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**Surface chemical analysis — Scanning-  
probe microscopy — Determination  
of geometric quantities using SPM:  
Calibration of measuring systems**

*Analyse chimique des surfaces — Microscopie à sonde à balayage  
— Détermination des quantités géométriques en utilisant des  
microscopes à sonde à balayage: Étalonnage des systèmes de mesure*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 201, *Surface chemical analysis*, Subcommittee SC 9, *Scanning probe microscopy*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 11952:2014), of which it constitutes a minor revision. The changes to the previous edition are as follows:

		Previous edition	Revised edition
<a href="#">Figure 1</a>		“interferometry”	“interferometry”
<a href="#">Figure 1</a>	Note	“The calibration of a user’s SPM by means of traceably calibrated measurement standards is the object of this International Standard (done by the user).”	“The calibration of a user’s SPM by means of traceable calibrated measurement standards is the object of this document (done by the user).”
<a href="#">Clause 4</a>	$N_i$	“ $N_i$ ”	“ $N_{ij}$ ”
<a href="#">Clause 4</a>	$r$	“tip”	“tip radius”
<a href="#">Clause 4</a>	$\alpha_m$	“thermal expansion coefficient”	“thermal expansion coefficient of the specimen”
<a href="#">Clause 4</a>	$ytx$	“positional deviation $\Delta x$ measured along a y-coordinate line”	“straightness deviation $\Delta x$ measured along a y-coordinate line”
<a href="#">Clause 4</a>	$yty$	“straightness deviation $\Delta y$ measured along a y-coordinate line”	“positional deviation $\Delta y$ measured along a y-coordinate line”
<a href="#">Clause 4</a>	$ztz$	“straightness deviation $\Delta z$ measured along a z-coordinate line”	“positional deviation $\Delta z$ measured along a z-coordinate line”
<a href="#">6.3.1</a>	Title	“Kinds of external influence”	“Sources of external influences”
<a href="#">6.3.1</a>	First sentence	“As SPMs are most sensitive to interference from the environment, the following quantities are to be accounted for”:	“As SPMs are very sensitive to interference from the environment, the influences of the following quantities need to be determined”:

		Previous edition	Revised edition
<a href="#">6.3.1</a>	Fourth bullet	“mechanical vibrations (e.g. structural vibrations, foot fall sounds/human traffic, pumps)”;	“mechanical vibrations (e.g. structural vibrations, human traffic, pumps)”;
<a href="#">6.4</a>	a) and b)	a) For measurement b) For installation or familiarization of the staff	a) and b) switched
<a href="#">7.3.4</a>	Second bullet	“Adjust the z-position of the scanner in such a way that the z-scanner operates symmetrically around the central position in the z-deflection range (see also <a href="#">Figure 18</a> ).”	“Adjust the z-position of the scanner in such a way that the z-scanner operates symmetrically around the central position in the z-deflection range as illustrated in <a href="#">Figure 17</a> around its medium (central) deflection, i.e. 50 % of its range”
<a href="#">7.3.7</a>	Fourth bullet	“adjust the z-position of the scanner in such a way that the z-scanner operates, e.g. by 20% (see also <a href="#">Figure 20</a> ) above or below the central position in the z-deflection range (see also <a href="#">Figure 18</a> and <a href="#">20</a> ).”	“adjust the z-position of the scanner in such a way that the z-scanner operates above or below the central position in the z-deflection range, i.e. symmetrically around 10 %, 30 %, 70 % and 90 % (as illustrated in <a href="#">Figure 17</a> ), in addition to the basic z calibration performed around 50 % deflection”
<a href="#">Figure 9</a>	Title	“Flow diagram of calibration of the lateral axes <sup>[35]</sup> ”	“Calibration of the lateral axes: materials, steps and methods <sup>[35]</sup> ”
<a href="#">7.4.4</a>	Seventh paragraph	“needs to” “great”	“should” “large”
<a href="#">7.4.4</a>	Eighth paragraph	“(relatively feeble)”	“(low)”
<a href="#">7.4.5</a>	2)	“(see also <a href="#">Figure 18</a> ).”	“as illustrated in <a href="#">Figure 15</a> and shown in <a href="#">Figure 17</a> .”
<a href="#">7.4.7</a>	<a href="#">Figure 10</a>		
<a href="#">7.4.7</a>	4) and Note 1	“Appurtenant”	“relevant”
<a href="#">7.4.8</a>	Second bullet	“In good gratings, the mean values of the pitches of all the straight lines are a good approximation and should be used for further evaluation. If this is not the case, the parallelism of the straight lines is to be forced by fitting as above.”	“In good gratings, the fit lines $g_0$ to $g_n$ are nearly parallel so that the mean value of the gradients of all these straight lines is a good approximation and should be used for further evaluation. If this is not the case, the parallelism of the straight lines is to be forced by fitting as above.”
<a href="#">7.4.8</a>	Eighth bullet	“(example in <a href="#">Figure 15</a> )”	“(the example in <a href="#">Figure 12</a> shows a polynomial fit of the third degree)”

		Previous edition	Revised edition
<a href="#">7.4.8</a>	Note 2	“In the case of clear deviations of the specimen temperature (e.g. in deep-temperature applications) from the reference temperature 20 °C in particular, for which the calibration of the measurement standard is valid, the thermal expansion is to be accounted for.”	“The certified pitch values of a transfer standard are valid for a certain reference temperature, typically 20 °C. In case of significant deviations of the sample temperature from the reference temperature (e.g. in low-temperature chambers or if the sample is heated in the particular setup), the material-dependent thermal expansion is to be taken into account.”
<a href="#">7.5.7.2.1</a>	Second paragraph	“For the one straight line — besides the parallelism requirement — the determination uses only an area C in the middle of the indentation or elevation whose width can be selected by the user; it is usual to select one (according to ISO 5436 1) to two-thirds ( <a href="#">Figure 18</a> ) of the total width $w$ of the indentation/elevation.”	“For the one straight line — besides the parallelism requirement — the determination uses only the section C in the middle of the indentation or elevation whose width $w_m$ can be selected by the user; it is usual to select one (according to ISO 5436-1) to two-thirds (like in the example shown on the left of <a href="#">Figure 18</a> ) of the total width $w$ (defined as full-width at half maximum) of the indentation/elevation.”
<a href="#">7.5.7.2.1</a>	Third paragraph	“Taking account of the parallelism requirement, the second straight is selected through two areas A and B which lie symmetrically about the indentation/elevation and usually show the same width as C. The distance of A”	“Taking account of the parallelism requirement, the second straight is selected through two sections A and B which lie symmetrically about the indentation/elevation. The lengths $w_s$ in sections A and B are identical, but might be different from $w_m$ . The sections A and B should not start/end with the beginning/end of the profile (scanline), as irregularities in height measurement are to be expected especially at the beginning/end of scanlines. A spacing $w_l$ to the left of section A and $w_r$ to the right of section B should be allowed for. As a general rule, the total length of the measured profile should be at least $3w$ . The distance $w_e$ of A”
<a href="#">7.5.7.2.1</a>	Fourth paragraph	“As to the mathematics, the determination of the step height, $h$ , is reduced to the calculation of only one regression line by appropriately shifting the points area by area by $+h/2$ and $-h/2$ , respectively.”	“As to the mathematics, the determination of the step height, $h$ , is reduced to the calculation of only one regression line by least squares approximation with $h$ being the fit variable. This reduction to only one regression line is achieved by introducing a vertical shift of the data points in the sections A, B and C according to the following rules”:
<a href="#">7.5.7</a>	<a href="#">Figure 18</a> title		

		Previous edition	Revised edition
		“Step height determination according to ISO 5436-1 (left: step height measurement standard 6 nm)”	“Step height determination according to ISO 5436-1 (left: example of a step height measurement standard 6 nm, right: profile section C of length $w_m$ and profile sections A and B each of length $w_s$ taken into account for step height analysis, spacings of lengths $w_e$ from the edge and of lengths $w_l$ to the left of section A and $w_r$ to the right of section B)”
Table C.1	Sum	+1,49”	+1,50”
<a href="#">Annex E</a>	Fifth paragraph	“The bars in <a href="#">Figure E.1</a> give the uncertainty”	“The bars in <a href="#">Figure E.1</a> give the standard uncertainty”
Bibliography	[16]	DZIOMBA T., KOENDERS L., WILKENING G., FLEMMING M., DUPARRÉ A. Entwicklung einer Kalibrierrichtlinie für Raster-sondenmikroskope; tm — Technisches Messen 72 (2005) 5, S. 295–307; siehe auch <a href="http://www.tm-messen.de/">http://www.tm-messen.de/</a>	KLAPETEK P., Quantitative data processing in scanning probe microscopy. Elsevier, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, ISBN: 978-0-12-813347-7, 2018
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Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).



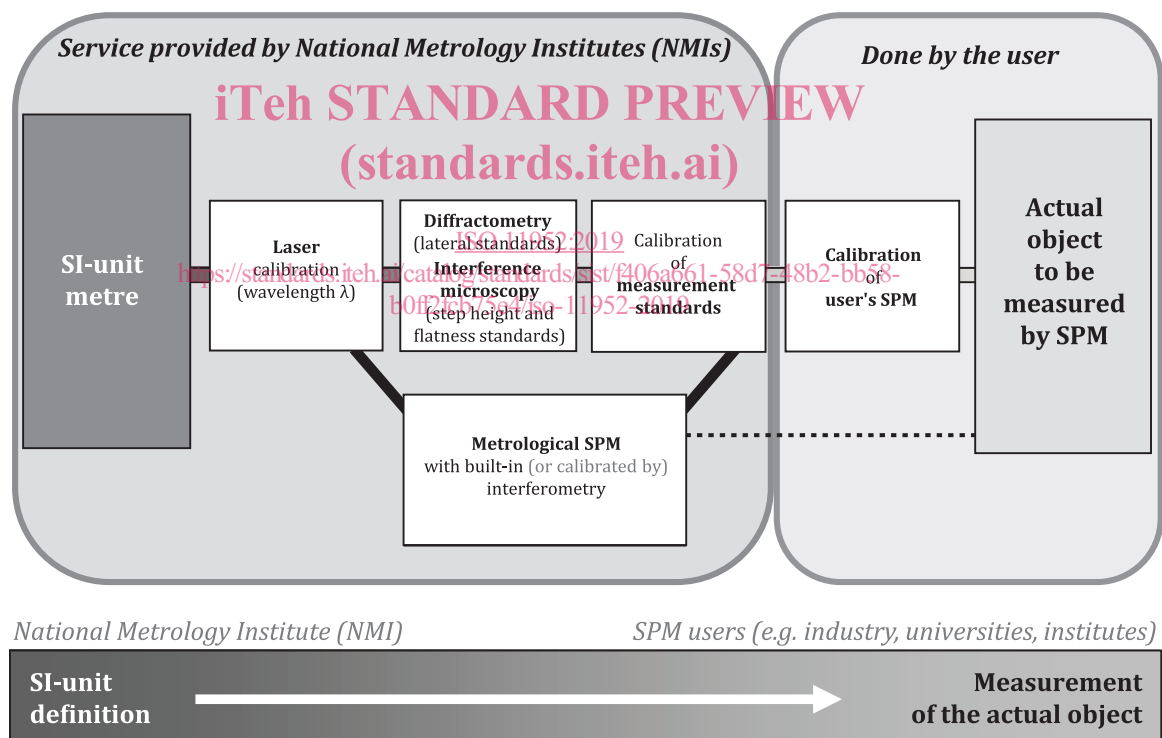
## Introduction

The progress of miniaturization in semiconductor structuring, together with the rapid advance of many diverse applications of nanotechnology in industrial processes, calls for reliable and comparable quantitative dimensional measurements in the micro- and submicrometre range<sup>[9]</sup>. Currently, a measurement resolution, in or below the nanometre region, is frequently required. Conventional optical or stylus measurement methods or coordinate measuring systems are not able to offer this level of resolution.

For this reason, scanning-probe microscopes (SPMs) are increasingly employed as quantitative measuring instruments. Their use is no longer confined only to research and development, but has been extended to include industrial production and inspection.

For this category of measuring instrument, standardized calibration procedures need to be developed, as have already been established, for example, for contact stylus instruments (see ISO 12179). For efficient and reliable calibration of SPMs to be carried out, the properties of the measurement standards used need to be documented and accounted for in the calibration (see [Figure 1](#)). At the same time, the procedure for the calibration should be clearly defined.

Only if this prerequisite is satisfied will it be possible to perform traceable measurements of geometrical quantities.



NOTE The calibration of a user's SPM by means of traceable calibrated measurement standards is the object of this document (done by the user).

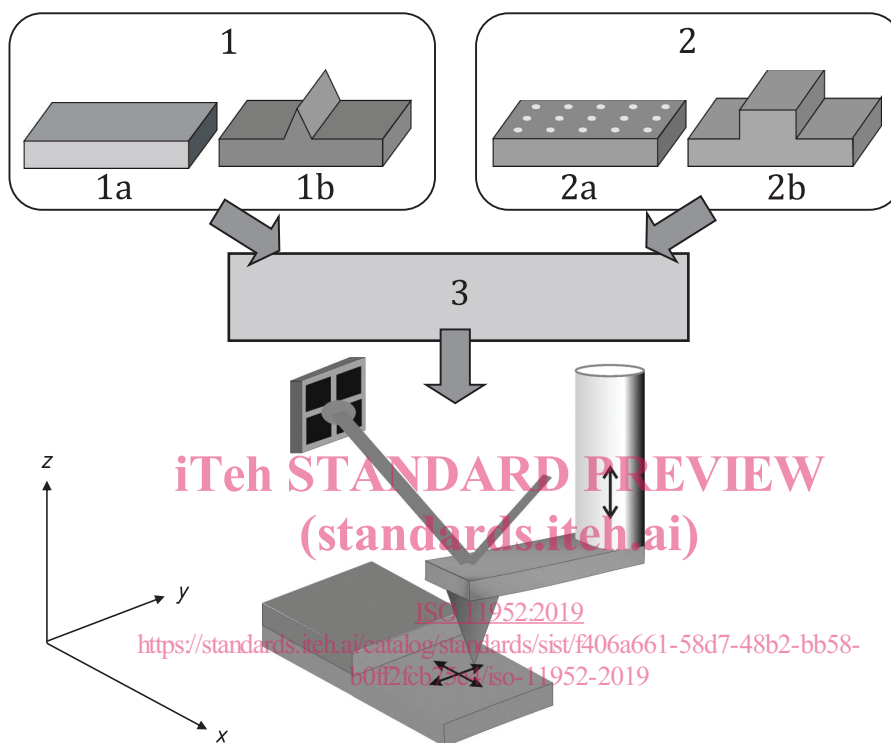
**Figure 1 — Traceability chain for SPMs**

An SPM is a serially operating measuring device which uses a probe with a tip of adequate fineness to trace the surface of the object to be measured by exploitation of a local physical interaction (such as the quantum-mechanical tunnel effect, interatomic or intermolecular forces, or evanescent modes of the electromagnetic field). The probe and the object to be measured are being displaced in relation to one another in a plane (hereinafter referred to as the  $x$ - $y$ -plane) according to a defined pattern<sup>[10]</sup>, while the signal of the interaction is recorded and can be used to control the distance between probe and

object. In this document, signals are considered which are used for the determination of the topography (hereinafter called the “z-signal”).

This document covers the verification of the device characteristics necessary for the measurement of geometrical measurands and the calibration of the axes of motion ( $x, y, z$ ) [11], i.e. the traceability to the unit of length via measurement on traceable lateral, step height and 3D measurement standards (see Figure 2).

While this document aims at axis calibrations at the highest level and is thereby intended primarily for high-stability SPMs, a lower level of calibration might be required for general industry use.



**Key**

- 1 measurement standards for verification purposes
- 1a flatness
- 1b probe shape
- 2 measurement standards for calibration purposes
- 2a 1D and 2D lateral
- 2b step height
- 3 calibration of the measurement standards by reference instruments (certified calibration, measurement value including uncertainty)

**Figure 2 — Verification and calibration of SPMs with test specimens and measurement standards**

This document is mainly based on the guideline VDI/VDE 2656, Part 1, drafted by a guideline committee of the VDI (Verein Deutscher Ingenieure/Association of German Engineers) from 2004 to 2008, with the final whiteprint of that guideline being released in June 2008.

# Surface chemical analysis — Scanning-probe microscopy — Determination of geometric quantities using SPM: Calibration of measuring systems

## 1 Scope

This document specifies methods for characterizing and calibrating the scan axes of scanning-probe microscopes (SPMs) for measuring geometric quantities at the highest level. It is applicable to those providing further calibrations and is not intended for general industry use, where a lower level of calibration might be required.

This document has the following objectives:

- to increase the comparability of measurements of geometrical quantities made using SPMs by traceability to the unit of length;
- to define the minimum requirements for the calibration process and the conditions of acceptance;
- to ascertain the instrument's ability to be calibrated (assignment of a “calibrate-ability” category to the instrument);
- to define the scope of the calibration (conditions of measurement and environments, ranges of measurement, temporal stability, transferability);
- to provide a model, in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 98-3, to calculate the uncertainty for simple geometrical quantities in measurements using an SPM;
- to define the requirements for reporting results.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 11039, *Surface chemical analysis — Scanning-probe microscopy — Measurement of drift rate*

ISO 18115-2, *Surface chemical analysis — Vocabulary — Part 2: Terms used in scanning-probe microscopy*

ISO/IEC Guide 98-3, *Uncertainty of measurement — Part 3: Guide to the expression of uncertainty in measurement (GUM:1995)*

IEC/TS 62622, *Artificial gratings used in nanotechnology — Description and measurement of dimensional quality parameters*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 18115-2 and IEC/TS 62622 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

**3.1  
scanner bow**

additional deflection in the z-direction when the scanner is displaced in the x-y-direction

Note 1 to entry: Scanner bow is also known as out-of-plane motion (see also  $xtz, ytz$  in [Clause 4](#)).

**3.2  
look-up table**

table in which a set of correction factors for the scanner are filed for different modes of operation (e.g. scan ranges, scan speeds, deflections)

**3.3  
step height**

height of an elevation (bar) or depth of a groove (see ISO 5436-1); on atomic surfaces, the distance between neighbouring crystalline planes

**3.4  
levelling**

correction of the inclination between the ideal x-y-specimen plane and the x-y-scanning plane

**4 Symbols**

$x, y, z$	position value related to the respective axis
$C_x, C_y, C_z$	calibration factors for the x-, y-, and z-axes
$h$	step height
$w$	width of a structure of the specimen
$N_{ij}$	$i$ th pitch value in a profile used for the determination of the pitch/period (number of pitch values $i$ over all lines $j = 1, \dots, N_j$ )
$p_x$	pitch or period in the x-direction
$p_y$	pitch or period in the y-direction
$a_x$	vector in the x-direction of a grating (not to be confused with $p_x$ )
$a_y$	vector in the y-direction of a grating (not to be confused with $p_y$ )
$\gamma_{xy}$	non-orthogonality of 2D gratings
$P-V$	peak-to-valley value
$r$	tip radius
$Rq (Sq)$	root mean square deviation of the assessed roughness profile ( $Rq$ ) or of the assessed area ( $Sq$ )
$T$	temperature
$\alpha_m$	thermal expansion coefficient of the specimen
$T_L$	temperature of the air
$T_m$	temperature of the specimen during measurement
$j_x$	angle of rotation about the x-axis

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$j_y$	angle of rotation about the $y$ -axis
$j_z$	angle of rotation about the $z$ -axis
$\theta$	levelling angle
$x_L$	value of the measurement standard for shift in the $x$ -direction
$x_m$	shift in the $x$ -direction measured with the $x$ -displacement transducer
$xtx$	positional deviation $\Delta x$ measured along an $x$ -coordinate line
$xty$	straightness deviation $\Delta y$ measured along an $x$ -coordinate line
$xtz$	straightness deviation $\Delta z$ measured along an $x$ -coordinate line
$rxx$	rotational deviation $j_x$ measured along an $x$ -coordinate line
$rxy$	rotational deviation $j_y$ measured along an $x$ -coordinate line
$xrz$	rotational deviation $j_z$ measured along an $x$ -coordinate line
$xwy$	measured rectangularity deviation in the coordinate plane $x$ - $y$
$xwz$	measured rectangularity deviation in the coordinate plane $x$ - $z$
$y_L$	value of the measurement standard for displacement in the $y$ -direction
$y_m$	displacement measured with the $y$ -displacement transducer in the $y$ -direction
$ytx$	straightness deviation $\Delta x$ measured along a $y$ -coordinate line
$yty$	positional deviation $\Delta y$ measured along a $y$ -coordinate line
$ytz$	straightness deviation $\Delta z$ measured along a $y$ -coordinate line
$yrx$	rotational deviation $j_x$ measured along a $y$ -coordinate line
$yry$	rotational deviation $j_y$ measured along a $y$ -coordinate line
$y rz$	rotational deviation $j_z$ measured along a $y$ -coordinate line
$ywz$	rectangularity deviation measured in the coordinate plane $y$ - $z$
$z_L$	value of the measurement standard for displacement in the $z$ -direction
$z_m$	displacement in the $z$ -direction measured with $z$ -displacement transducer
$ztx$	straightness deviation $\Delta x$ measured along a $z$ -coordinate line
$zty$	straightness deviation $\Delta y$ measured along a $z$ -coordinate line
$z tz$	positional deviation $\Delta z$ measured along a $z$ -coordinate line
$zrx$	rotational deviation $j_x$ measured along a $z$ -coordinate line
$zry$	rotational deviation $j_y$ measured along a $z$ -coordinate line
$z rz$	rotational deviation $j_z$ measured along a $z$ -coordinate line
$\cos(\varphi_i)$	rotational correction, for example in pitch measurement

$\cos(\theta_i)$	tilt-related correction, for example in pitch measurement
$\lambda_s$	short-wavelength filter (see ISO 4287 for details)
$\lambda_c$	long-wavelength filter (see ISO 4287 for details)
$\Lambda$	correlation length
$\phi_{xy}$	angle between the $x$ - and $y$ -direction, counterclockwise
$\phi_{xz}$	angle between the $x$ - and $z$ -direction, counterclockwise
$\phi_{yz}$	angle between the $y$ - and $z$ -direction, counterclockwise
$R_{qx}$	noise in the $x$ -direction
$R_{qy}$	noise in the $y$ -direction
$R_{qz}$ ( $S_{qz}$ )	noise in the $z$ -direction in a measured profile (or within a measured area)
$v$	scan speed (i.e. distance travelled by the probe tip per unit time, not to be confused with the scan rate, i.e. the number of scanlines recorded per unit time)

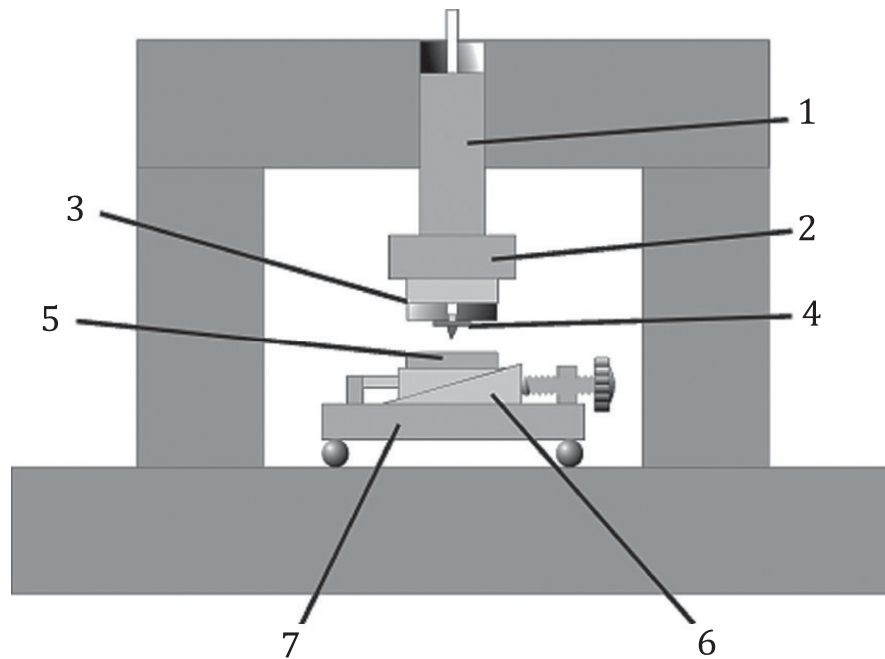
## 5 Characteristics of SPMs

### 5.1 Components of an SPM

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[ISO 11952:2019](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/f406a661-58d7-48b2-bb58-b0ff2fcb75e4/iso-11952-2019)

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**Key**

- 1 x-y-scanner  
 2 z-scanner  
 3 position detector  
 4 probe  
 5 specimen  
 6 coarse z-approach, i.e. move the probe or the specimen in the vertical direction to bring it close enough to the specimen or probe, respectively (afterwards, start automatic approach techniques)  
 7 coarse x-y-positioning, i.e. move the specimen or probe laterally close to or into the region of interest on the specimen

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**Figure 3 — Schematic sketch of an SPM**

Several components shown in [Figure 3](#) are defined in ISO 18115-2. In this document, they fulfil the following functions:

- *Probe*: equipped with a tip at its apex. This probes the specimen surface, exploiting a local physical interaction whose changes can be detected, for example cantilever bending in the case of an atomic force microscope.
- *Position detector*: transformation of the probe's interaction response (e.g. bending or oscillation of the cantilever) into an electrical signal.
- *z-scanner*: element for the realization of the vertical tracking of the specimen/probe distance during x-y-scanning to a constant value of the physical interaction used for distance control (e.g. of the action of force on the probe in the case of an atomic force microscope), to ensure an approximately constant distance between specimen and probe.
- *x-y-scanner*: element for realization of the lateral displacement of the probe (or of the specimen) in the x-y-plane (the plane parallel to the seating face of the specimen), which is used, among other things, to record a location-dependent interaction signal that contains information about a local property of the specimen (above all, the local height).
- *Specimen holder*: where appropriate, with coarse positioning and coarse approach mechanics.
- *Casing/mounting*: structure for mounting the scanner and specimen.