

## Determining the band gap of germanium

### Objects of the experiments

- Determining the voltage drop at an undoped Ge crystal as a function of the temperature when the current through the crystal is constant, and calculating the conductivity  $\sigma$ .
- Determining the band gap  $E_g$  of germanium.

### Principles

For the current density  $j$  in a body under the influence of an electric field  $E$  the Ohm law states

$$j = \sigma \cdot E \quad (I).$$

The proportionality factor  $\sigma$  is called electric conductivity. Since this quantity strongly depends on the material, it is common to classify materials with regard to their conductivity. Semiconductors, for example, are solids that do not conduct electric currents at low temperatures, but show a measurable conductivity at higher temperatures. The reason for this temperature dependence is the specific band structure of the electronic energy levels of a semiconductor.

The valence band, i. e. the highest band that is completely or partially populated in the ground state, and the conduction band, i. e. the next unpopulated band, are separated by a band gap  $E_g$  (Ge:  $E_g \approx 0,7$  eV). The region between the two bands is not populated by electrons in an undoped, pure semicon-

ductor and is called the "forbidden zone". At higher temperatures, more and more electrons are thermally activated from the valence band into the conduction band. They leave "holes" in the valence band which move like positive charged particles, thus contributing to the current density  $j$  as do the electrons (see Fig. 1).

The conduction which is made possible by the excitation of electrons from the valence band into the conduction band is called intrinsic conduction. Since under conditions of thermal equilibrium the numbers of holes in the valence band and of electrons in the conduction band are equal, the current density in the case of intrinsic conduction can be written in the form

$$j_i = (-e) \cdot n_i \cdot v_n + e \cdot n_i \cdot v_p \quad (II)$$

$e$ : elementary charge,

$n_i$ : concentration of electrons or holes respectively.

The average drift velocities  $v_n$  and  $v_p$  of the electrons and the holes are proportional to the field strength  $E$ . With

$$v_n = -\mu_n \cdot E \text{ and } v_p = \mu_p \cdot E \quad (III),$$

where the mobilities  $\mu_n$  and  $\mu_p$  are chosen to be positive quantities,

$$j_i = e \cdot n_i \cdot (\mu_n + \mu_p) \cdot E \quad (IV)$$

is obtained. Comparison with (I) leads to

$$\sigma_i = e \cdot n_i \cdot (\mu_n + \mu_p) \quad (V)$$

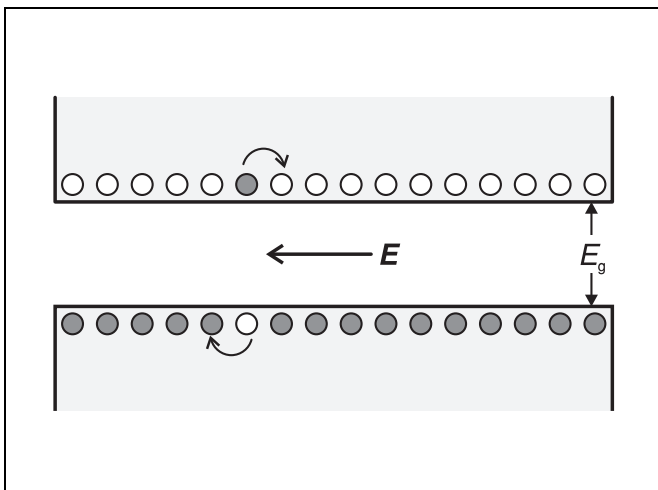
for the conductivity. Apart from the elementary charge  $e$ , all quantities in (V) depend on the temperature  $T$ . The concentration of intrinsic conduction  $n_i$  is

$$n_i = (N \cdot P)^{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot e^{-\frac{E_g}{2 \cdot kT}} \quad (VI),$$

$k$ : Boltzmann constant,

$E_g$ : band gap of the semiconductor.

Fig. 1 Simplified diagram of intrinsic conduction: a semiconductor with an electron in the conduction band and a hole in the valence band under the influence of an electric field  $E$ .



**Apparatus**

1 Ge undoped on plug-in board . . . . .	586 851
1 base unit for Hall effect . . . . .	586 850
1 sensor CASSY . . . . .	524010
1 CASSY Lab . . . . .	524 200
1 current-controlled power supply, 15 V <sub>r</sub> , 3 A, for example . . . . .	521 50
1 power supply, 12 V <sub>r</sub> , 50 mA for example	521 54
1 stand base, V-shape, 20 cm . . . . .	300 02
connection leads	

**Setup**

The experimental setup is illustrated in Fig. 2.

**Mounting and connecting the plug-in board:**

Notes:

*The Ge crystal is extremely fragile:*

*Handle the plug-in board carefully and do not subject it to mechanical shocks or loads.*

*Due to its high specific resistance, the Ge crystal warms up even if only the cross-current is applied:*

*Do not exceed the maximum cross-current  $I = 4$  mA.*

*Turn the control knob for the cross-current on the base unit for Hall effect to the left stop.*

- Insert the plug-in board with the Ge crystal into the DIN socket on the base unit for Hall effect until the pins engage in the holes.
- Turn the current limiter of the current-controlled power supply to the left stop, and connect the power supply to the input for the heating and electronics of the base unit for Hall effect.
- Switch the current-controlled power supply on, set the voltage limiter to 15 V and the current limiter to 3 A (for this, short-circuit the output of the power supply temporarily).
- Turn the control knob for the cross-current on the base unit for Hall effect to the left stop, and supply the current source by connecting the other power supply. Switch this power supply on and set its output voltage to 12 V.

$$N = 2 \cdot \left( \frac{2\pi \cdot m_n \cdot kT}{h^2} \right)^{\frac{3}{2}} \text{ and } P = 2 \cdot \left( \frac{2\pi \cdot m_p \cdot kT}{h^2} \right)^{\frac{3}{2}} \quad \text{(VII),}$$

$h$ : Planck constant,  
 $m_n$ : effective electron mass,  
 $m_p$ : effective hole mass,

are the effective state densities in the conduction band and in the valence band. The mobilities  $\mu_n$  and  $\mu_p$  also depend on the temperature. At low temperatures, the proportionality  $\mu \propto T^{-\frac{3}{2}}$  holds roughly, as does the proportionality  $\mu \propto T^{-\frac{3}{2}}$  at high temperatures.

Because of the predominance of the exponential function (see Eq. (VI)), conductivity is well approximated and represented by

$$\sigma_i = \sigma_0 \cdot e^{-\frac{E_g}{2 \cdot kT}} \quad \text{(VIII)}$$

or

$$\ln \sigma_i = \ln \sigma_0 - \frac{E_g}{2 \cdot kT} \quad \text{(IX)}$$

With the object of confirming Eq. (VIII) and determining the band gap  $E_g$ , the conductivity of undoped germanium is determined as a function of the temperature  $T$  in the experiment. At a constant current

$$I = j \cdot b \cdot c \quad \text{(X),}$$

$b$ : breadth of the crystal,  $c$ : thickness of the crystal,

the voltage drop

$$U = E \cdot a \quad \text{(XI),}$$

$a$ : length of the crystal,

is measured at an undoped Ge crystal.

Because of (I), (X), and (XI) the conductivity

$$\sigma = \frac{a}{b \cdot c} \cdot \frac{I}{U} \quad \text{(XII)}$$

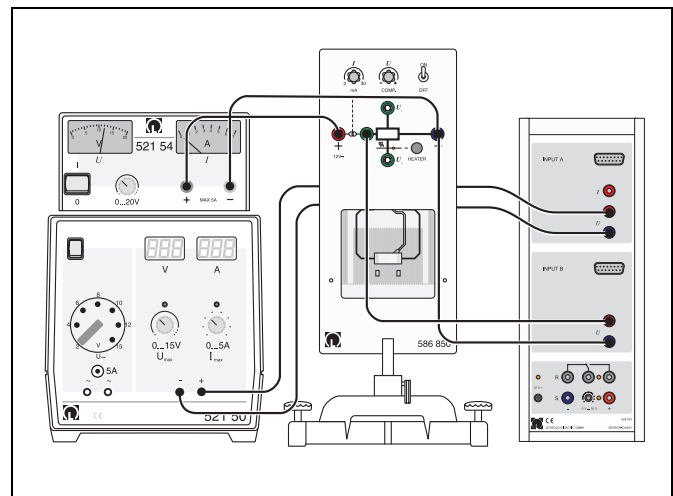


Fig. 2 Experimental setup for the determination of the band gap of germanium

**Preparation for data logging:**

- Connect the output for the temperature measurement to input A and the output for the voltage drop to input B of sensor CASSY.
- Connect sensor CASSY to the serial interface of the PC (usually COM1 or COM2) with the nine-pole V24 cable.
- If necessary, install the "CASSY Lab" program under Windows 95/98/NT and choose the desired language.
- Get the "CASSY Lab" program started and check whether connection of the CASSY sensor is correct.