

---

## NAME

lua\_udunits2 - Lua interface to the udunits2 library

## SYNTAX

```
ut = require('udunits2')
uts = require('udunits2.system')
utu = require('udunits2.unit')
cv = require('udunits2.converter')
```

## DESCRIPTION

**lua\_udunits2** provides a Lua interface for the UCAR UDUNITS-2 units conversion library. Its documentation should be used to understand its basic functionality and use. This document describes only the Lua interface.

**lua\_udunits2** distinguishes between *methods* (which operate on `ut_system`, `ut_unit`, or `cv_converter` objects) and *functions*, which do not. There is a small set of subroutines which may be interpreted as being in either category; both functions and methods are provided for those.

In most cases the names and arguments for the Lua routines are the same as for the C routines with the following changes:

- The `ut_` and `cv_` prefixes have been removed.
- Methods use the standard Lua method invocation, so

```
ut_unit* unit = ut_new_base_unit( system );
```

becomes

```
unit = system:new_base_unit()
```

Exceptions are noted in *API CHANGES*. See also *PITFALLS*.

## Return Values and UDUNITS-2 Errors

**UDUNITS-2** uses function return values and the **ut\_get\_status()** function to obtain the status of the last call to the function. Some functions return the status directly, others return a `NULL` pointer and the caller must use **ut\_get\_status()** to obtain further information.

The Lua interface strives to be a bit more Lua-like.

The Lua versions of **UDUNITS-2** routines which return `ut_status` return a boolean indicating success or failure, and in the case of failure the status code and the value of the C system variable `errno`.

The Lua versions of **UDUNITS-2** routines which return objects return the object upon success; upon failure they return `nil`, the status code, and the value of the C system variable `errno`.

The `ut_get_status()` and `ut_set_status` functions are still available.

## Error Message Handlers

**UDUNITS-2** supports user provided error message handlers. Lua functions may be used as handlers, but the API is different. See the documentation for `set_error_message_handler` in *API CHANGES* for more information.

## Lua Modules

The **UDUNITS-2** library is exposed via four Lua modules. When `require`'d these modules are *not* inserted into the global symbol table. So, do this:

```
ut = require('udunits')
```

not this:

```
require('udunits')
```

Only load a module to access its functions. Objects will automatically find their methods. For example, in the following code, it is not required to load `udunits2.unit` for the `unit1` object to have access to the `same_system()` method.

```
uts = require( 'udunits2.system' )
system = uts.new()
unit1 = system:new_base_unit()
unit2 = system:new_base_unit()
unit1:same_system( unit 2)
```

## The Modules

`udunits2`

This module provides the following functions:

```
trim
encode_date
encode_clock
encode_time
decode_time
get_status
set_status
set_error_message_handler (see below for API change)
handle_error_message (see below for API change)
```

**UDUNITS-2** provides a number of enumerated constants; these are provided as integers with the `UT_` prefix removed.

```
ASCII ISO_8859_1 LATIN1 UTF8

SUCCESS BAD_ARG EXISTS NO_UNIT OS NOT_SAME_SYSTEM
MEANINGLESS NO_SECOND VISIT_ERROR CANT_FORMAT SYNTAX
UNKNOWN OPEN_ARG OPEN_ENV OPEN_DEFAULT PARSE

NAMES DEFINITION
```

This module provides an additional function not available in **UDUNITS-2**:

`isa`

```
boolean = isa( object, type )
```

returns true if *object* is a **UDUNITS-2** object of the specified type. *type* is a string and may take one of the following values:

```
converter
```

```

    error_message_handler
    system
    unit

```

udunits2.system

This module provides the following functions:

```

    new (same as ut_new_system() )
    read_xml

```

and the following methods

add_name_prefix	new_base_unit
add_symbol_prefix	new_dimensionless_unit
get_dimensionless_unit_one	parse
get_unit_by_name	unmap_name_to_unit
get_unit_by_symbol	unmap_symbol_to_unit

udunits2.unit

This module provides the following functions:

```

    are_convertible
    compare
    divide
    get_converter
    multiply
    same_system

```

and the following methods:

are_convertible	map_symbol_to_unit (API change)
clone	map_unit_to_name
compare	map_unit_to_symbol
divide	multiply
format (API change)	offset
get_converter	offset_by_time
get_name	raise
get_symbol	root
get_system	same_system
invert	scale (API change)
is_dimensionless	set_second
log (API change)	unmap_unit_to_name
map_name_to_unit (API change)	unmap_unit_to_symbol

Note that there is overlap between the methods and the functions.

udunits2.converter

This module provides the following functions:

combine	get_galilean
get_trivial	get_converter
get_inverse	get_log
get_scale	get_pow
get_offset	

and the following methods:

```
combine
convert
get_expression
```

Note that there is overlap between the methods and the functions. The `cv_convert_float` and `cv_convert_double` functions are coalesced into the `convert` method.

## API CHANGES

`ut_map_name_to_unit`

```
C:   ut_map_name_to_unit( name, encoding, const unit)
Lua: unit:map_name_to_unit( name, encoding )
```

`ut_map_symbol_to_unit`

```
C:   ut_map_symbol_to_unit( symbol, encoding, const unit)
Lua: unit:map_symbol_to_unit( symbol, encoding )
```

`ut_scale`

```
C:   ut_scale( factor, unit )
Lua: unit:scale( factor )
```

`ut_log`

```
C:   ut_log( base, unit )
Lua: unit:log( base )
```

`ut_format`

```
C:   ut_format(unit, buf, size, opts)
Lua: buf = unit:format( opts )
```

The output string is limited to 1023 bytes.

`ut_handle_error_message`

In Lua, pass a simple string

```
C:   ut_handle_error_message(fmt, ...)
Lua: handle_error_message( string )
```

`ut_set_error_message_handler`

In C, a pointer to a `ut_error_message_handler` is passed and returned.

In Lua, pass in one of the following:

the string `stderr`

Error messages are written to the standard error string (equivalent to `ut_write_to_stderr`).

the string `ignore`

Error messages are discarded (equivalent to `ut_ignore`).

a Lua function

The function will be called with a single argument, the formatted error message string. Its length is limited to 1023 characters.

an `error_message_handler` object

This must come from a previous call to `set_error_message_handler`. Any operations on such an object are meaningless.

`set_error_message_handler` returns the last message handler set.

It may be either of the strings `stderr`, `ignore`, a Lua function, or a special `error_message_handler` object, which is used to encapsulate arbitrary handlers set from C. No operations on this object other than passing back to `set_error_message_handler` are defined.

`cv_get_expression`

```
C:   cv_get_expression( converter, buf, max, variable )
Lua: buf = converter:get_expression( variable )
```

## C Library support routines

This package provides C side support for manipulating UDUNITS-2 objects on the Lua stack. This requires linking against the `lib_lua_udunits2` library.

The following functions are declared in `lua_udunits2.h`:

Pushing a UDUNITS-2 object onto the Lua stack

```
luautil_push_udata_system(luaState *L, ut_system* obj, int
is_lua_managed);
luautil_push_udata_unit(luaState *L, ut_unit* obj, int is_lua_managed);
luautil_push_udata_converter(luaState *L, cv_converter* obj,
                             int is_lua_managed);
luautil_push_udata_message_handler(luaState* L,
ut_error_message_handler* obj,
                                int is_lua_managed);
```

Pushes a UDUNITS-2 object pointer onto the Lua stack. If `is_lua_managed` is non-zero then deallocation of the object will be handled by Lua.

Extracting a UDUNITS-2 object from the Lua stack

```
ut_system* luautil_tosystem(L,idx);
ut_unit*   luautil_tounit(L,idx);
cv_converter* luautil_toconverter(L,idx);
ut_error_message_handler luautil_tomessage_handler(L,idx);
```

Return the UDUNITS-2 object pointer at the given stack location.

Type checking

```
int luautil_is_system(L, idx);
int luautil_is_unit(L, idx);
int luautil_is_converter(L, idx);
int luautil_is_message_handler(L, idx);
```

Return true if the object on the Lua stack at the given index is the specific type.

Function argument checking

```
ut_system* luaut_check_system(L, nargs);  
ut_unit*   luaut_check_unit(L, nargs);  
cv_converter* luaut_check_converter(L, nargs);  
ut_error_message_handler* luaut_check_message_handler(L, nargs);
```

Raise an error if the given function is not of the specified type, else return the pointer to the object. Similar in spirit to the `luaL_check*` functions.

## PITFALLS

### Lua Thread safety

There is none. **UDUNITS-2** stores some state in global variables. No attempt has been made to maintain consistency across multiple Lua threads or interpreters.

### Error Messages

If multiple Lua interpreters call the library and one or more install Lua functions as error message handlers, interpreters which have *not* done so will throw an error when calling `set_error_message_handler`. This latter is a feature to prevent confused code.

### Unimplemented Functionality

Visitors

None of the visitor functionality has been exposed.

`cv_convert_floats`

`cv_convert_doubles`

Conversions of arrays is not supported.

## AUTHOR

Diab Jerius, <djerius@cfa.harvard.edu>

## COPYRIGHT AND LICENSE

Copyright (C) 2011 by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory

This software is released under the GNU General Public License. You may find a copy at <http://www.fsf.org/copyleft/gpl.html>.