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REVIEW ARTICLE

Calibration Validation of Analytical Instruments

G Amani[1], K Vinod Kumar[2*], R Harini[2], S Sunaina Farha[2], Karimulla Shaik[2]
[1]Department of pharmaceutical Quality Assurance, Raghavendra institute of pharmaceutical Education and Research, K.R. Palli cross, Anantapur, chiyyedu, Andhra Pradesh-515721-India.
[2]Department of pharmaceutical Analysis, Raghavendra institute of pharmaceutical Education and Research, K.R. Palli cross, Anantapur, chiyyedu, Andhra Pradesh-515721-India.
Corresponding Author Address: K. Vinod Kumar
Email: vinodpharma@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
In order to guarantee the precision and dependability of analytical instruments used in a variety of scientific applications, calibration, validation, and qualification are essential procedures. By comparing the instrument's output to a standard reference, calibration determines the measurement accuracy of the device. Validation verifies that the tool reliably yields precise, accurate findings that are within predetermined parameters. The qualification process evaluates the instrument's appropriateness for its intended application and confirms that it complies with all applicable regulations. All of these procedures ensure that the instrument operates as intended, giving confidence in the collected data. This abstract emphasises how crucial calibration, validation, and qualification are to preserving the accuracy of analytical data and facilitating well-informed choices in the fields of research, business, and healthcare. In addition, the integrity of analytical data in a variety of industries, including business, healthcare, and research, depends on calibration, validation, and certification. By lining up the equipment with a standardised reference, calibration creates a basis for measurement accuracy and guarantees consistent, dependable findings. Validation goes one step further by guaranteeing that the tool reliably provides precise and accurate results within predefined bounds. By assessing the instrument's fitness for its intended application and verifying compliance with pertinent rules, the qualifying procedure gives an additional degree of confidence. When taken as a whole, these processes strengthen trust in the dependability of analytical tools, promoting informed decision-making and furthering research in a variety of fields, including science.
Keywords: *Calibration, Validation, Qualification, Accuracy, Precision, Compliance, Traceability.*

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INTRODUCTION

Drugs and pharmaceutical items are subjected to particular analyses using analytical instruments. It is critical to the development and assessment of new products, as well as the production of consumers and the environment(1). The apparatus offers the lower detection thresholds needed to guarantee the safety of food, pharmaceuticals, water, and air. To make sure that the equipment used for analytical purposes is correctly validated and calibrated, regular performance verification is carried out. To show that it is appropriate for the function for which it was designed(2). Analytical chemistry may be defined as the study of chemical component identification, quantification, and separation of natural and manufactured materials made up of one or more compounds or elements(3). Pharmaceutical analysis is extremely important when looking at pharmaceutical formulations and bulk medications for quality control and assurance. Labs utilise these techniques to examine the efficacy, identification, purity, safety, and performance of pharmacological products(4). Any pharmaceutical facility's main goal is to continuously provide products with the necessary characteristics and levels of quality for the lowest possible price.

Calibration

A measurement equipment or instrument is calibrated by comparing its measurements or readings to established reference standards in order to identify and correct any mistakes or discrepancies(5).To

guarantee the accuracy, precision, and dependability of measurements, a fundamental method must be followed.

Purpose

The goal of calibration is to establish a connection between the instrument's readings and the actual value of the quantity being measured. This relationship enables the instrument output to be corrected or adjusted, ensuring that the next measurements are as accurate as possible.

Objectives

It evaluates an instrument's precision.
It establishes the instrument's traceability.
Offers assurance that your goods, services, and outcomes satisfy client requirements.

Types of calibration

Standard calibration
Calibration with data
Iso accredited calibration
Linear calibration
Zero calibration
Pressure calibration
Temperature calibration
Electrical calibration
Flow calibration
Dimensional calibration
Mass calibration(6)

Standard calibration

By contrasting with benchmarks. Utilise common medications (NABL). Turn on the instrument. Allow yourself some time to stabilise. Stabilise, please. It should be near on all sides. Amount zero. preserve the NABL-determined standard weight. Examine the weight before adjusting the knob.

Calibration with data

Evaluating against benchmark values. The process of correcting or aligning a measurement or prediction model to assure its accuracy and dependability is known as calibration with data. It makes use of the gathered data to adjust the model's parameters and enhance performance(7). Organisations can lessen biases, increase measurement accuracy, and improve the model's capacity for making reliable predictions by calibrating with data.

Iso accredited calibration

To compare the before and after. It is an extremely exacting calibration technique. They will issue a certificate and approve revisions(8).

Linear calibration

Verifying and modifying the linearity of a measuring device is part of calibration. It guarantees that the instrument gives reliable readings over the whole measuring range(9).

Zero calibration

Establishing the baseline or zero point. It guarantees that the instrument reads zero accurately. if no input is present or if it is in the reference state(7, 10).

Pressure calibration

used specifically for pressure-measuring equipment. such as sensors, transducers, or pressure gauges. It entails examining and modifying the precision of pressure readings taken at various locations. In the instrument's price range(11).

Temperature calibration

Done on temperature measurement equipment. such as temperature sensors, thermocouples, or thermometers. It guarantees precise temperature measurements across the whole temperature range or at particular locations(12).

Electrical calibration

Instruments that measure electrical properties like voltage, current, resistance, capacitance, or frequency must be calibrated(13).

Flow calibration

It is used with devices that gauge fluid flow rates. include flow metres. By contrasting the instrument's reading with a calibrated one, you can ensure precise flow measurement(14).

Dimensional calibration

carried out on instruments for measuring length, distance, or geometry. such as micrometres and callipers. It guarantees that this equipment delivers precise and accurate measurements(15).

Mass calibration

Weighing scales, balances, and mass standards are calibrated to ensure that they accurately measure weight or loss(16).

Process of calibration

Establish calibration
Preparation
Measurement
Analysis
Adjustment
Verification
Documentation
Certification traceability
Calibration interval

Establish calibration

Find and acquire a set of reference standards with greater accuracy than the calibration tool. These standards ought to be able to be linked to both domestic and foreign measuring tools(17).

Preparation

Make sure that the tool is in good operating order and is clean. Remove any dirt or old calibration markings from the instrument, if necessary(18).

Measurement

Take a number of readings and measurements with the equipment. Make sure you accurately record these dimensions, noting any alterations or mistakes(19).

Analysis

Compare the measurements made by the instrument to the values that are already known. Calculate the variations or errors between the measurements made with the instrument and the standard values(20).

Adjustment

Adjustments might be required if the instrument measurements differ from the reference standards. To adjust the instrument and get its measurements closer to the reference values, follow the manufacturer's instructions or the calibration process. This might entail altering various parameters, internal systems, or corrective factors(21).

Verification

Repeat the measurement procedure using the instrument reference standards after the adjustment. When the modifications are compared to the reference values for the new instruments, the deviations are satisfactorily fixed(22).

Documentation

In a calibration report, note all the adjustments made to the measurement data as well as the verification outcomes. Include pertinent details such as the calibration date, the instrument's identification, the calibration standards used, and any other notes or observations(23).

Certification and traceability

Obtain a calibration certificate from a recognised calibration laboratory if necessary. This certificate assures traceability to national or international standards and provides written verification of the calibration process(7).

Calibration interval

Based on the instrument's usage, manufacturer recommendations, industry standards, and legal requirements, decide how frequently it has to be calibrated. Plan future calibrations on a regular basis to guarantee the instrument's continued accuracy.

Parameters of calibration

Accuracy
Precision
Linearity
Sensitivity
Traceability
Uncertainty

Accuracy

The purpose of calibration is to ascertain a measuring system's or instrument's accuracy. It entails contrasting the measurements made by the instrument or system with established reference standards(24). Measurement accuracy measures the difference or inaccuracy between measured values and real or reference values.

Precision

Measurement consistency and repeatability are referred to as precision. It estimates how much variance there is between measurements of the same amount taken repeatedly under the same circumstances(25). An instrument's precision can be assessed by calibration, which also guarantees that it will produce trustworthy and consistent findings.

Linearity

Over the whole measurement range, linearity investigates the correlation between the measured values and the true values (26).

Sensitivity

Sensitivity gauges how responsive an instrument is to variations in the quantity being measured(27). It shows how much the instrument's output varies when the input is changed. A calibration test determines whether an instrument is sensitive enough to detect and measure minute changes or variances(28).

Traceability

Particularly in scientific and metrological situations, traceability is a crucial calibration feature. It alludes to the capacity to connect measurements to regional, national, or global measurement standards via an uninterrupted series of calibrations(29). Traceability guarantees the accuracy, consistency, and comparability of the calibration results(30).

Uncertainty

The degree of doubt or mistake connected with a measurement is quantified as uncertainty. Calibration entails calculating and providing an uncertainty value to describe the accuracy and degree of confidence in the calibration results(31). It aids users in comprehending the restrictions and possible differences in the measured results(32).

Validation

Documentary proof that offers a high degree of certainty that a given method or procedure consistently yields outcomes fulfilling predefined requirements is what is referred to as this(33). Validation is a methodical strategy of identifying, assessing, measuring, documenting, and critically re-assessing all manufacturing process events that require control to ensure the reproducibility of the final product(34).

Purpose

Verifying and confirming something's accuracy, integrity, and efficacy, whether it be data, software, models, procedures, or compliance, is the goal of validation(35, 36).

To find errors, inconsistencies, or deviations, it entails comparing results to predetermined criteria or requirements(37).

By ensuring that the topic being validated satisfies the required criteria, validation improves performance, lowers risks, and increases trust in the validity of the subject being validated(38).

Objectives

To describe software validation and verification.

To outline the testing process's stages.

To highlight the value of test planning.

To outline other complimentary testing techniques.

Types of validation

Retrospective

Concurrent validation

Retrospective validation

Revalidation

Prospective validation

Before a system or process is implemented, performance and dependability are assessed proactively through a procedure called prospective validation. based on the protocol that has already been decided(39). Granulation, drying, punching, coating, and packing are used to assess the process before beginning mixing(40).

It consists of;

Brief description about the process.

Summary of the critical manufacturing steps.

List of facilities and equipment.

Analytical test methods are used.

In process control and accepted limits.

Sampling plan and procedure.

Specifications of finished product.

Methods to record.

Additional test to be done or performed.
Proposed time and frame.
Functions and responsibilities in validation program.

Concurrent validation

A new system's performance is compared side by side with that of an established reference system during concurrent validation(41). By evaluating any differences, it maintains consistency and agreement between the two systems. With dependable results, this method verifies that the new system performs at least as well as the reference system. Concurrent validation serves as a benchmarking tool, fostering stakeholders' confidence and assisting in the development of well-informed decisions. whether the steps were followed correctly(42). We must investigate.

Retrospective validation

A validation technique called retrospective validation uses previous data to evaluate the effectiveness and precision of a system or process(43). It entails analysing historical data and contrasting the outputs or predictions of the system with the actual results. Organisations can assess the system's dependability and efficacy in the past by conducting retrospective validation(44). This approach makes it possible to spot any inconsistencies or weak points and then make corrections and advancements to boost performance moving forward. Retrospective validation supports decision-making, ensures quality control, and validates the system's capacity to generate accurate outcomes based on historical data(45). Only established methods or processes can undergo this kind of validation.

Revalidation

Take into account periodic revalidation, where small-scale cumulative changes to the raw materials and process may eventually damage the process(46). Normally, sterilisation procedures undergo periodic revalidation. We attempted the validation once more.

If any changes for:
Equipment
Facility
Formula
Raw materials
Method or process
Vendor

Process of validation

Plan validation activities
Gather and prepare data
Perform validation analysis
Interpret document results
Implement corrective actions
Finalize validation report
Ongoing validation and maintenance.

Plan Validation Activities

Create a validation plan, including the tasks, supplies, and time frames needed for the validation procedure. Methods for gathering data, validation procedures, and any tools or knowledge required should all be included in this strategy(8).

Gather and Prepare Data

Gather pertinent information that will be needed to validate the results. Make sure that the information is correct, representative, and pertinent to the goals of the validation(47). The data should be cleaned, organised, and pre-processed as needed for analysis.

Perform Validation Analysis

Utilise relevant statistical or analytical techniques to assess the system's or model's performance(48). Compare the results or projections to the ground-truth information or actual results. Examine the precision, dependability, accuracy, and other pertinent indicators(49).

Interpret and Document Results

Interpret the consequences of the validation results after analysing them. Check to see if the model, technique, or system satisfies the predetermined criteria and goals(50). Include any restrictions, doubts, or suggestions for improvement in the finding’s documentation.

Implement Corrective Actions

Take corrective action to fix any flaws or discrepancies found during validation. To improve performance and dependability, this may entail improving the system or model, changing the way things are done, or changing some of the parameters(51).

Finalize Validation Report

Create a validation report that includes a summary of the objectives, techniques, data analysis, findings, and conclusions from the validation process as a whole(52). The report should be thorough, transparent, and simple for stakeholders to understand.

Ongoing Validation and Maintenance

Validation is a continuous process, especially for systems or models that might change over time or necessitate revalidation on a regular basis. Create a strategy for ongoing reliability and performance assessment, maintenance, and monitoring of the validated system(53).

Parameters of validation

Accuracy
Precision
Linearity
Range
Limit of detection
Limit of quantification
Specificity
Robustness
Ruggedness
System suitability studies

Accuracy

The degree of agreement between the value acknowledged as either a conventional true value or a recognised reference value and the value discovered is expressed as the analytical procedure's accuracy(54).

Precision

The degree of agreement between a set of measurements made by multiple samplings of the homogeneous sample under the specified conditions is expressed as an analytical procedure's precision(55). There are three types of precision: reproducibility, intermediate precision, and repeatability.

Linearity

The capacity of an analytical technique to produce test results that are inversely proportional to the concentration of analyte in the sample is known as linearity. A visual evaluation of a plot of signals as a function should be used to assess linearity(56).

Range

The range of an analytical method is the range between the upper and lower concentrations of the analyte in the sample for which it has been shown that the method has an adequate level of precision, accuracy, and linearity(57).

Limit of Detection

The lowest amount of analyte in a sample that can be detected but not necessarily quantitated as an accurate value is the detection limit of a specific analytical process(58). Other strategies besides those mentioned below may be appropriate. Evolution is based on visuals. On the basis of signal-to-noise. Based on the slope and the response's standard deviation.

Limit of Quantification

The lowest amount of analyte in a sample that can be quantitatively determined with adequate precision and accuracy is the quantitative result of a specific analytical method. Other methods besides those mentioned below may also be useful, based on the analysis of visuals. utilising a signal-to-noise ratio based on the slope and the response's standard deviation(59).

Specificity

The ability to accept an analyte categorically in the presence of a component that may be anticipated to be present is known as specificity. These frequently could be contaminants, degradants, matrix, etc(60).

Robustness

A measure of an analytical procedure's robustness is its ability to be unaffected by tiny but intentional changes to the technique parameters, which identifies the procedure's dependability under typical conditions. The sort of process being studied will determine how robustness evolves, which should be taken into account during the development phase.

Ruggedness

Ruggedness is a measurement of the reproducibility of test results under the range of variables often present between laboratories and analysts(61).

System suitability studies

Testing for system compatibility is a crucial step in many analytical processes. The tests are based on the idea that the instruments, electronics, analytical procedures, and material being analysed form a whole system that can be assessed.

Qualification of equipment

The process of creating concrete proof that machinery utilised in a variety of sectors, including manufacturing, biotechnology, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals, is appropriate for its intended use and adheres to predetermined standards is known as equipment qualification. It entails a set of procedures and examinations to guarantee that the apparatus complies with industry standards, legal requirements, and quality standards.

Typically, the qualification procedure is divided into three steps:

Design Qualification

Installation Qualification

Operational Qualification

Performance Qualification

Design Qualification

They are two types

FAT (Factory acceptance test)

SAT (Site acceptance test)

The Factory Acceptance Test (FAT) is crucial to the qualification procedure for equipment. It is a thorough assessment carried out by the equipment provider or manufacturer to show that the equipment satisfies the requirements and functions as intended before it is given to the client. The FAT normally takes place at the manufacturing facility of the equipment's manufacturer and entails a number of tests, inspections, and verifications to confirm the equipment's performance, functionality, and adherence to industry standards and regulations(62). The test protocols are created in accordance with the specifications provided by the customer and may include functionality testing, performance tests, calibration checks, safety evaluations, and documentation reviews.

The Site Acceptance Test (SAT) is an important phase of equipment certification that is carried out at the customer's location after the equipment has been installed. It confirms that the device satisfies the user's unique requirements and operates well in the environment where it is meant to be used. In order to verify the equipment's performance, functionality, and integration with other systems, the SAT normally entails a number of tests and inspections. In order to guarantee its dependability and compliance with established acceptance criteria, it may also involve testing under hypothetical operational circumstances(63).

Installation Qualification (IQ)

System Description

Describe the instrument in detail, mentioning its maker, model, serial number, software version, etc. When necessary, use flowcharts and sketches.

Instrument Delivery

Verify that the instrument, software, manuals, supplies, and any additional accessories are delivered with the instrument as specified in the purchase order and are in good condition. Documentation and manuals for a used or current instrument should be gathered.

Utilities/Facility/Environment

Check to see if the installation site satisfies the environmental specifications supplied by the vendor. One need not measure the exact voltage for a standard-voltage instrument or the exact humidity value for an instrument that will operate under ambient conditions(64). common sense judgement for the environment is sufficient.

Network and Data Storage

In order to use certain analytical systems, users must have access to a network and data storage facilities at the installation site. Connect the device to the network and test it to see if this is the case.

Assembly and Installation

Perform any preliminary diagnostics and testing, as well as assemble and install the equipment. While individuals can construct and install basic instruments, it is recommended to have the vendor or specialised engineers do it for sophisticated instruments. Vendor-established installation tests and manuals offer a useful starting point for assessing instrument acceptance for complicated equipment(65). Any unusual occurrence noticed during assembly and installation deserves to be recorded. Install and assemble the pre-owned or unqualified existing instrument as directed above, and then carry out the installation verification method listed below.

Installation Verification

After installation, start the instrument's basic diagnostics and testing. Before moving on to the next qualifying phase, the user and installing engineer should ensure that the installation was successful after obtaining satisfactory results.

Operational Qualification (OQ)

Fixed Parameters

These tests examine the instrument's constant, non-variable characteristics, such as its size, weight, and so forth. The user may forgo the test requirement if the vendor's specifications for these parameters satisfy them. Testing can be done on-site if the user wants to confirm the settings. Fixed parameters never need to be recalculated because they don't change during the course of the instrument's life.

Secure Data Storage, Backup, and Archive

When necessary, secure data handling processes, including backup, archiving, and storage, should be evaluated at the user site in accordance with specified guidelines.

Instrument Functions Tests

To ensure that the instrument performs as the user and the manufacturer intended, test key instrument functions. According to the instrument's intended function, the user should choose key instrument parameters for testing. The specifications for these parameters can be determined using information provided by the vendor. The identified parameters should be evaluated through tests. These tests should be carried out by users or their certified designees to ensure that the instrument complies with user and vendor requirements(66).

Performance Qualification (PQ)

Performance Checks

PQ tests ought to be carried out separately from the instrument's usual analytical testing. The tests can be modular or comprehensive, just like OQ testing. Since numerous modules in a system interact with one another, holistic tests that assess the entire system rather than simply its individual modules are typically more successful. The instrument's ruggedness and the importance of the tests that are run determine how frequently they are conducted. There may be unforeseen testing(67). Whenever the instrument is utilised, for instance, or it could be planned to happen on a regular basis, such as weekly, monthly, or yearly. This choice may be influenced by prior experience with the instrument. The same PQ tests are typically performed repeatedly so that a performance history of the instrument can be built. Concurrent with the test samples, some quality control or system appropriateness checks suggest that the instrument is operating as intended. System suitability assessments can add to periodic PQ tests, but they cannot take their place.

Preventive Maintenance and Repairs

The instrument needs upkeep or repair when PQ tests don't meet requirements. Periodic preventive maintenance may also be advised for various instruments. To make sure the instrument is still qualified after any necessary maintenance or repairs, the pertinent PQ test should be conducted again.

Standard Operating Procedure for Operation, Calibration, and Maintenance

Make sure the instrument is maintained and calibrated by establishing standard operating procedures. Each maintenance and calibration procedure should be recorded in a logbook, binder, or electronic file.

Table 1: Differences between calibration validation and qualification

ASPECT	CALIBRATION	VALIDATION	QUALIFICATION
Definition	To check the equipment's functionality.	The act of proving in writing that any procedure, process, piece of machinery, material activity, or system actually produces the desired outcome is known as validation.	Demonstrating that all equipment and systems used in a space function properly and truly produce the desired outcomes.
Objective	matching instrument measurements to a recognised standard.	Appropriate for the intended use.	Processes perform as anticipated and according to predetermined standards.
Purpose	To guarantee measurement accuracy and sustain the equipment's dependability.	To show that the method or system can reliably yield the intended outcomes	To guarantee that the machinery or procedure complies with predetermined specifications.

Scope	limited to a single piece of machinery or equipment	comprehensive assessment of the system or process as a whole.	comprehensive evaluation of the machinery, procedures, and auxiliary systems.
Focus	Concentrate solely on the tool or apparatus.	Entire process or system.	Apparatus, procedures, or frameworks.
Measurement	Adjusting and correcting.	Evaluation of performance	Ensuring the necessary tools.
Methodology	Instrument calibration is done using known values or standard reference materials.	Conventional reference is not necessary.	Experiments and data collected during testing that were documented
Acceptance criteria	Any deviation from the norm must fall within the permitted bounds.	Process requirements and targets serve as the foundation for defining acceptance criteria.	Adherence to rules or predetermined standard standards
Frequency	Regular and periodic intervals are consistent.	Usually carried out with the creation of procedures or significant modifications	occurs during validation, installation, or when major adjustments are not possible.
Examples	Adjusted using a thermometer. so that the temperature is displayed accurately. Equipment linked	Automation of validation. packing procedure to guarantee It seals every time. connected to the system.	A sterilisation's qualification procedure to fulfil their legal obligations Recorded associated

CONCLUSION

Analytical instruments must go through calibration, validation, and certification procedures in order to maintain their accuracy, dependability, and legal compliance. Calibration reduces systematic errors by guaranteeing consistent and traceable measurements. An instrument's fitness for its intended application is verified through validation, increasing confidence in the precision of the data it produces. An instrument's qualification evaluates all aspects of its operation to ensure compliance with industry and regulatory requirements. When combined, these processes enhance the instrument's overall performance and quality, lower the likelihood of erroneous data, and support the legitimacy of scientific research, quality control, and safety assurance. Consistent, trustworthy, and scientifically sound data are the only way to progress the goals of industry and analytical research.

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