The 'secret sauce' to metrology equipment calibrations
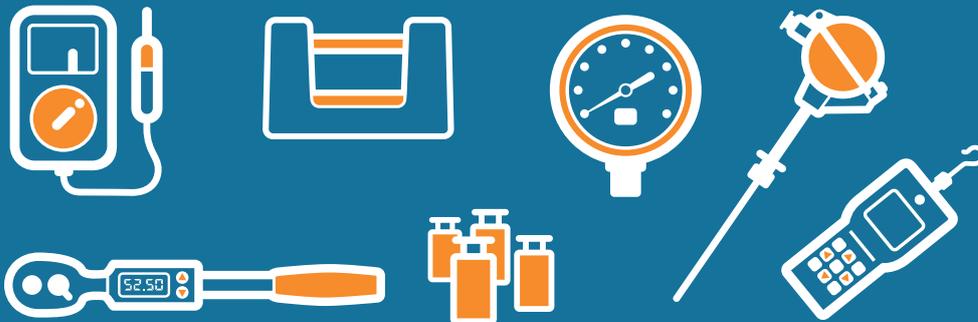
A guide to simpler, less time-consuming calibrations for QA teams

Calibration SELECT™

SECRET SAUCE

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For many QA teams, organising metrology equipment calibrations is a time-consuming and complicated process

With hundreds of pieces of equipment on site requiring calibrations it can be a struggle to keep on top of all the deadlines, documentation and suppliers involved in the process.

Although arranging calibrations tends to be just one small part of a QA team's busy role, it's a critical part of any quality process thanks to the penalties involved in missing a calibration.

This guide will show you how to simplify your metrology equipment calibration process – freeing up more time and resource to focus on other projects.

Start with the basics

Lay the foundations towards a simplified calibration process with these four simple steps:

1 **Know your assets**

Is your asset list up to date? Start by running a site audit that catalogues the key information for each of your assets, including the make and model of the equipment, the serial number and the calibration frequency.

Although this will undoubtedly take some time, getting this first step right will be paid back in dividends when it's time to arrange your calibrations. Or, if you don't have the time to conduct the audit yourself, consider outsourcing the task to an external calibration supplier.

2 **Create a calibration schedule that minimises downtime**

Once your asset list is up to date, create an annual schedule for your calibrations.

As a general rule, calibrations take place once every 6 or 12 months – although it's important to remember that other factors such as heavy use or individual project requirements can also affect how often equipment should be calibrated.

To avoid having any impact whatsoever on production, arrange calibrations during a factory shutdown period.

If that's not possible, minimise downtime by staggering calibrations throughout the year, taking small groups of equipment out of process one-by-one until they have all been calibrated.

3 **Trust the experts**

Although some businesses perform metrology calibrations internally, often in-house calibrations aren't possible thanks to a lack of adequate measurement standards or technical expertise.

Outsourcing to a metrology focussed calibration provider that uses high-precision processes and equipment can ensure the optimum accuracy of your metrology equipment. They can also provide fully traceable calibration certificates backed by internationally recognised quality management processes including ISO17025 which is required to provide UKAS accreditation.

4 **Maximise your internal resource**

Outsourcing calibrations allows you to improve internal capacity and make better use of your resources by freeing up time to concentrate on other tasks.

It also avoids the high costs involved in purchasing (and re-calibrating) calibration equipment, as well as reducing administrative overheads, chain of custody tracking and paperwork.

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Storing your asset data

How do you store the data for each of your metrology assets?

Many QA teams rely on shared documents, usually stored in a central location. However, keeping this type of document up to date is a huge task and unfortunately it tends to become out of date almost as quickly as it is created.

Meanwhile not being able to track any changes made within the document makes it impossible to know if an asset has been added, deleted or amended, and the reasons why.

This causes a problem because when it's time to arrange calibrations, items can be missed, resulting in a potential non-conformance when it comes to audits.

If your asset list needs updating, you're not alone. Over 50% of QA teams admitted their asset lists weren't up to date!

90% of QA teams use spreadsheets to manage their metrology assets

Managing your asset data

Online asset management systems offer more than just a place to store and update your asset list. Asset management systems like the Calibration Hub, from Calibration Select take the headache out of the calibration process by providing a way to manage the end-to-end process of metrology equipment calibrations.

■ Seamless calibrations

Manage your entire calibration process in one, easy to access portal instead of relying on emails, multiple folders or outdated files.

If you're using multiple pieces of metrology equipment in your processes, it can be hard to keep track of all those calibration due dates. Never miss a calibration again with automated email reminders which alert you when an item is due for calibration.

■ Full traceability

The Calibration Hub stores the details and past history of each piece of metrology equipment, including the associated manuals, certificates and inspection reports.

The information is stored behind a unique asset ID which is linked to a barcode and attached to the asset.

This can be viewed at any time on the Calibration Hub, meaning no more hunting through paper trails to find the information you're looking for at short notice during audits.

■ Keeping you informed

Full visibility allows you to track your equipment from beginning to end of the calibration process. See when your items have arrived at the laboratory, what the calibration status is, and when your calibrated equipment is due back with you.

You can use the Calibration Hub to book and schedule items in for calibration in advance (helping with budgeting for the financial year ahead as there should be no unexpected costs), as well as organising adjustments or requesting replacement equipment.

Running a site audit

How many metrology assets do you have on site? Do you know where each one is located or when its next calibration is due?

Developing an asset list, although time consuming, will help your calibration process run smoothly.

We recommend collecting the following information for each asset:

- **Make and model of the equipment**
- **Serial number**
- **Maximum operating range**
- **Tolerance**
- **Calibration frequency**
- **Calibration location (on-site or off-site)**
- **Asset location on site**

Spreadsheet or software?

If you're storing asset and calibration information in a spreadsheet, it might be time to reassess. Asset management software can save you a huge amount of time and allow you to keep everything in one, easily accessible place.

	Spreadsheet	Software
Easy to amend	✔	✔
Generates unique asset ID	✘	✔
Amendments tracked	✘	✔
Automated calibration reminders	✘	✔
Store calibration history and certificates	✘	✔
Arrange calibrations	✘	✔

The secret sauce...

Calibration Select's 'secret sauce' combines three key ingredients to ensure your calibrations run as smoothly as possible

1 Manage your process with the Calibration Hub

Use the Calibration Hub to manage and simplify your entire metrology calibration process. From storing asset history and details, to organising calibrations and planning for the year ahead - giving you one less thing to worry about.

2 Guaranteed 5-day turnaround

Time is of the essence. And if you can't be without your equipment for long periods of time? That's ok! We're the UK's only calibration supplier to offer, and deliver, a guaranteed 5-day turnaround time for items sent to our laboratory in Birmingham. We can also calibrate a range of equipment directly at your site, ensuring downtime is kept to a minimum.

3 Work with one single, trusted supplier

Working with multiple suppliers brings about a whole host of time-consuming administrative work. Consolidating the process to use one single supplier saves money and time.

Calibration Select offers calibrations on a range of electrical, force, pressure, temperature and torque equipment, and mass weights. Calibrations are traceable to both UKAS and national standards and can be performed either on-site or in our Birmingham laboratory.

Secret sauce

- **Never miss a calibration deadline again**
- **Free up time and resource for other projects**
- **Accurately budget for all calibrations or replacements**
- **Instant access to up to date information for tracking and audit purposes**

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