

## Electronic Supplementary Information

### Metal-organic framework-derived CoN<sub>x</sub> nanoparticles on N-doped carbon for selective N-alkylation of aniline

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#### Chemicals

Cobalt(II) nitrate hexahydrate (Co(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O), methanol, toluene and silica gel were purchased from Merck. 2-methylimidazole was purchased from Avra. Chloroform-D was purchased from Sigma Aldrich. Vulcan-XC-72R carbon was purchased from CABOT corporation. Alcohols and amines were obtained commercially from various chemical companies (Sigma Aldrich, Avra, and SRL). All catalytic experiments were carried out in a pressure sealed tube (Ace pressure tube, volume 15 mL, from Sigma).

#### Instruments

High resolution X-ray diffractions (HR-XRD) of the catalysts were carried out in Rigaku SmartLab 9kW Powder X-ray diffractometer (RIGAKU Corporation).

Scanning Electron Microscopy (FE-SEM) studies were carried out in Nova Nano SEM 450, FEI Company of USA (S.E.A.) PTE, LTD. Energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX) images were collected by Team Pegasus Integrated EDS-EBSD with Octane plus and Hikari Pro EDX System. Elemental mapping was performed with the analyzer attached to SEM. TEM studies were carried out on Tecnai G2 20 TWIN transmission electron microscope connected with an energy-dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDAX, r-TEM SUTW).

The X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) measurements were performed in a K-Alpha X-ray photoelectron spectrometer from Thermo Fisher Scientific. The binding energies were calibrated using the C 1s peak located at 284.6 eV as the reference. Raman spectra were recorded in an STR-300 spectrometer (AIRIX Corp.) with a 532 nm excitation source.

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectra were recorded on AVH D 500 AVANCE III HD 500 MHZ, One Bay NMR Spectrometer from Bruker Bio Spin International. The Chemical shifts were reported in ppm. Coupling constants are expressed in Hertz (Hz). The following abbreviations are used: s = singlet, bs = broad singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet and m = multiple. The residual solvent signals were used as references for <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra (CDCl<sub>3</sub>: δ<sub>H</sub> = 7.28-7.29 ppm, δ<sub>C</sub> = 77.01-77.16 ppm).

The GC-MS analyses were recorded on Agilent 5977B instrument. Conversion and yields were determined by GC-FID, HP-5MS UI chromatograph with FID detector, (HP-5MS UI .025μ, 30 m x 0.25 mm) capillary column.

## Experimental

### Synthesis of ZIF-67@C<sup>1</sup>

200 mg Vulcan carbon was dispersed in 30 mL methanol and stirred for 30 minutes.  $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (1.00 mmol) was added to the previous dispersion of Vulcan and stirred for 10 minutes to form the dispersion A. 2-methylimidazole (4 mmol) was dissolved in 20 mL methanol and stirred for 10 minutes to get the solution B. Then, solution B was added to A at a time and stirred for 24 h. The precipitate of ZIF-67@C was obtained. The precipitate was collected by centrifugation (14000 rpm for 15 minutes) and washed five times with methanol. The obtained precipitate was dried at 60 °C in a hot air oven over night.

### Synthesis of $\text{CoN}_x$ @NC<sup>1</sup>

200 mg of ZIF-67@C was ground in a mortar pestle to get a fine powder. The powder was placed in a crucible boat and heated at 800 °C in the presence of  $\text{N}_2$  for 3 h (in a tubular furnace with heating rate: 5 °C/min from 35 °C). The furnace was allowed to cool down to room temperature. The black powder was collected and denoted as  $\text{CoN}_x$ @NC.

Similarly,  $\text{CoN}_x$ @NC-1 and  $\text{CoN}_x$ @NC-2 were prepared from ZIF-67@C by changing the pyrolysis temperature to 700 °C and 900 °C, respectively.

### Synthesis of Co@C<sup>2</sup>

200 mg Vulcan carbon was dispersed in 30 mL methanol and stirred for 30 minutes.  $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (1.00 mmol) was added to the previous dispersion of Vulcan and stirred for 10 minutes to form the dispersion A.  $\text{NaBH}_4$  (2 mmol) was dissolved in 20 mL methanol and stirred for 1 minute to form the solution B. The solution B was added to A at a time and stirred for 24 h. The mixture yielded a black suspension of Co@C. The precipitate was collected by centrifugation (11000 rpm for 10 minutes) and washed five times with methanol. The obtained precipitate was dried at 60 °C in a hot air oven over night.

## Figures

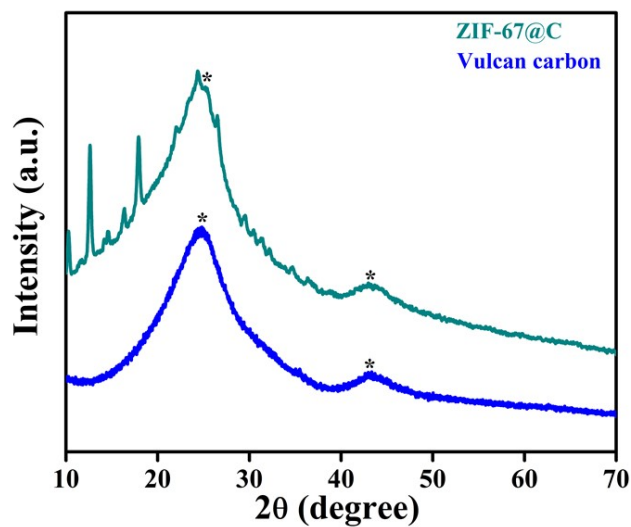


Figure S1. The PXR D patterns of ZIF-67@C and Vulcan carbon.

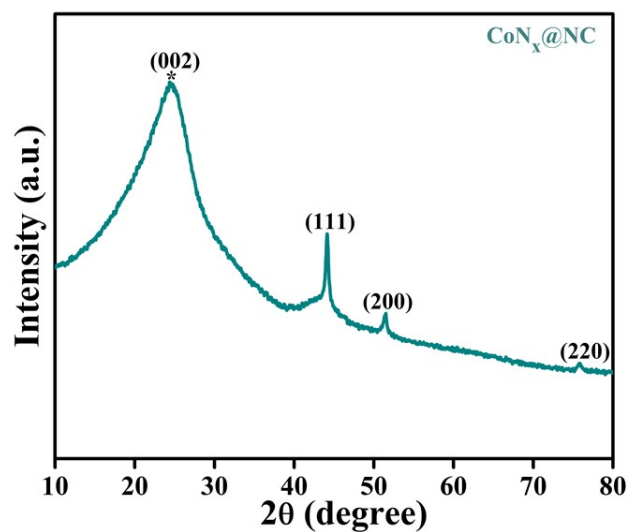
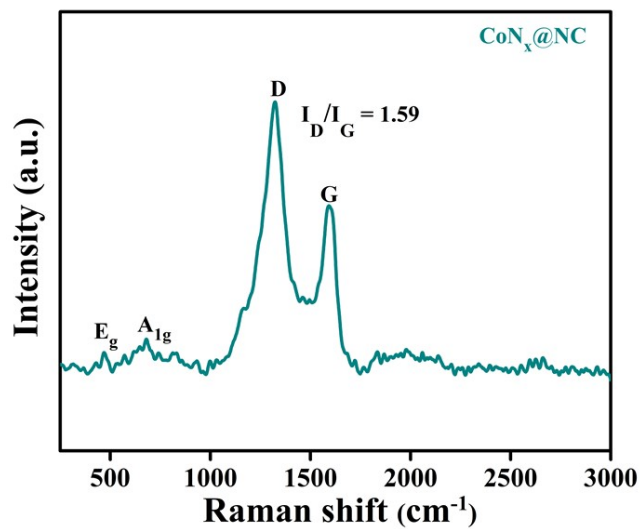
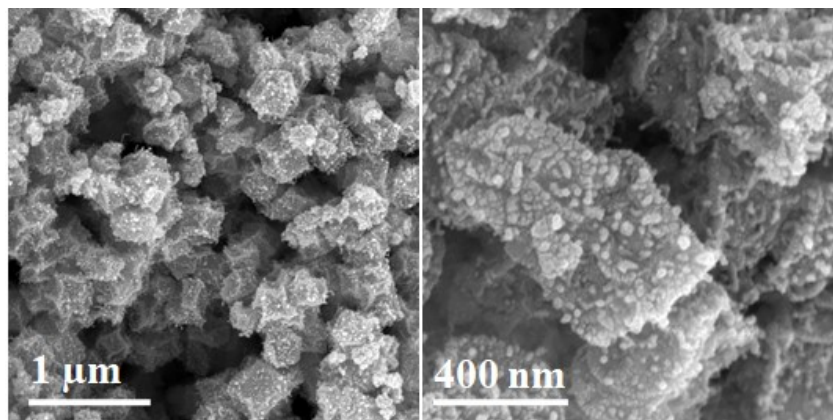


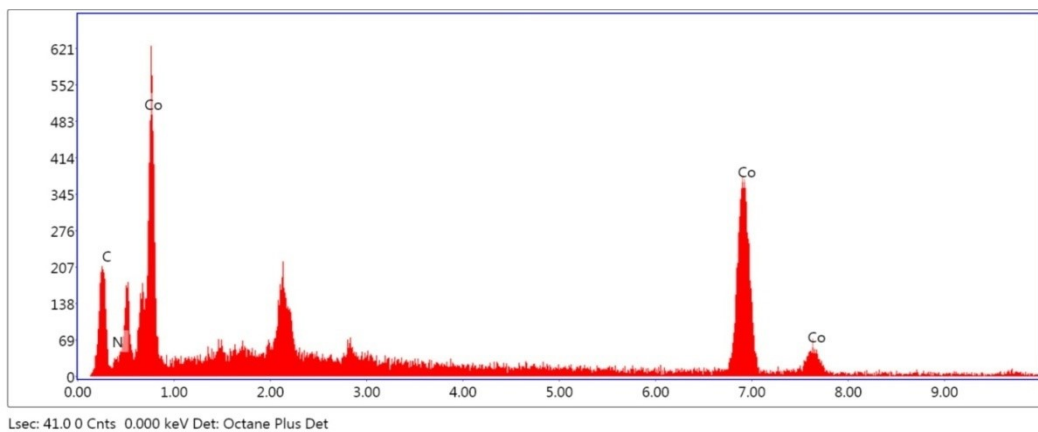
Figure S2. The PXR D pattern of CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC. The PXR D of CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC showed that cobalt crystallized in pure face-center cubic (*fcc*) phase (JCPDS: No.15-0806). The broad peak at  $2\theta = 24.56^\circ$  is related to graphitic carbon.<sup>3</sup>



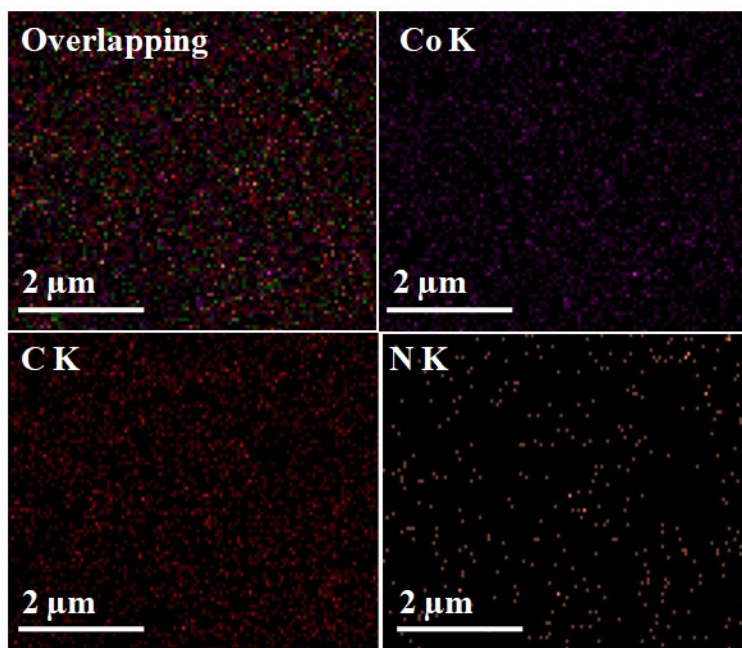
**Figure S3.** Raman spectra of CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC showing the peaks at 1322 and 1596 cm<sup>-1</sup> corresponding to D and G bands of graphitic carbon and peaks at 475 and 682 cm<sup>-1</sup> correspond to vibration modes of E<sub>g</sub> and A<sub>1g</sub> of metallic Co. The I<sub>D</sub>/I<sub>G</sub> of CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC catalyst is 1.59.<sup>4</sup>



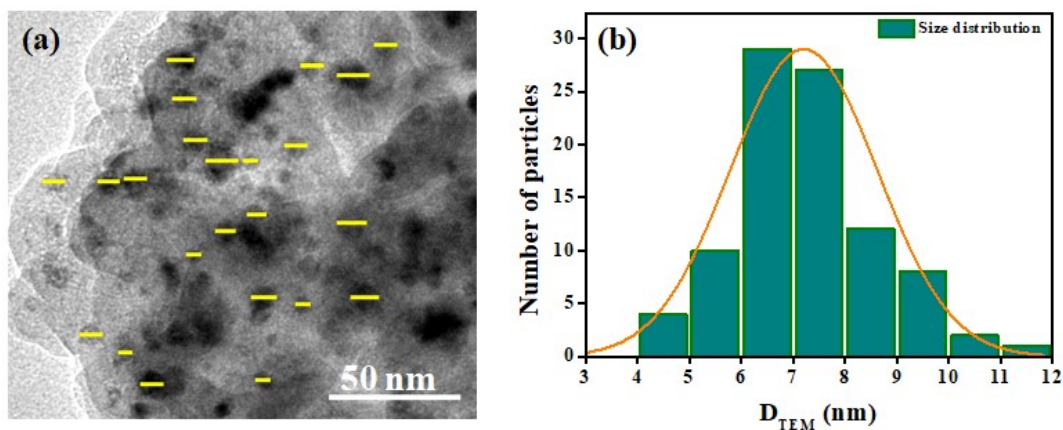
**Figure S4.** FE-SEM images of the CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC showed rhombic dodecahedron morphology at different resolutions.



**Figure S5.** EDX spectrum of  $\text{CoN}_x@NC$  showing the presence of Co, C and N.



**Figure S6.** Elemental mapping of  $\text{CoN}_x@NC$  showing the homogeneously distributed of Co, C and N.



**Figure S7.** The average particles size of Co in  $\text{CoN}_x@\text{NC}$  is 6-7 nm.

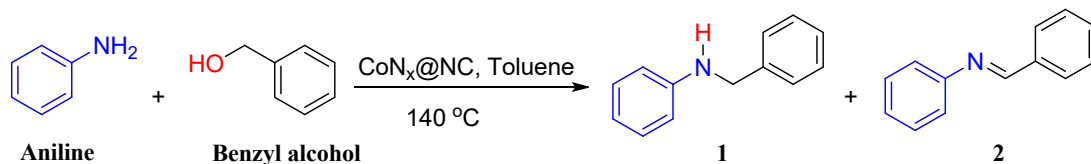
### Catalytic Test

N-alkylation of amines with alcohols was carried out in a 15 mL pressure sealed tube. In a typical experiment, the sealed tube was filled with 1 mmol benzyl alcohol, 0.5 mmol aniline, 10 mg catalyst ( $\text{CoN}_x@\text{NC}$ ) and toluene (2 mL) was used as a solvent. Then, the tube was capped and placed in the oil bath preheated at 140 °C and the reaction was continued for 18-24 h with stirring (500 rpm). After the reaction, the sealed tube was cooled down to room temperature and the mixture was centrifuged to separate the solid catalyst. The liquid part was collected and worked up.

The % of conversion and product yield was analyzed using an Agilent 7890 GC equipped with an HP-5MS UI (.025 $\mu$ , 30 m x 0.25 mm, -60 to 350 °C) capillary column and  $^1\text{H}$  NMR.

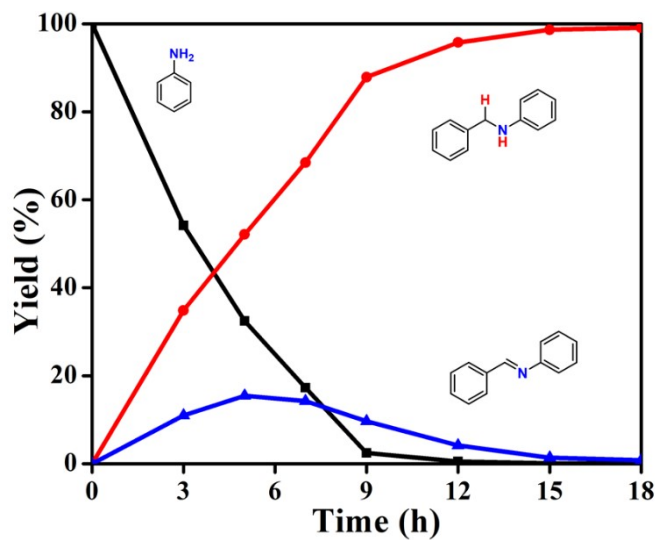
After each amination test, the catalyst was washed with ethanol and separated by centrifugation several times and dried for overnight for further testing of the recyclability of the catalyst.

**Table S1: Optimization of the reaction condition**

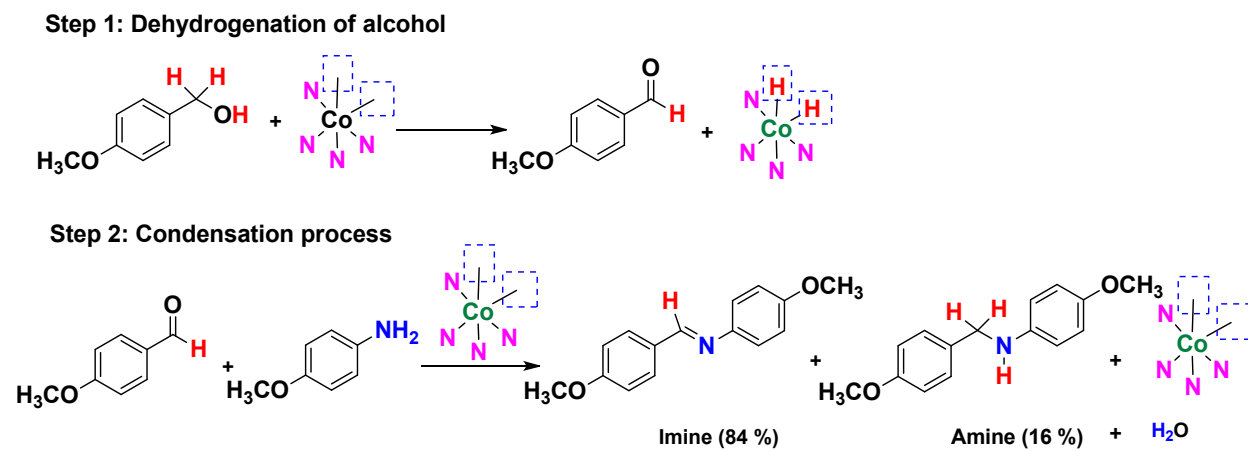


Entry	Catalyst	Base	Solvent	Conv. (%)	Yield 1 (%)	Yield 2 (%)
<b>Variation of catalyst</b>						
1.	<b>CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC</b>	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	<b>Toluene</b>	<b>&gt;99</b>	<b>99</b>	0
2.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC-1	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	96	87	9
3.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC-2	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	>99	90	9
4.	Co@C	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	87	65	22
5.	Vulcan carbon	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	35	28	7
6.	Co-ZIF@C	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	56	46	9
7.	Co(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ·6H <sub>2</sub> O	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	44	36	8
<b>Variation of base</b>						
8.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	-	Toluene	85	56	29
9.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	K <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	Toluene	54	40	14
10.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	Cs <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	Toluene	65	56	9
11.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	KOH	Toluene	86	73	13
12.	<b>CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC</b>	<b><i>tert</i>-BuOK</b>	<b>Toluene</b>	<b>&gt;99</b>	<b>99</b>	0
<b>Variation of catalyst amount</b>						
13.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC (5 mg)	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	85	76	8
14.	<b>CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC (10 mg)</b>	<b><i>tert</i>-BuOK</b>	<b>Toluene</b>	<b>&gt;99</b>	<b>99</b>	0
15.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC (15 mg)	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Toluene	>99	92	6
<b>Variation of solvent</b>						
16.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	CH <sub>3</sub> CN	54	43	9
17.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	Dioxane	91	80	11
18.	CoN <sub>x</sub> @NC	<i>tert</i> -BuOK	THF	97	86	11
19.	<b>CoN<sub>x</sub>@NC</b>	<b><i>tert</i>-BuOK</b>	<b>Toluene</b>	<b>&gt;99</b>	<b>99</b>	0

**Reaction conditions:** Benzyl alcohol (1 mmol), aniline (0.5 mmol), catalyst (10 mg), toluene (2 mL), *tert*-BuOK (0.5 mmol), temperature (140 °C) and time 18 h. Conversion and selectivity were detected by GC-MS and <sup>1</sup>H-NMR.

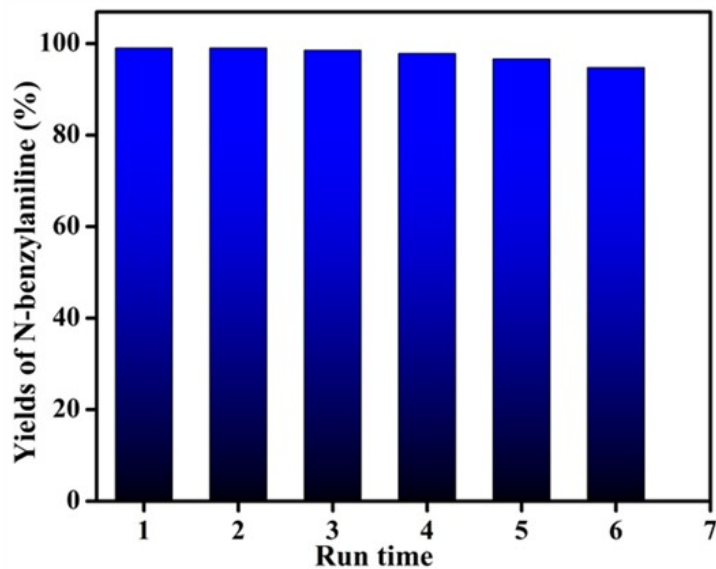
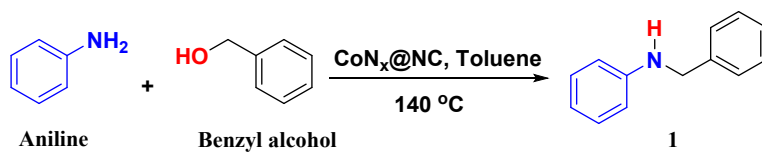


**Figure S8.** Progress of the N-alkylation reaction of aniline and benzyl alcohol with time. Reaction conditions: Benzyl alcohol (1 mmol), aniline (0.5 mmol), catalyst (10 mg), toluene (2 mL), *tert*-BuOK (0.5 mmol), temperature (140 °C) and time 18 h. Conversion and selectivity were detected by GC-MS.



**Figure S9.** Sequence of the reaction involved as detected by <sup>1</sup>H NMR.

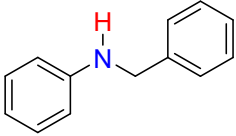
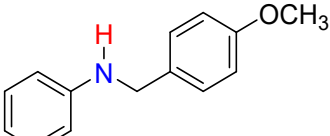
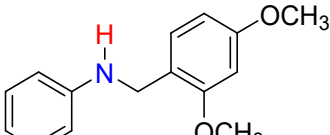
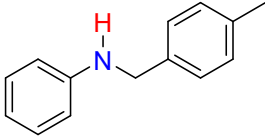
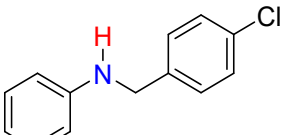
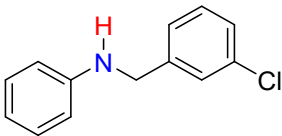


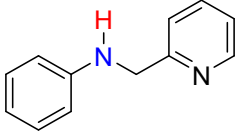
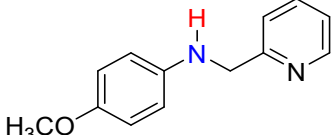
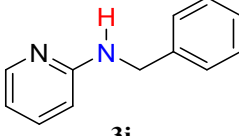
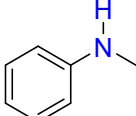
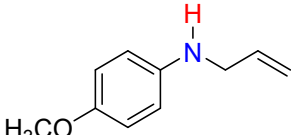
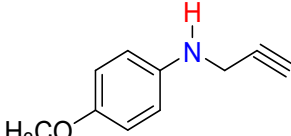


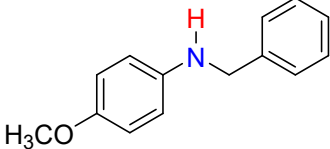
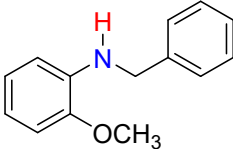
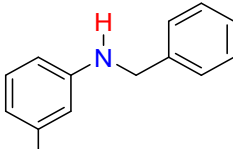
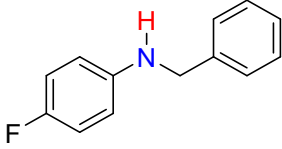
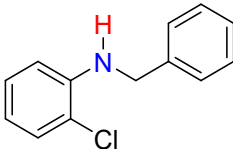
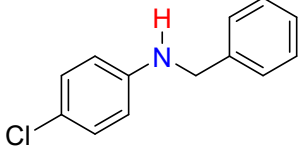
**Figure S10:** Recycling test of  $\text{CoN}_x\text{@NC}$  for the synthesis of N-benzylaniline. Reaction conditions: 1 mmol benzyl alcohol, 0.5 mmol aniline, 10 mg catalyst, 0.5 mmol *tert*-BuOK, 2 mL toluene, 140 °C, 24 h. Conversions and yields are based on aniline and determined by GC.

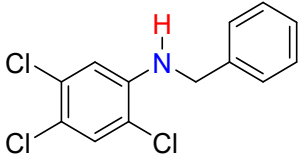
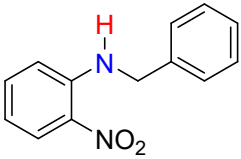
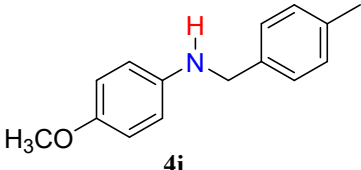
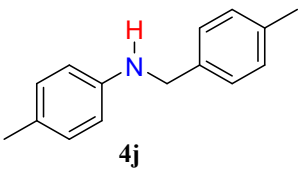
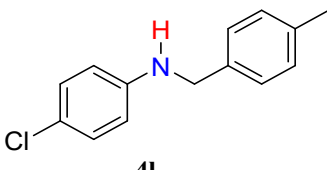
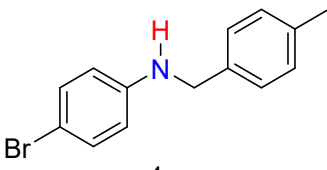
**Table S2: Characterization of the products by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR**

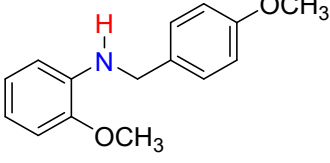
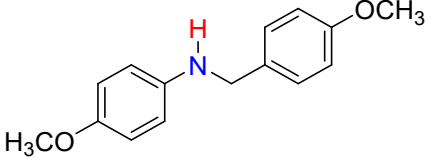
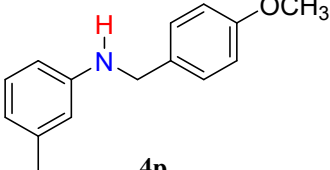
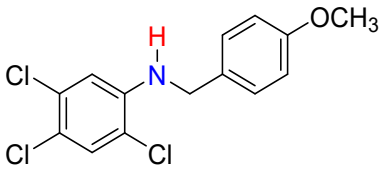
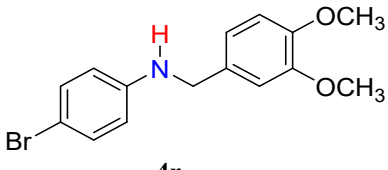
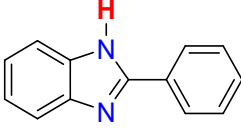

**Note:** For some compounds intensity of -NH peak is poor and hence not properly visible in  $^1\text{H}$ NMR.

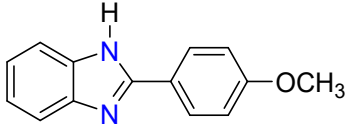
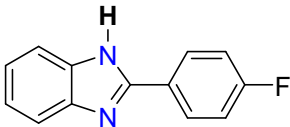
<p><b>3a: N-benzylaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3a</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H}</math> NMR (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>): <math>\delta</math> 7.43-7.31 (m, <math>J = 7.1</math> Hz, 5H), 7.23 (m, <math>J = 7.4</math> Hz, 2H), 6.77 (m, <math>J = 7.3</math> Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, <math>J = 8.5</math> Hz, 2H), 4.38 (s, 2H), 4.07 (s, 1H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C}</math> NMR (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>): <math>\delta</math> 148.12, 139.40, 129.24, 128.6, 127.48, 127.20, 117.53, 112.81, 48.28.</p> <p>Yield of product: 99%, 90.2 mg and 0.49 mmol</p>
<p><b>3b: N-(4-methoxybenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3b</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H}</math> NMR (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.33 (d, <math>J = 8.6</math> Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, <math>J = 8.5</math>, 7.4 Hz, 2H), 6.92 (d, <math>J = 8.7</math> Hz, 2H), 6.75 (m, <math>J = 7.3</math> Hz, 1H), 6.67 (d, <math>J = 7.6</math> Hz, 2H), 4.29 (s, 2H), 3.98 (s, 1H), 3.84 (s, 3H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C}</math> NMR (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 158.89, 148.24, 131.44, 129.28, 128.84, 117.53, 114.05, 112.86, 55.33, 47.82.</p> <p>Yield of product: 97%, 103.6 mg and 0.48 mmol</p>
<p><b>3c: N-(2,4-dimethoxybenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3c</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H}</math> NMR (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.26-7.20 (m, 2H), 7.19 (d, <math>J = 1.2</math> Hz, 2H), 6.71 (t, <math>J = 6.8</math> Hz, 1H), 6.68 (d, <math>J = 7.6</math> Hz, 2H), 6.50 (d, <math>J = 2.3</math> Hz, 1H), 6.46 (m, <math>J = 8.3</math>, 2.4 Hz, 2H), 4.28 (s, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 3.82 (s, 3H), 3.41 (s, 1H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C}</math> NMR (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 160.22, 158.45, 148.52, 129.71, 129.16, 119.80, 117.30, 113.12, 103.92, 98.65, 55.39, 43.18.</p> <p>Yield of product: 88%, 107.1 mg and 0.44 mmol</p>
<p><b>3d: N-(4-methylbenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3d</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H}</math> NMR (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.34 (t, <math>J = 7.7</math> Hz, 2H), 7.25 (dd, <math>J = 13.3</math>, 5.9 Hz, 4H), 6.79 (m, <math>J = 10.2</math> Hz, 1H), 6.71 (d, <math>J = 7.3</math> Hz, 2H), 4.36 (s, 2H), 4.04 (s, 1H), 2.44 (s, 3H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C}</math> NMR (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 148.31, 136.92, 136.46, 129.35, 127.59, 117.56, 112.92, 48.14, 21.18.</p> <p>Yield of product: 88%, 86.8 mg and 0.44 mmol</p>
<p><b>3e: N-(4-chlorobenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3e</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H}</math> NMR (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.33 (d, 4H), 7.25-7.18 (m, 2H), 6.76 (t, <math>J = 7.3</math> Hz, 1H), 6.64 (d, <math>J = 8.4</math> Hz, 2H), 4.34 (s, 2H), 4.09 (s, 1H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C}</math> NMR (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 147.94, 138.12, 132.98, 129.42, 128.84, 117.92, 113.00, 47.72.</p> <p>Yield of product: 86%, 94.0 mg and 0.43 mmol</p>
<p><b>3f: N-(3-chlorobenzyl)aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3f</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H}</math> NMR (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.40 (s, 1H), 7.28 (t, 3H), 7.24-7.18 (m, 2H), 6.77 (m, <math>J = 7.3</math> Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d, <math>J = 7.7</math> Hz, 2H), 4.35 (s, 2H), 4.12 (s, 1H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C}</math> NMR (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 147.79, 141.75, 134.54, 129.89, 129.31, 127.40, 125.41, 117.87, 112.91, 47.80.</p> <p>Yield of product: 84%, 91.8 mg and 0.42 mmol.</p>

<p><b>3g: N-(pyridine-2-ylmethyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3g</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 8.60 (m, 1H), 7.66 (td, <i>J</i> = 1.8, 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (dt, <i>J</i> = 1.0, 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.23–7.17 (m, 3H), 6.74 (m, 1H), 6.69 (t, <i>J</i> = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 5.12–4.62 (m, 1H), 4.49 (s, 2H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 158.91, 149.58, 148.26, 137.06, 129.63, 122.50, 121.99, 117.99, 113.44, 49.67.</p> <p>Yield of product: 83%, 76.4 mg and 0.415 mmol.</p>
<p><b>3h: 4-methoxy-N-(pyridin-2-ylmethyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3h</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 8.60 (d, <i>J</i> = 5.6 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (t, <i>J</i> = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (d, <i>J</i> = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.22–7.16 (m, 1H), 6.80 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.65 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 4.44 (s, 2H), 3.86 (s, 1H), 3.76 (s, 3H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 158.89, 152.26, 149.21, 142.19, 136.64, 122.07, 121.68, 114.92, 114.33, 55.79, 50.28.</p> <p>Yield of product: 81%, 86.5 mg and 0.40 mmol</p>
<p><b>3i: N-benzylpyridin-2-amine</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3i</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 8.11 (d, <i>J</i> = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 7.49–7.31 (m, 5H), 7.32–7.26 (m, 1H), 6.67–6.56 (m, 1H), 6.39 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 5.11 (s, 1H), 4.53 (d, <i>J</i> = 4.7 Hz, 2H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 158.74, 148.17, 139.24, 137.68, 128.75, 127.41, 113.23, 106.89, 46.42.</p> <p>Yield of product: 82%, 75.5 mg and 0.41 mmol.</p>
<p><b>3j: N-methylaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3j</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 7.27 (t, <i>J</i> = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 6.79 (t, <i>J</i> = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, <i>J</i> = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 3.71 (s, 1H), 2.89 (s, 3H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 149.42, 129.26, 117.29, 112.48, 30.76.</p> <p>Yield of product: 72%, 39.1 mg and 0.36 mmol</p>
<p><b>3k: N-allylaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3k</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b>: δ 6.81 (d, <i>J</i> = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 6.63 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 5.99 (ddd, <i>J</i> = 15.7, 10.4, 5.2 Hz, 1H), 5.31 (dd, <i>J</i> = 17.2, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 5.19 (dd, <i>J</i> = 10.3, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.76 (d, <i>J</i> = 5.5 Hz, 2H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b>: δ 152.25 (s), 142.32 (s), 135.84 (s), 116.14 (s), 114.90 (s), 114.36 (s), 55.82 (s), 47.58 (s).</p> <p>Yield of product: 55%, 41.6 mg and 0.27 mmol.</p>
<p><b>3l: 4-methoxy-N-(prop-2-yn-1-yl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3l</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b>: δ 6.85 (d, <i>J</i> = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 6.70 (d, <i>J</i> = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 3.91 (s, 2H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 2.24 (s, 1H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b>: δ 153.01, 140.97, 115.14, 114.86, 81.43, 71.26, 55.73, 34.60.</p> <p>Yield of product: 52%, 42.4 mg and 0.26 mmol.</p>

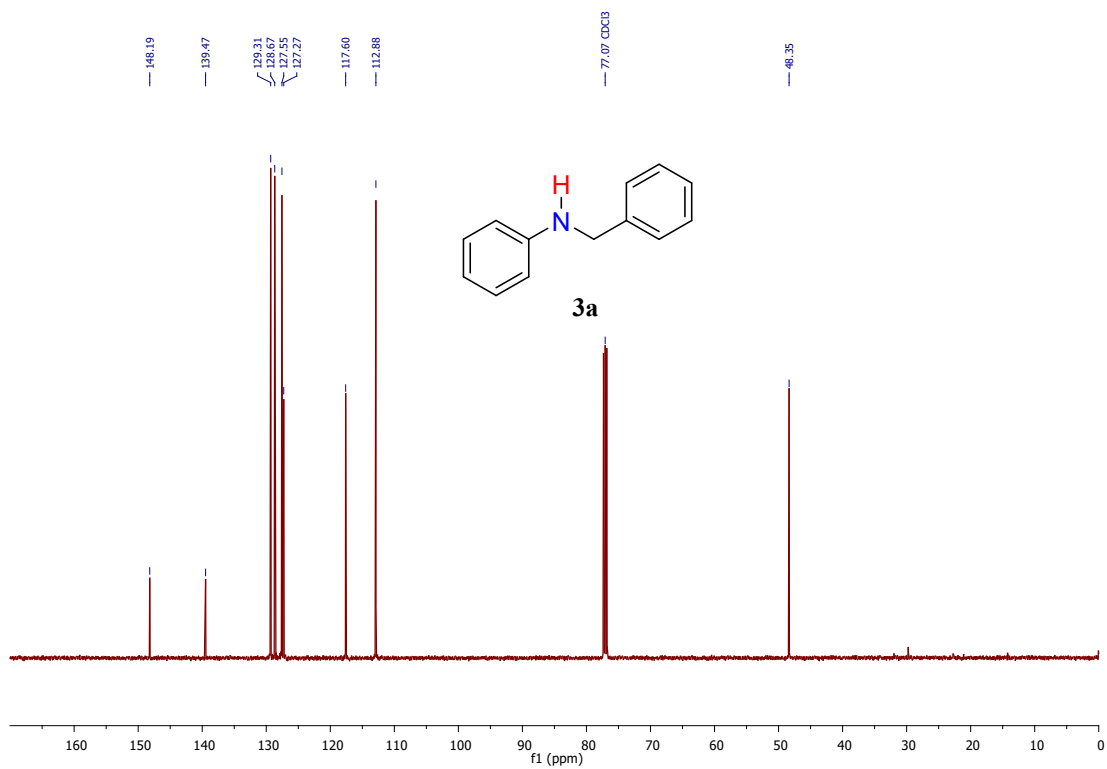
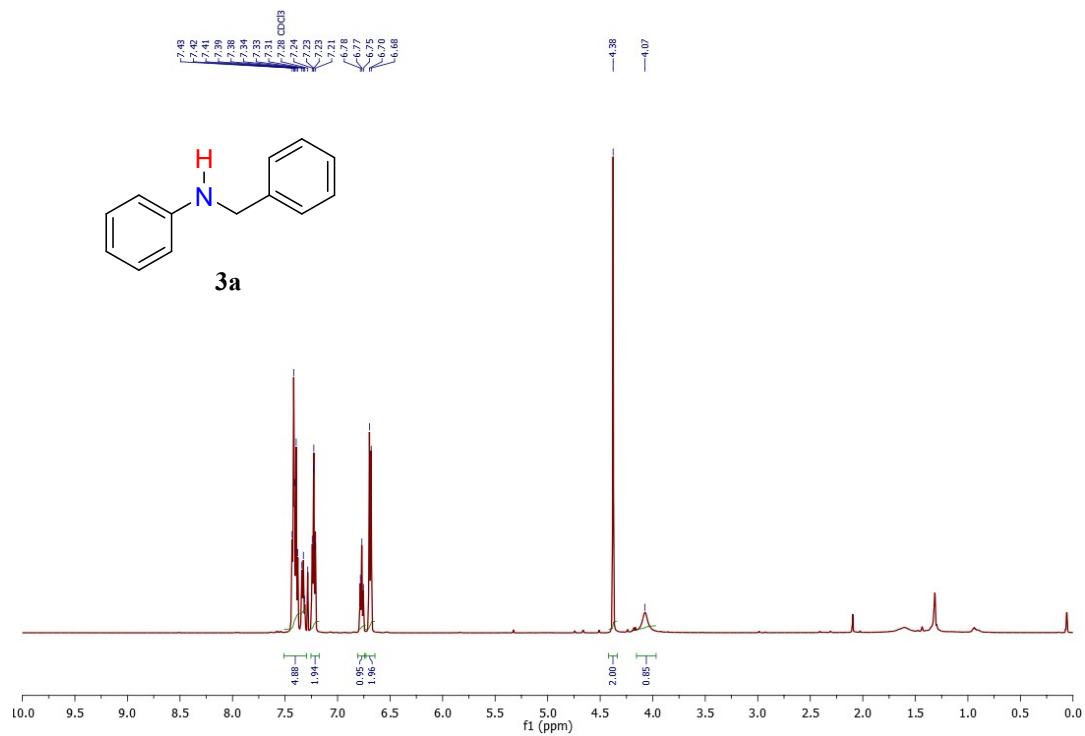
<p><b>4a: N-benzyl-4-methoxyaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4a</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):</b> δ 7.48-7.39 (m, 4H), 7.35 (t, <i>J</i> = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 6.86 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.68 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 4.35 (s, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.63 (s, 1H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 152.25, 142.55, 139.81, 128.68, 127.63, 127.24, 114.99, 114.19, 55.85, 49.28.</p> <p>Yield of product: 92%, 98.1 mg and 0.46 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4b: N-benzyl-2-methoxyaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4b</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 7.38 (m, <i>J</i> = 7.3 Hz, 5H), 6.89 (t, <i>J</i> = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (d, <i>J</i> = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 6.73 (t, <i>J</i> = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d, <i>J</i> = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 4.69 (s, 1H), 4.40 (s, 2H), 3.90 (s, 3H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 146.90, 139.69, 138.23, 128.69, 127.63, 127.23, 121.39, 116.76, 110.21, 109.50, 55.52, 48.16.</p> <p>Yield of product: 86%, 91.7 mg and 0.40 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4c: N-benzyl-3-methylaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4c</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 7.40-7.25 (m, 5H), 7.15-7.06 (m, 1H), 6.63 (t, <i>J</i> = 0.8, 1H), 6.57-6.50 (m, 2H), 4.38 (s, 2H), 4.02 (s, 1H), 2.35 (s, 3H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 148.31, 139.65, 139.13, 129.25, 128.72, 127.63, 127.29, 118.62, 113.73, 110.05, 48.42, 21.75.</p> <p>Yield of product: 80%, 78.9 mg and 0.40 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4d: N-benzyl-4-fluoroaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4d</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 7.38-7.30 (m, 4H), 7.30-7.25 (m, 1H), 6.95-6.92 (d, <i>J</i> = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 6.62-6.57 (d, <i>J</i> = 13.1 Hz, 2H), 4.33 (s, 2H), 3.97 (s, 1H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 156.68, 154.81, 144.35, 139.10, 128.53, 127.35, 115.44, 113.53, 48.78.</p> <p>Yield of product: 84%, 84.5 mg and 0.40 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4e: N-benzyl-2-chloroaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4e</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 7.45-7.39 (m, 3H), 7.39-7.29 (m, 5H), 6.73 - 6.71 (d, 1H), 4.77 (s, 1H), 4.39 (s, 2H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 143.38, 137.66, 131.78, 129.94, 129.02, 127.87, 127.42, 119.50, 117.83, 112.31, 47.95.</p> <p>Yield of product: 81%, 88.16 mg and 0.405 mmol</p>
<p><b>4f: N-benzyl-4-chloroaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4f</b></p>	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 7.38 (d, <i>J</i> = 4.6 Hz, 4H), 7.32 (dd, <i>J</i> = 8.7, 4.5 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.57 (d, <i>J</i> = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.32 (s, 2H), 4.07 (s, 1H).</p> <p><b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)</b> δ 146.70, 139.13, 129.12, 128.76, 127.45, 122.12, 113.98, 48.37.</p> <p>Yield of product: 82%, 88.2 mg and 0.405 mmol.</p>

<p><b>4g: N-benzyl-2,4,5-trichloroaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4g</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.42-7.33 (m, 6H), 6.71 (s, 1H), 4.76 (s, 1H), 4.38 (s, 2H).  <math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 137.68, 131.80, 129.96, 129.04, 127.88, 127.43, 119.53, 117.86, 112.33, 47.97.  Yield of product: 81%, 116.23 mg and 0.40 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4h: N-benzyl-2-nitroaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4h</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (600 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 8.46 (s, 1H), 8.22 (d, <math>J = 8.6</math> Hz, 1H), 7.43 – 7.31 (m, 6H), 6.84 (d, 1H), 6.69 (, 1H), 4.57 (s, 2H).  <math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (151 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 145.27, 137.37, 136.24, 132.29, 128.95, 127.72, 127.06, 126.89, 115.74, 114.21, 47.11.  Yield of product: 72%, 82.2 mg and 0.36 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4i: 4-methoxy-N-(4-methylbenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4i</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.29 (d, <math>J = 9.0</math> Hz, 2H), 7.18 (d, <math>J = 7.9</math> Hz, 2H), 6.81 (d, <math>J = 8.9</math> Hz, 2H), 6.64 (d, <math>J = 8.9</math> Hz, 2H), 4.27 (s, 2H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 2.38 (s, 3H).  <math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 152.26, 142.65, 136.93, 136.71, 129.39, 127.68, 115.02, 114.24, 55.94, 49.13, 21.23.  Yield of product: 89%, 101.4 mg and 0.44 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4j: 4-methyl-N-(4-methylbenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4j</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.33 (d, <math>J = 7.7</math> Hz, 2H), 7.22 (d, <math>J = 7.6</math> Hz, 2H), 7.05 (d, <math>J = 7.9</math> Hz, 2H), 6.63 (d, <math>J = 8.1</math> Hz, 2H), 4.32 (s, 2H), 3.91 (s, 1H), 2.41 (s, 3H), 2.31 (s, 3H).  <math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 146.07, 136.81, 136.66, 129.79, 129.33, 127.56, 126.71, 113.06, 48.46, 21.15, 20.45.  Yield of product: 88%, 73.23 mg and 0.44 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4l: 4-chloro-N-(4-methylbenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4l</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.29-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.20 (d, <math>J = 7.4</math> Hz, 2H), 7.15 (d, <math>J = 8.8</math> Hz, 2H), 6.58 (d, <math>J = 8.8</math> Hz, 2H), 4.29 (s, 2H), 4.05 (s, 1H), 2.39 (s, 3H).  <math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 146.74, 137.05, 135.89, 129.39, 129.07, 127.44, 122.03, 113.92, 48.13, 21.13.  Yield of product: 84%, 97.5 mg and 0.42 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4m: 4-bromo-N-(4-methylbenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4m</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.31-7.25 (m, 4H), 7.20 (d, <math>J = 7.8</math> Hz, 2H), 6.53 (d, <math>J = 8.8</math> Hz, 2H), 4.29 (s, 2H), 4.07 (s, 1H), 2.39 (s, 3H).  <math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 147.16, 137.08, 135.83, 131.94, 129.41, 127.44, 114.44, 109.05, 48.02, 21.13  Yield of product: 81%, 112.1 mg and 0.406 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4n: N-(4-methoxybenzyl)-2-methoxyaniline</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.33 (d, <math>J = 8.6</math> Hz, 2H), 6.91 (d, <math>J = 8.7</math></p>

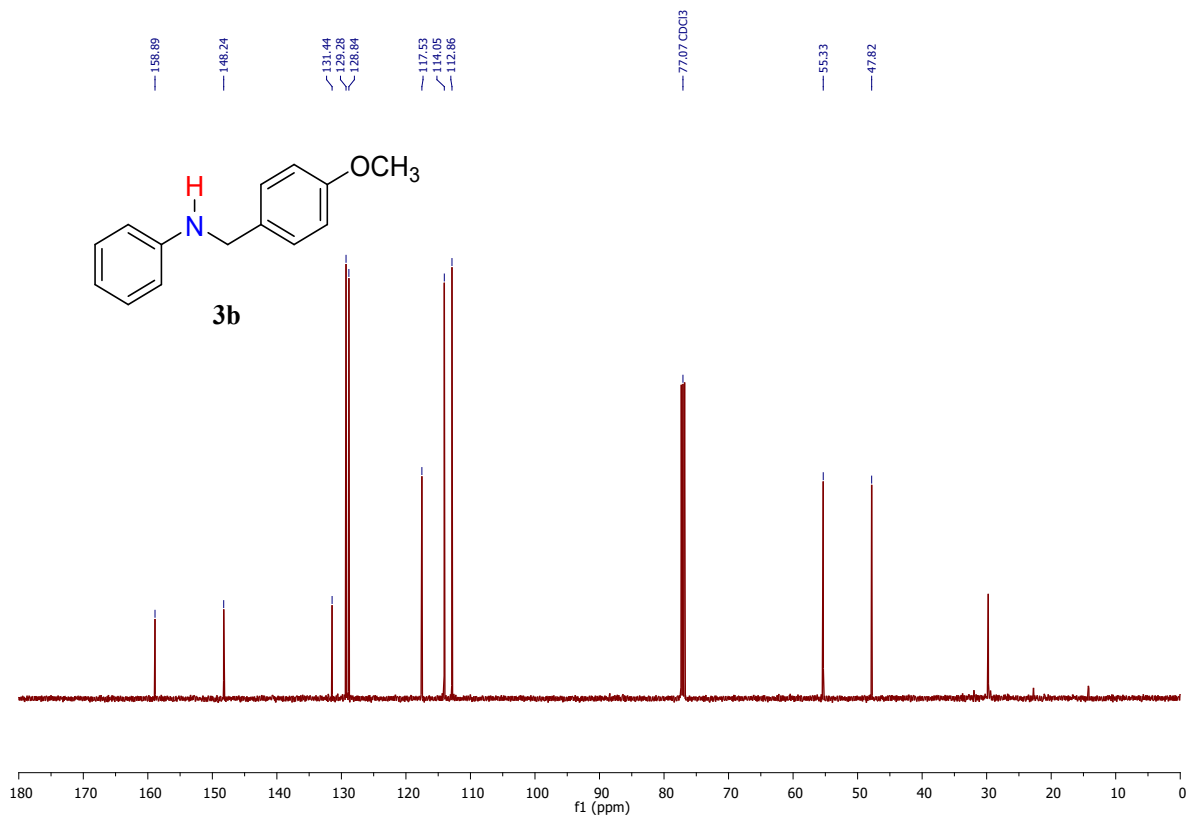
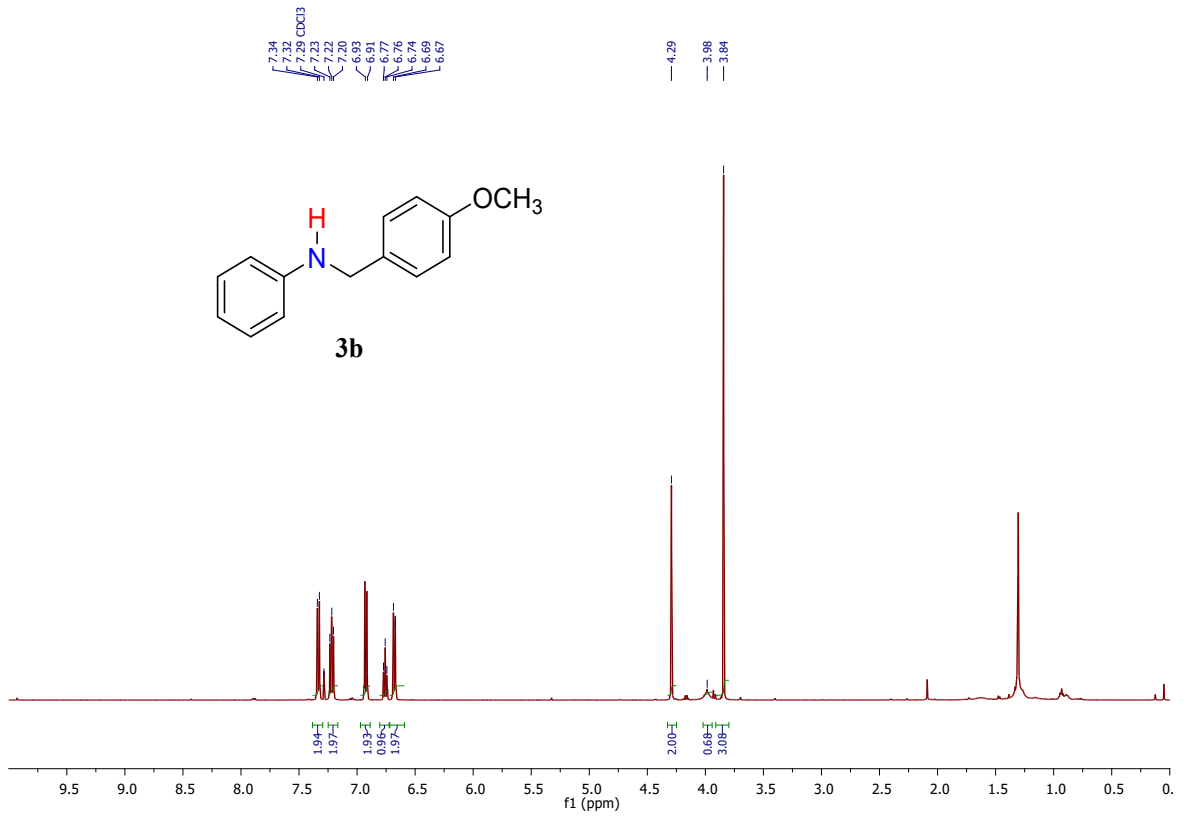
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4n</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 6.87 (t, <math>J = 7.6</math> Hz, 1H), 6.81 (d, <math>J = 9.2</math> Hz, 1H), 6.70 (t, <math>J = 8.5</math> Hz, 1H), 6.64 (d, <math>J = 9.2</math> Hz, 1H), 4.63 (s, 1H), 4.30 (s, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 3.83 (s, 3H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 158.92, 146.91, 138.30, 131.68, 128.96, 121.40, 116.72, 114.14, 110.20, 109.49, 55.48, 47.66.</p> <p>Yield of product: 86%, 104.8 mg and 0.43 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4o: N-(4-methoxybenzyl)-4-methoxyaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4o</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.30 (d, <math>J = 8.6</math> Hz, 2H), 6.89 (d, <math>J = 6.8</math> Hz, 2H), 6.79 (d, <math>J = 8.9</math> Hz, 2H), 6.62 (d, <math>J = 8.9</math> Hz, 2H), 4.22 (s, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 158.84, 152.19, 142.55, 131.70, 128.86, 114.93, 114.08, 55.84, 55.32, 48.76.</p> <p>Yield of product: 89%, 108.3 mg and 0.44 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4p: N-(4-methoxybenzyl)-3-methylaniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4p</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.31 (d, <math>J = 8.7</math> Hz, 2H), 7.09 (t, <math>J = 7.7</math> Hz, 1H), 6.91 (d, <math>J = 8.7</math> Hz, 2H), 6.57 (d, <math>J = 7.4</math> Hz, 1H), 6.51-6.46 (m, 2H), 4.26 (s, 2H), 3.97 (s, 1H), 3.83 (s, 3H), 2.30 (s, 3H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 158.96, 148.36, 139.17, 131.63, 129.27, 128.98, 118.64, 114.14, 113.78, 110.13, 55.44, 47.99, 21.77.</p> <p>Yield of product: 86%, 98.12 mg and 0.43 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4q: 2,4,5-trichloro-N-(4-methoxybenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4q</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.36 (s, 1H), 7.29 (d, <math>J = 5.3</math> Hz, 2H), 6.93 (d, <math>J = 8.7</math> Hz, 2H), 6.72 (s, 1H), 4.66 (s, 1H), 4.30 (s, 2H), 3.84 (s, 3H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 159.21, 143.32, 131.66, 129.82, 129.50, 128.70, 119.29, 117.71, 114.29, 112.21, 55.34, 47.39.</p> <p>Yield of product: 81%, 128.7 mg and 0.40 mmol.</p>
<p><b>4r: 4-bromo-N-(3,4-dimethoxybenzyl) aniline</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4r</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 7.31-7.22 (d, 2H), 6.91 (d, <math>J = 8.3</math> Hz, 2H), 6.87 (s, 1H), 6.53 (d, <math>J = 8.7</math> Hz, 2H), 4.24 (s, 2H), 4.05 (s, 1H), 3.89 (s, 6H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (126 MHz, <math>\text{CDCl}_3</math>) <math>\delta</math> 149.25, 148.39, 147.16, 131.94, 131.39, 119.65, 116.71, 114.47, 111.32, 110.74, 77.06, 55.91, 48.18.</p> <p>Yield of product: 79%, 127.65 mg and 0.39 mmol.</p>
<p><b>5a: 1-phenyl-1H-benzimidazole</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>5a</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (500 MHz, <math>\text{DMSO-}d_6</math>) <math>\delta</math> 12.95 (brs, 1H), 8.21 (d, <math>J = 7.1</math> Hz, 2H), 7.73 – 7.47 (m, 5H), 7.22 (d, 2H).</p> <p><math>^{13}\text{C NMR}</math> (125 MHz, <math>\text{DMSO-}d_6</math>) <math>\delta</math> 151.72, 144.27, 135.44, 130.67, 130.30, 129.41, 126.92, 122.72, 122.20, 119.29, 111.82.</p> <p>Yield of product: 86%, 83.5 mg and 0.43 mmol.</p>
<p><b>5b: 2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-benzimidazole</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>5b</b></p>	<p><math>^1\text{H NMR}</math> (600 MHz, <math>\text{DMSO-}d_6</math>) <math>\delta</math> 12.78 (brs, 1H), 8.17 (d, <math>J = 8.1</math> Hz,</p>

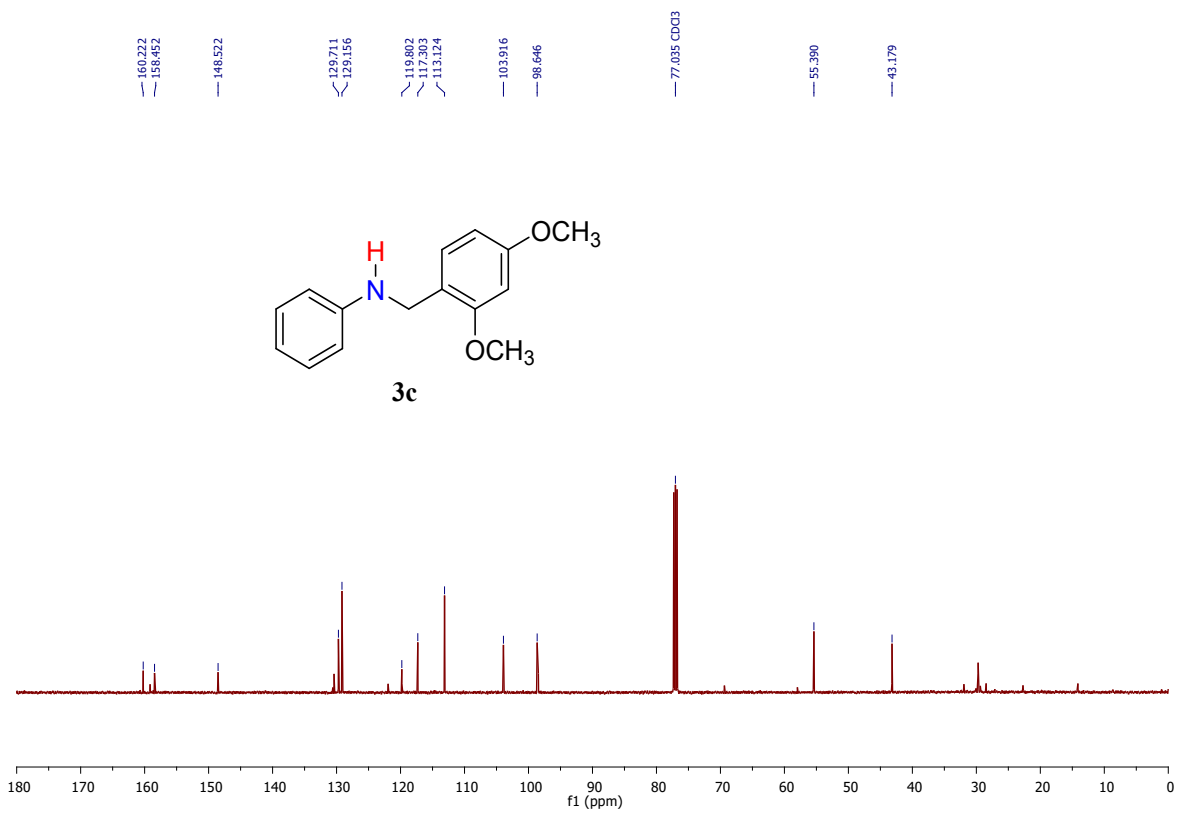
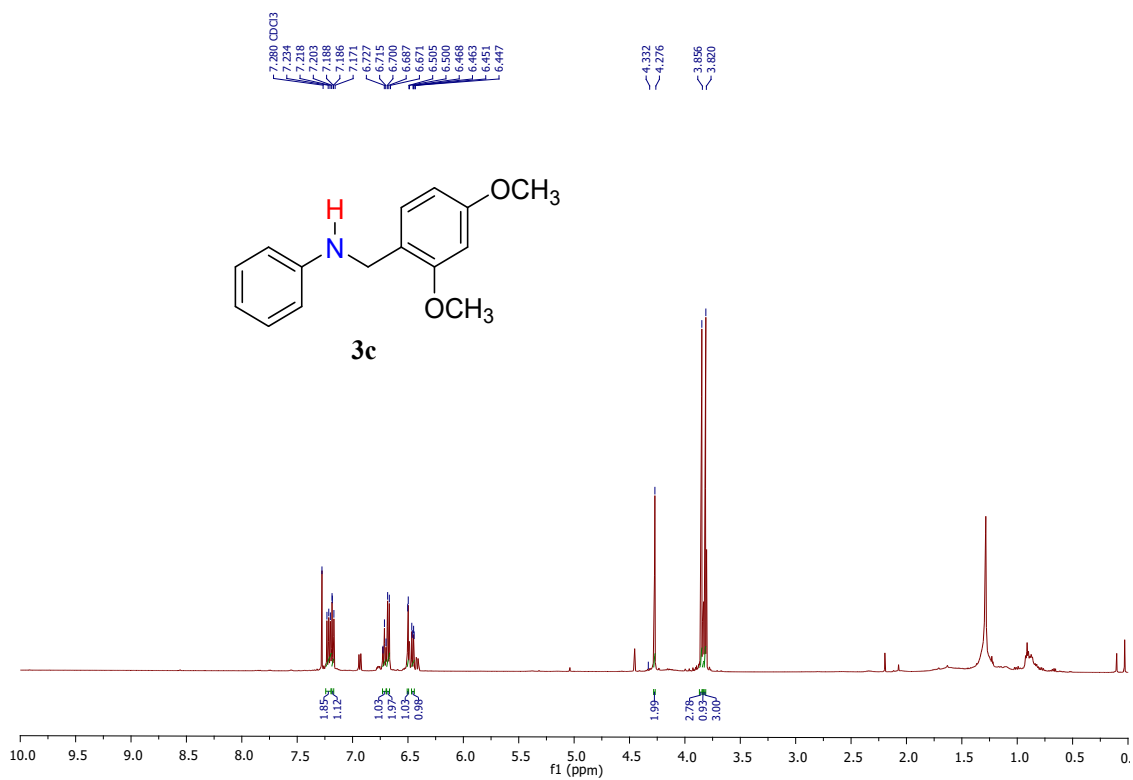
	<p>2H), 7.60 (d, 2H), 7.21 (m, 2H), 7.15 (d, 2H), 3.88 (s, 3H). Yield of product: 84%, 94.2 mg and 0.42 mmol.</p>
<p><b>5c: 2-(4-fluorophenyl)-1H-benzimidazole</b></p> 	<p><b><sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-D<sub>6</sub>)</b> δ 12.75 (brs, 1H), 8.13 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.56 – 7.53 (m, 2H), 7.25 (d, 2H), 7.20 (d, 2H). <b><sup>13</sup>C NMR (150 MHz, DMSO-D<sub>6</sub>)</b> δ 163.11, 161.49, 160.06, 151.74, 133.48, 130.59, 130.53, 128.48, 123.44, 115.84, 115.67. Yield of product: 78%, 82.7 mg and 0.39 mmol.</p>

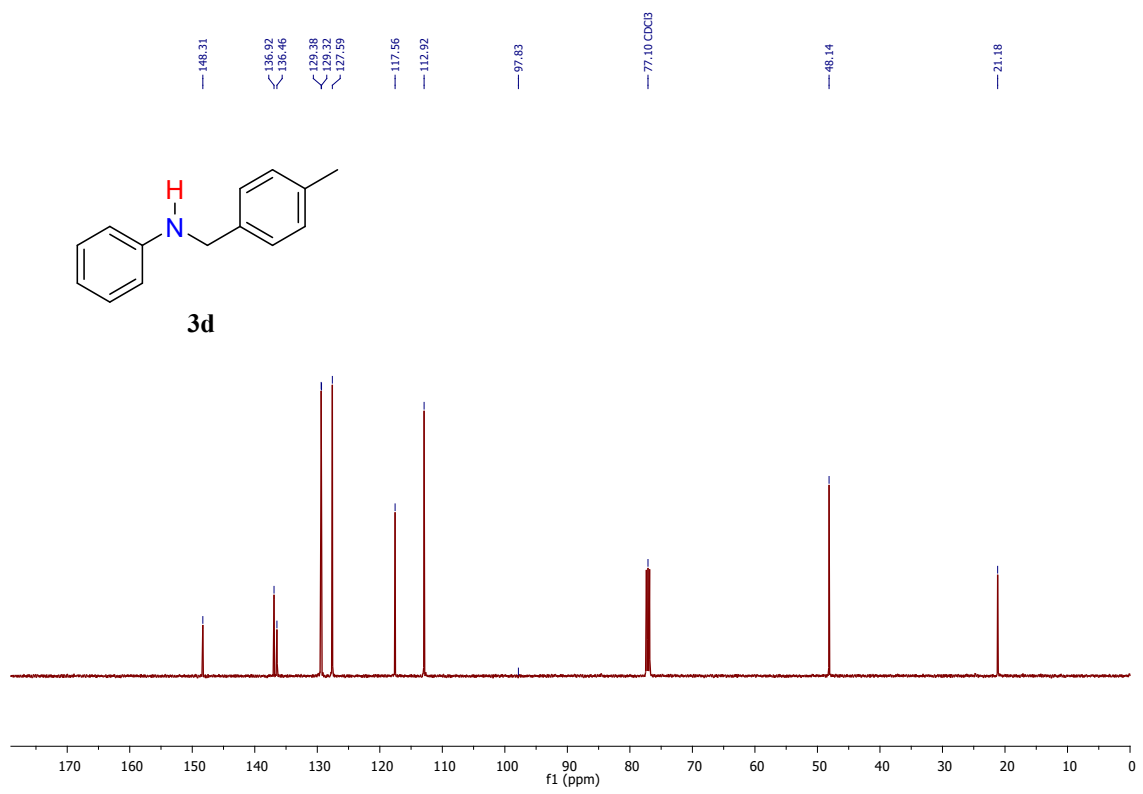
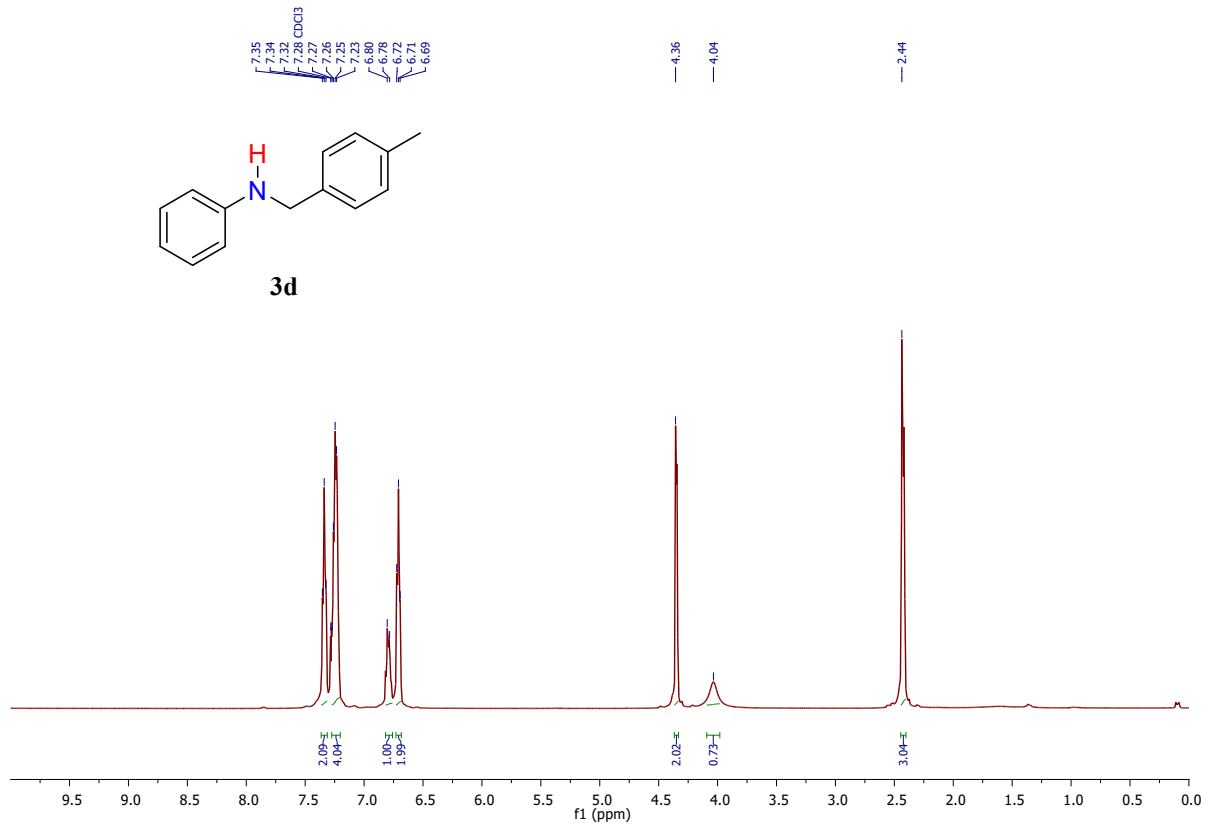
# $^1\text{H}$ and $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR spectra of the products

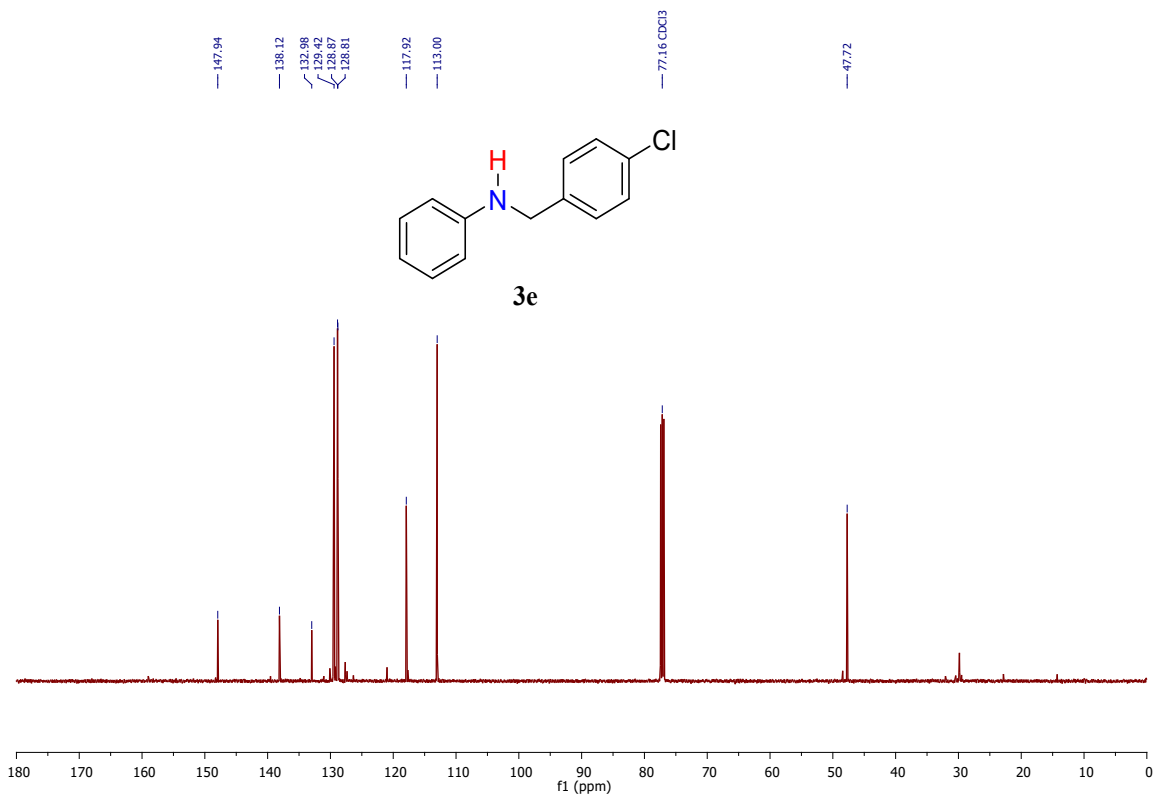
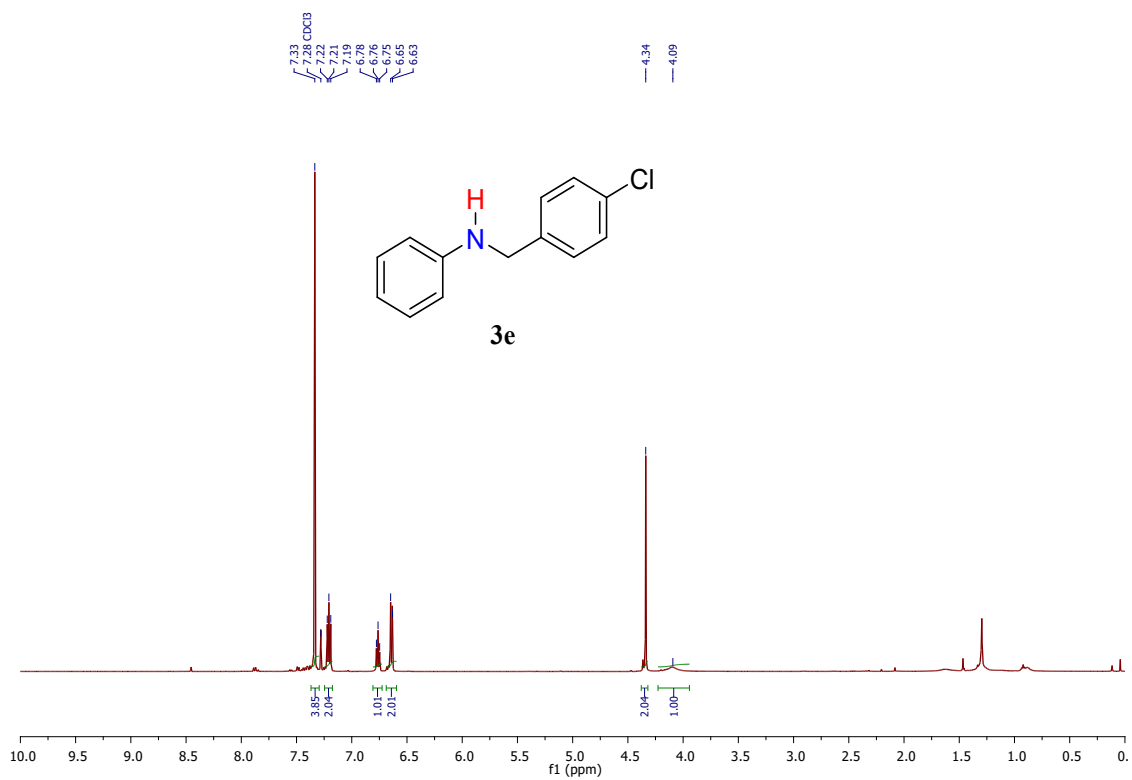


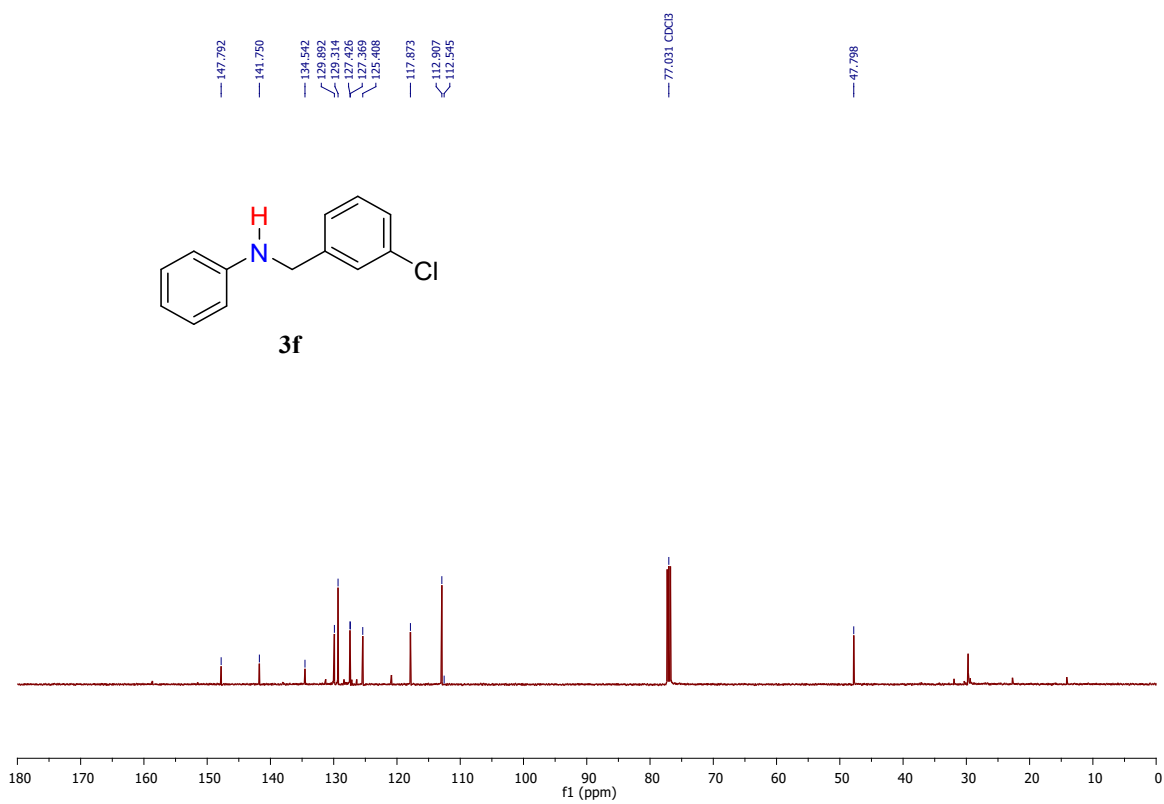
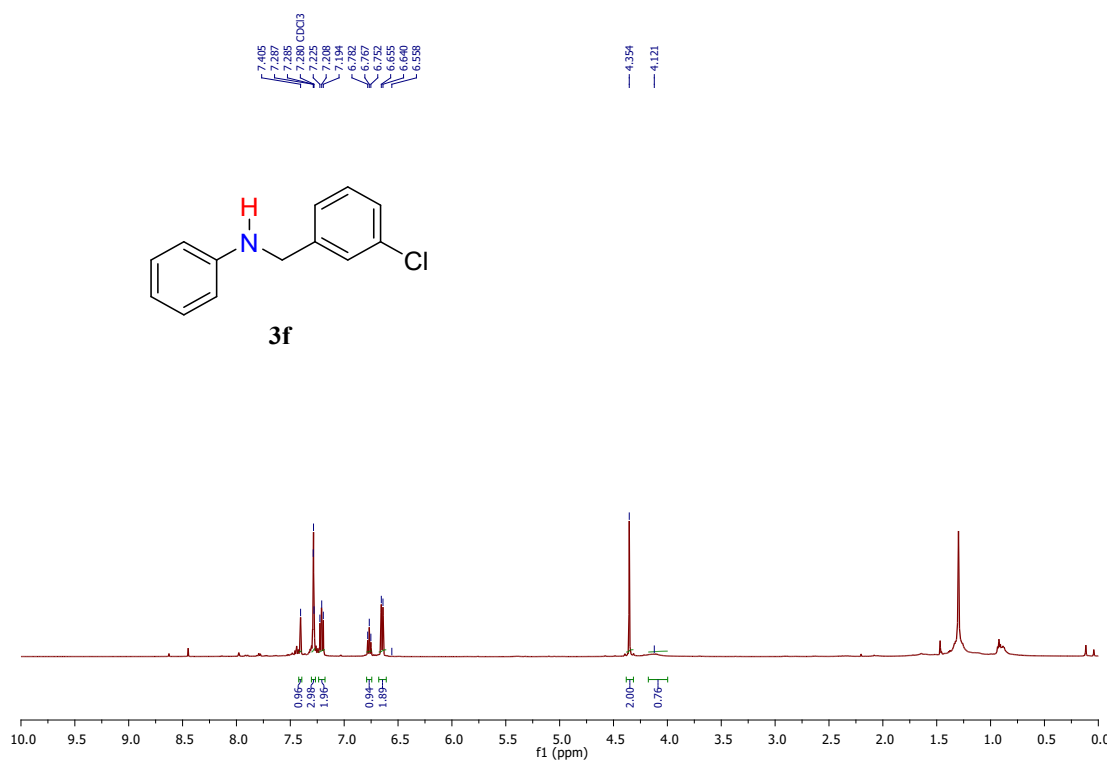


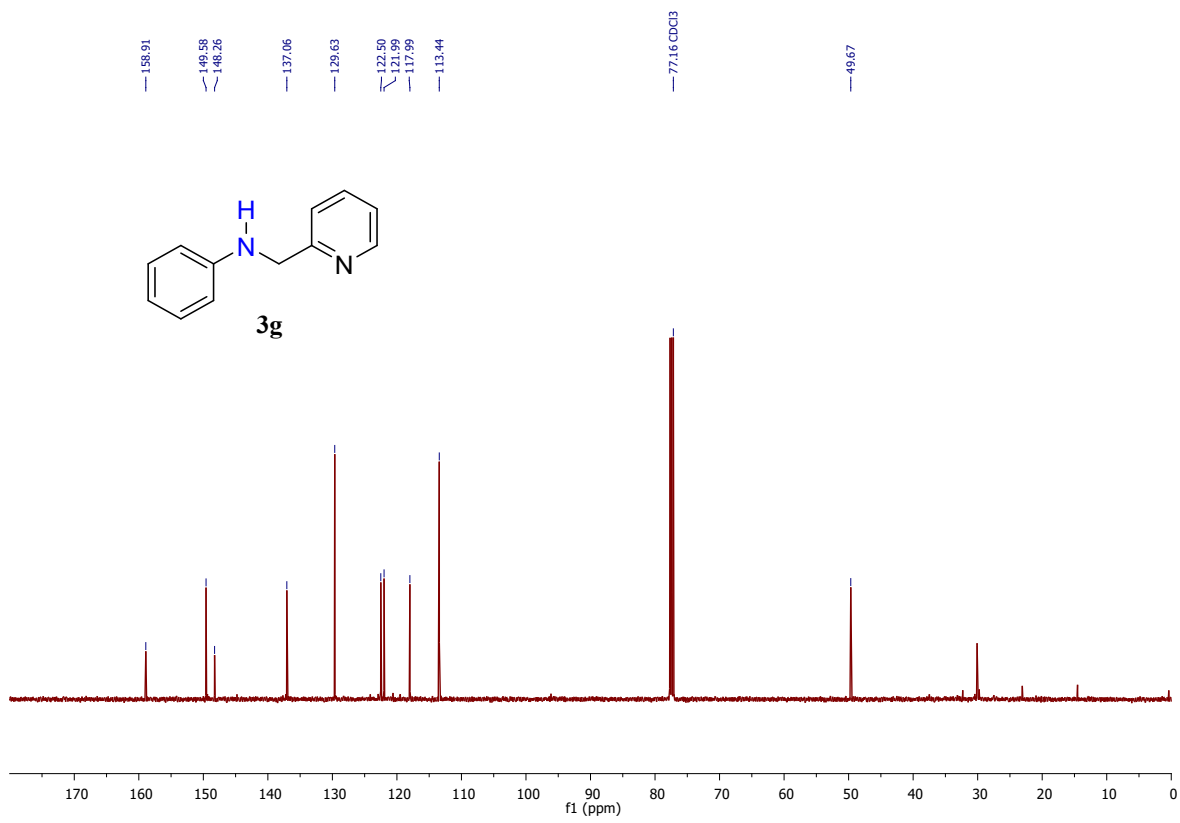
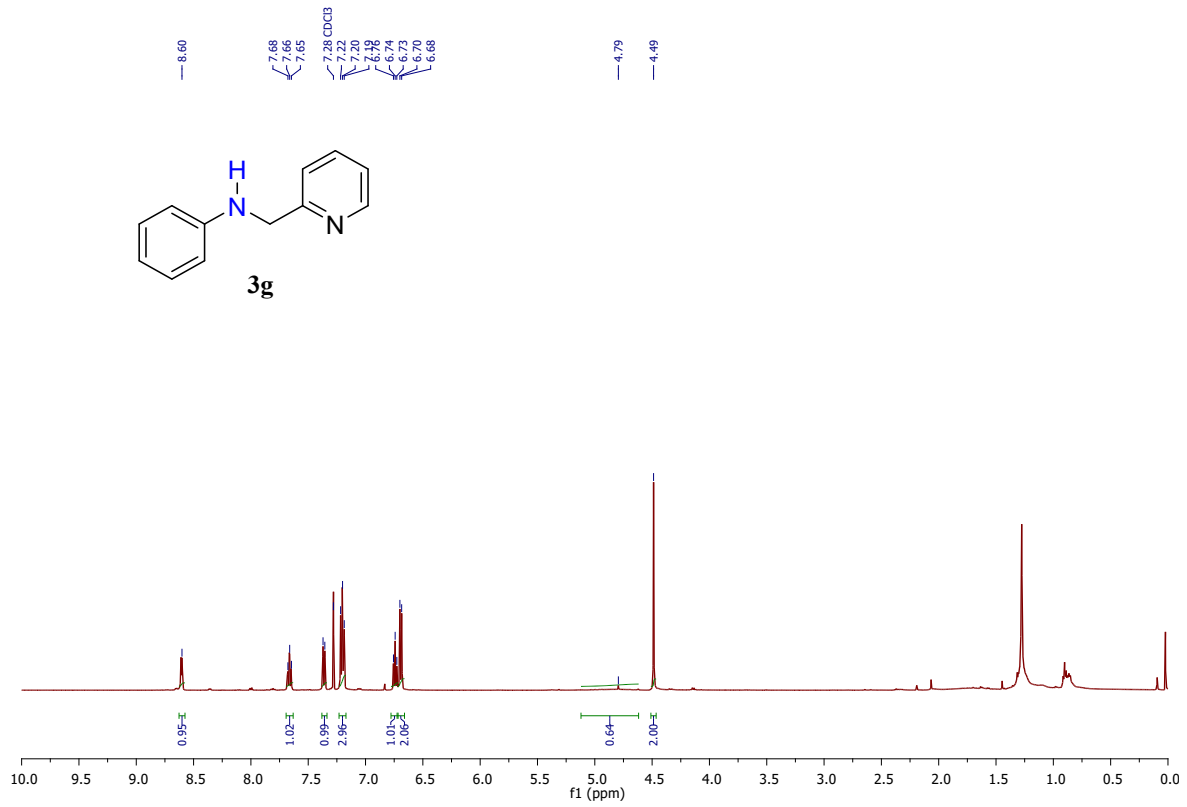


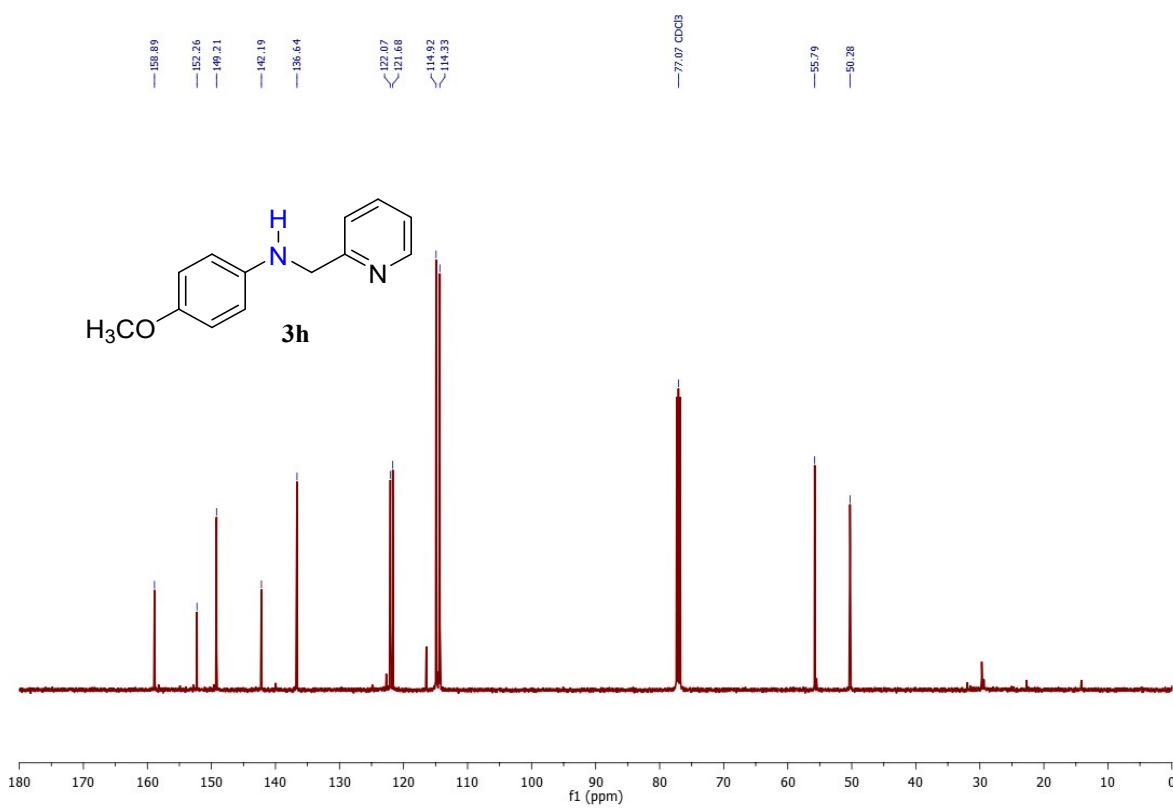
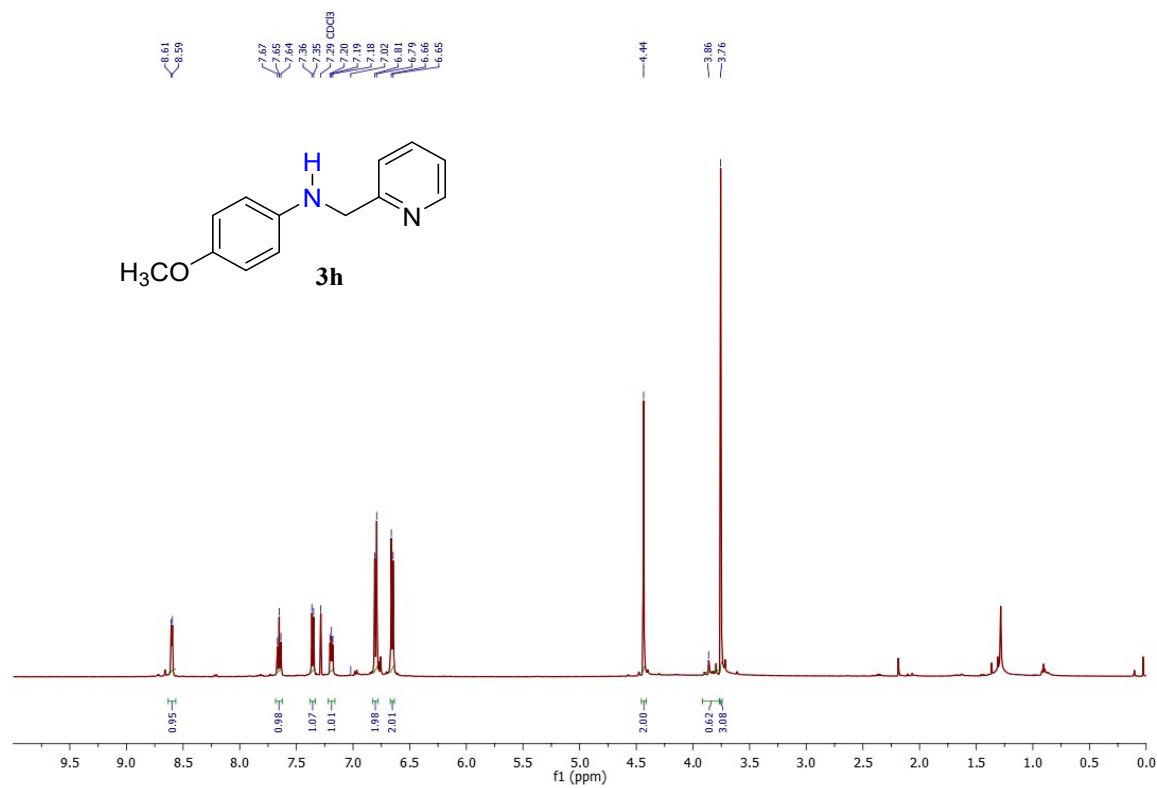


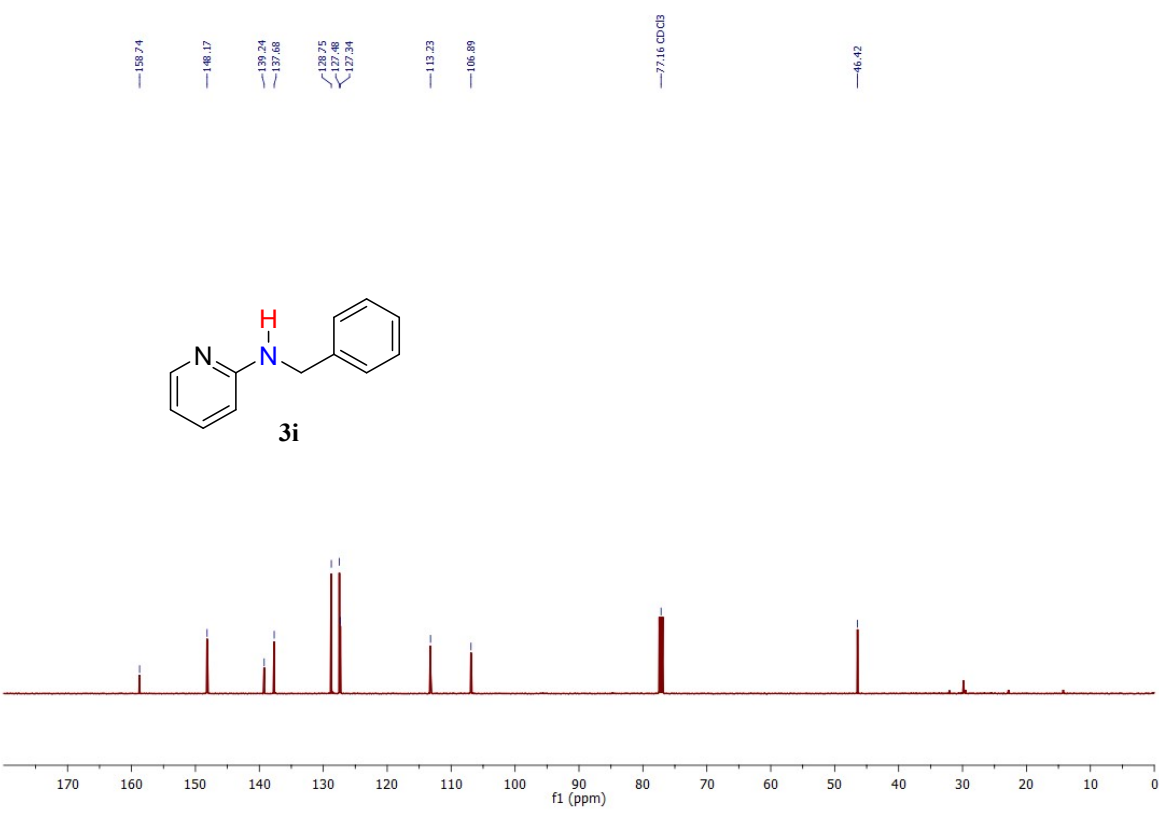
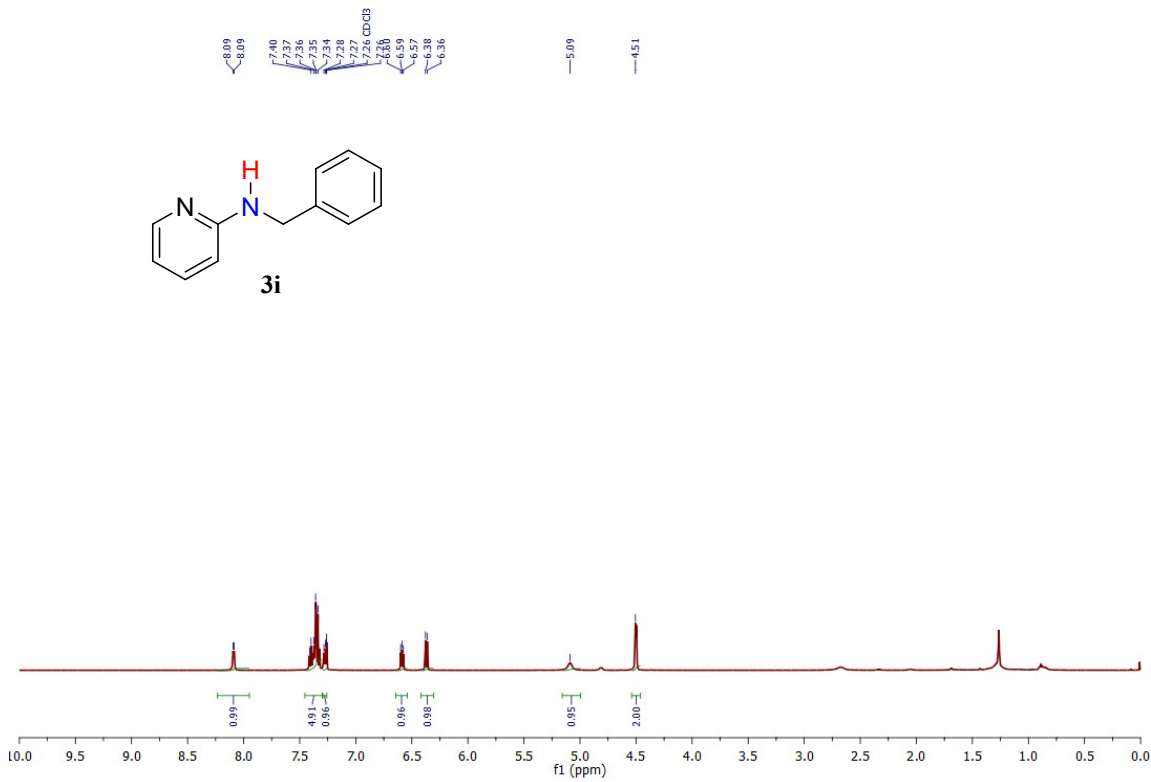
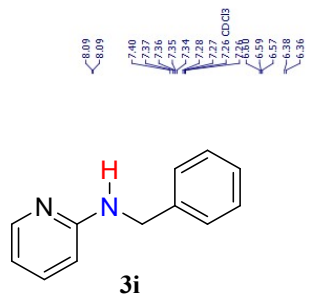




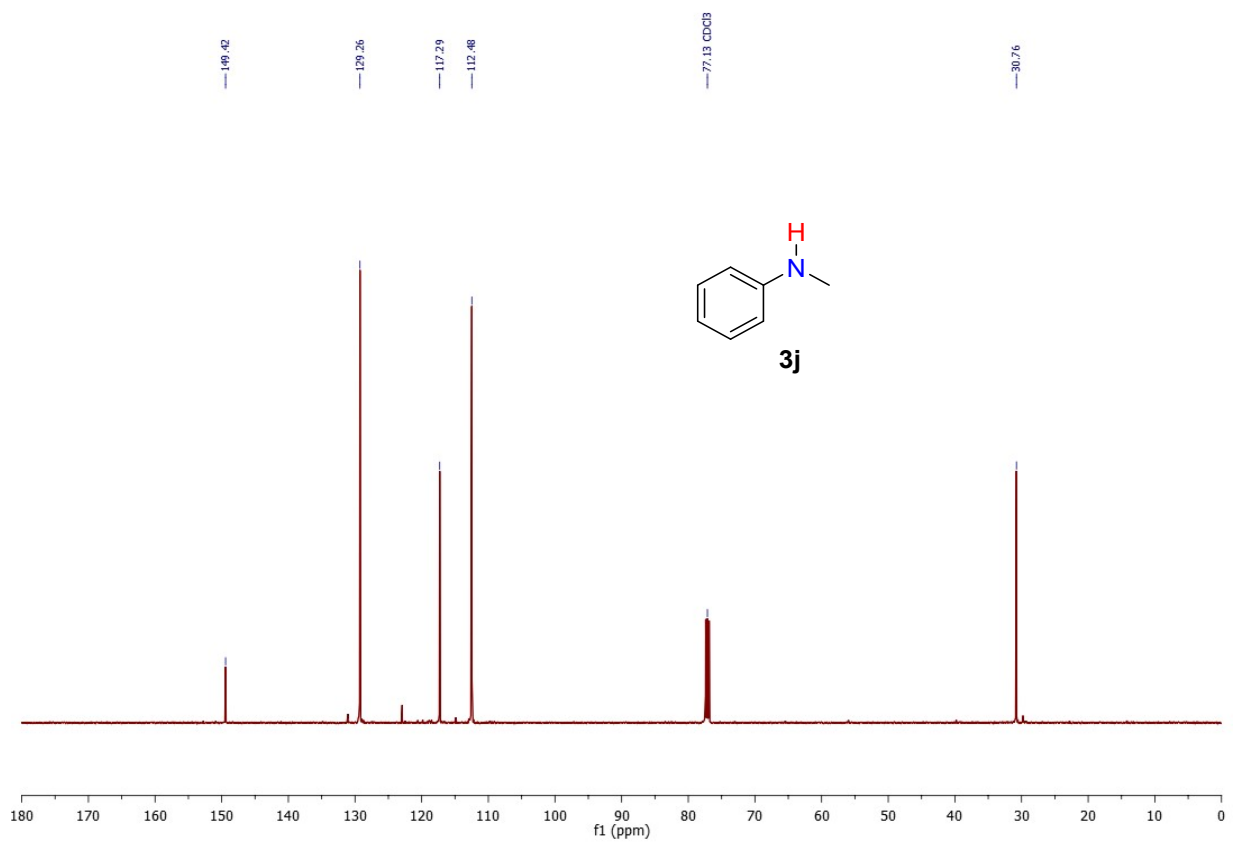
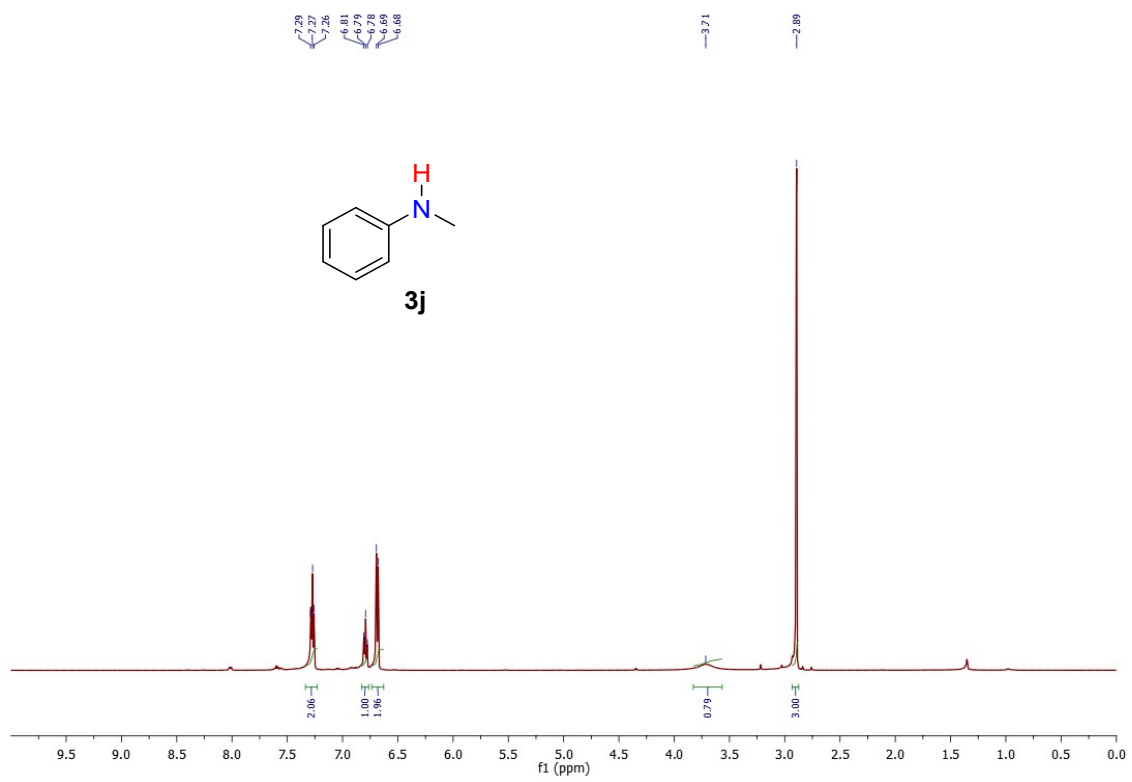


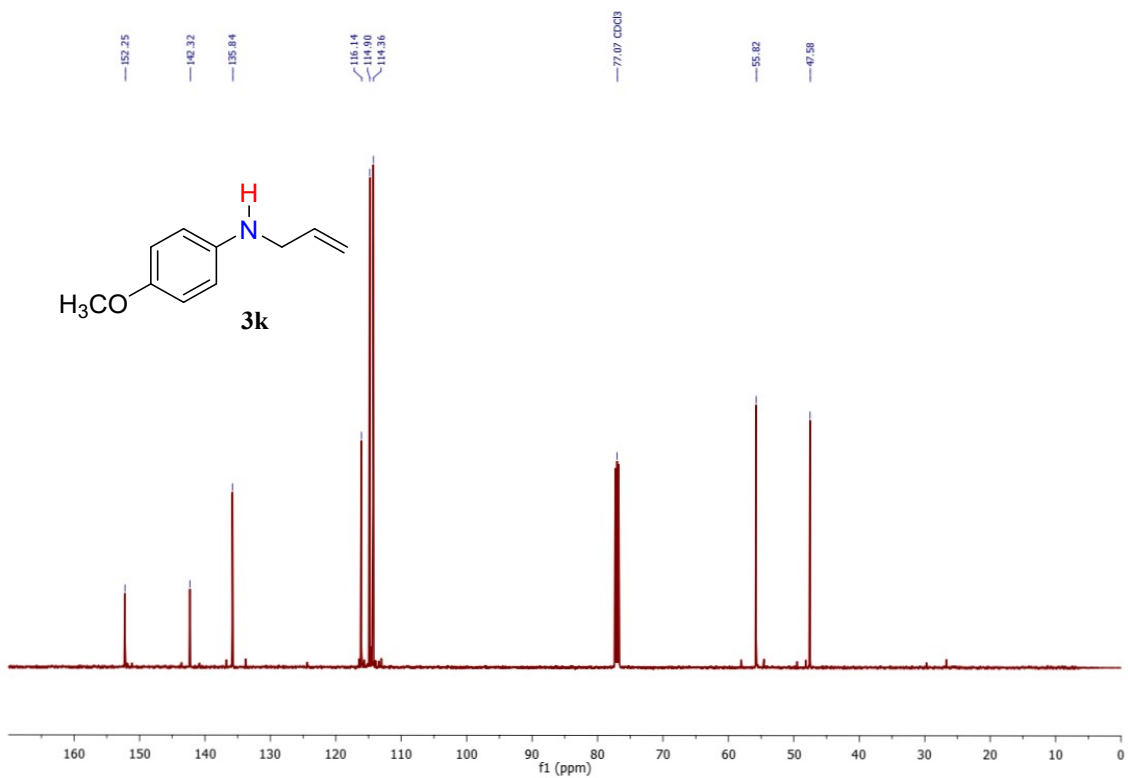
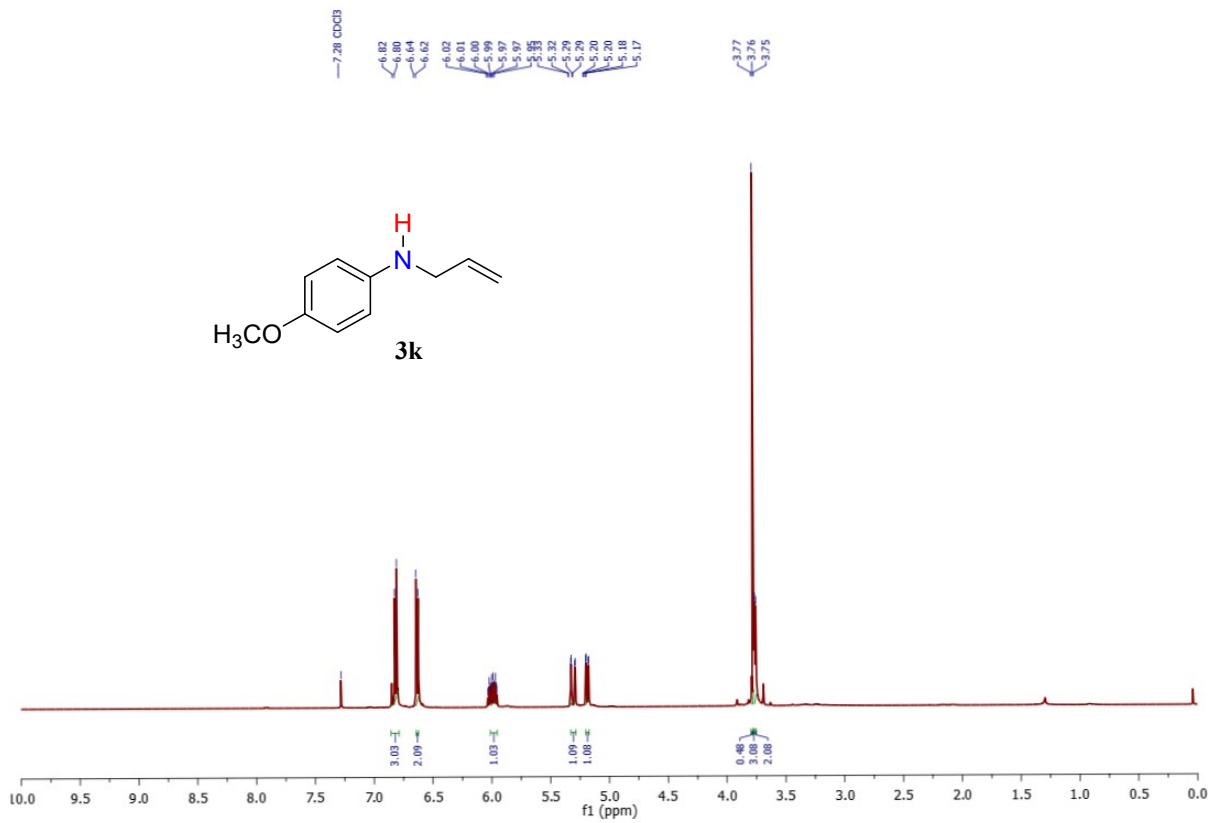


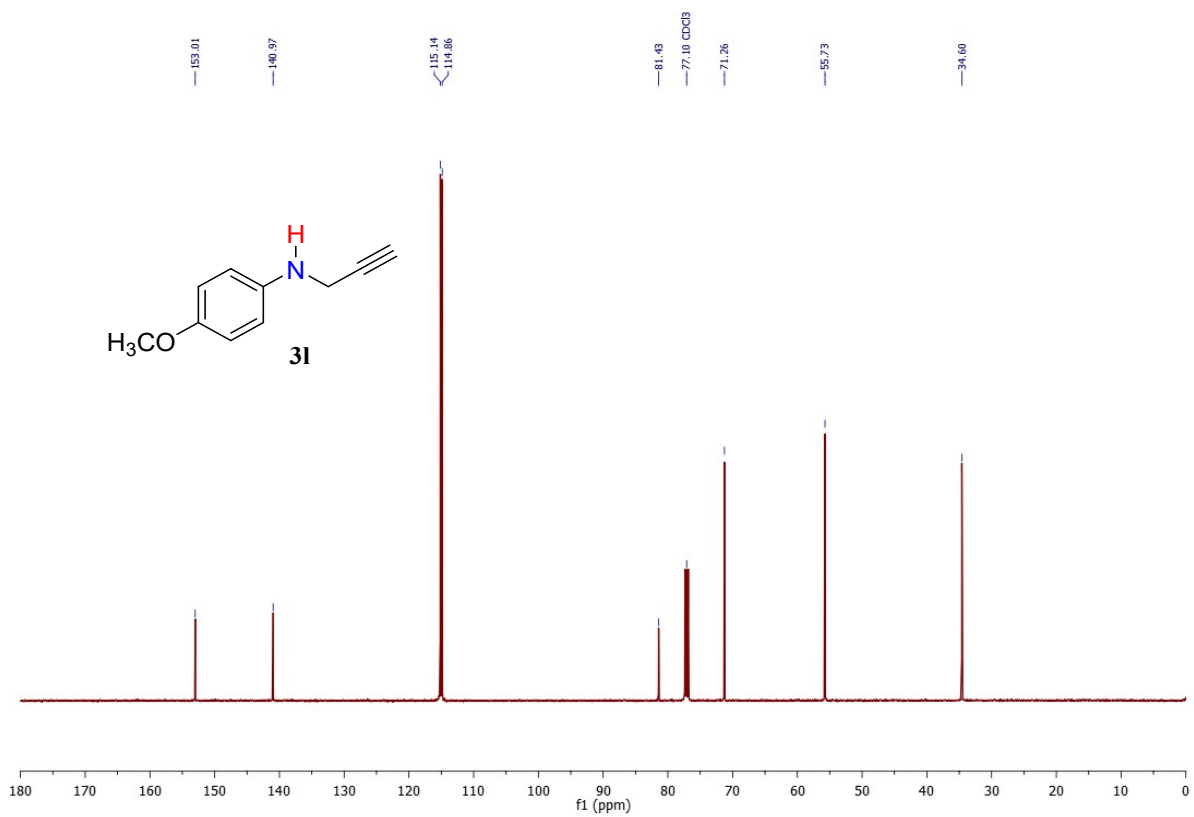
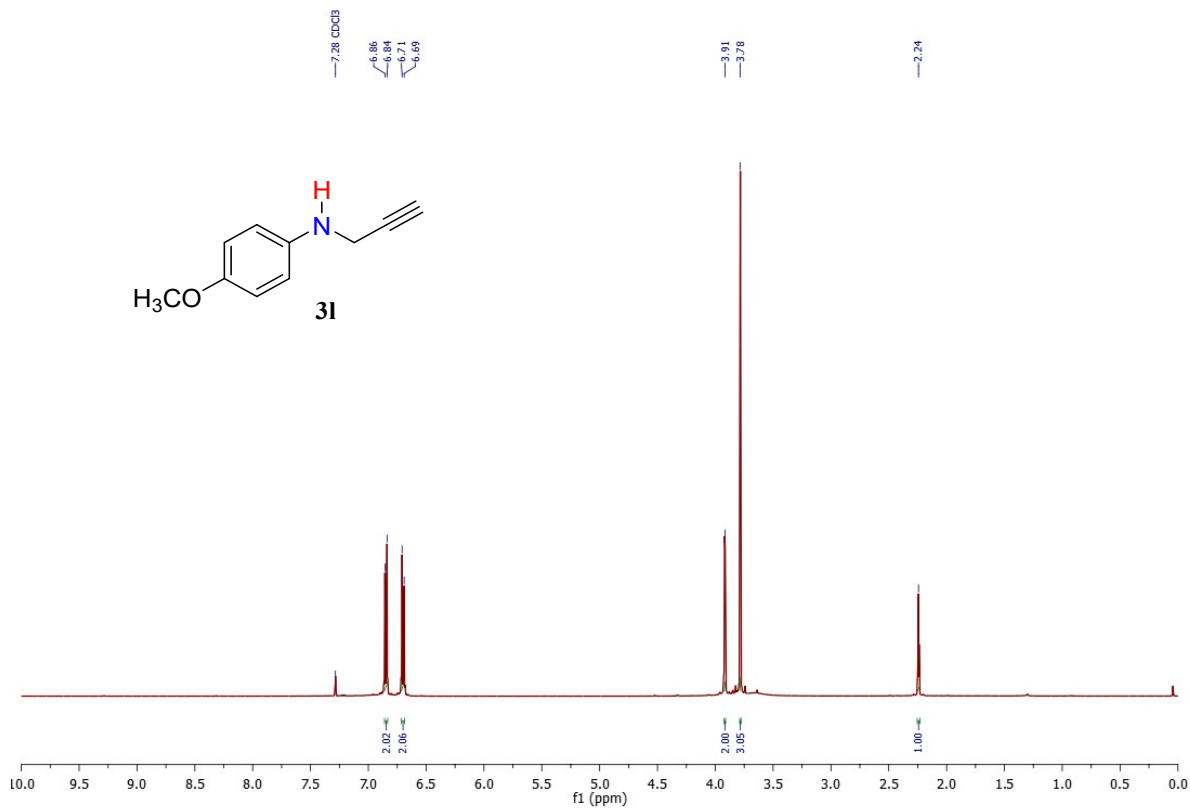


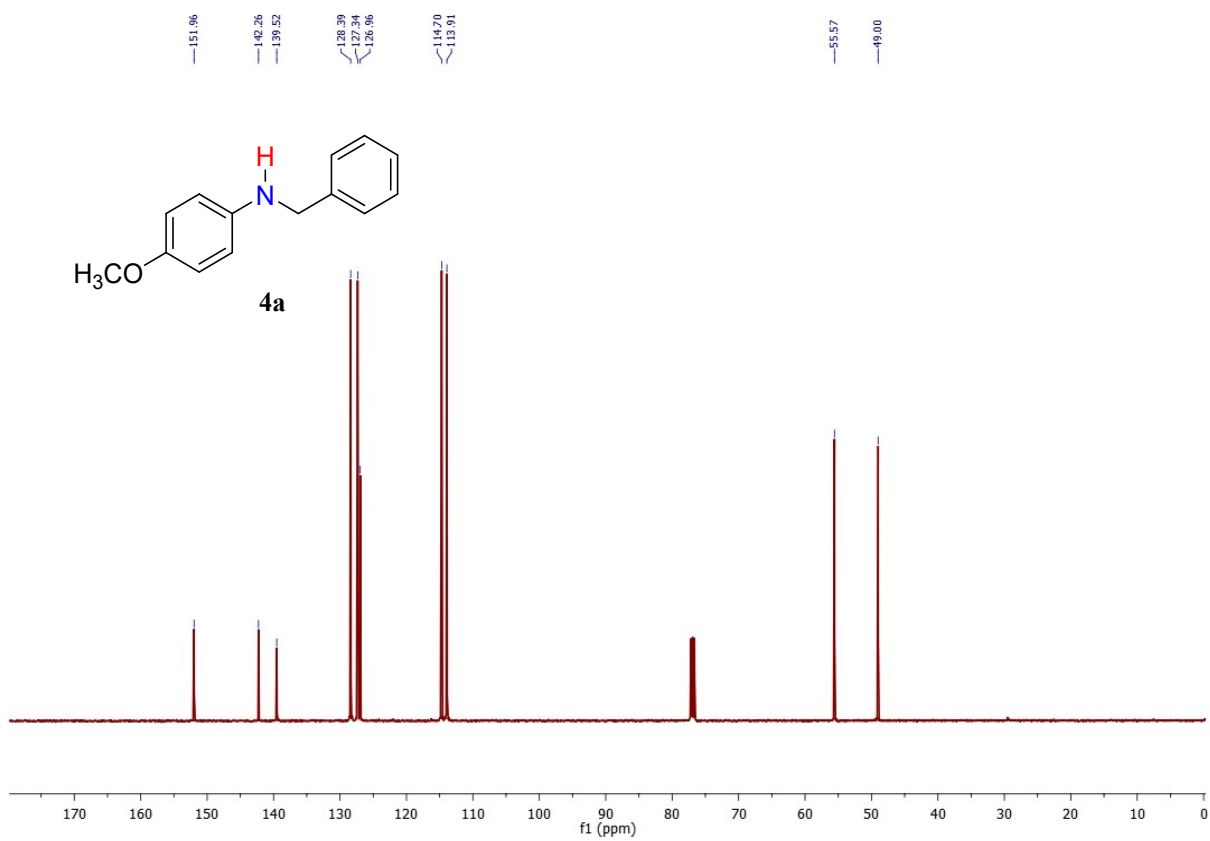
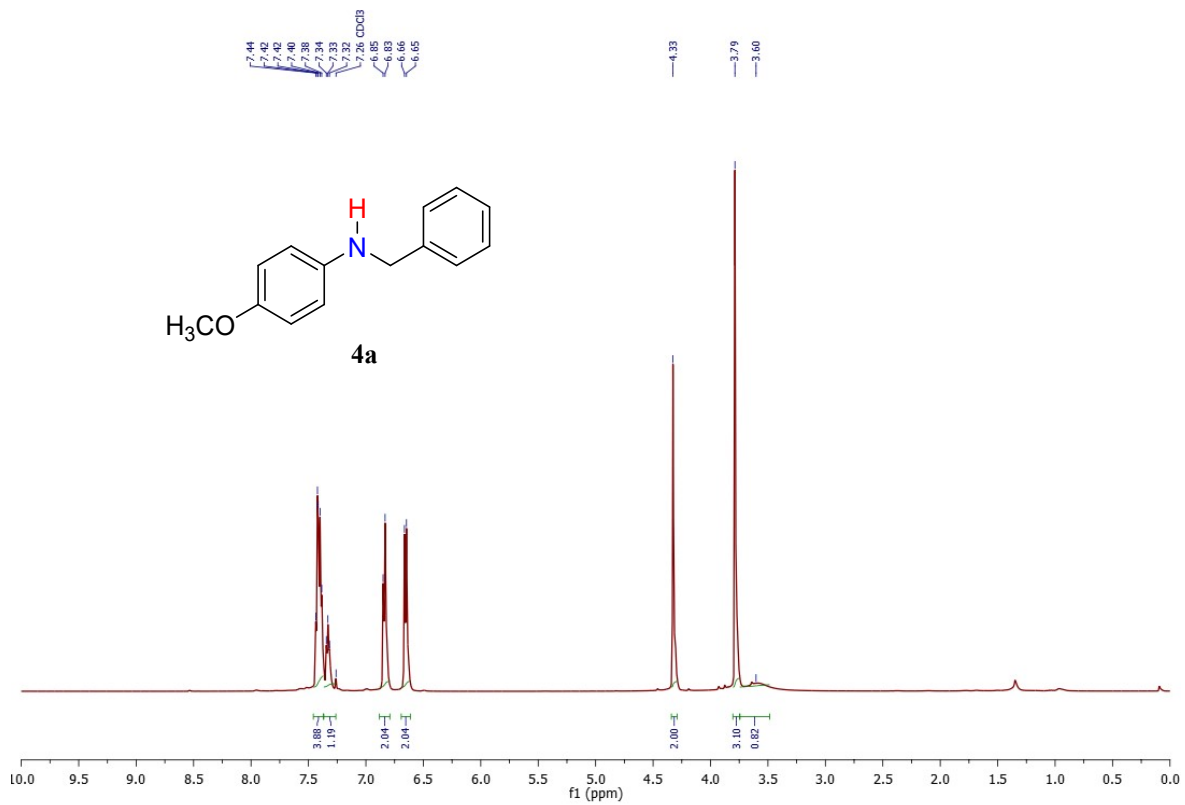


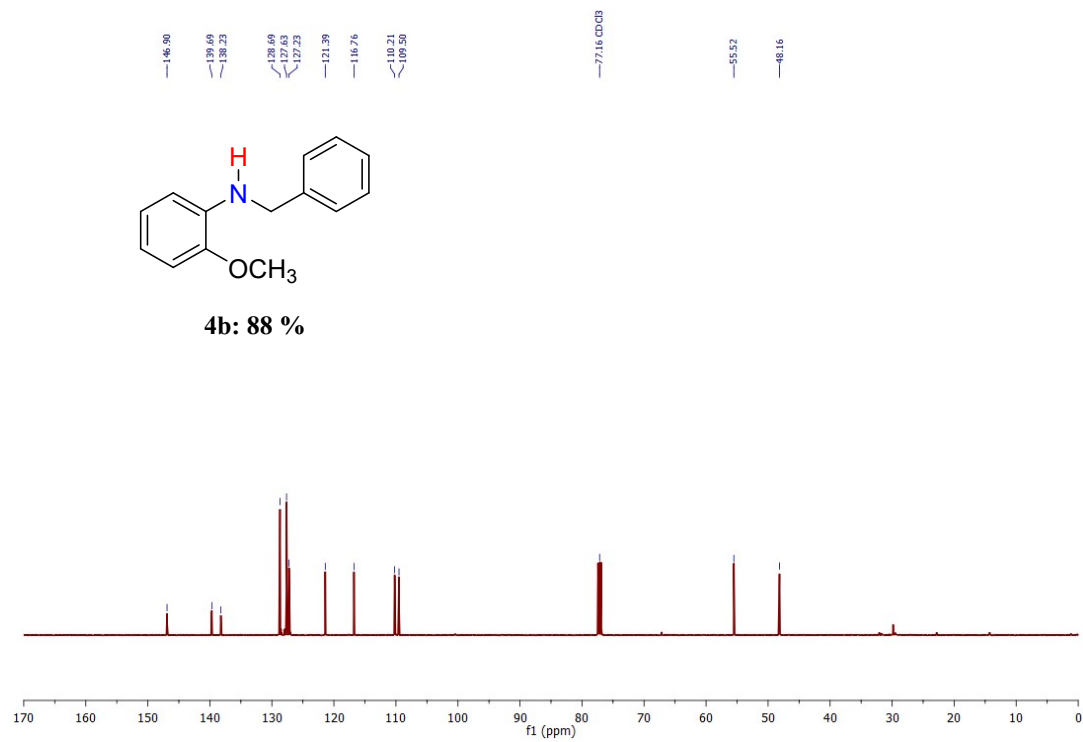
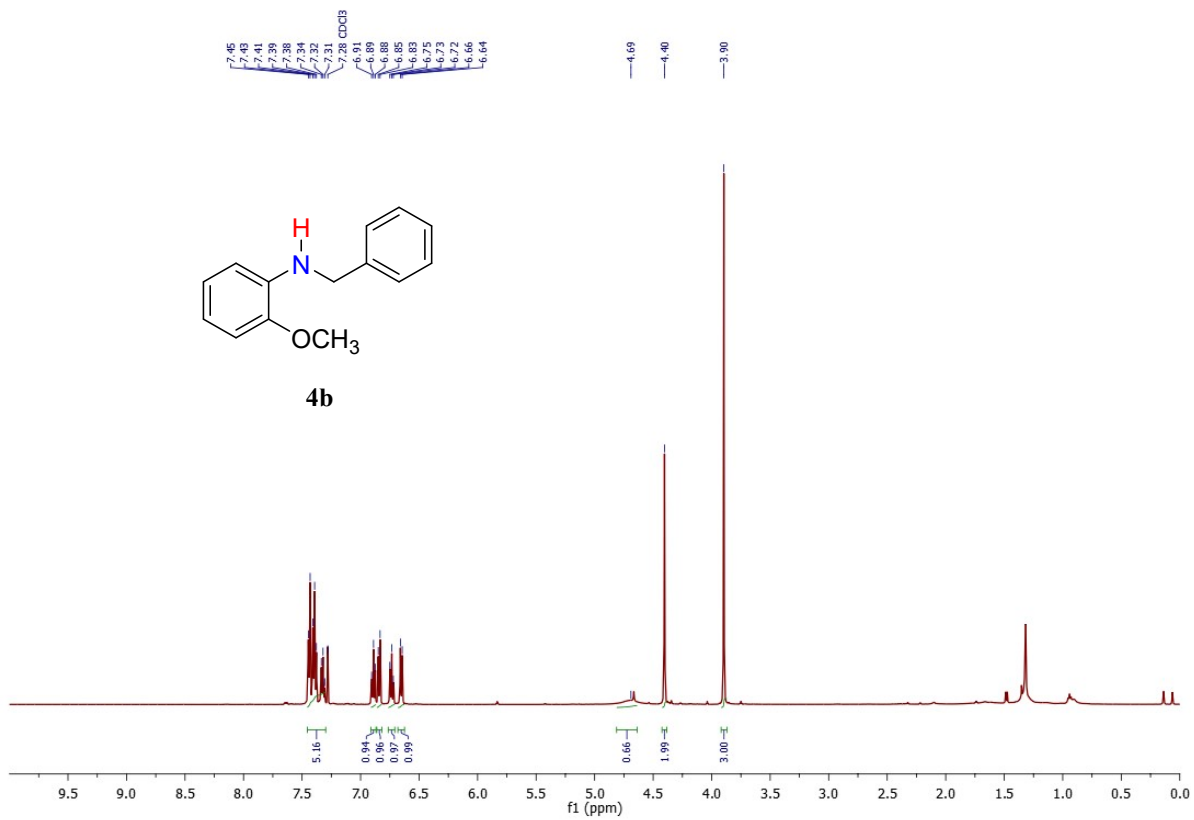


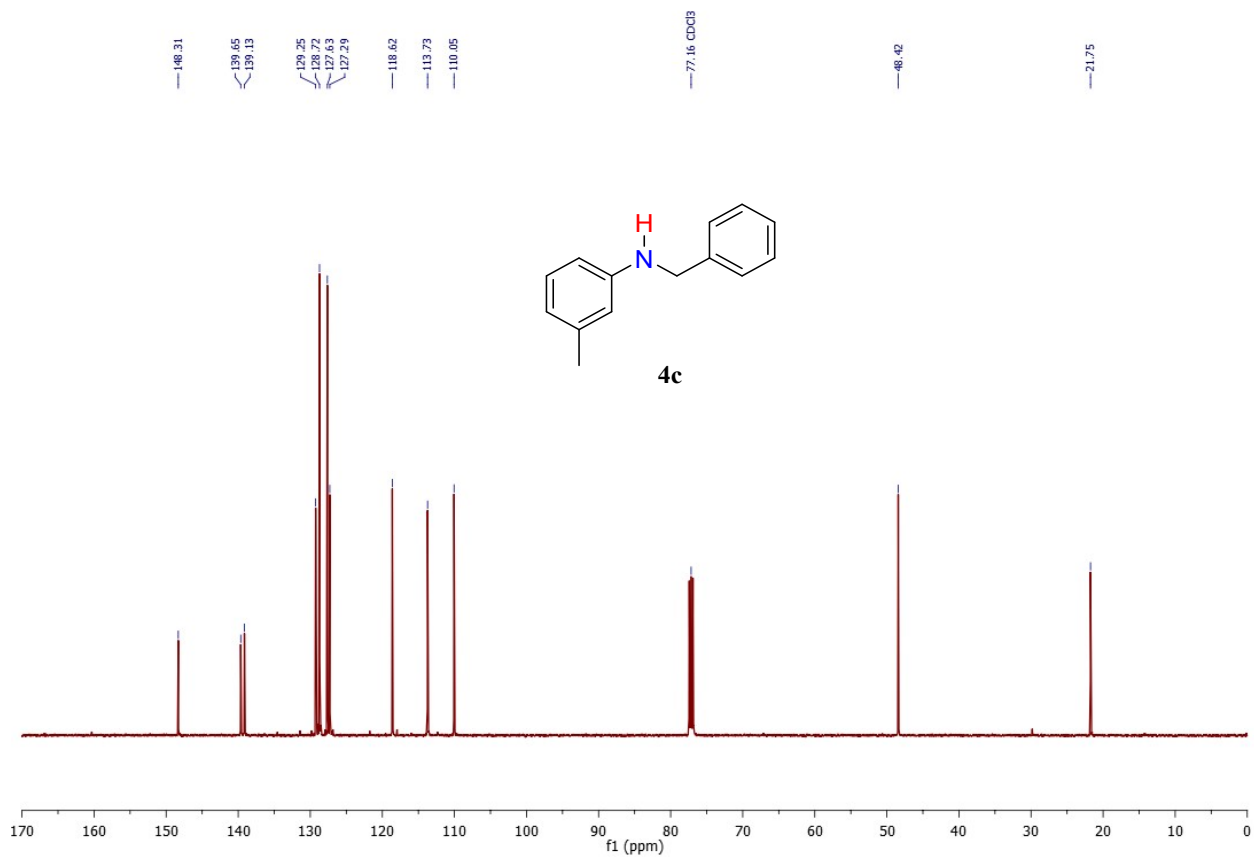
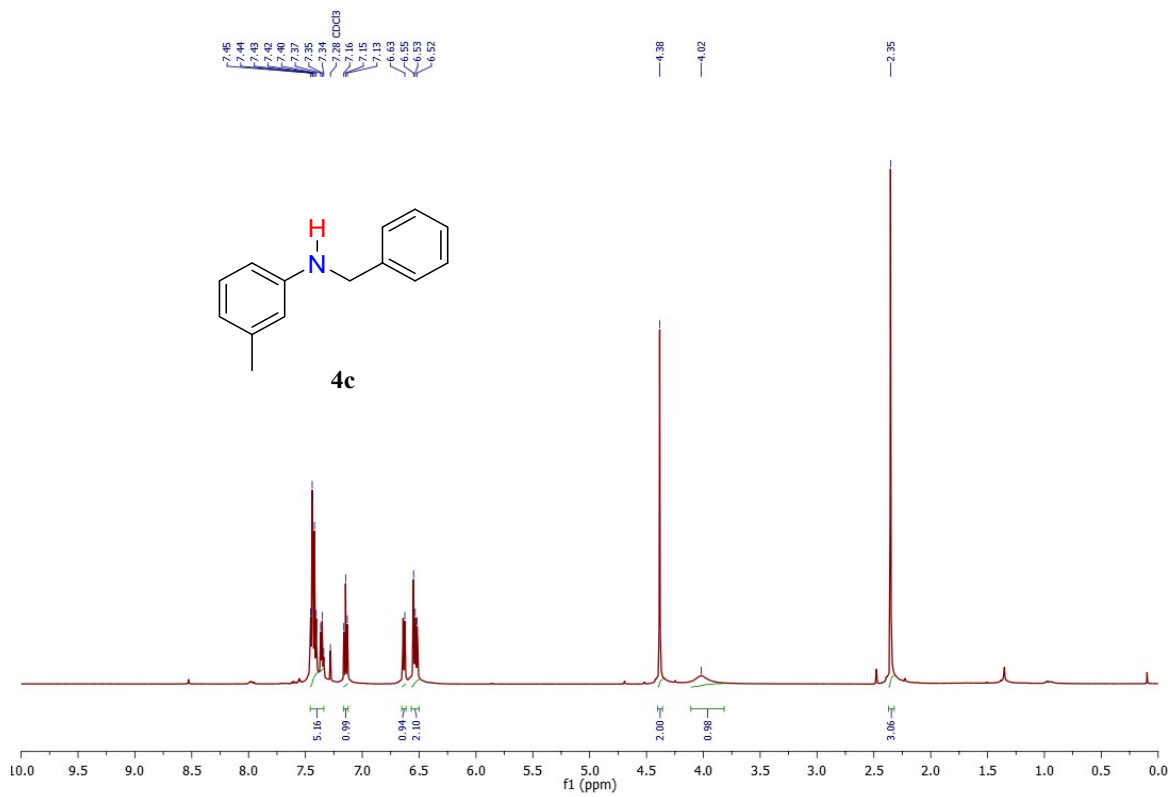


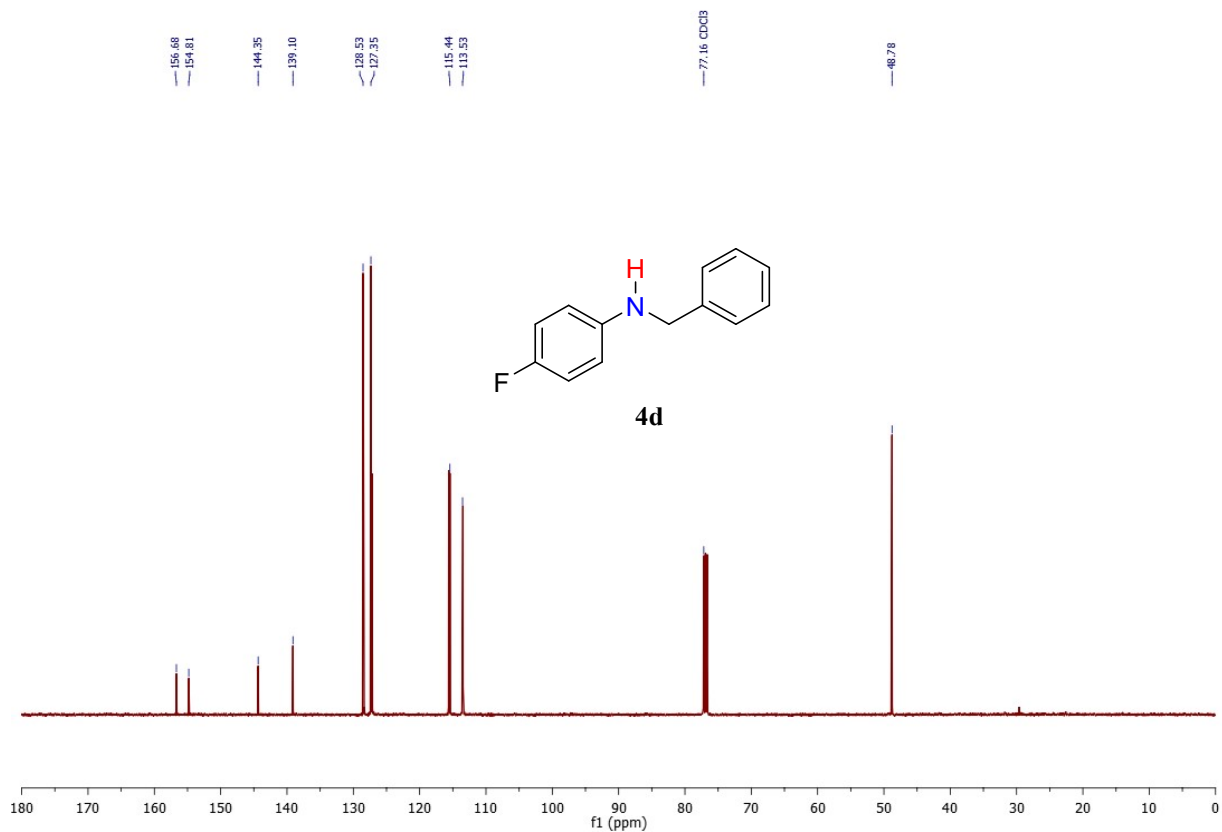
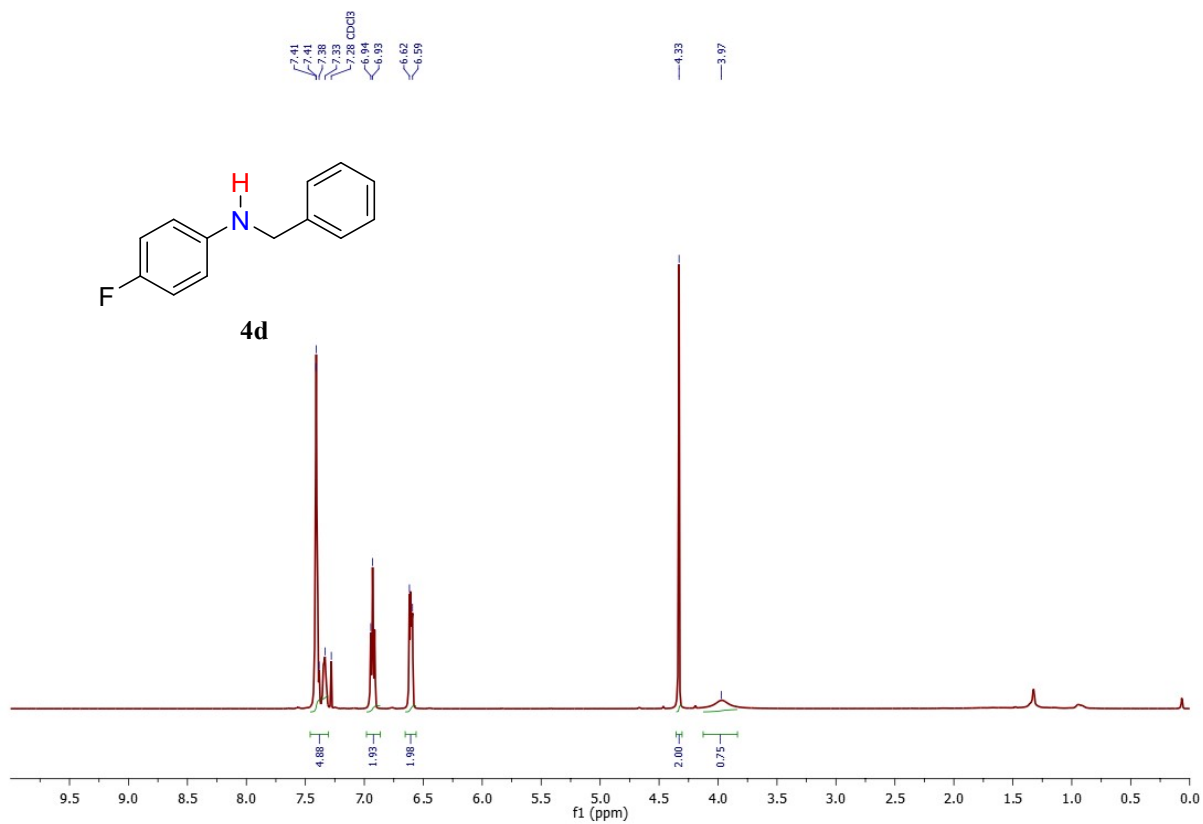




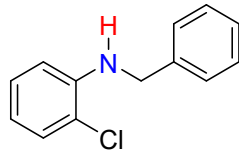




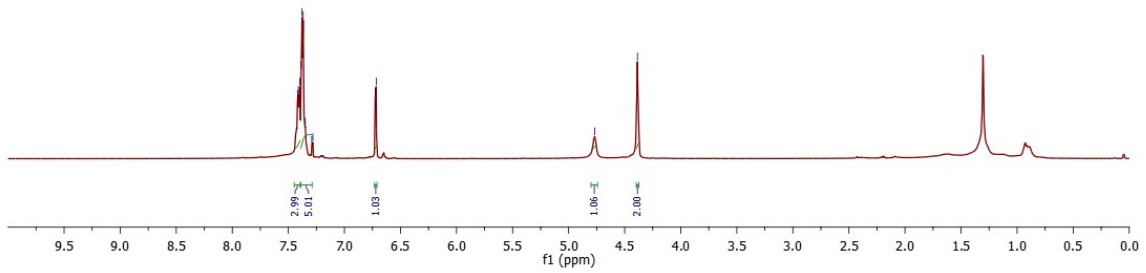




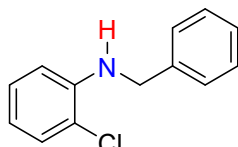
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7.41  
7.40  
7.38  
7.37  
7.35  
7.29  
7.28 CDCl<sub>3</sub>  
6.72  
6.72  
4.77  
4.39



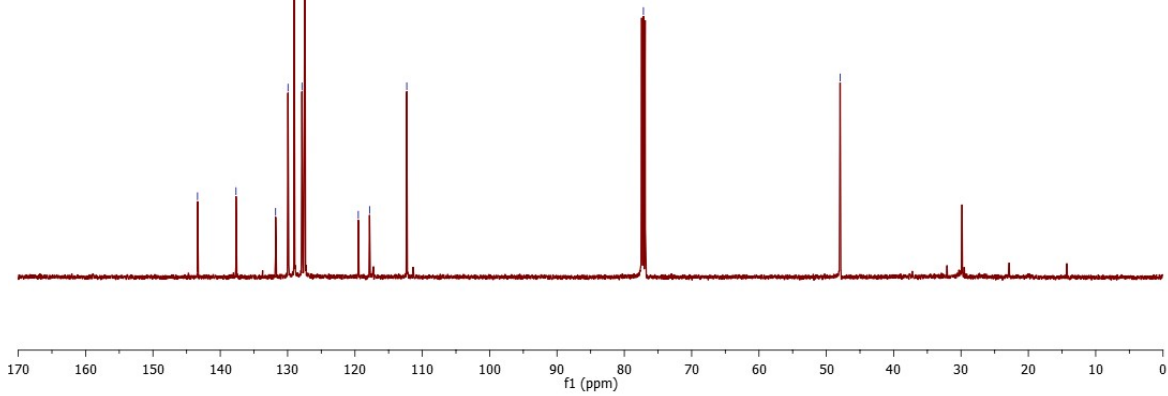
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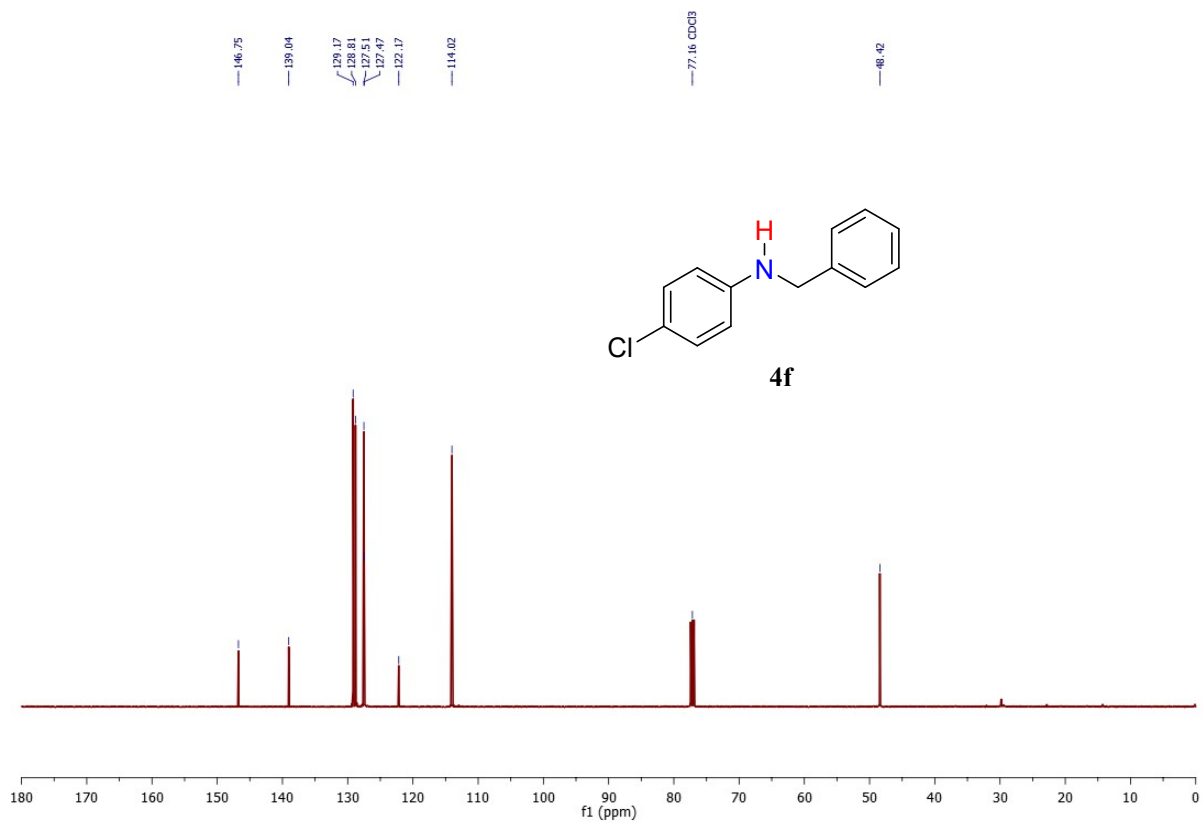
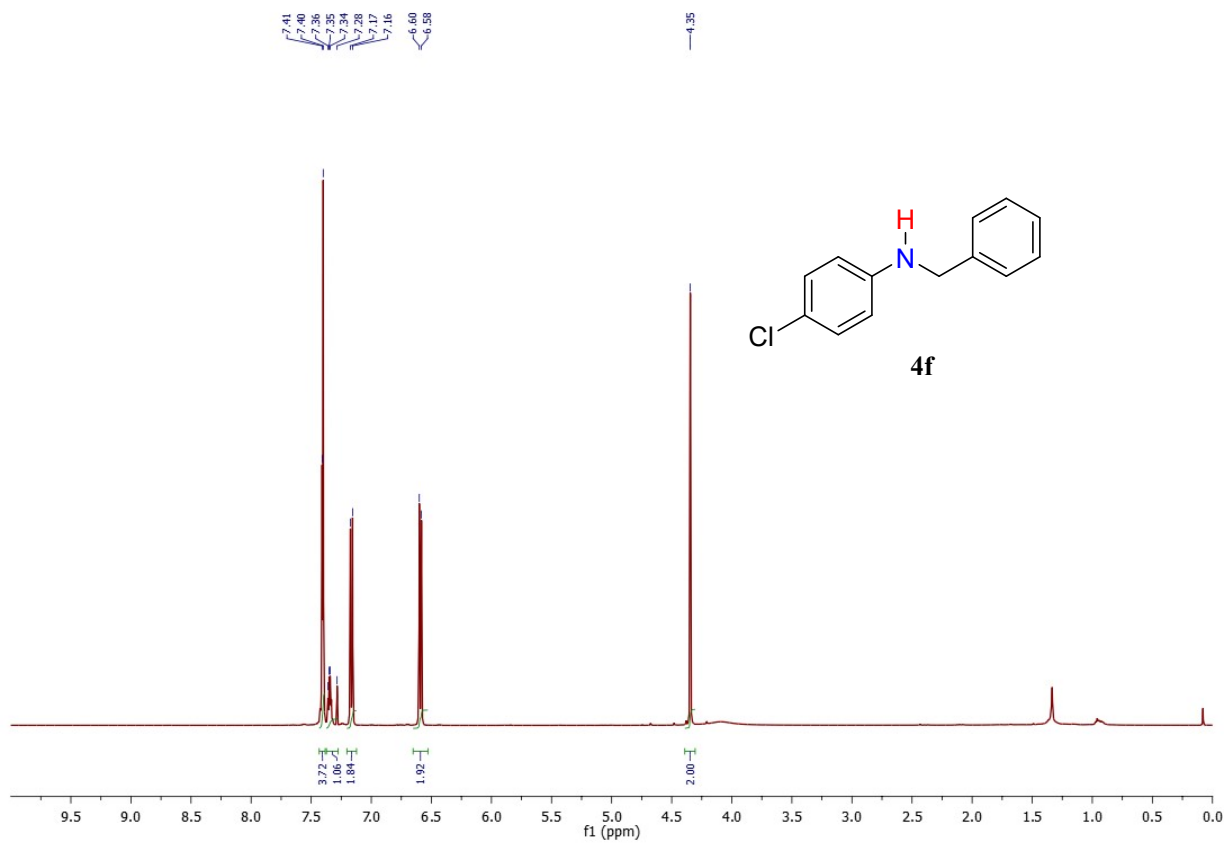
148.38  
137.66  
131.78  
129.94  
129.02  
127.42  
119.50  
117.83  
112.31  
77.16 CDCl<sub>3</sub>  
47.95

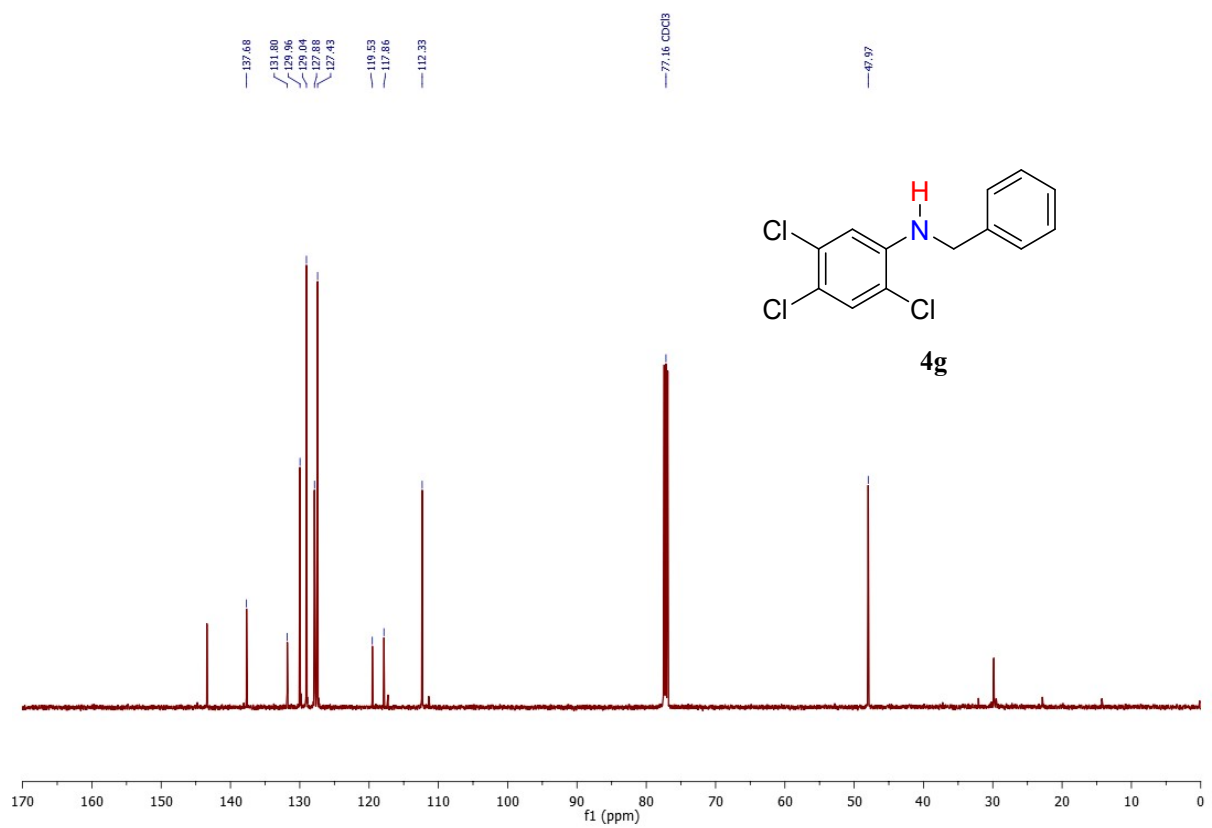
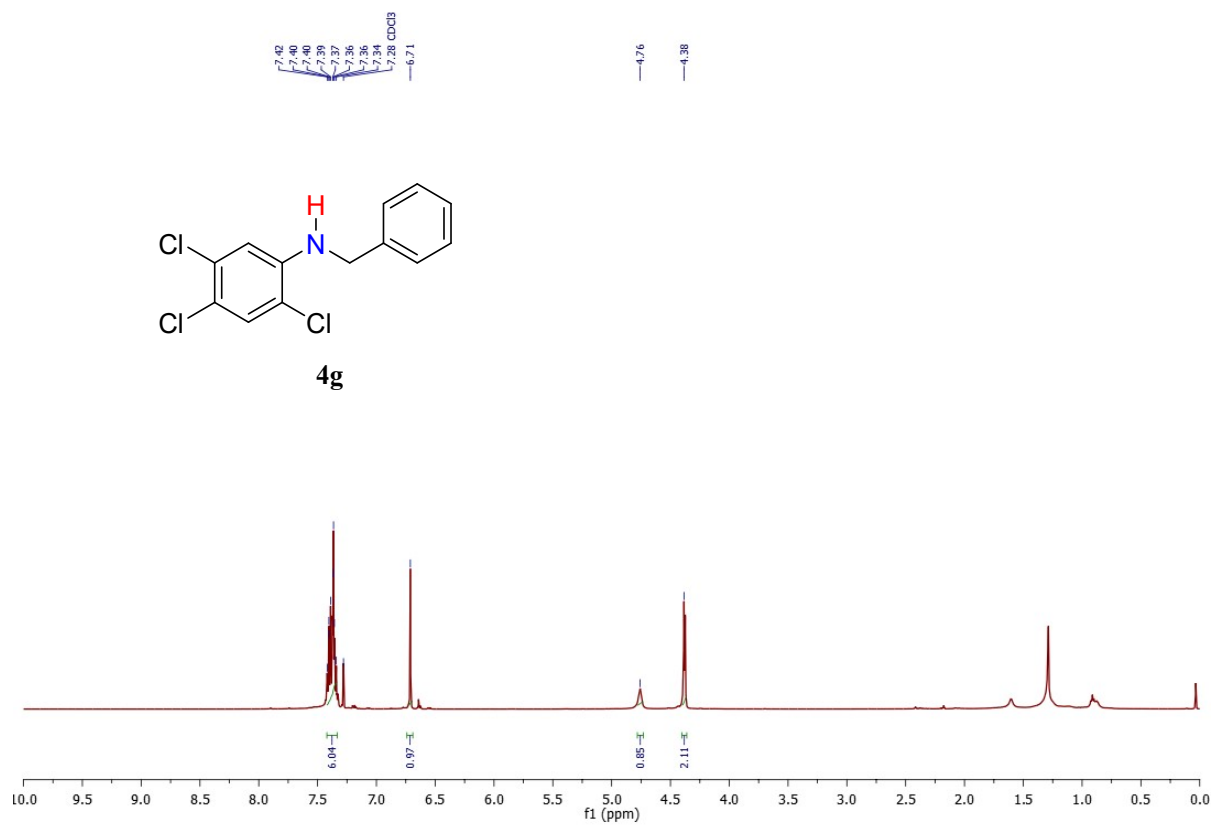


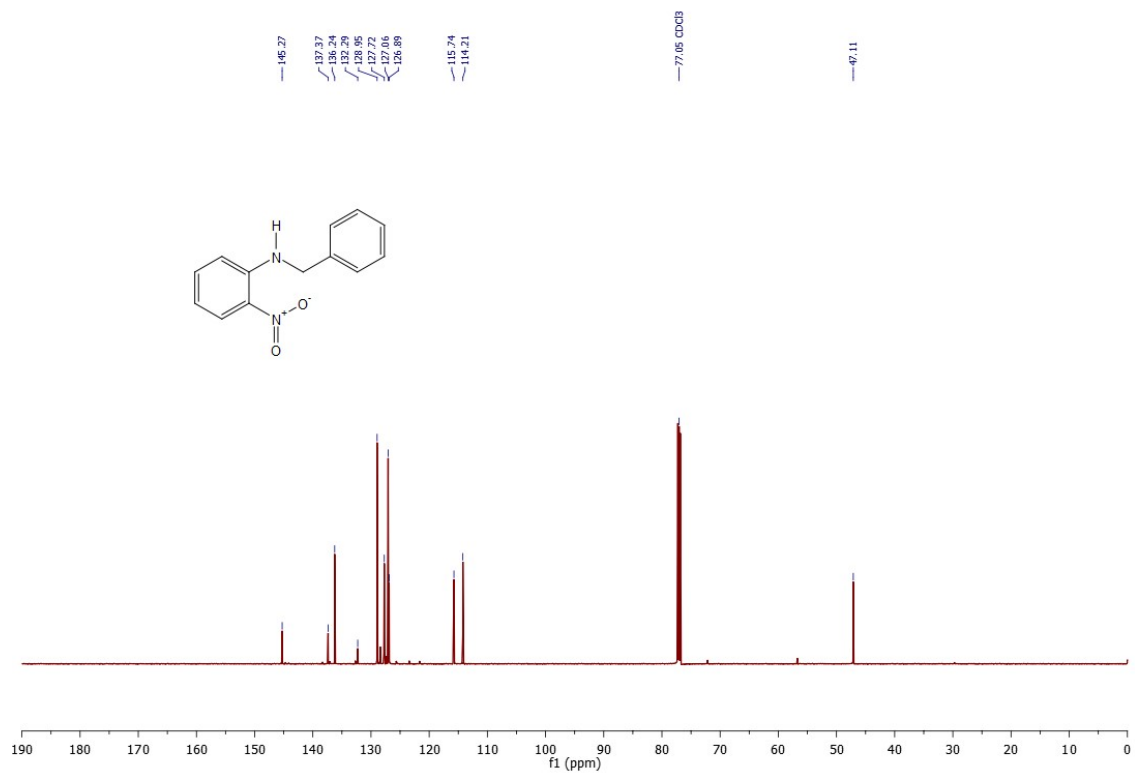
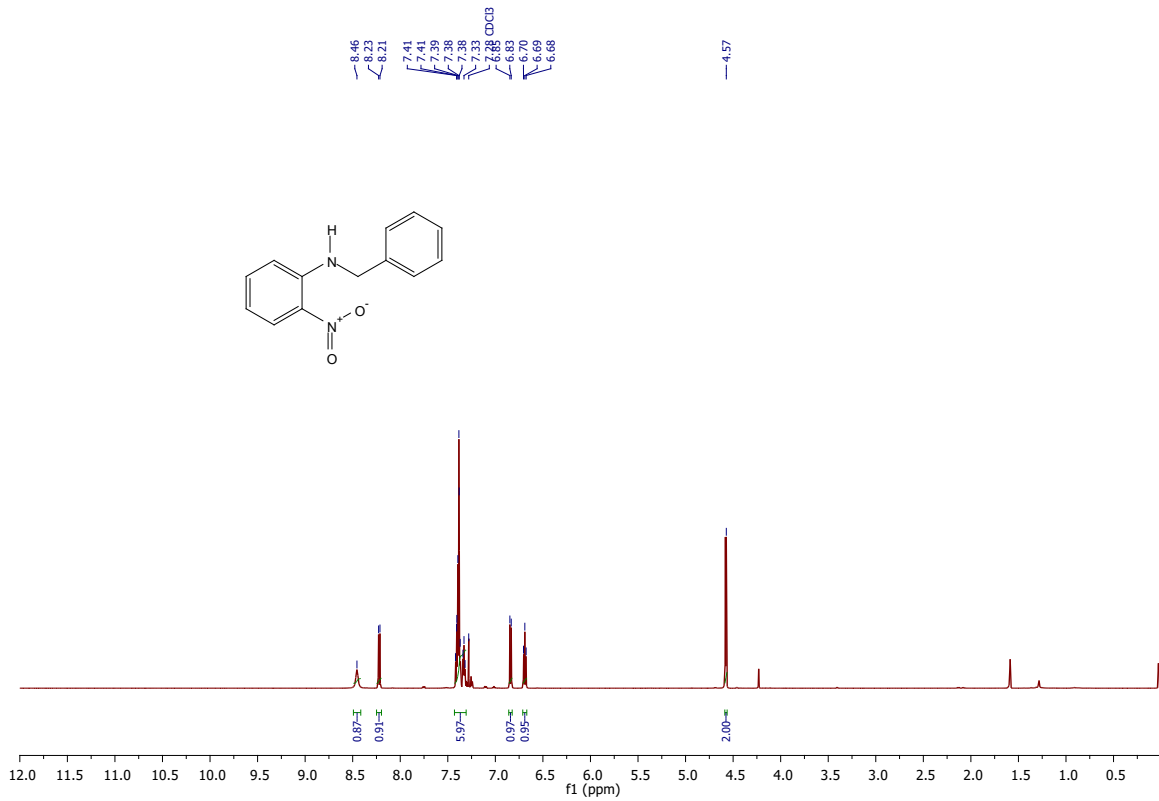
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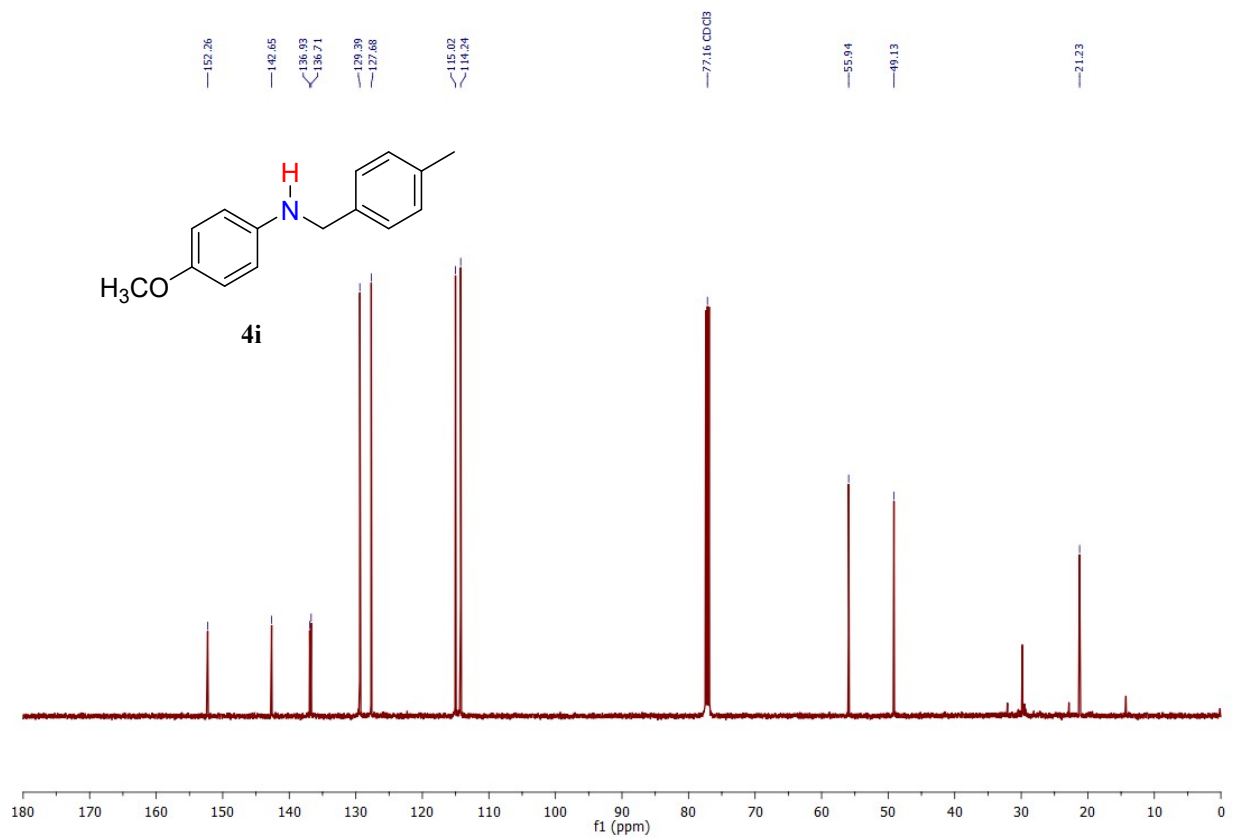
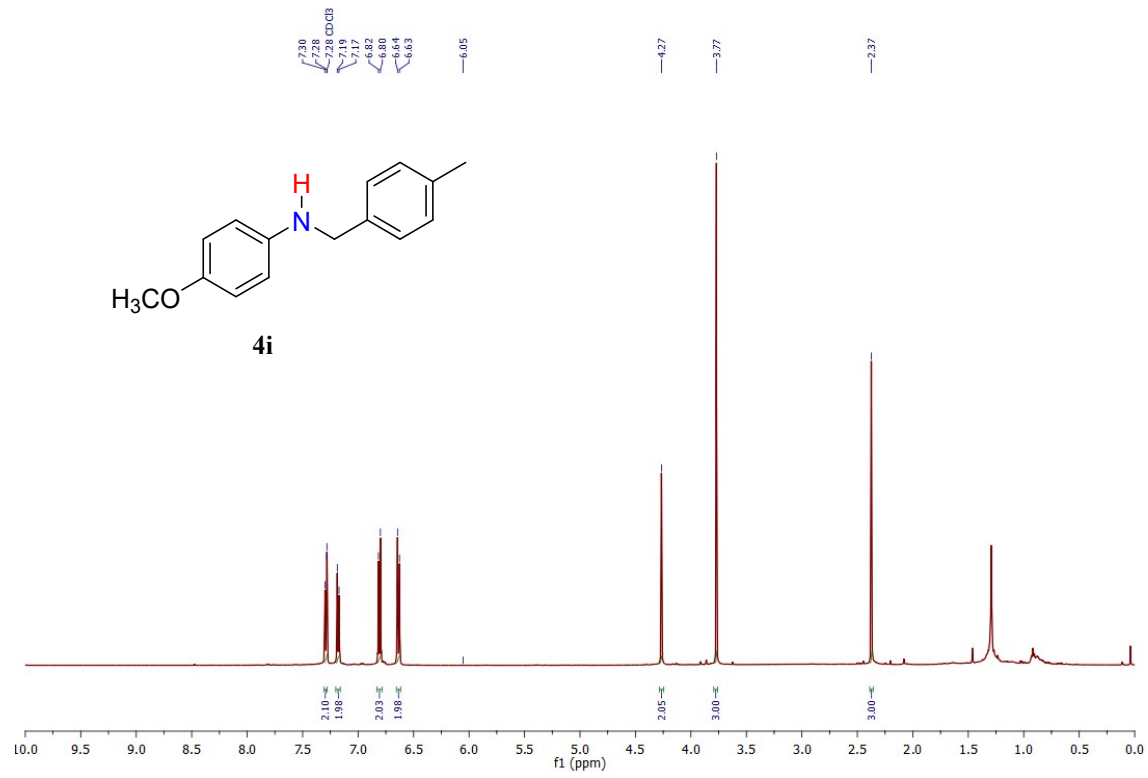


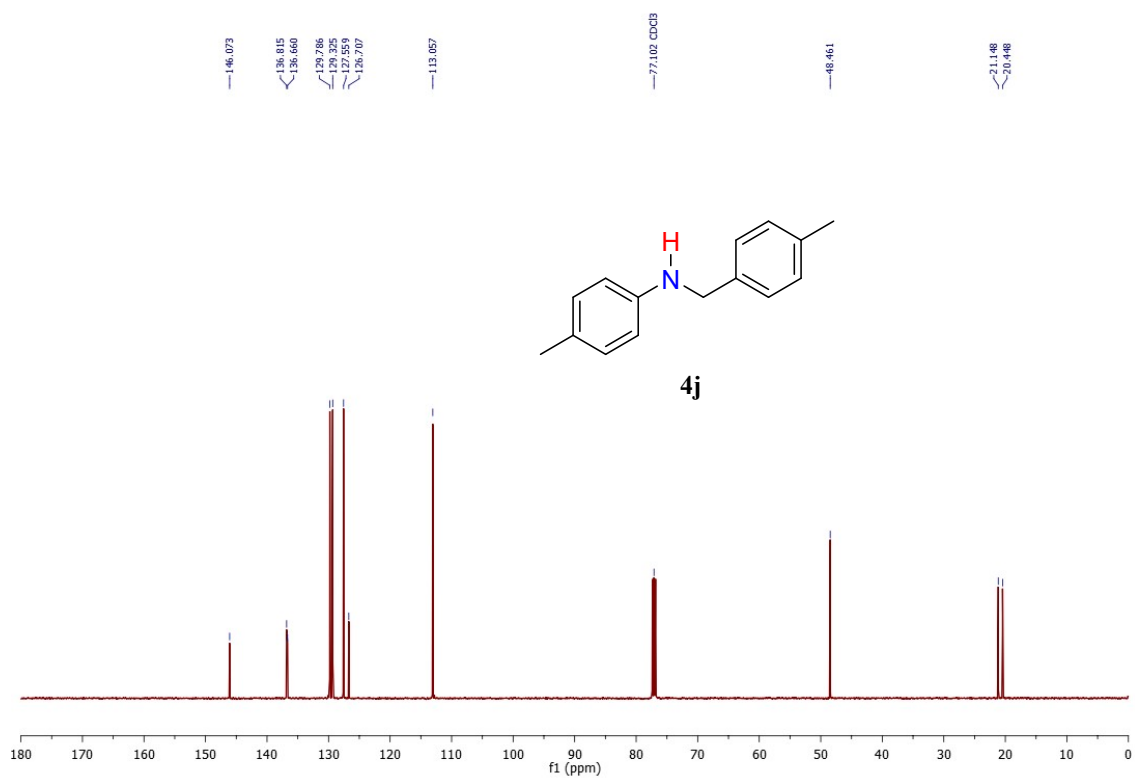
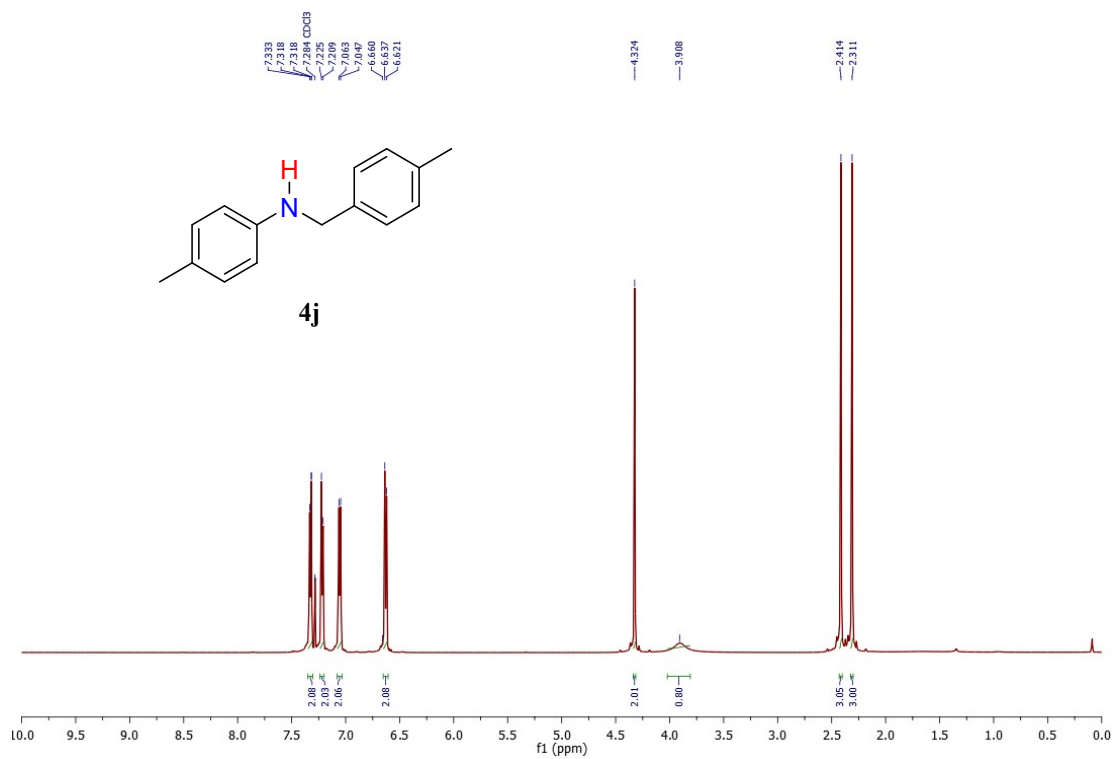


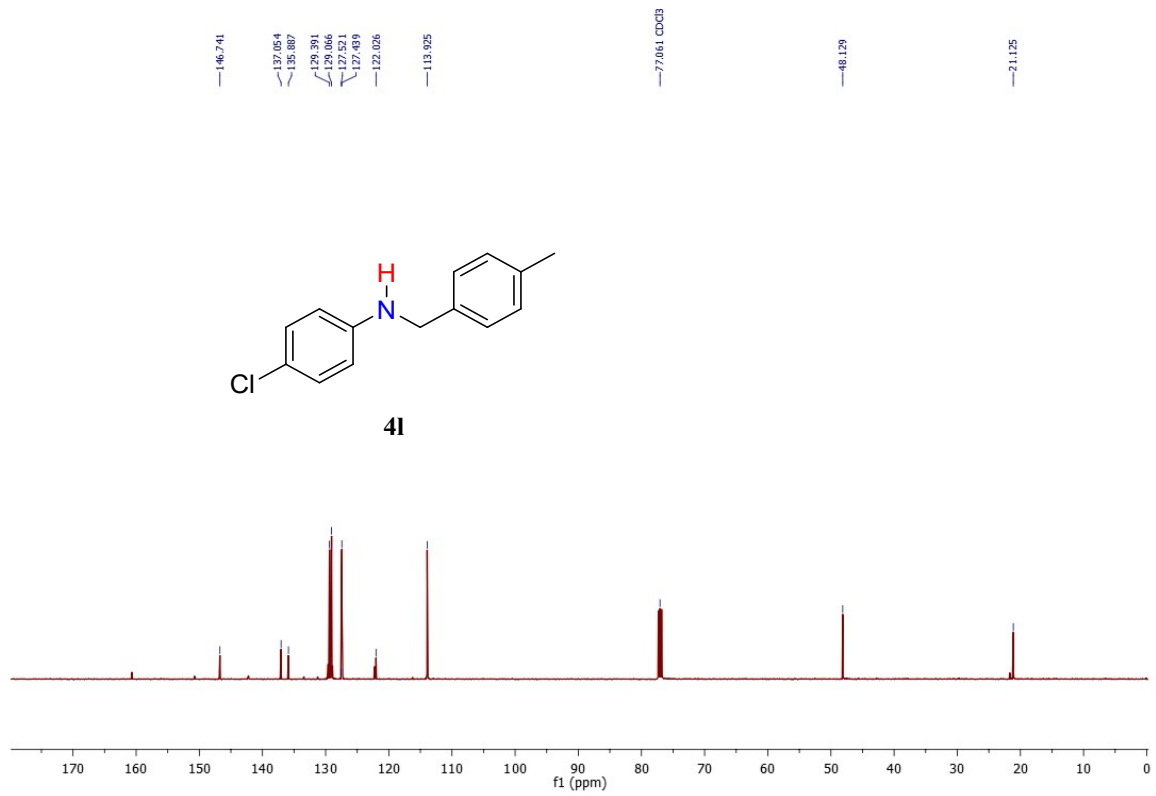
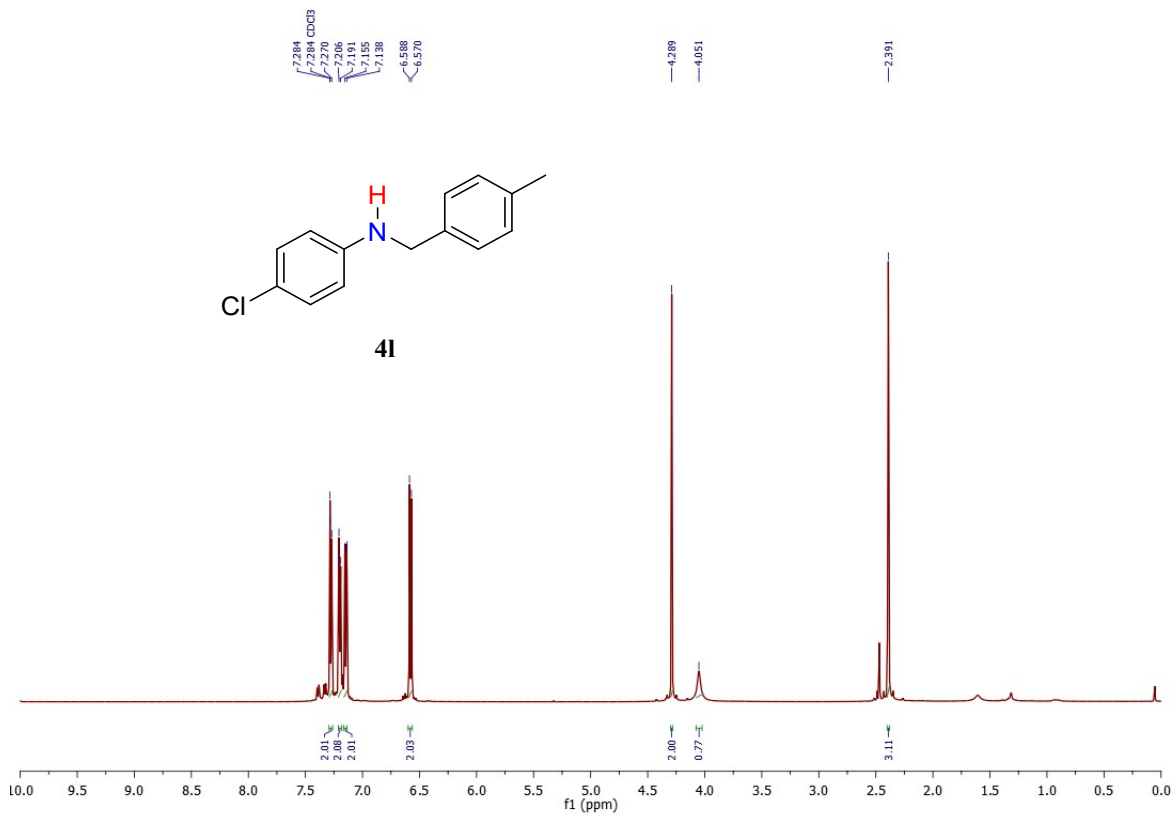


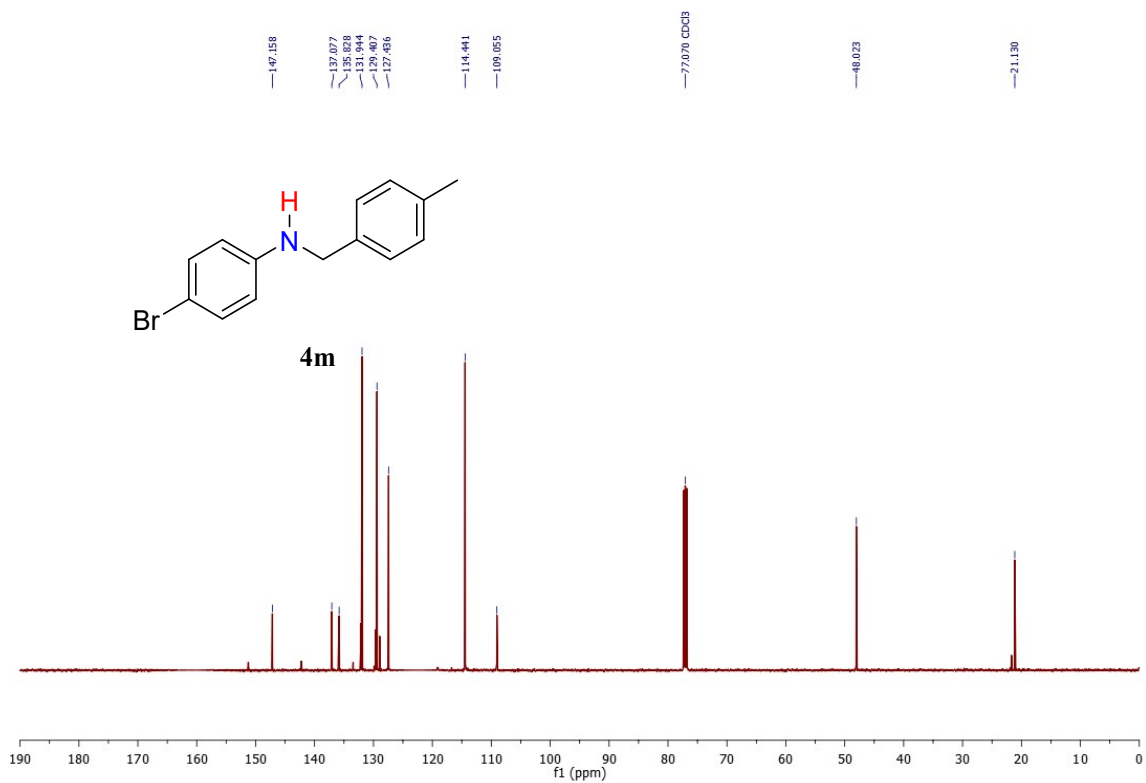
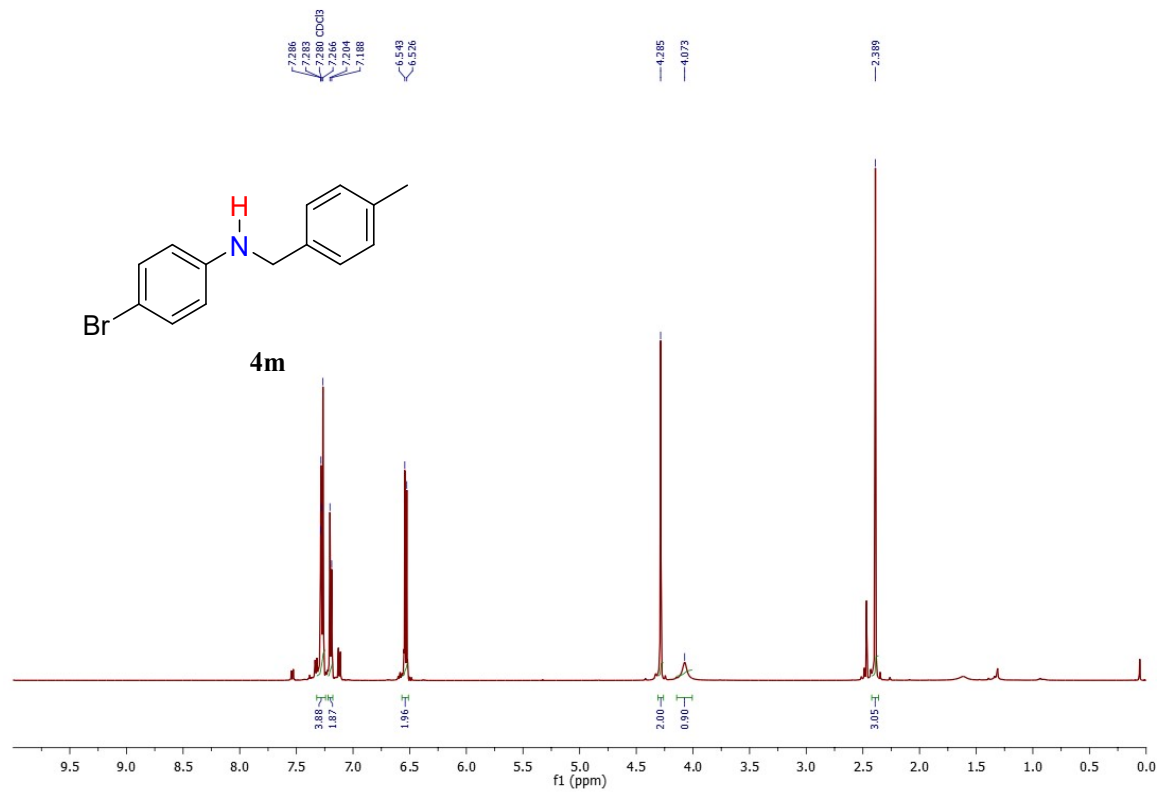


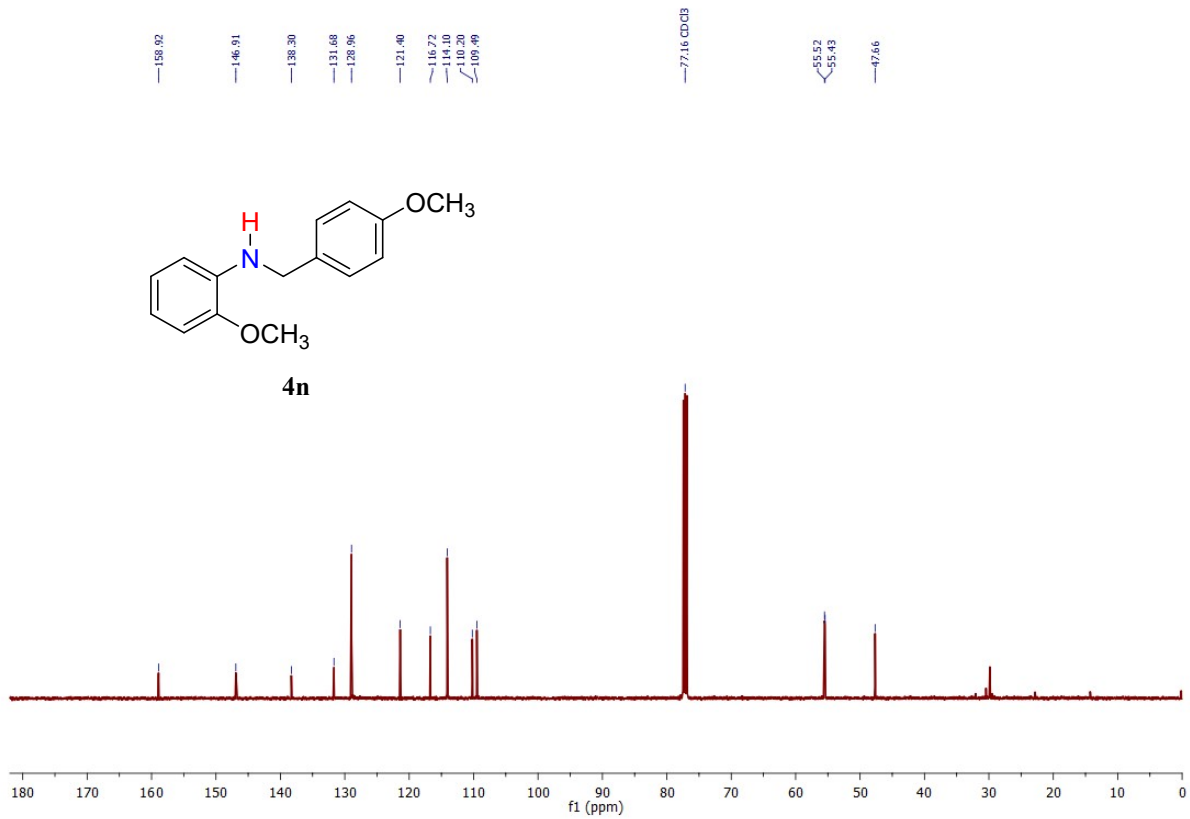
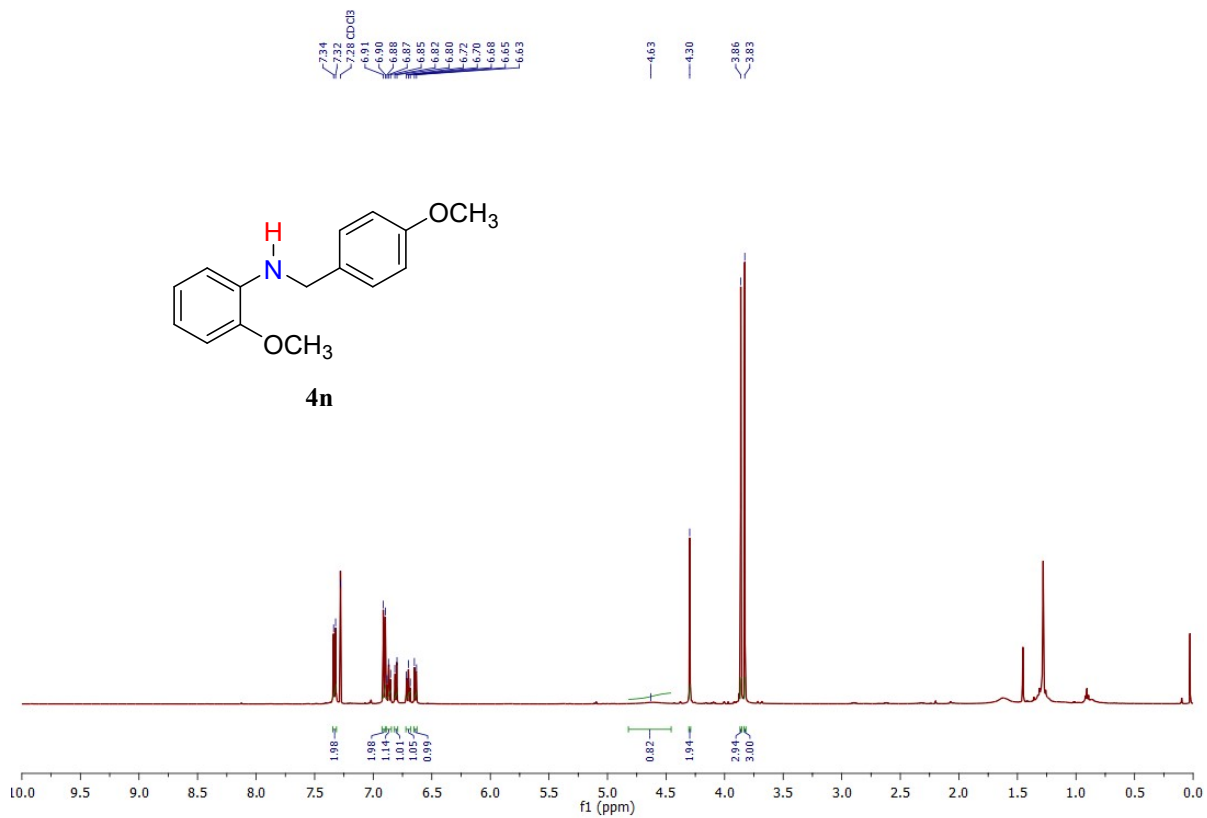




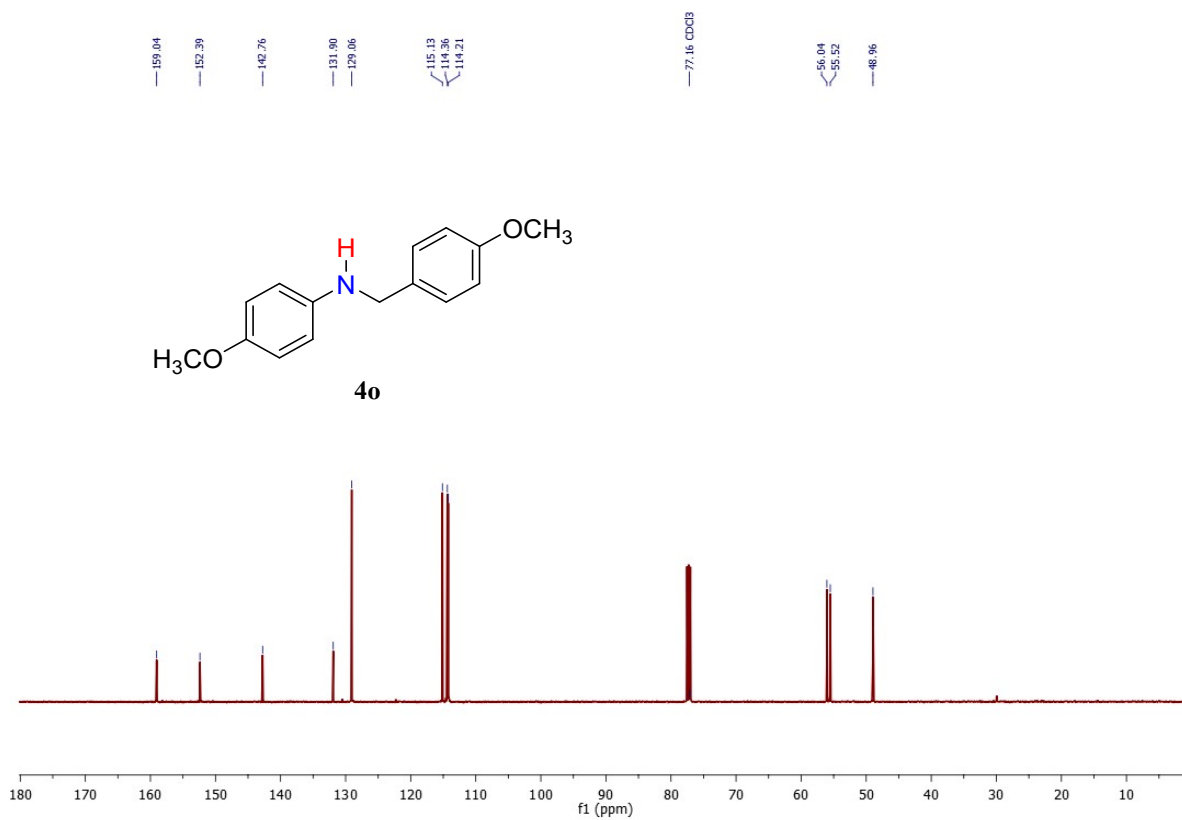
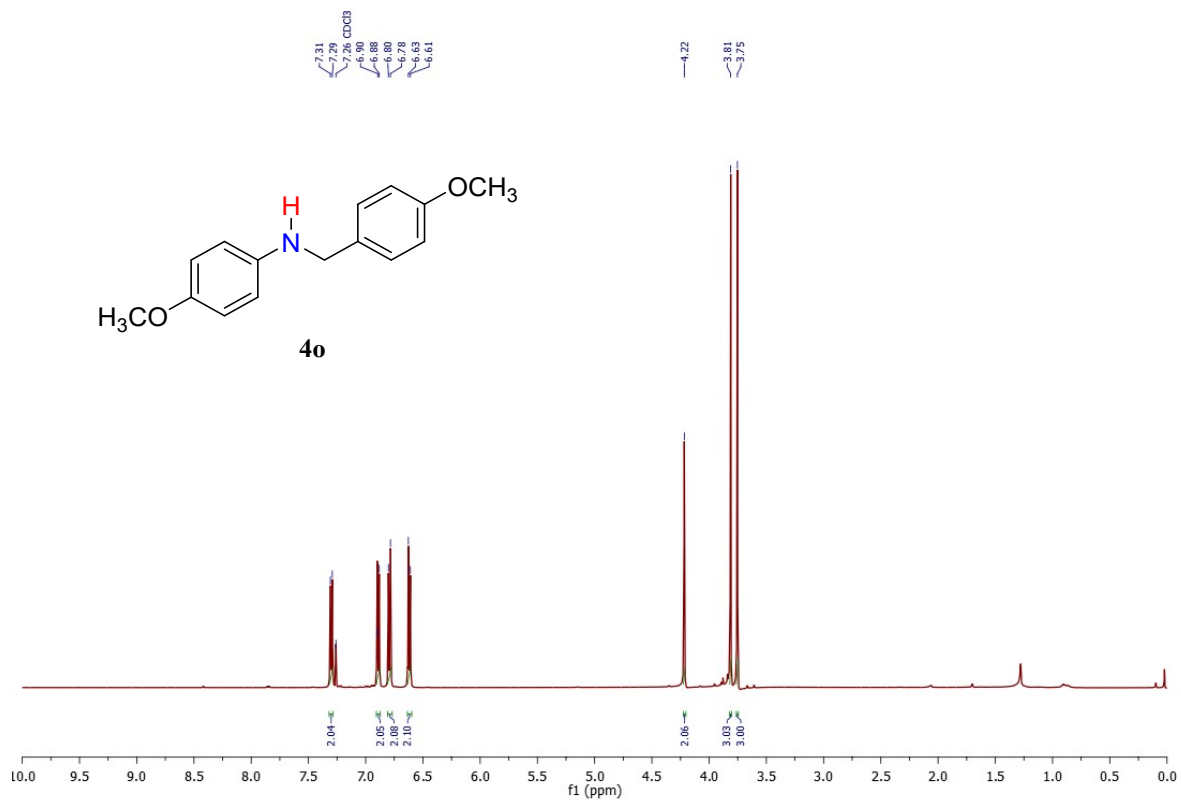


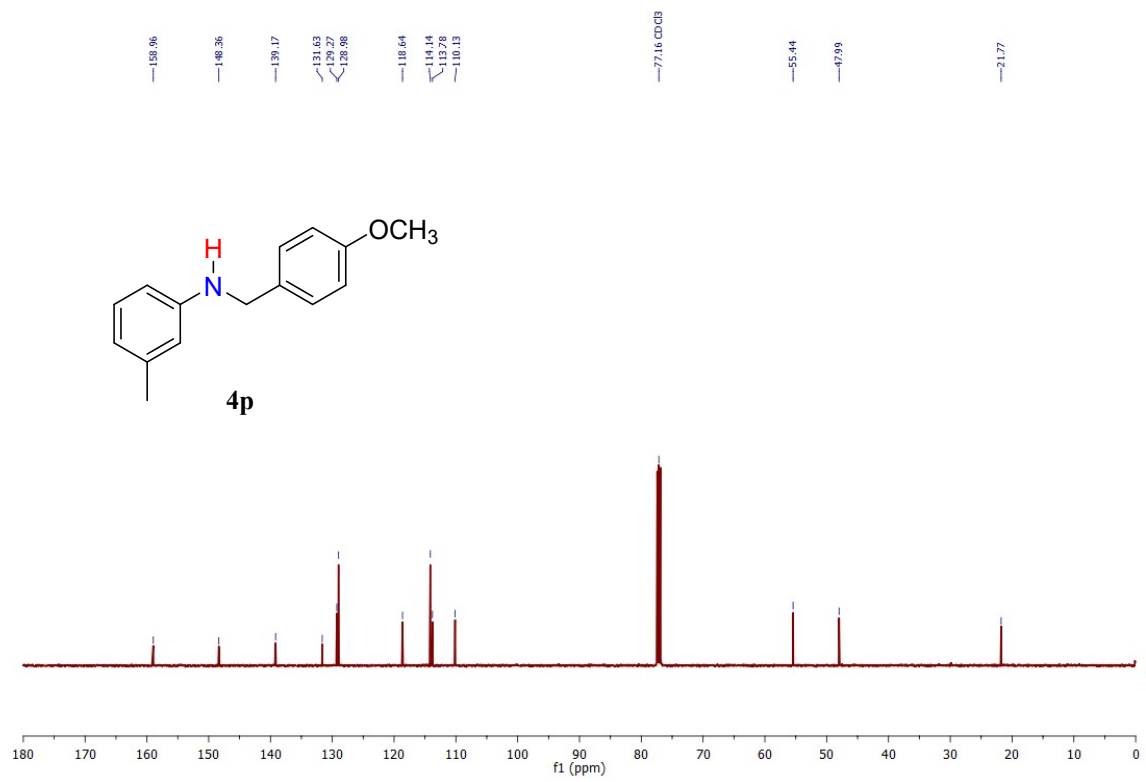
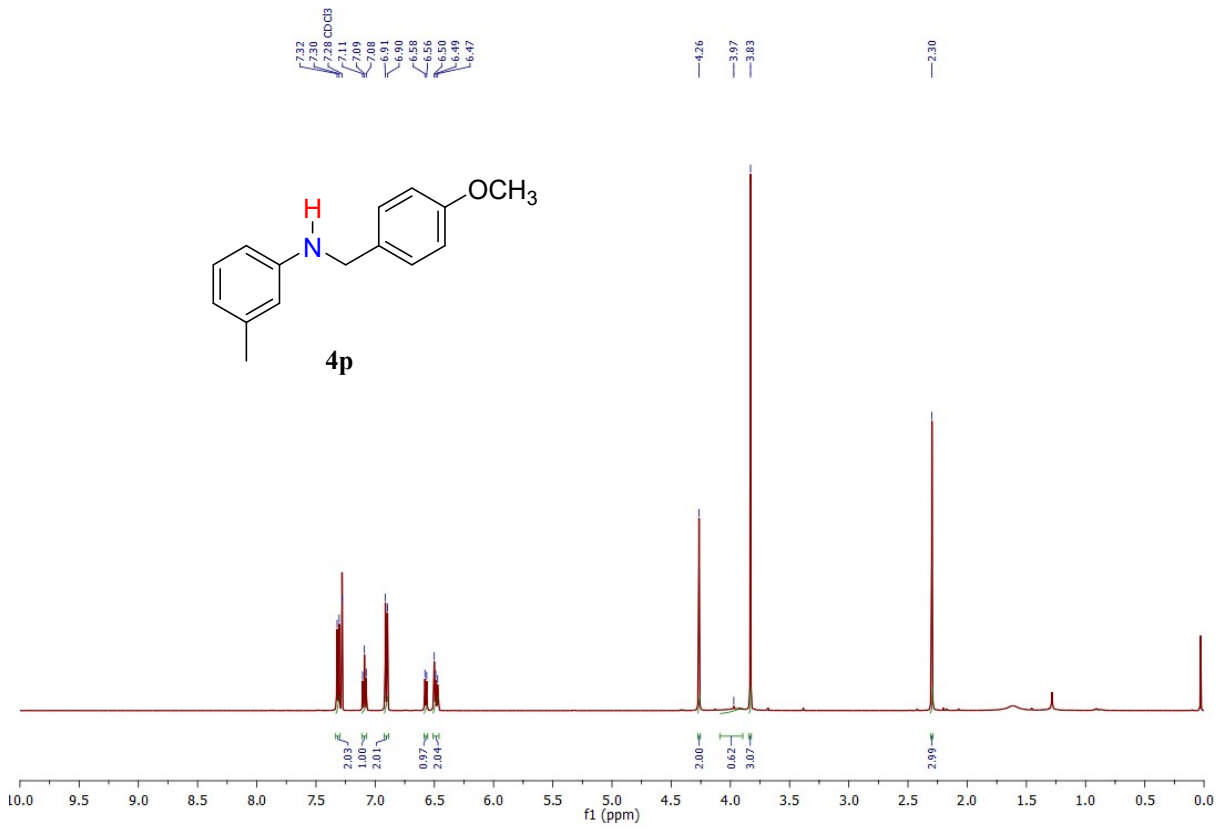


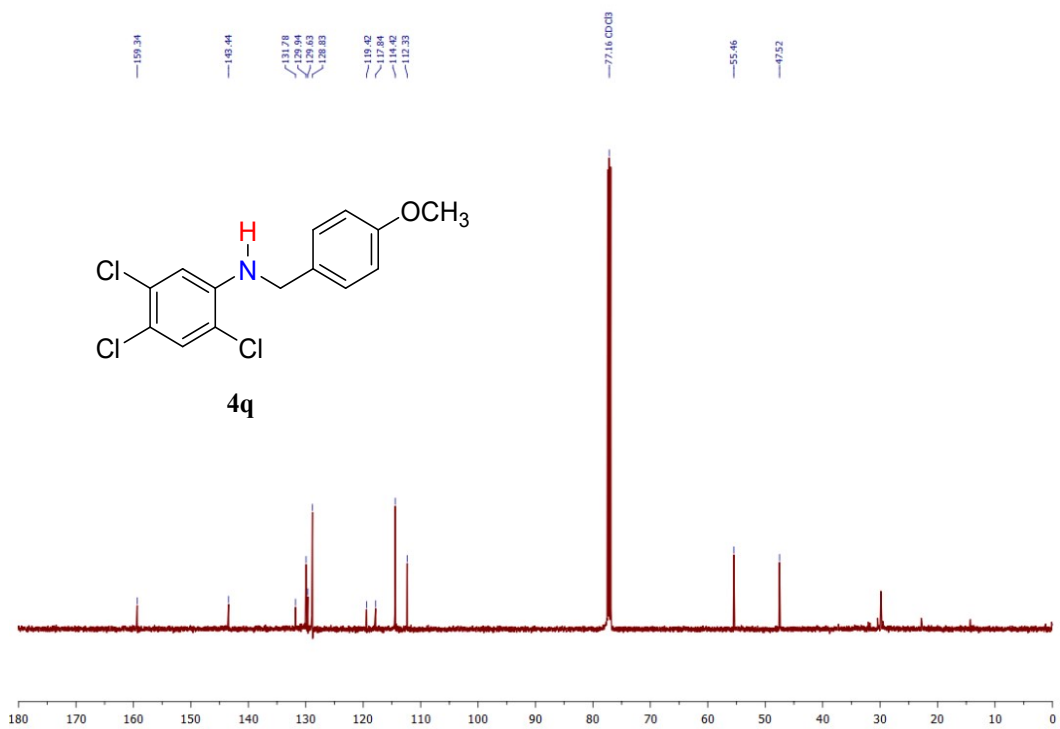
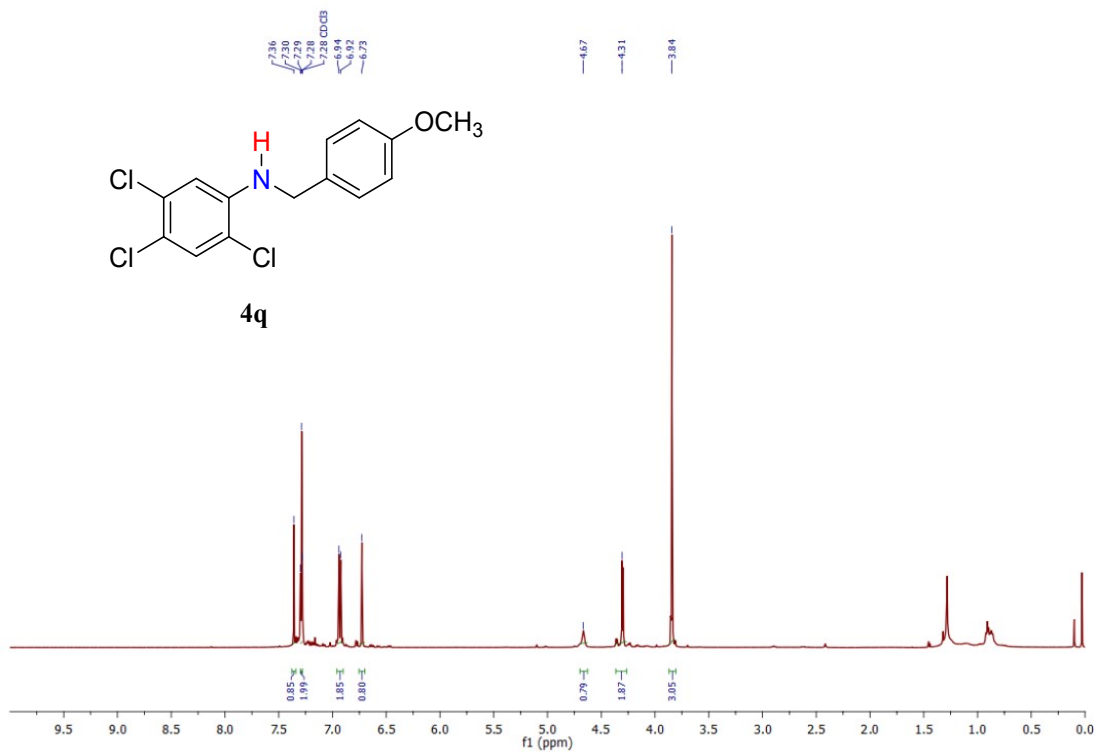


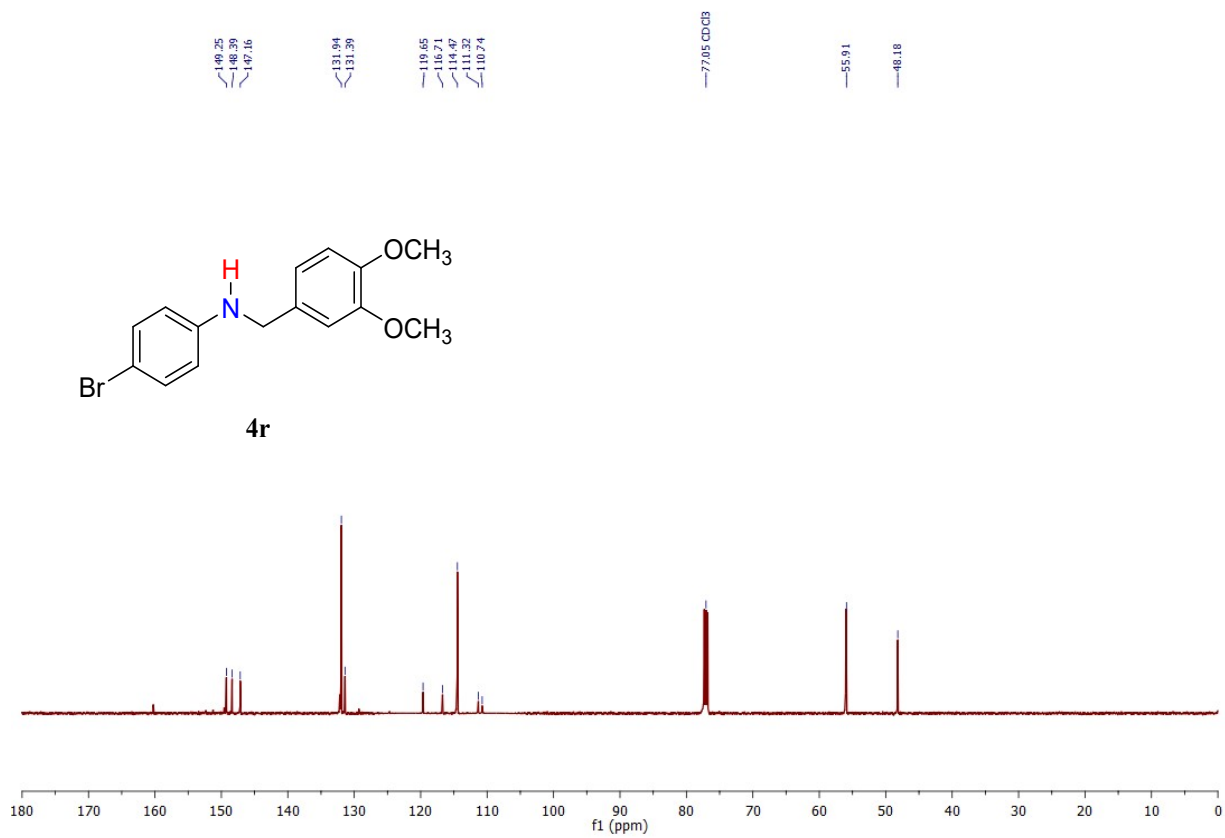
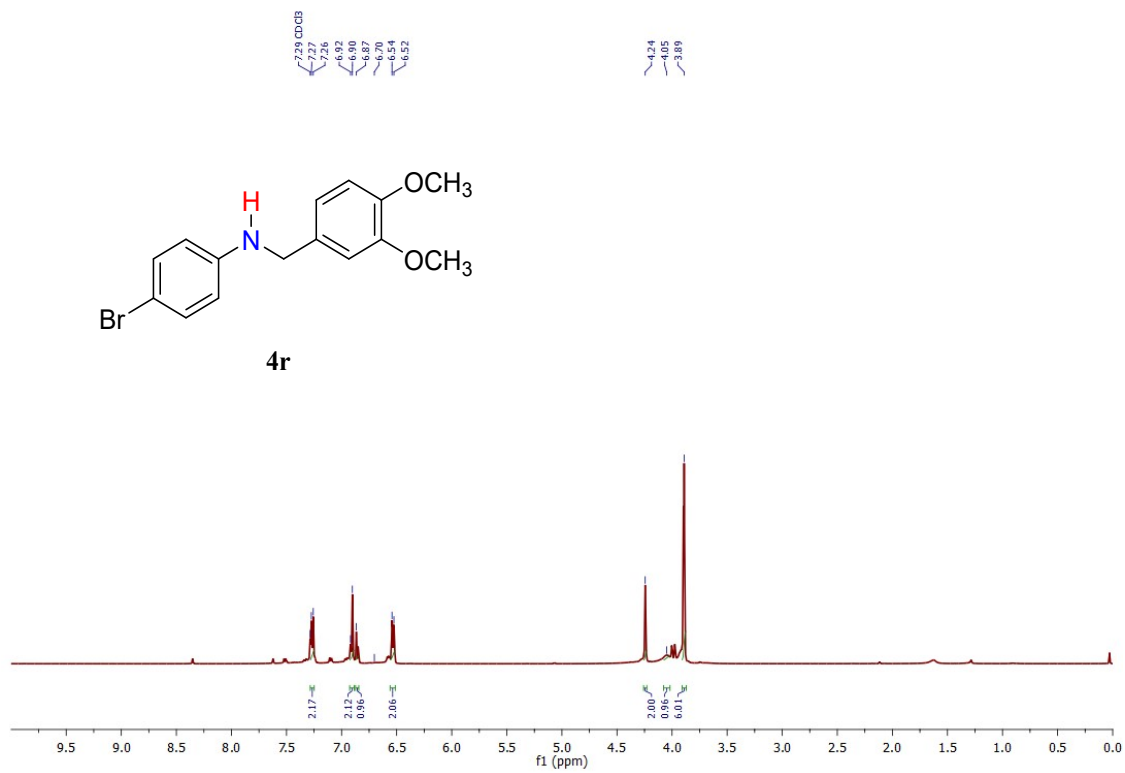


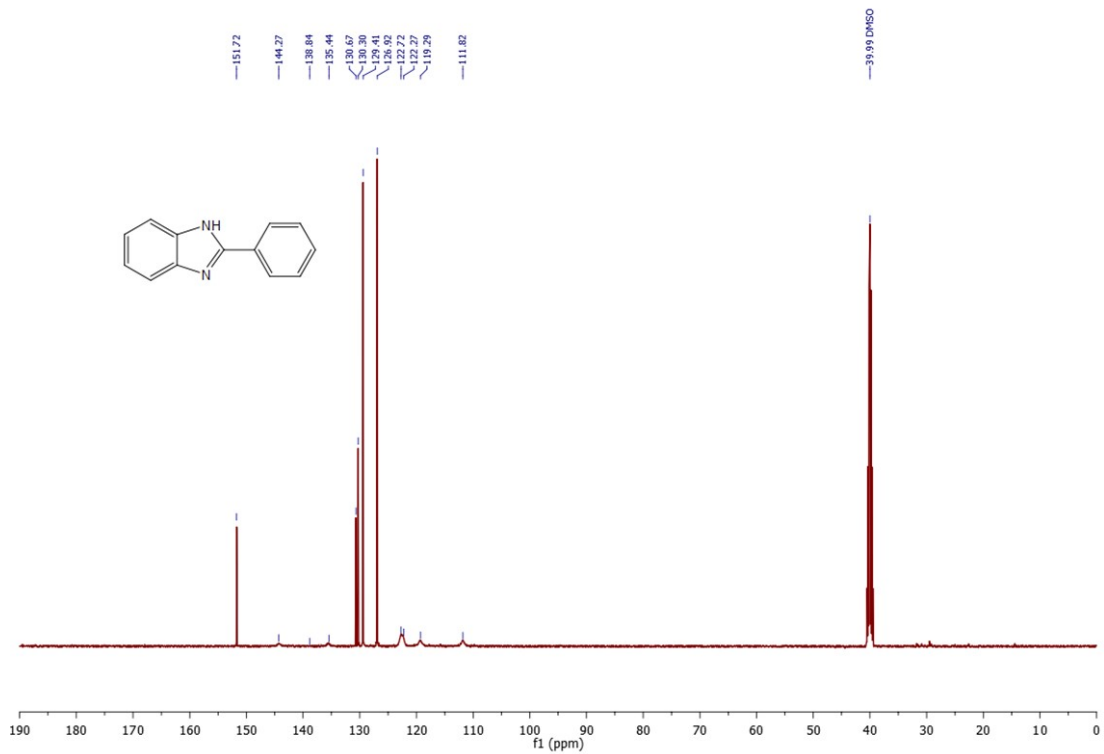
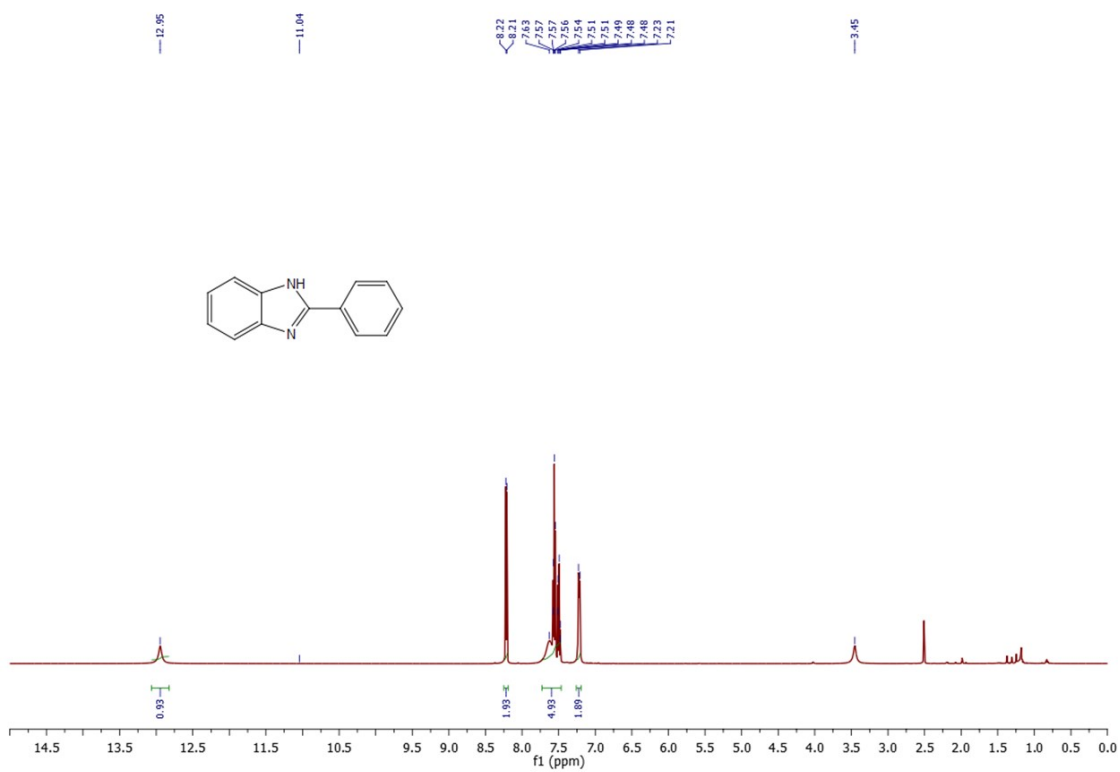


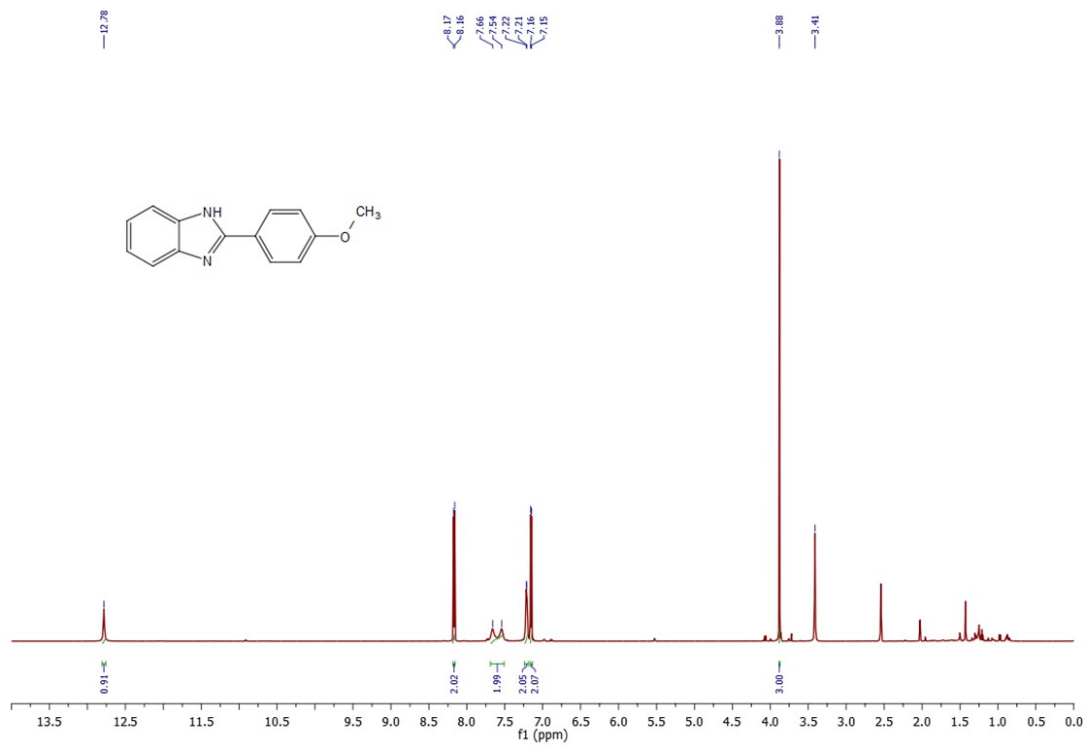












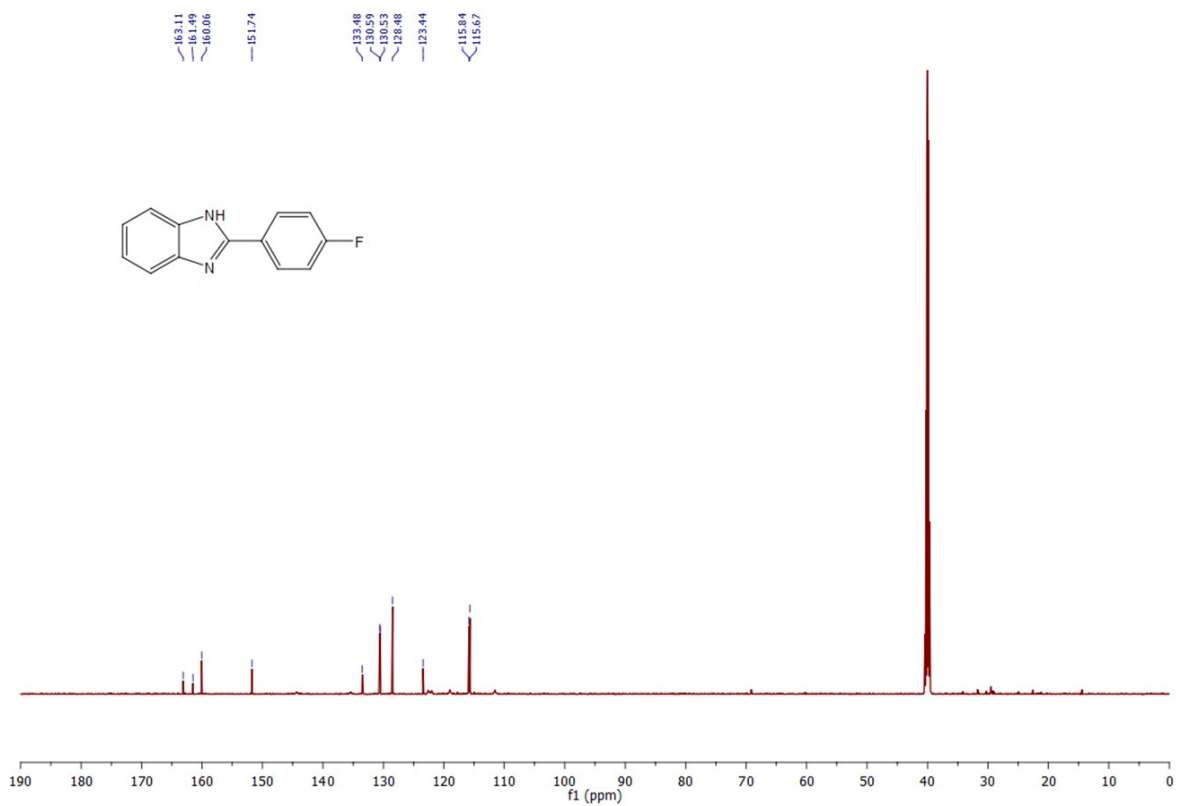
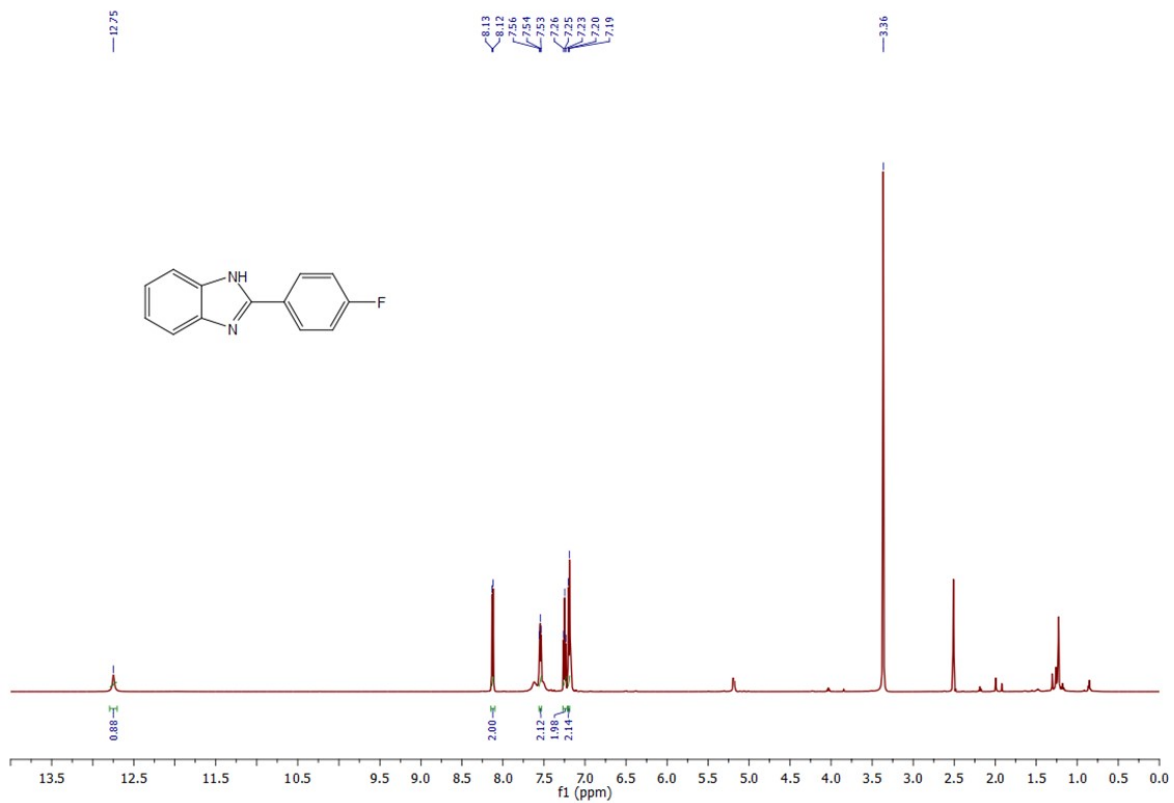


Figure S9: Step 1. <sup>1</sup>H NMR data

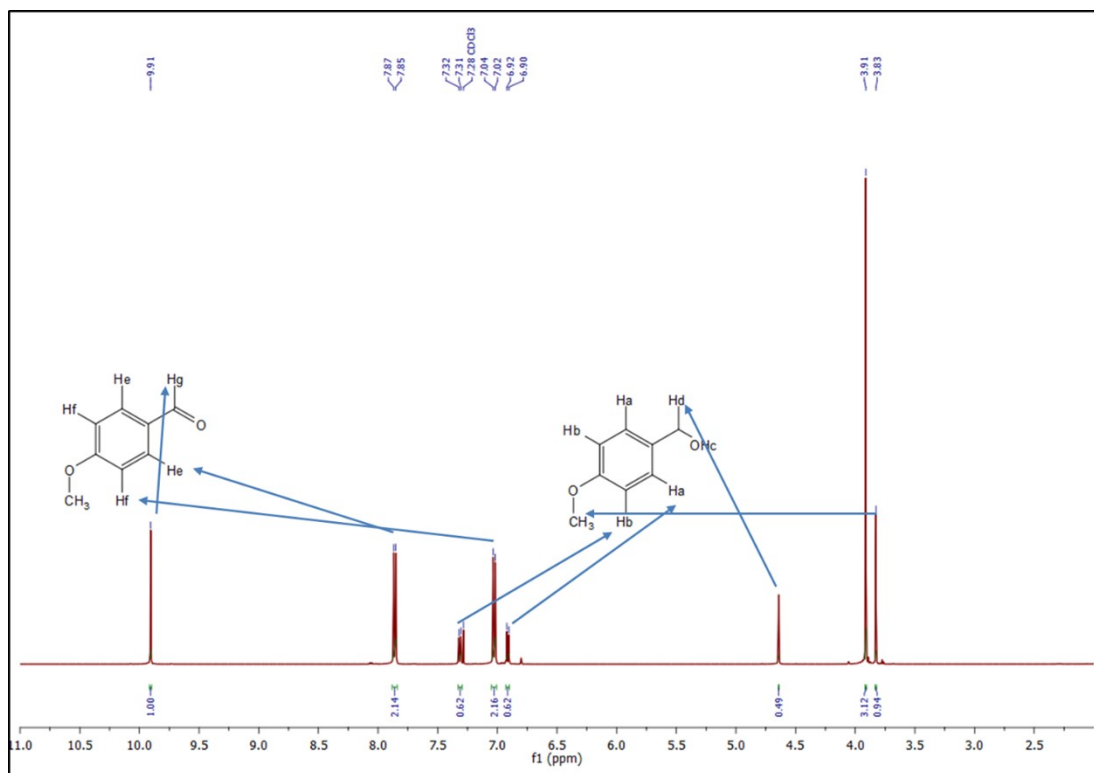
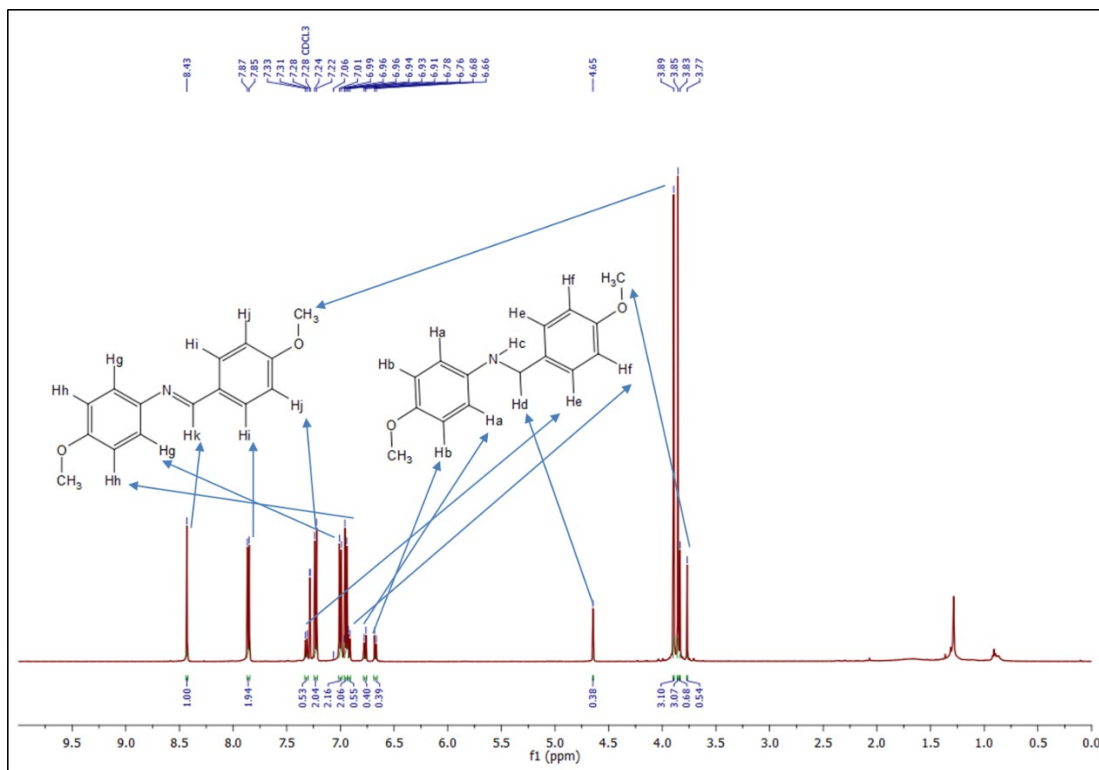




Figure S9: Step 2. <sup>1</sup>H NMR data



## Reference

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- 2 X. Song, S. Sun, W. Zhang and Z. Yin, *J. Colloid Interface Sci.*, 2004, **273**, 463–469.
- 3 X. Liu, L. Xu, G. Xu, W. Jia, Y. Ma and Y. Zhang, *ACS Catal.*, 2016, **6**, 7611–7620.
- 4 Y. Xue, N. N. T. Pham, G. Nam, J. Choi, Y. Y. Ahn, H. Lee, J. Jung, S. G. Lee and J. Lee, *Chem. Eng. J.*, 2021, **408**, 127305.