

The QuantSeq logo consists of the word "QUANT" in green and "SEQ" in dark blue, with a trademark symbol (TM) to the upper right of "QUANT".

# QUANT<sup>TM</sup>SEQ

Sequencing that counts

## 3' mRNA-Seq Library Prep Trial Kit (FWD) Instruction Manual

Catalog Numbers:

- 015 (QuantSeq 3' mRNA-Seq Library Prep Kit for Illumina (FWD))
- 016 (QuantSeq 3' mRNA-Seq Library Prep Kit for Illumina (REV) with Custom Sequencing Primer)
- 020 (PCR Add-on Kit for Illumina)
- 022 (Purification Module with Magnetic Beads)
- 026 (QuantSeq-Flex First Strand Synthesis Module for Illumina)
- 028 (QuantSeq-Flex Second Strand Synthesis Module V2 for Illumina)
- 047 (i5 Dual Indexing Add-on Kit for QuantSeq/SENSE for Illumina)



# 1. Overview

This instruction manual outlines the protocol for the QuantSeq Forward (FWD) Trial Kit (015.04). For more detailed information refer to the complete User Guide (015 and 016) which is available for download at our website ([www.lexogen.com](http://www.lexogen.com)).

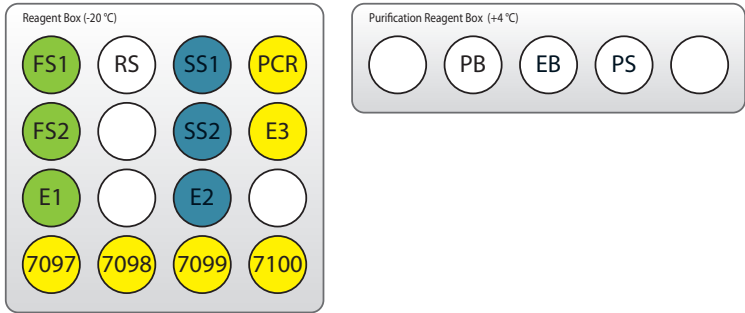
Lexogen's QuantSeq kit provides a library preparation protocol designed to yield sequences close to the 3' end of polyadenylated transcripts. As this is a 3' mRNA-Seq protocol the quality of the RNA input is not as critical as for other RNA-Seq applications and even lower quality RNA (including FFPE samples) can yield good RNA-Seq results. With QuantSeq FWD we do not recommend paired-end sequencing, as the quality of Read 2 would be very low due to the poly(T) stretch at the beginning of Read 2. For paired-end sequencing please use the QuantSeq Reverse Kit (REV, 016).

The amount of total RNA required for QuantSeq depends on the poly(A) RNA content of the sample in question. This protocol was tested extensively with various cell cultures, animal and plant tissues, fungi, and human reference RNA (Universal Human Reference RNA (UHRR) and Brain Reference RNA (HBRR)). Typically we recommend using 500 ng total RNA input as starting material, but with minor protocol adjustments the input amount can even be reduced to 100 pg. The maximum input amount is 2 µg of total RNA. A continuously updated list of recommended cycle numbers and expected yield of different input RNAs can be found under Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at [www.lexogen.com](http://www.lexogen.com).

This trial kit contains enough reagents to perform a qPCR and an endpoint PCR for each sample so we highly recommend performing the qPCR to determine the exact cycle number required for your RNA input.



## 2. Kit Components and Storage Conditions



Kit Component	Tube Label	Volume*	Storage
First Strand cDNA Synthesis Mix 1	FS1 ●	22 µl	-20 °C
First Strand cDNA Synthesis Mix 2	FS2 ●	41.8 µl	-20 °C
Enzyme Mix 1	E1 ●	2.2 µl	-20 °C
RNA Removal Solution	RS ○	22 µl	-20 °C
Second Strand Synthesis Mix 1	SS1 ●	66 µl	-20 °C
Second Strand Synthesis Mix 2	SS2 ●	17.6 µl	-20 °C
Enzyme Mix 2	E2 ●	4.4 µl	-20 °C
PCR Mix	PCR ●	61.6 µl	-20 °C
Enzyme Mix 3	E3 ●	8.8 µl	-20 °C
i7 Index Primer	7097-7100 ●	11 µl each	-20 °C
Purification Beads	PB	220 µl	+4 °C
Purification Solution	PS	448.8 µl	+4 °C
Elution Buffer	EB	484 µl	+4 °C/-20 °C

**ATTENTION:** Even though shipped at -20 °C, store **PB** and **PS** at +4 °C. The rest of the kit should be stored in a -20 °C freezer. **EB** can be stored either at +4 °C or -20 °C. Before use, check the contents of **PS** which may precipitate during shipping. If a precipitate is visible or the content appears milky, incubate at 37 °C until buffer components dissolve completely.



### 3. Library Generation

#### Preparation

First Strand cDNA Synthesis	RNA Removal	Second Strand Synthesis	Purification
<b>FS1</b> ● – thawed at RT <b>FS2</b> ● – thawed at RT <b>E1</b> ● – keep on ice or at -20 °C	<b>RS</b> ○ – thawed at RT	<b>SS1</b> ● – thawed at 37 °C <b>SS2</b> ● – thawed at RT <b>E2</b> ● – keep on ice or at -20 °C	<b>PB</b> – stored at +4 °C <b>PS</b> – stored at +4 °C <b>80 % EtOH</b> – provided by user <b>prepare fresh!</b> <b>EB</b> – stored at +4 °C
Thermocycler 96-well PCR plate PCR sealing films Plate centrifuge 85 °C, 3 min 42 °C, 15 min	Thermocycler PCR sealing films Plate centrifuge 95 °C, 10 min cool down to 25 °C	Thermocycler PCR sealing films Plate centrifuge 98 °C, 1 min, then cool to 25 °C (0.5 °C/sec) 25 °C, 30 min 25 °C, 15 min	96-well magnetic plate 96-well PCR plate

#### First Strand cDNA Synthesis - Reverse Transcription

An oligodT primer containing an Illumina-compatible sequence at its 5' end is hybridized to the RNA and reverse transcription is performed.

- Mix up to 5 µl of your RNA (typically 500 ng) with 5 µl First Strand cDNA Synthesis Mix 1 (**FS1** ●) in a PCR plate or 8-well strip. If a smaller volume of RNA is used, add RNase-free water to a total volume of 10 µl. Mix well by pipetting. Seal the plate or PCR strips. Make sure the seal is closed tightly. Spin down the plate to make sure all liquid is collected at the bottom of the wells.

- Denature the RNA / **FS1** mix for 3 minutes at 85 °C in a thermocycler and then cool down to 42 °C. **REMARK:** Leave the reaction on the thermocycler until step 4. **ATTENTION:** Skip this step for FFPE samples or degraded RNA and inputs ≤10 ng total RNA.

- Prepare a mastermix containing 9.5 µl First Strand cDNA Synthesis Mix 2 (**FS2** ●) and 0.5 µl Enzyme Mix 1 (**E1** ●) per reaction. Mix well. Do not cool the mastermix.

- Quickly spin down the denatured RNA / **FS1** plate from step 2 at room temperature to make sure all liquid is collected at the bottom of the wells before carefully removing the sealing foil. Place the plate onto the thermocycler again. Add 10 µl of the **FS2** / **E1** mastermix to each reaction, mix by pipetting, and seal the plate. If necessary spin down the liquid at room temperature and incubate at 42 °C for 15 minutes. **OPTIONAL:** For low input RNA (≤10 ng) this step can be extended to 1 hour incubation at 42 °C. ⚠ Safe stopping point. Libraries can be stored at -20 °C at this point.



## RNA Removal

During this step the RNA template is degraded which is essential for efficient second strand synthesis. Before removing the sealing foil after the first strand synthesis reaction, quickly spin down the plate to make sure all liquid is collected at the bottom of the wells.


- 5 Add 5 µl RNA Removal Solution (**RS O**) directly to the first strand cDNA synthesis reaction. Mix well and re-seal the plate using a fresh foil. **REMARK:** Use a pipette set to 15 µl for efficient mixing.
- 6 Incubate 10 minutes at 95 °C, then cool down to 25 °C. Spin down the plate at room temperature and carefully remove the sealing foil. **ATTENTION:** Reduce this step for RNA inputs below 1 ng total RNA to 5 minutes at 95 °C.

## Second Strand Synthesis

During this step the library is converted to dsDNA. Second strand synthesis is initiated by a random primer containing an Illumina-compatible linker sequence at its 5' end. A reverse complement prevents the linker sequence from taking part in the hybridization.

**NOTE:** At this point we recommend placing the purification components (**PB, PS, EB**) for step 12 at room temperature to give them enough time to equilibrate.

**ATTENTION:** Second Strand Synthesis Mix 1 (**SS1 ●**) is a viscous solution and needs to be mixed thoroughly before use. Thaw at 37 °C. If a precipitate is visible, incubate at 37 °C, and mix until buffer components dissolve completely. Make sure **SS1 ●** is at room temperature as this facilitates accurate pipetting.

- 7 Add 10 µl Second Strand Synthesis Mix 1 (**SS1 ●**) to the reaction. Mix well by pipetting, and seal the plate. **REMARK:** Use a pipette set to 30 µl for efficient mixing.
- 8 Incubate the plate for 1 minute at 98 °C in a thermocycler, and slowly cool down to 25 °C by setting the ramp speed to 10 % (0.5 °C/second). Incubate the reaction for 30 minutes at 25 °C. Quickly spin down the plate at room temperature before removing the sealing foil.
- 9 Prepare a mastermix containing 4 µl Second Strand Synthesis Mix 2 (**SS2 ●**) and 1 µl Enzyme Mix 2 (**E2 ●**). Mix well.
- 10 Add 5 µl of the **SS2 / E2** mastermix per reaction. Mix well. **REMARK:** Use a pipette set to 30 µl for efficient mixing.
- 11 Incubate the reaction at 25 °C for 15 minutes.  
 Safe stopping point. Libraries can be stored at -20 °C at this point.



## Purification

The double-stranded library is purified by using magnetic beads to remove all reaction components. The purification components (**PB**, **PS**, **EB**) should equilibrate for 30 minutes at room temperature before use. **PB** may have settled and must be properly resuspended before adding them to the reaction.

- 12 Add 16 µl of properly resuspended Purification Beads (**PB**) to each reaction, mix well, and incubate for 5 minutes at room temperature.
- 13 Place the plate onto a magnetic plate, and let the beads collect for 2 - 5 minutes or until the supernatant is completely clear (depends on the strength of your magnet).
- 14 Remove and discard the clear supernatant without removing the PCR plate from the magnetic plate. Make sure that accumulated beads are not disturbed.
- 15 Add 40 µl of Elution Buffer (**EB**), remove the plate from the magnet and resuspend the beads properly in **EB**. Incubate for 2 minutes at room temperature.
- 16 Add 56 µl of Purification Solution (**PS**) to the beads / **EB** mix to reprecipitate the library. Mix thoroughly, and incubate for 5 minutes at room temperature. **ATTENTION:** For low input RNA ( $\leq 10$  ng), FFPE, or degraded RNA add only 48 µl **PS**.
- 17 Place the plate onto a magnetic plate, and let the beads collect for 2 - 5 minutes or until the supernatant is completely clear.
- 18 Remove and discard the clear supernatant without removing the PCR plate from the magnetic plate. Make sure that accumulated beads are not disturbed.
- 19 Add 120 µl of 80 % EtOH, and incubate the beads for 30 seconds. Leave the plate in contact with the magnet as beads should not be resuspended during this washing step. Remove and discard the supernatant.
- 20 Repeat this washing step once for a total of two washes. Make sure to remove the supernatant completely as traces of ethanol can inhibit subsequent PCR reactions.
- 21 Leave the plate in contact with the magnet, and let the beads dry for 5 - 10 minutes or until all ethanol has evaporated. **ATTENTION:** Do not let the beads dry too long (visible cracks appear) as this will negatively influence the elution and the resulting library yield.
- 22 Add 20 µl of Elution Buffer (**EB**) per well, remove the plate from the magnet and resuspend the beads properly in **EB**. Incubate for 2 minutes at room temperature.
- 23 Place the plate onto a magnetic plate and let the beads collect for 2 - 5 minutes or until the supernatant is completely clear.
- 24 Transfer 17 µl of the clear supernatant into a fresh PCR plate. Make sure not to transfer any beads.  Safe stopping point. Libraries can be stored at -20 °C at this point.



# 4. Library Amplification

## Preparation

PCR	Purification
<p><b>PCR</b> ● – thawed at RT</p> <p><b>E3</b> ● – keep on ice or at -20 °C</p> <p><b>7097-7100</b> ● – thawed at RT; <b>spin down before opening!</b></p> <p>SYBR Green I (Sigma-Aldrich, Cat. No. S9430), 10,000 x in DMSO for qPCR - provided by user</p>	<p><b>PB</b> – stored at +4 °C</p> <p><b>80 % EtOH</b> – provided by user <b>prepare fresh!</b></p> <p><b>EB</b> – stored at +4 °C</p>
<p>96-well PCR plate</p> <p>PCR sealing films</p> <p>Plate centrifuge</p> <p>Thermocycler</p> <div><div><div>98 °C, 30 sec</div><div>98 °C, 10 sec</div><div>65 °C, 20 sec</div><div>72 °C, 30 sec</div></div><div>}</div><div>30-35x for qPCR</div><div>Endpoint as determined by qPCR</div></div> <p>72 °C, 1 min</p> <p>10 °C, ∞</p>	<p>96-well magnetic plate</p> <p>96-well PCR plate</p> <p>Plate centrifuge</p> <p>PCR sealing films</p>

## qPCR

A qPCR assay is recommended to determine the exact number of PCR cycles for the endpoint PCR to avoid any under- or overcycling of your samples.

**NOTE:** If you are confident about the number of cycles for your endpoint PCR (e.g., because your RNA is listed on the FAQ page), you can skip the qPCR.

**NOTE:** If you do not have a qPCR available, skip step 25 – 30 and proceed directly with step 31, initially conduct 13 cycles of PCR (for 500 ng RNA input) with half of your sample, and check the yield. If the libraries show a second peak in high molecular regions your sample is overcycled and you should use less PCR cycles for the remaining half of your sample. If the yield is too low, add 1 - 5 PCR cycles (yield doubles with each cycle).

25	Dilute the double stranded library from step 24 to 19 µl by adding 2 µl Elution Buffer (EB).
26	Prepare a mastermix containing 7 µl of PCR Mix (PCR ●) and 1 µl Enzyme Mix 3 (E3 ●) per reaction, add SYBR Green I (or an equivalent fluorophore) to the PCR reaction to a final concentration of 0.1x. <b>EXAMPLE:</b> For 0.1x SYBR Green I, add 1.2 µl of a 2.5x SYBR Green I solution (i.e., 1:4,000 dilution of the stock, dilute in DMSO). Fill up the remaining volume to 23.3 µl with EB (in this example it would be 14.1 µl EB).
27	Add 23.3 µl of this PCR / E3 / SYBR Green I / EB mastermix to 1.7 µl of the eluted library.



28

Add 5 µl of the respective i7 Index Primer (**7097-7100** ●, in microtubes). Mix well by pipetting. Seal the plate and quickly spin down to make sure all liquid is collected at the bottom of the well.

29

Overcycle this initial qPCR for 30 cycles (or even more if little input material was used) with the following program: Initial denaturation at 98 °C for 30 seconds, 30 - 40 cycles of 98 °C for 10 seconds, 65 °C for 20 seconds and 72 °C for 30 seconds, and a final extension at 72 °C for 1 minute, hold at 10 °C.

30

Determine the fluorescence value at which the fluorescence reaches the plateau. Calculate where the fluorescence is at 50 % of the maximum and determine at which cycle these 50 % of fluorescence are reached. As in the endpoint PCR 10x more cDNA will be used compared to the qPCR, three cycles can be subtracted from the determined cycle number. There is no need to purify or analyze the overcycled PCR reaction. **EXAMPLE:** 500 ng total RNA input was used for generating libraries. When inserting 1.7 µl of the cDNA into a qPCR, the cycle number determined in the overcycled qPCR (50 % of the maximum fluorescence) was 15 cycles. The remaining 17 µl of the template (i.e., 10 times more cDNA than in the qPCR, hence -3 cycles) should be amplified with 12 cycles.

## Endpoint PCR

The library is amplified to add the complete adapter sequences required for cluster generation and to generate sufficient material for quality control and sequencing.

**NOTE:** At this point we recommend placing the purification components (**PB**, **PS**, **EB**) for step 35 at room temperature to give them enough time to equilibrate.

31

Prepare a mastermix containing 7 µl of PCR Mix (**PCR** ●) and 1 µl Enzyme Mix 3 (**E3** ●) per reaction.

32

Add 8 µl of this **PCR / E3** mastermix to 17 µl of the eluted library.

33

Add 5 µl of the respective i7 index primer (**7097-7100** ●, in microtubes). Mix well by pipetting. Seal the plate and quickly spin down to make sure all liquid is collected at the bottom of the well.

34

Use the cycle number that was determined in step 30: Initial denaturation at 98 °C for 30 seconds, 12 cycles (or whatever cycle number was determined in step 30) of 98 °C for 10 seconds, 65 °C for 20 seconds and 72 °C for 30 seconds, and a final extension at 72 °C for 1 minute, hold at 10 °C.



## Purification

The finished library is purified from PCR components that can interfere with quantification. The Purification Beads may have settled and must be properly resuspended before adding them to the reaction.

- 35 Add 30  $\mu$ l of properly resuspended Purification Beads (**PB**) to each reaction, mix well, and incubate for 5 minutes at room temperature. **ATTENTION:** For low input RNA, FFPE, or degraded RNA add only 27  $\mu$ l **PB**.
- 36 Place the plate onto a magnetic plate, and let the beads collect for 2 - 5 minutes or until the supernatant is completely clear.
- 37 Remove and discard the clear supernatant without removing the PCR plate from the magnetic plate. Make sure that accumulated beads are not disturbed.
- 38 Add 30  $\mu$ l of Elution Buffer (**EB**), remove the plate from the magnet and resuspend the beads properly in **EB**. Incubate for 2 minutes at room temperature.
- 39 Add 30  $\mu$ l of Purification Solution (**PS**) to the beads / **EB** mix to reprecipitate the library. Mix thoroughly, and incubate for 5 minutes at room temperature.
- 40 Place the plate onto a magnetic plate, and let the beads collect for 2 - 5 minutes or until the supernatant is completely clear.
- 41 Remove and discard the clear supernatant without removing the PCR plate from the magnetic plate. Make sure that accumulated beads are not disturbed.
- 42 Add 120  $\mu$ l of 80 % EtOH, and incubate the beads for 30 seconds. Leave the plate in contact with the magnet as beads should not be resuspended during this washing step. Remove and discard the supernatant.
- 43 Repeat this washing step once for a total of two washes. Make sure to remove the supernatant completely.
- 44 Leave the plate in contact with the magnet, and let the beads dry for 5 - 10 minutes or until all ethanol has evaporated. **ATTENTION:** Do not let the beads dry too long (visible cracks appear) as this will negatively influence the elution and hence the resulting library yield.
- 45 Add 20  $\mu$ l of Elution Buffer (**EB**) per well, remove the plate from the magnet, and resuspend the beads properly in **EB**. Incubate for 2 minutes at room temperature.
- 46 Place the plate onto a magnetic plate and let the beads collect for 2 - 5 minutes or until the supernatant is completely clear.
- 47 Transfer 15 - 17  $\mu$ l of the supernatant into a fresh PCR plate. Make sure not to transfer any beads.
- 48 At this point, the libraries are finished and ready for quality control, pooling, and cluster generation (see QuantSeq 3' mRNA-Seq User Guide for Illumina).



## 5. Appendix A: Input RNA

QuantSeq has been tested with different input materials, e.g., different tissues, cells, plants, and yeast. Depending on the mRNA content of your sample, the number of cycles for your endpoint PCR will vary. If using lower RNA input amounts further cycles need to be added. The table below depicts some examples of higher and lower input RNA amounts using Universal Human Reference RNA (UHRR).

Input RNA (UHRR)	Step 6: RNA Removal 95°C	Step 16: PS Addition	Library*			Insert				Library Yield		PCR Cycles
			Start [bp]	End [bp]	Mean Size*	Mean Size	≥ 50 nt	≥ 100 nt	≥ 200 nt	ng/μl	nM	
2,000 ng	10 min	56 μl	132	2,000	456	324	97 %	80 %	31 %	2.0	10.2	11
500 ng	10 min	56 μl	132	2,000	364	232	98 %	78 %	27 %	1.8	9.8	12
100 ng	10 min	56 μl	132	2,000	350	218	97 %	74 %	21 %	2.1	11.3	14
50 ng	10 min	56 μl	132	2,000	389	257	96 %	70 %	20 %	2.4	12.7	15
10 ng	10 min	48 μl	132	2,000	350	218	96 %	70 %	24 %	2.6	14.1	18
5 ng	10 min	48 μl	132	2,000	365	233	97 %	75 %	28 %	3.2	15.7	19
500 pg	5 min	48 μl	132	2,000	335	203	89 %	67 %	21 %	1.4	8.0	22

\*All libraries were prepared with dual indexing. Linker sequences are 132 bp including 6 nt long i5 and i7 indices, respectively. For single indexing (i7 only) adapter sequences are 122 bp.

**ATTENTION:** For input RNA amounts of 10 ng or less and degraded RNA, the amount of **PS** added in step 16 was reduced (48 μl instead of 72 μl) to prevent sequencing through linkers and poly(T) stretches.

Further adjustments for low input RNA (less than 10 ng) and degraded RNA are skipping step 2 (recommended), extending step 4 to 1 hour (optional), reducing step 6 to 5 minutes 95 °C for less than 1 ng input RNA and reducing the amount of **PB** in step 35 to 27 μl.

QuantSeq was tested with 500 pg - 50 ng FFPE or degraded RNA input (see table below). The table comprises some results obtained from using different amounts of mouse brain FFPE RNA input with a RIN of 1.8 (DV<sub>200</sub> of 51 %). The DV<sub>200</sub> value is the percentage of RNA fragments larger than 200 nucleotides. The lower the DV<sub>200</sub>, the more degraded the RNA is. Other FFPE RNAs or RNAs with lower DV<sub>200</sub> values may require more PCR cycles, hence we would strongly recommend taking advantage of the qPCR assay.

**ATTENTION:** FFPE RNA is degraded RNA and hence the insert sizes are smaller than for non-degraded RNA samples. Keep this in mind when choosing your sequencing length.

Input RNA (UHRR)	Step 6: RNA Removal 95°C	Step 16: PS Addition	Library*			Insert				Library Yield		PCR Cycles
			Start [bp]	End [bp]	Mean Size*	Mean Size	≥ 50 nt	≥ 100 nt	≥ 200 nt	ng/μl	nM	
50 ng	10 min	48 μl	132	600	264	132	96 %	52 %	5 %	2.3	14.2	15
10 ng	10 min	48 μl	132	600	265	133	95 %	56 %	5 %	2.1	13.1	18
500 pg	5 min	48 μl	132	600	266	134	85 %	53 %	4 %	1.2	7.5	22

\*All libraries were prepared with dual indexing. Linker sequences are 132 bp including 6 nt long i5 and i7 indices, respectively. For single indexing (i7 only) adapter sequences are 122 bp.



If you see a lot of linker-linker products in your sample, an additional purification of the lane mix with 0.9x **PB** (e.g., 50 µl lane mix plus 45 µl **PB**), incubating 5 minutes at room temperature, and following the protocol from step 36 on again may be necessary.

In the following table some reference values (cycles numbers and approximate yields) for 500 ng high quality input RNA from other RNA sources are depicted:

500 ng Input RNA from	Library Yield		PCR Cycles
	ng/µl	nM	
Universal Human Reference RNA (UHRR)	1.8	9.8	12
Human Brain Reference RNA (HBRR)	2.0	13.8	13
Mm heart	1.9	10.5	13
Mm brain	2.9	15.6	13
Mm liver	1.3	6.7	12
Mm kidney	2.3	12.2	12
Mm spleen	1.4	8.0	13
Mm lung	2.6	15.5	14
Mm embryonic stem cells	1.3	7.5	11
Mm myoblast	0.9	5.2	12
Mm fibroblast	1.0	5.6	14
Mm myoblast progenitors	2.1	11.5	11
Mm neural progenitors	1.2	7.0	12
Arabidopsis thaliana	1.7	9.4	13
Tomato seeds	1.7	9.4	16
Fungi RNA	1.24	7.1	13
Yeast RNA (Sc)	1.2	7.7	12
Drosophila melanogaster	1.6	7.9	13

Mm: Mus musculus; Sc: Saccharomyces cerevisiae

Please also refer to the QuantSeq Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page at [www.lexogen.com](http://www.lexogen.com) for continuous updates on other RNA sources.

## 6. Appendix B: Multiplexing

i7 indices are 6 nt long and require an additional index-specific sequencing reaction. This trial kit contains four i7 indices (**7097-7100** 🟡) which are perfectly color balanced to be run on any Illumina sequencer such as MiniSeq, MiSeq, HiSeq, and NextSeq. They can be easily multiplexed with Illumina barcodes as the sequences differ.

7097: CGTGAT      7098: GAACTA      7099: ACGTCG      7100: TTCAGC



The background of the lower half of the page features a decorative graphic of several translucent blue spheres of varying sizes, connected by thin, light blue lines, creating a network-like structure.

## QuantSeq 3' mRNA-Seq Library Prep Trial Kit · Instruction Manual

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