

OJT Resource: Purchasing and Supplier Evaluation

General Idea

Purchasing and supplier evaluation ensure that all externally provided products and services that affect the quality of calibration or testing meet the lab's requirements. This includes calibration services, reference standards and materials, software, consumables, and any subcontracted work that can impact results. If you rely on something external to produce valid results, you must ensure it is suitable before use and continue verifying it remains so afterward.

It's important to know that it is a **requirement to have a procedure** for Supplier Evaluation (typically an SAP in your lab.)

ISO/IEC 17025:2017¹ Requirements & Interpretation

Control of Externally Provided Products and Services

The lab must ensure that externally provided items conform to established requirements. This means having documented criteria for what's acceptable, how suppliers are chosen, and how performance is reviewed over time.

Responsibilities

You must have procedures that define how suppliers are evaluated, selected, and monitored, including criteria for approval and re-evaluation, and records of these activities.



Communication of Requirements

When purchasing, communicate the exact technical and quality requirements (e.g., reference weights must be traceable to the SI via an accredited laboratory, or uncertainties must be below a certain number').

Verification of Products and Services

The lab must verify that purchased items meet requirements before use, through reviews, inspections, or functional checks. This is the post purchase evaluation that you perform before using the items/service purchased.

¹ ISO/IEC 17025:2017 is a document that must be purchased by each metrology laboratory

What This Looks Like in a Metrology Lab

Examples of Externally Provided Products and Services:

- Calibration services
- Reference standards and materials
- Software
- Consumables
- Subcontracted calibration or testing

Where You Can Find Evidence:

- Purchasing records or requisitions
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- Approved supplier list (not required but best practice)
- Calibration certificates
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- Incoming inspection logs
- Audit reports

Ways to Meet the Requirement

Pre-Evaluation (Before Purchase):

- Maintain an Approved Supplier List
- Verify supplier competence via accreditation
- Review quotations for compliance
- Document evaluations via an internal form

Post-Evaluation (Ongoing Monitoring):

- Review calibration certificates for compliance (Use SOP 1's checklist)
- Track supplier performance
- Re-evaluate suppliers periodically
- Remove or reclassify suppliers if needed
- Document evaluation via an internal form

Practical Implementation Tips

- Use a spreadsheet to track approved suppliers and evaluation dates.
- Apply a risk-based approach – critical suppliers require stricter review.
- Integrate supplier performance into management review.
- Have a form that can be filled out and saved for objective evidence.

Other Resources

<https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/2018/01/12/procedure-for-supplier-evaluation-20180101.pdf>

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