

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

## NORME INTERNATIONALE



**Superconductivity –  
Part 23: Residual resistance ratio measurement – Residual resistance ratio  
of cavity-grade Nb superconductors**

**Supraconductivité –  
Partie 23: Mesurage du rapport de résistance résiduelle – Rapport de résistance  
résiduelle des supraconducteurs de Nb à cavités**



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### Superconductivity –

**Part 23: Residual resistance ratio measurement – Residual resistance ratio of cavity-grade Nb superconductors**

### Supraconductivité –

**Partie 23: Mesurage du rapport de résistance résiduelle – Rapport de résistance résiduelle des supraconducteurs de Nb à cavités**

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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

## SUPERCONDUCTIVITY –

**Part 23: Residual resistance ratio measurement –  
Residual resistance ratio of cavity-grade Nb superconductors**

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IEC 61788-23 has been prepared by IEC technical committee 90: Superconductivity. It is an International Standard.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition published in 2018. This edition constitutes a technical revision.

This edition includes the following significant technical changes with respect to the previous edition:

- a) The scope of this standard was modified to restrict the range of residual resistance ratio to that encountered by providers of material for superconducting radio-frequency cavities.
- b) The references to technical material were updated and corrected.

The text of this International Standard is based on the following documents:

| FDIS        | Report on voting |
|-------------|------------------|
| 90/478/FDIS | 90/482/RVD       |

Full information on the voting for its approval can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

The language used for the development of this International Standard is English.

This document was drafted in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, and developed in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1 and ISO/IEC Directives, IEC Supplement, available at [www.iec.ch/members\\_experts/refdocs](http://www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs). The main document types developed by IEC are described in greater detail at [www.iec.ch/standardsdev/publications](http://www.iec.ch/standardsdev/publications).

A list of all parts in the IEC 61788 series, published under the general title *Superconductivity*, can be found on the IEC website.

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## INTRODUCTION

High-purity niobium is the chief material used to make superconducting radio-frequency cavities. Similar grades of niobium may be used in the manufacture of superconducting wire. Procurement of raw materials and quality assurance of delivered products often use the residual resistance ratio (RRR) to specify or assess the purity of a metal. RRR is defined for non-superconducting metals as the ratio of electrical resistance measured at room temperature (293 K) to the resistance measured for the same specimen at low temperature ( $\sim 4,2$  K). The low-temperature value is often called the residual resistance. Higher purity is associated with higher values of RRR.

Niobium presents special problems due to its transformation to a superconducting state at  $\sim 9$  K, so DC electrical resistance is effectively zero below this temperature. The definition above would then yield an infinite value for RRR. This document describes a test method to determine the residual resistance value by using a plot of the resistance to temperature as the test specimen is gradually warmed through the superconducting transition in the absence of an applied magnetic field. This results in a determination of the residual resistance at just above superconducting transition,  $\sim 10$  K, from which RRR is subsequently determined.

International Standards also exist to determine the RRR of superconducting wires. In contrast to superconducting wires, which are usually a composite of a superconducting material and a non-superconducting material and the RRR value is representative of only the non-superconducting component, here the entire specimen is composed of superconducting niobium. Frequently, niobium is procured as a sheet, bar, tube, or rod, and not as a wire. For such forms, test specimens will likely be a few millimetres in the dimension transverse to electric current flow. This difference is significant when making electrical resistance measurements, since niobium samples will likely be much longer than that for the same length-to-diameter ratio as a wire, and higher electrical current may be required to produce sufficient voltage signals. Guidance for sample dimensions and electrical connections is provided in Annex A. Test apparatus should also take into consideration aspects such as the orientation of a test specimen relative to the liquid helium surface, accessibility through ports on common liquid helium dewars, design of current contacts, and minimization of thermal gradients over long specimen lengths. These aspects distinguish this document from similar wire standards.

Other test methods have been used to determine RRR. Some methods use a measurement at a temperature other than 293 K for the high resistance value. Some methods use extrapolations at  $4,2$  K in the absence of an applied magnetic field for the low resistance value. Other methods use an applied magnetic field to suppress superconductivity at  $4,2$  K. A comparison between this document and some other test methods is presented in Annex A. Note that systematic differences of up to 10 % are produced by these other methods, which is larger than the target uncertainty of this document. It is therefore important to apply this document or the appropriate corrections listed in Annex A according to the test method used.

Whenever possible, this test method should be transferred to vendors and collaborators who also perform RRR measurements. To promote consistency, the results of inter-laboratory comparisons are described in Clause C.2.

## SUPERCONDUCTIVITY –

### Part 23: Residual resistance ratio measurement – Residual resistance ratio of cavity-grade Nb superconductors

#### 1 Scope

This part of IEC 61788 addresses a test method for the determination of the residual resistance ratio (RRR),  $r_{RRR}$ , of cavity-grade niobium. This method is intended for high-purity niobium grades with  $150 < r_{RRR} < 600$ . The test method is valid for specimens with rectangular or round cross-section, cross-sectional area greater than 1 mm<sup>2</sup> but less than 20 mm<sup>2</sup>, and a length not less than 10 nor more than 25 times the width or diameter.

#### 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.

IEC 60050-815, *International Electrotechnical Vocabulary – Part 815: Superconductivity* (available at: [www.electropedia.org](http://www.electropedia.org))

#### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in IEC 60050-815 and the following apply.

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

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

##### 3.1 residual resistance ratio RRR

$r_{RRR}$   
ratio of resistance at room temperature to the resistance just above the superconducting transition

$$r_{RRR} = R_1 / R_2 \quad (1)$$

where

$R_1$  is the resistance at 293 K;

$R_2$  is the resistance just above the superconducting transition, at ~10 K.