm of material below to protect the cables. The sensor can be attached to the base plate with adhesive tape applied anywhere on the bottom of the PCB except the soldering pad area.

The distance between each taxel is 7.25 mm. Moreover, users can customize the cable length to their specifications, with options ranging from 30 cm, 50 cm, to 90 cm, providing flexibility to meet various installation requirements.

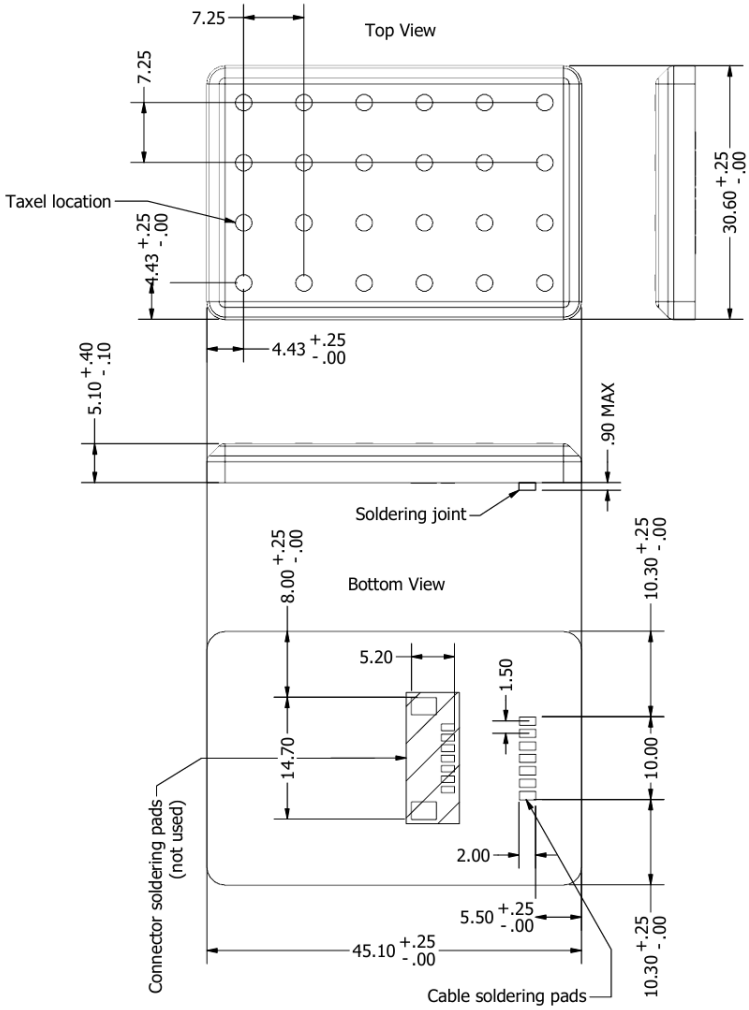


Figure 8:
uSPa46 drawing (units are in mm).