

# Validate your Antibodies

Antibodies are among the most common reagents in both research and clinical laboratories for:

Did you Know?

- WB** WESTERN BLOTTING
- IHC** IMMUNOHISTOCHEMISTRY
- ICC** IMMUNOCYTOCHEMISTRY
- QIF** QUANTITATIVE IMMUNOFLUORESCENCE
- ELISA** ENZYME-LINKED IMMUNOSORBENT ASSAYS
- IP** IMMUNOPRECIPITATION
- ChIP** CHROMATIN IMMUNOPRECIPITATION
- FC** FLOW CYTOMETRY



It is estimated that there are more than 300 antibody companies that sell over 2 million antibodies for the research and clinical markets ([www.antibodyresource.com/onlinecomp.html](http://www.antibodyresource.com/onlinecomp.html), [www.citeab.com](http://www.citeab.com)).

When it comes to research use, there are no standard guidelines in place for manufacturing, validating, and using antibodies.

## Pitfalls of not validating your antibodies

- Incorrect, misleading data
- Irreproducibility



Varying degrees of validation can be applied depending on the application in which the antibody will be used.

For example, a clinically geared immunohistochemistry assay **IHC** will require a high degree of antibody validation at multiple levels:

- ✓ A single band detected in western blots **WB** of sample lysates or immunoprecipitations **IP** at the expected molecular weight.
- ✓ The single band in **WB** and the signal in immunofluorescence assay is diminished by RNAi or absent in negative tissue or cell lines.
- ✓ Staining is localized, specific, and consistent with the literature.
- ✓ The antibody results are reproducible between lots, runs, and personnel.

## Recommended methods and controls to determine if an antibody is recognizing its intended target

- WB** **IHC** **ICC** **ELISA** **IP** **ChIP** **FC**

Is detection reduced in samples after siRNA knockdown?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Is detection absent in samples from knockout tissue?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Is detection absent in naturally negative cell lines or tissues?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Do two or more antibodies against disparate epitopes reciprocally identify the target in western blot of IPs?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Can expression level be correlated in another type of assay (e.g., enzyme activity, WB, IP, ELISA)?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Do two or more antibodies against disparate epitopes show relatively similar patterns?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Is the subcellular localization in agreement with the literature?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Does the use of protein activators or inhibitors modify the detection of posttranslational modifications?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Does expression and detection of epitope-tagged protein agree with results of studies of the endogenous protein?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Is the signal from an isotype control low to negative?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>
Are the results reproducible between runs, lots, personnel?	<b>WB</b>	<b>IHC</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ELISA</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>ChIP</b>	<b>FC</b>



## Antibody Validation Questions for the Vendor

## Antibody Validation Questions for the Researcher

### When purchasing an antibody, do not depend *solely* on:

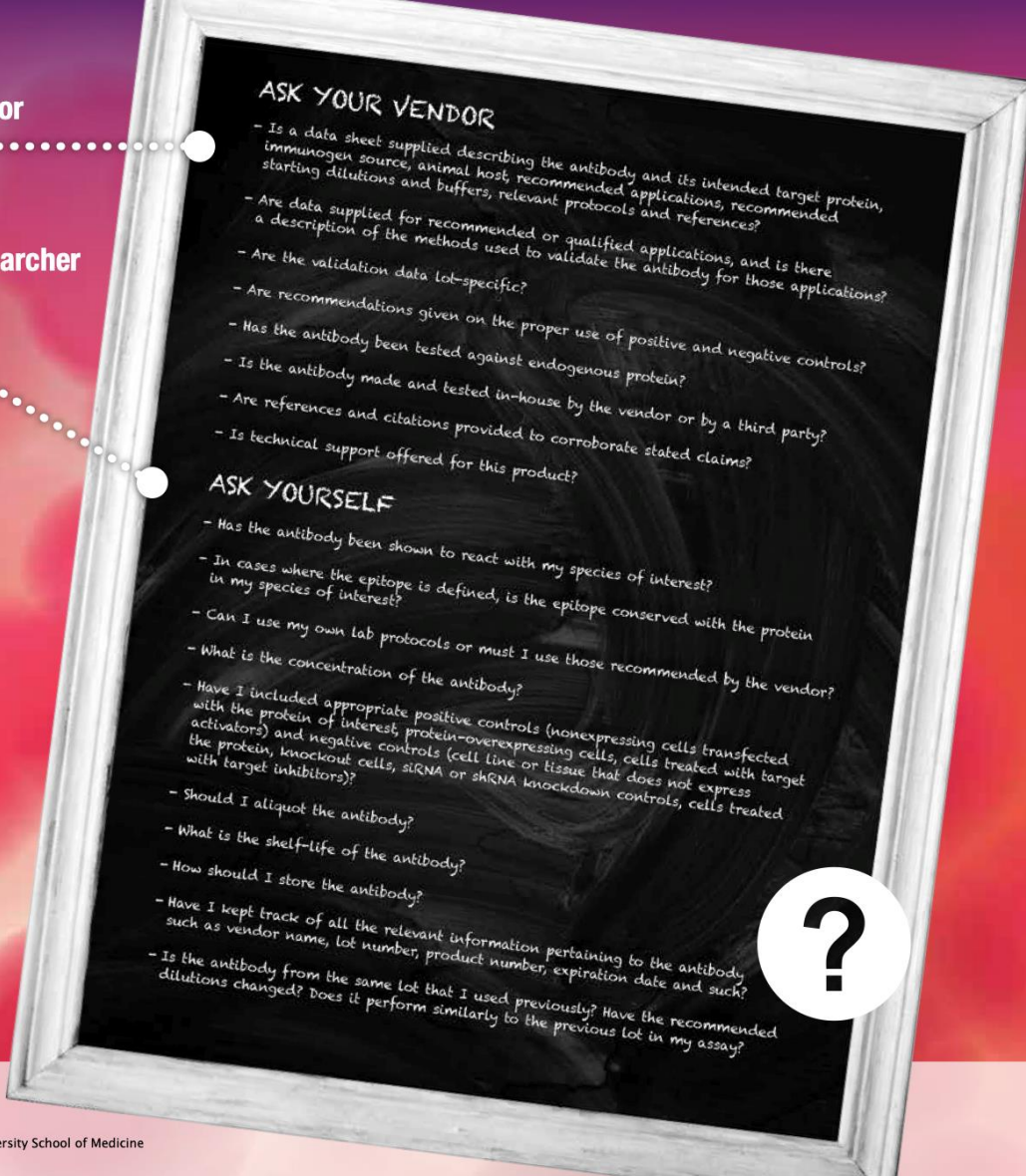
- The vendor's word
- Western blot **WB** evidence claiming a single band migrating at the predicted molecular weight



The ultimate responsibility for the validity of the antibody lies with you, the purchaser, not the vendor!

### The MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION to ask yourself:

Does the antibody recognize its intended target in my assay?



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