



## Product Life Cycle Support Notice

### Instron® 4400, 5500, 5500A, 5800 Series transitioning to Phase 4 (Discontinued Product) on January 1, 2023

Keeping customers informed of the serviceability of their products is one of our primary duties as a responsible supplier. On January 1, 2022 we announced that the Instron 4400, 5500, 5500A, and 5800 Series systems and electronics will enter the “Phase 4 – Discontinued Product” phase of Instron’s Product Life Cycle on January 1, 2023.

The Product Life Cycle Policy is intended to help you plan for the ultimate evolution of your Instron testing system. Notices such as this one, are issued at life cycle milestones to inform you of pending changes and to provide recommendations on how to move forward. Please disregard this letter if you have already upgraded or no longer own this equipment.



### Why Evolve Your Testing System?

The 5500 Series systems were designed in the 1990s and last produced in 2010. Over the years these systems have consistently produced accurate and repeatable test data to help you meet your goals. However, in the years since these systems were introduced, the manufacturing landscape has changed significantly. Product cycle times have shortened while tolerances for data variability have shrunk. New and emerging regulations require labs to maintain records of all test system activity in order to prove the validity of their results.

You may be trying to address these demands using your legacy 4400, 5500, 5500A, or 5800 system. However, parts and components that were state-of-the-art when these systems were produced are now outdated, and many of them are no longer available. Adding to our concern is that some systems may be running an older operating system that is no longer supported by Microsoft, creating data security issues that we cannot mitigate. Because of these challenges, your lab is likely to experience extended downtime if and when your legacy system requires servicing or repair. For these reasons, we recommend that you upgrade or retrofit your legacy system to Instron’s latest 3400 or 6800 Series platform.

### Transition Your System Without Risk

There are many factors to consider when faced with the need to upgrade equipment. In order to make an informed decision, it is important to fully understand the implications of transitioning your system.

Data integrity is critical for product development and production, and is Instron’s foremost concern as a supplier of mechanical testing instruments. Inaccurate test data can result in delayed time to market, scrapped product, and lost revenue. In the most extreme cases, inaccurate test data can lead to defective products that cause injury to the end user. Data repeatability issues

are also a concern, as repeatability issues can cause bottlenecks in production until the source of a discrepancy is found and corrected. Transitioning to any new testing system creates opportunities for data accuracy and repeatability issues to surface, and replacing a legacy Instron system with equipment from another supplier amplifies this risk. Transitioning to a third party system comes at a significant cost of time, money, and effort as your operators struggle to replicate the test methods and data from their legacy Instron system on an unfamiliar machine and without the support of familiar Instron service resources. Every hour that it takes to validate a new system is an hour of lost productivity for your lab, and will result in testing backlogs and lost revenue.

By choosing to upgrade with Instron you will enjoy guaranteed data continuity from your legacy system to your new system. Furthermore, and just as importantly, you will be able to easily verify this correlation, saving you time during the validation process and during any potential audits. Throughout the transition you will be supported by the same technicians who already service your legacy system and are familiar with your lab and the needs of your testing program. Transitioning with Instron will also provide continuity and security to your system operators, who will enjoy a familiar – if upgraded – interface, similar workflows, and the addition of robust new safety features and ergonomic improvements.

Perhaps the most major concern when faced with the prospect of an upgrade is the upfront cost of a new system. A low cost system from a third party can be very appealing to organizations with budget constraints, especially if the decision makers are unfamiliar with some of the hidden costs associated with system downtime and data integrity problems. Instron understands this concern and offers multiple system migration options to fit your budget. Upgrade options range from simple software upgrades to system retrofits (upgrade software and electronics) to a full replacement of your system with one of our new 3400 or 6800 Series systems. These upgrades can be made on your timeline to fit your budget. Each options allow you to retain the value of your existing Instron fixtures and accessories, which will continue to be compatible with the new or retrofitted system, as well as the value you have gained from investing in operator training on your legacy system over the years. This step approach to upgrading allows you to only spend money on the “at risk” components of your legacy system, allowing you to continue operating that system with upgraded components while minimizing the cost of ownership.

The last thing to consider is the need to future-proof your testing program. With equipment lifespans reaching 20 years or more, it is imperative that any new or upgraded system not only be robust enough to withstand decades of use, but also be capable of growing to accommodate new tests and requirements as they are developed in the years to come. As an equipment provider we consider it our responsibility to anticipate trends and develop solutions so that when new requirements are introduced, our customers are prepared. One of the fastest growing trends in the industry is the need for increased documentation of test methods and results data. If this requirement is not part of your testing process today, it is likely to be added in the future, and you should make future investment decisions with this likelihood in mind.

Finally, although equipment downtime is rare, there will be moments during the lifetime of your new instrument where you need to address critical repair or service issues. By choosing to continue with Instron, not only will you maintain your relationship with your existing service technician who knows your business needs, but you will also benefit from remote technical support designed to help you more accurately pinpoint problems, allowing parts to be ordered and shipped to you on-site to minimize downtime.

The purpose of this notice is to convey the importance of upgrading your legacy Instron system and to advise you of the potential risks and benefits that come along with transitioning. By evolving your partnership with Instron, you can gain new capabilities, such as best-in-class safety and advanced traceability, while reducing the risk of unexpected costs, production halts, and frustrated stakeholders. We encourage you to work with your local Instron sales engineer to create a plan for migrating from your 4400, 5500, 5500A, or 5800 system.

## What Are Your Options?

### A Trade-in for a Complete New System



Instron® offers a range of universal testing machines which are direct replacements of existing 4400, 5500, 5500A, and 5800 Series systems. A trade-in ensures that you are on the latest Instron platform with in-production hardware, software, and electronics. Phase 1 systems have parts stocked by Instron's global service organization and can be backed by an extended warranty and support agreement for priority assistance. We design our systems to re-use mounting interfaces and electrical connections wherever possible so that existing accessories can be used on a new system.

### B Upgrade to the latest Electronics & Bluehill® Universal Software

On some 4400, 5500, 5500A, and 5800 systems, Instron also offers system retrofits (or upgrades) to extend product life and enhance functionality with minimal cost and downtime. Instron's latest electronics, system-mounted Operator Dashboard, and new Bluehill Universal software are installed on the existing Instron test frame. Existing load cells and accessories are retained while obsolete electronic components are replaced. With a retrofitted system the software and electronics return to Phase 1 while the frame remains in Phase 4.



### C Upgrade to Bluehill® Universal Software

Some 5500 and 5500A systems that have been well-maintained and remain in good working order can be updated with just new software and an Operator Dashboard. In this case, users are on the latest software and operating system. When upgrading the software to Bluehill Universal with an Operator Dashboard, the frame and electronics will be in Phase 4 with software in Phase 1.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What software upgrades are available?

Some 5500 and 5500A systems can be upgraded to Bluehill Universal software. No 4400 or 5800 systems can be upgraded. Please be aware that when upgrading your software, the electronics and frame will still be in Phase 4.

## What software updates are available?

Updates are available for customers who have upgraded to Bluehill Universal. However, we can't guarantee how long new updates will be made available on phase 4 controllers.

## Will we offer technical support assistance?

Phase 4 "Discontinued Product" means that repair service or parts are not available. Please contact your local service team to discuss your specific situation.

## Will we offer spare parts and factory repairs?

No.

## Will we offer preventative maintenance services?

Yes.

## Will we provide calibration services?

Yes as long as the electronics or transducer do not need to be repaired. If the transducer does not pass, there is nothing that can be done to repair it.

## Will we offer premium support contracts?

Yes, if your system has been upgraded to Bluehill Universal. However, you may not be able to realize the full value of this contract type. Please discuss with your local service team to learn more.

## Will we provide IQOQ services?

Yes, on systems running Bluehill Universal.

## Will we provide Instron product training?

Yes, but it may be limited. It will require a custom quotation.

## Will we still sell accessories such as Load Cells, Grips, and Fixtures?

Yes

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