

BS EN 61746-1:2011

Incorporating corrigendum September 2014



BSI Standards Publication

Calibration of optical time-domain reflectometers (OTDR)

Part 1: OTDR for single-mode fibres

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Foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of EN 61746-1:2011, incorporating corrigendum September 2014. It is identical to IEC 61746-1:2009. It supersedes BS EN 61746:2005, which is withdrawn.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee GEL/86, Fibre optics.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

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Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

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Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Text affected
30 November 2014	Implementation of CENELEC corrigendum September 2014: Supersession information updated

**Calibration of optical time-domain reflectometers (OTDR) -
Part 1: OTDR for single-mode fibres
(IEC 61746-1:2009)**

Étalonnage des réflectomètres optiques
dans le domaine temporel (OTDR) -
Partie 1: OTDR pour fibres unimodales
(CEI 61746-1:2009)

Kalibrierung optischer
Rückstreumessgeräte (OTDR) -
Teil 1: OTDR für Einmodenfasern
(IEC 61746-1:2009)

This European Standard was approved by CENELEC on 2011-01-02. CENELEC members are bound to comply with the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations which stipulate the conditions for giving this European Standard the status of a national standard without any alteration.

Up-to-date lists and bibliographical references concerning such national standards may be obtained on application to the Central Secretariat or to any CENELEC member.

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CENELEC

European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
Comité Européen de Normalisation Electrotechnique
Europäisches Komitee für Elektrotechnische Normung

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Foreword

The text of document 86/347/FDIS, future edition 1 of IEC 61746-1, prepared by IEC TC 86, Fibre optics, was submitted to the IEC-CENELEC parallel vote and was approved by CENELEC as EN 61746-1 on 2011-01-02.

This European Standard supersedes EN 61746:2005.

The main technical changes to EN 61746:2005 are:

- the adaptation of Clause 4;
- the deletion of Clause 10;
- the adaptation of some definitions and calculations;
- the change of graphical symbology to IEC/TR 61930.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN and CENELEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

The following dates were fixed:

- | | | |
|--|-------|------------|
| – latest date by which the EN has to be implemented at national level by publication of an identical national standard or by endorsement | (dop) | 2011-10-02 |
| – latest date by which the national standards conflicting with the EN have to be withdrawn | (dow) | 2014-01-02 |

Annex ZA has been added by CENELEC.

Endorsement notice

The text of the International Standard IEC 61746-1:2009 was approved by CENELEC as a European Standard without any modification.

In the official version, for Bibliography, the following notes have to be added for the standards indicated:

- | | | |
|------------------------|------|---|
| [2] IEC 60793-1-1 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 60793-1-1. |
| [3] IEC 60794-1-2:2003 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 60794-1-2:2003 (not modified). |
| [4] IEC 60825-1 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 60825-1. |
| [5] IEC 60825-2 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 60825-2. |
| [6] IEC 61280-1-3:1998 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 61280-1-3:1999 (not modified). |
| [7] IEC 61300-3-2 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 61300-3-2. |
| [8] IEC 61300-3-6 | NOTE | Harmonized as EN 61300-3-6. |
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Annex ZA (normative)

Normative references to international publications with their corresponding European publications

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

NOTE When an international publication has been modified by common modifications, indicated by (mod), the relevant EN/HD applies.

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>EN/HD</u>	<u>Year</u>
IEC 60793-1-40 (mod)	-	Optical fibres - Part 1-40: Measurement methods and test procedures - Attenuation	EN 60793-1-40	-
IEC 60793-2-50	-	Optical fibres - Part 2-50: Product specifications - Sectional specification for class B single-mode fibres	EN 60793-2-50	-
ISO/IEC 17025	-	General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories	EN ISO/IEC 17025	-
ITU-T Recommendation G.650.1	2004	Definitions and test methods for linear, deterministic attributes of single-mode fibre and cable	-	-
ITU-T Recommendation G.650.2	2002	Definitions and test methods for statistical and - non-linear related attributes of single-mode fibre and cable		-

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	8
1 Scope	9
2 Normative references	9
3 Terms, definitions and symbols	9
4 Preparation for calibration	16
4.1 Organization	16
4.2 Traceability	16
4.3 Preparation	16
4.4 Test conditions	16
4.5 Documentation	16
5 Distance calibration – General	17
5.1 General	17
5.2 Location deviation model	17
5.3 Using the calibration results	19
5.4 Measuring fibre length	19
6 Distance calibration methods	20
6.1 General	20
6.2 External source method	20
6.2.1 Short description and advantage	20
6.2.2 Equipment	20
6.2.3 Calibration of the equipment	21
6.2.4 Measurement procedure	22
6.2.5 Calculations and results	23
6.2.6 Uncertainties	24
6.3 Concatenated fibre method	25
6.3.1 Short description and advantages	25
6.3.2 Equipment	25
6.3.3 Measurement procedures	27
6.3.4 Calculations and results	27
6.3.5 Uncertainties	28
6.4 Recirculating delay line method	29
6.4.1 Short description and advantage	29
6.4.2 Equipment	29
6.4.3 Measurement procedure	31
6.4.4 Calculations and results	31
6.4.5 Uncertainties	32
7 Loss calibration – General	33
7.1 General	33
7.2 Determination of the displayed power level F	33
7.3 Selection of an appropriate reference loss A_{ref}	34
7.4 Development of a test plan	35
7.5 Polarization dependence	37
7.6 Calculation of the calibration results	38
7.7 Using the calibration results	38
8 Loss calibration methods	38

8.1	General	38
8.2	Fibre standard method	39
8.2.1	Short description and advantage	39
8.2.2	Equipment	39
8.2.3	Measurement procedure	40
8.2.4	Calculations and results	41
8.2.5	Uncertainties	41
8.3	External source method (see Figure 16)	42
8.3.1	Short description and advantage	42
8.3.2	Equipment	42
8.3.3	Calibration of the reference loss	43
8.3.4	Measurement procedure	44
8.3.5	Calculations and results	45
8.3.6	Uncertainties	45
8.4	Splice simulator method	46
8.4.1	Short description and advantage	46
8.4.2	Equipment	46
8.4.3	Procedure	47
8.4.4	Calculations and results	49
8.4.5	Uncertainties	49
8.5	Power reduction method	50
8.5.1	Short description and advantage	50
8.5.2	Equipment	51
8.5.3	Measurement procedure	52
8.5.4	Calculations and results	53
8.5.5	Uncertainties	53
9	Reflectance calibration	54
9.1	Objective	54
9.2	Reflectance measurements (see Figure 23)	54
9.3	Use of the backscatter parameter, K	54
9.4	Range of reflectance measurement	55
9.5	Development of a test plan	56
9.6	Equipment	57
9.7	Measurement procedure	58
9.7.1	Preparation	58
9.7.2	Taking reflectance measurements	58
9.7.3	Calculation and results	58
9.7.4	Uncertainties	58
Annex A (normative)	Recirculating delay line for distance calibration	60
Annex B (normative)	Optical fibre standard for loss calibration	64
Annex C (normative)	Standard splice simulator for loss calibration	68
Annex D (normative)	Mathematical basis	72
Annex E (normative)	Reflectance standard	75
Annex F (normative)	Simple version of reflectance standard	81
Annex G (informative)	OTDR basis: Backscatter theory – Reflectance measurements using an OTDR – Determination of fibre backscatter parameter	85
Bibliography		90

Figure 1 – Definition of attenuation dead zone	10
Figure 2 – Representation of the location deviation $\Delta L(L)$	18
Figure 3 – Equipment for calibration of the distance scale – External source method	21
Figure 4 – Set-up for calibrating the system insertion delay.	22
Figure 5 – Concatenated fibres used for calibration of the distance scale.	26
Figure 6 – Distance calibration with a recirculating delay line	30
Figure 7 – OTDR trace produced by recirculating delay line	30
Figure 8 – Determining the reference level and the displayed power level	34
Figure 9 – Measurement of the OTDR loss samples	35
Figure 10 – Region A, the recommended region for loss measurement samples	36
Figure 11 – Possible placement of sample points within region A.	36
Figure 12 – External source method for testing the polarization dependence of the OTDR.	37
Figure 13 – Reflection method for testing the polarization dependence of the OTDR.	37
Figure 14 – Loss calibration with a fibre standard	39
Figure 15 – Placing the beginning of section D_1 outside the attenuation dead zone.	40
Figure 16 – Loss calibration with the external source method.....	43
Figure 17 – Location and measurements for external source method	44
Figure 18 – Set-up for loss calibration with splice simulator	46
Figure 19 – OTDR display with splice simulator	47
Figure 20 – Measurement of the splice loss	48
Figure 21 – Loss calibration with "fibre-end" variant of the power reduction method	51
Figure 22 – Loss calibration with "long-fibre" variant of the power reduction method.	52
Figure 23 – Parameters involved in reflectance measurements.	54
Figure 24 – The same reflectance at the end of three fibres with different values of the backscatter parameter shows different pulse amplitudes	55
Figure 25 – Maximum and minimum values for the pulse amplitude, ΔF	56
Figure 26 – Range of reflectance measurement.	56
Figure 27 – Determining the default displayed power level and the default location	57
Figure 28 – Set-up for reflectance calibration.....	58
Figure A.1 – Recirculating delay line.	60
Figure A.2 – Measurement set-up for loop transit time T_b	61
Figure A.3 – Calibration set-up for lead-in transit time T_a	62
Figure B.1 – Determination of a highly linear power range.	65
Figure B.2 – Testing the longitudinal backscatter uniformity of the fibre standard	66
Figure C.1 – Splice simulator and idealized OTDR signature.	68
Figure C.2 – Determination of the reference loss A_{ref}	70
Figure E.1 – Reflectance standard description and trace.....	75
Figure E.2 – Calibration set up and reference points for calibration	78
Figure F.1 – Reflectance standard description and trace.....	81
Figure F.2 – Calibration set up and reference points for calibration	83
Figure G.1 – OTDR signals used for determining reflectance	86
Figure G.2 – Set-up for measurement of the backscatter coefficient	88

Table 1 – Attenuation coefficients defining region A	35
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INTRODUCTION

In order for an Optical time-domain reflectometer (OTDR) to qualify as a candidate for complete calibration using this standard, it must be equipped with the following minimum feature set:

- a) a programmable index of refraction, or equivalent parameter;
- b) the ability to present a display of a trace representation, with a logarithmic power scale and a linear distance scale;
- c) two markers/cursors, which display the loss and distance between any two points on a trace display;
- d) the ability to measure absolute distance (location) from the OTDR's zero-distance reference;
- e) the ability to measure the displayed power level relative to a reference level (for example, the clipping level);
- f) the ability to evaluate the reflectance of a reflective event.

CALIBRATION OF OPTICAL TIME-DOMAIN REFLECTOMETERS (OTDR) –

Part 1: OTDR for single mode fibres

1 Scope

This part of IEC 61746 provides procedures for calibrating single-mode optical time domain reflectometers (OTDR). It only covers OTDR measurement errors and uncertainties.

This standard does not cover correction of the OTDR response.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60793-1-40, *Optical fibres – Part 1-40: Measurement methods and test procedures – Attenuation*

IEC 60793-2-50, *Optical fibres – Part 2-50: Product specifications – Sectional specification for class B single-mode fibres*

ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*

ITU-T Recommendation G.650.1:2002, *Definitions and test methods for linear, deterministic attributes of single-mode fibre and cable*

ITU-T Recommendation G.650.2:2002, *Definitions and test methods for statistical and non-linear attributes of single-mode fibre and cable*

3 Terms, definitions and symbols

For the purposes of this document, the following terms, definitions and symbols apply.

NOTE For more precise definitions, the references to IEC 60050-731 should be consulted.

3.1 attenuation loss

A

optical power decrease in decibels (dB)

NOTE If P_{in} (watts) is the power entering one end of a segment of fibre and P_{out} (watts) is the power leaving the other end, then the attenuation of the segment is

$$A = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{P_{\text{in}}}{P_{\text{out}}} \right) \text{ dB} \quad (1)$$

[IEV 731-01-48, modified]

3.2

attenuation coefficient

α

attenuation (3.1) of a fibre per unit length

[IEV 731-03-42, modified]

3.3

attenuation dead zone

for a reflective or attenuating event, the region after the event where the displayed trace deviates from the undisturbed backscatter trace by more than a given vertical distance ΔF

NOTE The attenuation dead zone (see Figure 1 below) will depend on the following event parameters: reflectance, loss, displayed power level and location. It may also depend on any fibre optic component in front of the event.

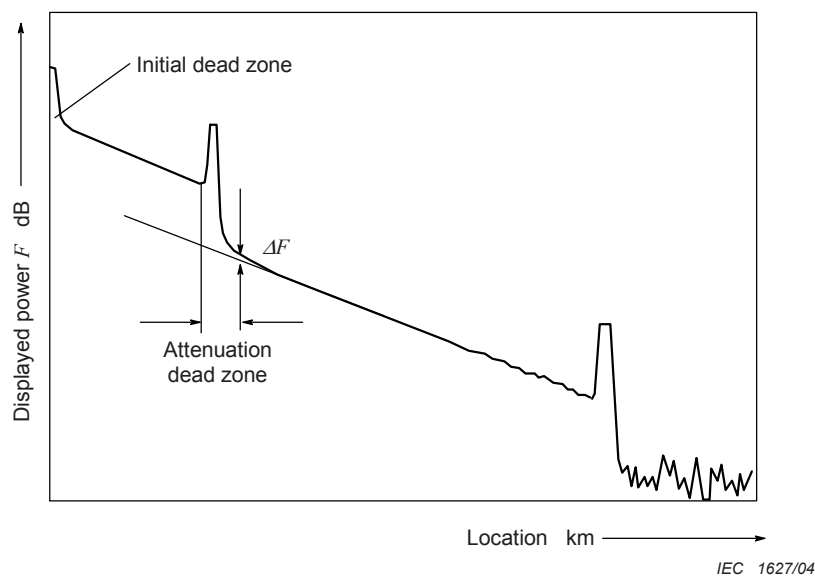


Figure 1 – Definition of attenuation dead zone

3.4

backscatter parameter

K

at a given point along the fibre, the backscattered propagating power per unit incident energy

NOTE 1 K is given by the following formula:

$$K = S\alpha_s \frac{V}{2} \quad \text{s}^{-1} \quad (2)$$

where

α_s is the scattering coefficient, e.g.; in m^{-1} ;

S is the backscatter capture fraction. It depends on other standard fibre parameters such as the mode field diameter in single mode fibre;

V is the group velocity (in m/s);

$= c / N$ where c is the speed of the light in vacuum, N the group index of the fibre.

NOTE 2 See also Annex G.

3.5**backscatter coefficient** **C**

for a given pulse, the ratio of backscattered power at the input side of the fibre to the pulse input power

NOTE 1 It represents the backscatter parameter for a given pulse width. The backscatter coefficient is defined from the backscatter parameter (3.4) using the following formula:

$$C(\Delta T) = K\Delta T \quad (3)$$

where ΔT is the pulse width, e.g. in seconds.

Usually the backscatter coefficient is expressed in dB for a given pulse width, ΔT .

$$C_{\text{dB}}(\Delta T) = 10 \log_{10}(K\Delta T) \quad (4)$$

NOTE 2 The pulse width, ΔT in the previous formula is used to normalise $C(\Delta T)$. Usual values for ΔT are 1 ns and 1 μ s. See also Annex G.

3.6**calibration**

set of operations which establish, under specified conditions, the relationship between the values indicated by the measuring instrument and the corresponding known values of that quantity

NOTE See ISO/IEC Guide 99 [11] in the bibliography.

3.7**centroidal wavelength** **λ_{avg}**

power-weighted mean wavelength of a light source in vacuum

[IEC 61280-1-3, definition 2.1.4]

3.8**displayed power level** **F**

level displayed on the OTDR's power scale

NOTE 1 Unless otherwise specified, F is defined in relation to the clipping level (see Figure 8).

NOTE 2 Usually, the OTDR scale displays five times the logarithm of the received power, plus a constant offset.

3.9**distance** **D**

spacing between two features

NOTE Usually expressed in metres.

3.10**distance sampling error** **ΔL_{sample}**

maximum distance (3.9) error attributable to the distance between successive sample points

NOTE 1 Usually expressed in metres.

NOTE 2 The distance sampling error is repetitive in nature; therefore, one way of quantifying this error is by its amplitude.

3.11**distance scale deviation** **ΔS_L**

difference between the average displayed distance (3.9) $\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle$ and the correspondent reference distance (3.27) D_{ref} divided by the reference distance (3.27)

NOTE 1 Usually expressed in m/m

NOTE 2 ΔS_L is given by the following formula:

$$\Delta S_L = \frac{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle - D_{\text{ref}}}{D_{\text{ref}}} = \frac{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}{D_{\text{ref}}} - 1 \quad (5)$$

where $\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle$ is the displayed distance on a fibre averaged over at least one sample spacing.

3.12**distance scale factor** **S_L**

average displayed distance (3.9) distance divided by the correspondent reference distance (3.27)

NOTE S_L is given by the following formula:

$$S_L = \frac{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}{D_{\text{ref}}} \quad (6)$$

where $\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle$ is the displayed distance between two features on a fibre averaged over at least one sample spacing.

3.13**distance scale uncertainty** **$u_{\Delta S_L}$**

uncertainty of the distance scale deviation (3.11)

NOTE 1 Usually expressed in m/m.

NOTE 2 $u_{\Delta S_L}$ is given by the following formula:

$$u_{\Delta S_L} = u\left(\frac{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}{D_{\text{ref}}} - 1\right) = u\left(\frac{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}{D_{\text{ref}}}\right) \quad (7)$$

NOTE 3 In the above formula, $u()$ is understood as the standard uncertainty of ().

3.14**dynamic range at 98 %(one-way)**

amount of fibre attenuation (3.1) that causes the backscatter signal to equal the noise level at 98 % (3.24)

NOTE It can be represented by the difference between the extrapolated point of the backscattered trace (taken at the intercept with the power axis) and the noise level expressed in decibels, using a standard category B fibre (see IEC 60793-2-50).

3.15**group index** **N**

factor by which the speed of light in vacuum has to be divided to yield the propagation velocity of light pulses in the fibre

3.16**location** **L**

spacing between the front panel of the OTDR and a feature in a fibre

NOTE Usually expressed in metres.

3.17**location deviation** **ΔL** displayed location (3.16) of a feature L_{otdr} minus the reference location (3.28) L_{ref}

NOTE 1 Usually expressed in metres.

NOTE 2 This deviation is a function of the location.

3.18**location offset** **ΔL_0**

constant term of the location deviation (3.17) model

NOTE 1 Usually expressed in metres.

NOTE 2 This is approximately equivalent to the location of the OTDR front panel connector on the instrument's distance scale.

NOTE 3 For a perfect OTDR, the location offset is zero.

3.19**location offset uncertainty** **$u_{\Delta L_0}$**

uncertainty of the location offset (3.18)

3.20**location readout uncertainty** **$u_{L_{\text{readout}}}$**

uncertainty of the location (3.16) measurement samples caused by both the distance sampling error (3.10) and the uncertainty type A of the measurement samples

3.21**loss deviation** **ΔA** difference between the displayed loss of a fibre component A_{otdr} and the reference loss (3.29), in dBNOTE 1 ΔA is given by the following formula:

$$\Delta A = A_{\text{otdr}} - A_{\text{ref}} \quad (8)$$

NOTE 2 The loss deviation usually depends on the displayed power level, F .**3.22****loss uncertainty** **$u_{\Delta A}$**

uncertainty of the loss deviation (3.21), in dB

3.23**loss scale deviation** **ΔS_A**

difference between the displayed loss of a fibre component A_{otdr} and the reference loss (3.29) A_{ref} , divided by the reference loss (3.29), in dB/dB

NOTE 1 ΔS_A is given by the following formula:

$$\Delta S_A = \frac{A_{\text{otdr}} - A_{\text{ref}}}{A_{\text{ref}}} \quad (9)$$

NOTE 2 Refer to 7.1 for more details.

3.24**noise level at 98 %**

upper limit of a range which contains at least 98 % of all noise data points

3.25**non-linearity** **NL_{loss}**

difference between the maximum and minimum values of the loss deviation (3.21) ΔA for a given range of power levels, in dB

NOTE 1 This is the non linearity of a logarithmic power scale.

NOTE 2 Non-linearity is one contribution to loss deviation; it usually depends on the displayed power level and the location.

3.26**received power level** **P**

power received by the OTDR's optical port

3.27**reference distance** **D_{ref}**

distance (3.9) precisely determined by measuring equipment with calibration traceable to international or national standards

NOTE Usually expressed in metres.

3.28**reference location** **L_{ref}**

location (3.16) precisely determined by measuring equipment with calibration traceable to international or national standards

NOTE Usually expressed in metres.

3.29**reference loss** **A_{ref}**

loss of a fibre optic component precisely determined by measuring equipment with calibration traceable to international or national standards

3.30**reflectance** **R**

the ratio, expressed in dB, of the reflected power (in watts), to the incident power (in watts), at a discrete location in a fibre optic component

NOTE 1 R is given by the following formula:

$$R = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{P_{\text{refl}}}{P_{\text{inc}}} \right) \quad (10)$$

where P_{refl} is the reflected power, e.g. in watts;

P_{inc} is the incident power, e.g. in watts.

NOTE 2 In this standard, reflectance is expressed in decibels.

NOTE 3 Reflectance values are negative.

NOTE 4 For the purpose of this standard, the reflectivity, ρ , is defined as the linear value of the reflectance:

$$\rho = \frac{P_{\text{refl}}}{P_{\text{inc}}} \quad (11)$$

3.31

reflectance deviation

ΔR

difference between the reflectance (3.30) of a fibre component R_{otdr} and the reflectance R_{ref} , in dB

$$\Delta R = R_{\text{otdr}} - R_{\text{ref}} \quad \text{dB} \quad (12)$$

3.32

rms dynamic range (one-way)

amount of fibre attenuation (3.1) that causes the backscatter signal to equal the rms noise level (3.33)

NOTE Assuming a Gaussian distribution of noise, the rms dynamic range can be calculated adding 1,56 dB to the one way dynamic range.

3.33

rms noise level

quadratic mean of the noise

NOTE 1 On a general basis, the rms noise level can not be read or extracted from the logarithm data of the OTDR. This is because of the linear to logarithm conversion used to display the power level on a dB scale removes the negative part of the noise.

NOTE 2 Assuming a Gaussian distribution of noise, a relation between the noise level and the rms noise level can be found using the following formula:

$$\text{noise}_{98} - \text{noise}_{\text{rms}} = 5 \times \log_{10}(2,05375) = 1,56 \text{ dB} \quad (13)$$

where noise_{98} is the noise level at 98 %, e.g. in dB;

$\text{noise}_{\text{rms}}$ is the rms noise level, e.g. in dB;

2,053 75 is the value of the reverse standard normal distribution for 98 %.

3.34

sample spacing

distance of consecutive data points digitized by the OTDR

NOTE 1 Usually expressed in metres.

NOTE 2 Sample spacing may be obtainable from instrument set-up information. Sample spacing may depend on the measurement span and other OTDR instrument settings.

3.35**spectral width** $\Delta\lambda_{\text{FWHM}}$

full-width half-maximum (FWHM) spectral width of the source

[IEC 61280-1-3, modified]

4 Preparation for calibration**4.1 Organization**

The calibration laboratory should satisfy requirements of ISO/IEC 17025.

There should be a documented measurement procedure for each type of calibration performed, giving step-by-step operating instructions and equipment to be used.

4.2 Traceability

The requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 should be met.

All standards used in the calibration process shall be calibrated according to a documented program with traceability to national standards laboratories or to accredited calibration laboratories. It is advisable to maintain more than one standard on each hierarchical level, so that the performance of the standard can be verified by comparisons on the same level. Make sure that any other test equipment which has a significant influence on the calibration results is calibrated. Upon request, specify this test equipment and its traceability chain(s). The re-calibration period(s) shall be defined and documented.

4.3 Preparation

Perform all tests at an ambient room temperature of $23\text{ °C} \pm 3\text{ °C}$, unless otherwise specified. Give the test equipment a minimum of 2 h prior to testing to reach equilibrium with its environment. Allow the OTDR a warm-up period according to the manufacturer's instructions.

4.4 Test conditions

The test conditions usually include the following OTDR external conditions: date, temperature, connector-adaptor combination and use of a lead-in fibre.

Perform the calibration in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and operating procedures. Where practical, select a range of test conditions and parameters so as to emulate the actual field operating conditions of the OTDR under test. Choose these parameters so as to optimize the OTDR's accuracy and resolution capabilities (for example, view windows, zoom features, etc.), as specified by the manufacturer's operating procedures.

The test conditions usually include the following OTDR parameters: averaging time, pulse width, sample spacing, centroidal wavelength. Unless otherwise specified, set the OTDR group index to exactly 1,46.

NOTE 1 The calibration results only apply to the set of test conditions used in the calibration process.

NOTE 2 Because of the potential for hazardous radiation, be sure to establish and maintain conditions of laser safety. Refer to IEC 60825-1 and IEC 60825-2.

4.5 Documentation

Calibration certificates shall include the following data and their uncertainties:

- a) the location offset ΔL_0 and its uncertainty $\pm 2 u_{\Delta L_0}$ as well as the distance scale deviation ΔS_L and its uncertainty $\pm 2 u_{\Delta S_L}$, or the location deviations ΔL_i and their uncertainties $\pm 2 u_{\Delta L_i}$;
- b) the loss deviations ΔA and their uncertainties $\pm 2 u_{\Delta A}$ or the loss scale deviation ΔS_A and their uncertainties $\pm 2 u_{\Delta S_A}$;
- c) the instrument configuration (pulse width, measurement span, wavelength, averaging time,...) used during calibration;
- d) other calibration certificate requirement as per ISO/IEC 17025.

5 Distance calibration – General

5.1 General

The objective of distance calibration is to determine deviations (errors) between the measured and actual distances between points on a fibre, and to characterize the uncertainties of these deviations.

An OTDR measures the location L of a feature from the point where a fibre is connected to the instrument, by measuring the round-trip transit time T for a light pulse to reach the feature and return. L is calculated from T using the speed of light in vacuum c ($2,997\,924\,58 \times 10^8$ m/s) and the group index N of the fibre:

$$L = \frac{cT}{2N} \quad (14)$$

Errors in measuring L will result from scale errors, from offsets in the timebase of the OTDR and from errors in locating a feature relative to the timebase. Placing a marker in order to measure the location may be done manually or automatically by the instrument. The error will, generally, depend on both the marker placement method and the type of feature (for example, a point loss, a large reflection that saturates the receiver or a small reflection that does not).

Even larger errors in measuring L may result from the uncertainty in determining the fibre's group index N . The determination of N is beyond the scope of this standard. Consequently, the calibration procedures below only discuss the OTDR's ability to measure T correctly. For the purpose of this standard, a default value $N = 1,46$ is used and the uncertainty of N is considered to be 0.

5.2 Location deviation model

In order to characterize location deviations, a specific model will be assumed that describes the behaviour of most OTDRs. Let L_{ref} be the reference location of a feature from the front panel connector of the OTDR and let L_{otdr} be the displayed location. It is assumed that the displayed location L_{otdr} , using OTDR averaging to eliminate noise, depends functionally on the reference location L_{ref} in the following way:

$$L_{\text{otdr}} = S_L \times L_{\text{ref}} + \Delta L_0 + f(L_{\text{ref}}) \quad (15)$$

where

S_L is the scale factor, which ideally should be 1;

ΔL_0 is the location offset, which ideally should be 0;

$f(L_{\text{ref}})$ represents the distance sampling error, which is also ideally 0. The distance sampling error is a periodic function with a mean of zero and a period equal to the distance interval between sampled points on the OTDR. As an example, if the location of a large reflection is measured by placing a marker on the first digitized point that shows an increase in signal and the position of the reflection is incremented in fine steps, then $f(L_{\text{ref}})$ may be shaped like a periodic ramp waveform.

Equation (15) is meant to characterize known errors in location measurements, but there may still be an additive uncertainty type A. This will affect both the distance measurements and the accuracy with which parameters describing the errors can be determined by the procedures below.

S_L and ΔL_0 may be determined by measuring L_{otdr} for different values of L_{ref} , then fitting a straight line to the data by the least squares method. S_L and ΔL_0 are the slope and intercept, respectively.

Equivalently, a line may be fitted to the location deviation function, that is the difference between L_{otdr} and L_{ref} :

$$\Delta L = L_{otdr} - L_{ref} = \Delta S_L \times L_{ref} + \Delta L_0 + f(L_{ref}) \quad (16)$$

where

ΔS_L is the slope; and

ΔL_0 is still the intercept, as illustrated in Figure 2.

After finding the linear approximation, the distance sampling error $f(L_{ref})$ respectively its half-amplitude $\Delta L_{readout}$ may be determined by measuring departures from the line for different values of L_{ref} . The distance sampling error amplitude ΔL_{sample} is taken as half the amplitude of $f(L_{ref})$.

In this standard, the distance sampling error amplitude ΔL_{sample} is treated as part of the location readout uncertainty type A. The stated uncertainty result thus ignores the repetitive nature of the sampling error, that is it does not distinguish between the relative contributions of the sampling error and the uncertainty type A.

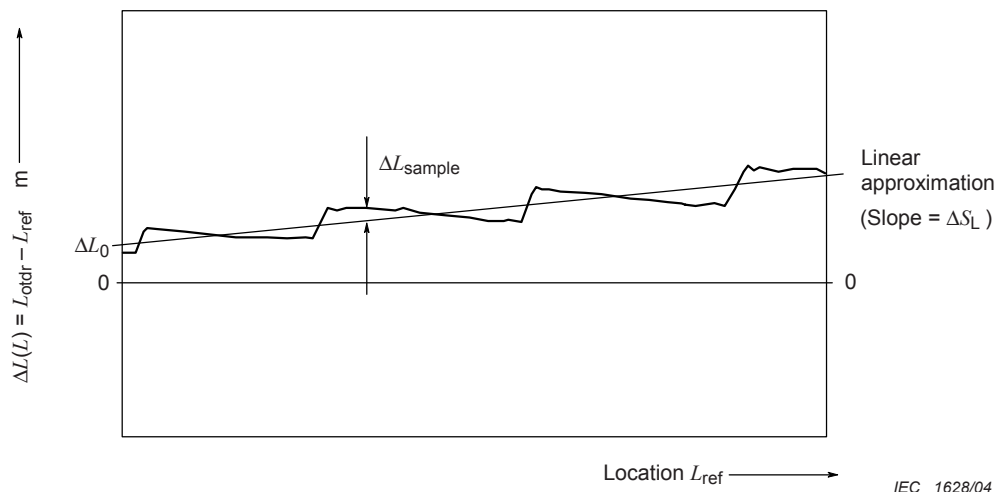


Figure 2 – Representation of the location deviation $\Delta L(L)$

Therefore, the result of the distance calibration shall be stated by the following parameters:

$\Delta S_L, u_{\Delta S_L}$ the distance scale deviation and its uncertainty;

$\Delta L_0, u_{\Delta L_0}$ the location offset and its uncertainty;

$u_{L_{\text{readout}}}$ the location readout uncertainty, that is the combined uncertainty due to the distance sampling error and the uncertainty type A of the measurement samples, in the form of a standard deviation.

In compliance with the "mathematical basis", divide the largest excursions from the least-squares approximation by the square root of 3 for stating $u_{L_{\text{readout}}}$. Note that the uncertainty will depend on the distance, the displayed power level and the instrument settings.

NOTE ΔL_{sample} represents the physical sampling error of the instrument. This error is accessible for the user as $u_{L_{\text{readout}}}$ that includes distance calculation and displaying errors.

5.3 Using the calibration results

The error in the location of a feature $\Delta L = L_{\text{otdr}} - L_{\text{ref}}$ can be calculated from the calibration results:

$$\Delta L = \Delta L_0 + L_{\text{ref}} \Delta S_L \quad (17)$$

with the uncertainty in ΔL given by the following formula, in which the recommended confidence level of 95 % is used:

$$\pm 2u_{\Delta L} = \pm 2 \left(u_{\Delta L_0}^2 + L_{\text{ref}}^2 u_{\Delta S_L}^2 + u_{L_{\text{readout}}}^2 \right)^{1/2} \quad (17a)$$

where the displayed location L_{otdr} can be used instead of the reference location L_{ref} without serious consequences.

Similarly, the error in the distance between two features ΔD and its uncertainty can be calculated from the following formula:

$$\Delta D = D_{\text{ref}} \Delta S_L \quad (18)$$

with uncertainty in ΔD given by the following formula:

$$\pm 2u_{\Delta D} = \pm 2 \left(D_{\text{ref}}^2 u_{\Delta S_L}^2 + u_{L_{\text{readout}}}^2 \right)^{1/2} \quad (18a)$$

where the displayed distance D_{otdr} can be used instead of the reference distance D_{ref} .

NOTE The 2 in front of $u_{L_{\text{readout}}}^2$ is due to combining two uncorrelated uncertainties.

Additional uncertainties may have to be taken into account if the type of feature is different from the feature used in the calibration. Specify the type of feature as part of the calibration result.

5.4 Measuring fibre length

As indicated above, one of the methods of OTDR distance calibration is to measure fibres of known length with the OTDR. In several instances in this standard, it is required that fibre length be determined using the fibre's transit time, in contrast to a mechanical length measurement. This method is directly compatible with the measurement principle of the OTDR itself. In addition, the transit time can usually be measured with better accuracy than its mechanical length, particularly when the fibre is long. Therefore, in this standard, it is suggested that fibre transit time instead of fibre length be used whenever accuracy is important.

Measure the transit time of the fibre T_{transit} with the help, for example, of a pulse generator, a triggerable laser source, an optical-to-electrical converter (O/E converter) and a time interval counter. It is important that the laser source has approximately the same centroidal wavelength λ_{avg} as the test OTDR, because a difference in wavelength may result in a difference of transit time due to the chromatic dispersion of the fibre. An alternative to the laser source is using the OTDR itself to produce optical pulses; in this case, the centroidal wavelengths automatically coincide. Record the transit time as the difference between the arrival times with and without the fibre inserted between the laser source and the O/E converter.

When this fibre is used for OTDR distance calibrations, then the reference distance D_{ref} can be calculated by

$$D_{\text{ref}} = \frac{cT_{\text{transit}}}{N} \text{ m} \quad (19)$$

In this equation, use a group index N which is identical with the OTDR's group index setting. The time measurement principle makes it possible to use D_{ref} as the reference distance.

6 Distance calibration methods

6.1 General

Each of the three alternative calibration methods described below is capable of determining all of the necessary calibration results: location offset, distance scale deviation, and their uncertainties.

6.2 External source method

6.2.1 Short description and advantage

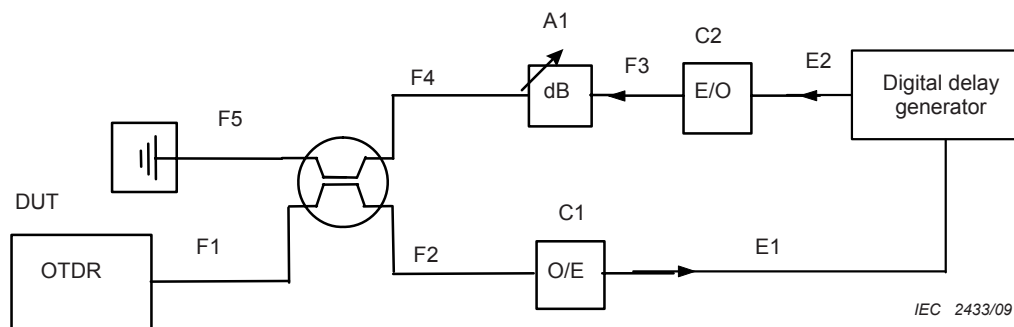
The external source method uses a calibrated time-delay generator to simulate the time delay in a fibre and an optical source to simulate the reflected or scattered signal from a fibre.

The method is well suited to automated laboratory testing under computer control. For simplicity, only reflective features are discussed in this standard. To calibrate the OTDR for features other than reflection, the pulsed E/O converter described below should be replaced by an optical source that simulates the appropriate feature.

6.2.2 Equipment

In addition to the OTDR, the measurement equipment includes, as shown in Figure 3:

- a) an optical coupler;
- b) an optical-to-electrical converter;
- c) a digital delay generator with pulse capability;
- d) an electrical to optical converter;
- e) a variable optical attenuator, for reduction of the pulse amplitude to just below the clipping level.

**Key**

F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5	fibres
E1 and E2	electric cables
E/O	electrical-to-optical converter
O/E	optical-to-electrical converter
A1	variable attenuator
C1	optical-to-electrical converter
C2	electrical-to-optical converter

**Figure 3 – Equipment for calibration of the distance scale –
External source method**

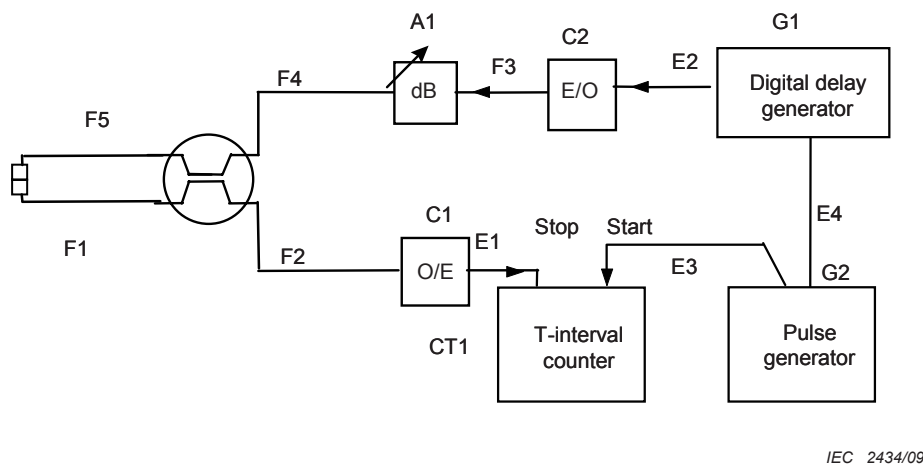
The coupler routes the OTDR signal to the O/E converter (detector). The detector triggers the delay generator, which, after a known time delay, causes an optical pulse to be generated. This pulse is then coupled back to the OTDR.

The E/O converter can be a simple pulsed laser that simulates a reflection. Constant pulse amplitude and pulse width are considered adequate to calibrate the distance scale for reflective features. However, the attenuator makes it possible to adjust the pulse amplitude based on the distance of the reflection from the front panel of the OTDR, in order to simulate the change of reflection amplitude caused by the attenuation of the fibre.

To allow accurate calibration of the set-up, fibres F1 and F5 should have the same length (see below). F5 is terminated to absorb reflections.

6.2.3 Calibration of the equipment

Before using the "external source" equipment, it shall be properly calibrated. It is assumed that the digital delay generator is regularly calibrated. For computing the location offset ΔL_0 from the measured data, it is also necessary to determine the insertion delay T_{delay} of the apparatus. This can be accomplished by adding a pulse generator and a calibrated time interval counter to the equipment, as shown in Figure 4.



IEC 2434/09

Key

F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5	fibres
E1, E2, E3 and E4	electric cables
C2	electrical-to-optical converter
C1	optical-to-electrical converter
A1	variable attenuator

Figure 4 – Set-up for calibrating the system insertion delay

To calibrate the insertion delay T_{delay} , proceed as follows.

Set the pulse generator to square wave, with a repetition period more than twice as long as the delay time to be measured. Use the output pulse of the pulse generator as the start pulse on the time interval counter, and to externally trigger the delay generator. Set the digital delay generator for external triggering and zero delay for the leading edge of the pulse generator signal. Set the trigger levels of the delay generator and the counter.

The external source will then generate an optical square wave which, after re-conversion to an electrical pulse, will stop the time interval counter. To ensure lowest uncertainty, the electrical cables E3 and E4 should have equal length. Also, fibres F1 and F5 should have equal lengths. Note that identical cable numbers in Figures 3 and 4 mean the same physical cables. Adjust the optical attenuator for best triggering of the time interval counter. Record the displayed time interval (between start and stop) as the insertion delay T_{delay} .

6.2.4 Measurement procedure**6.2.4.1 Preparation**

Select the technique (automatic or manual) for locating the feature on the OTDR. Program the attenuator to generate the desired pulse amplitude(s). Select the pulse width on the digital delay generator, for example 1 μs .

Choose the time settings of the delay generator T_i so that the samples are distributed over a wide distance range with some randomness, to accomplish averaging over the OTDR's distance sampling interval. The first time setting should be chosen so that the pulse appears close to the front panel of the OTDR, but sufficiently out of the initial dead zone for good measurements. If the testing laboratory does not determine and analytically justify a different distance sampling scheme, one of the two schemes below shall be chosen.

- a) In the first scheme, evaluate the sample spacing D_{sample} (for the appropriate OTDR instrument setting), for example by zooming into the OTDR trace. Then calculate the corresponding delay difference of the delay generator T_{sample} using:

$$T_{\text{sample}} = \frac{2ND_{\text{sample}}}{c} \quad (20)$$

where N is the OTDR's group index setting and c is the speed of light in vacuum.

Then calculate a total number of i delay generator settings, grouped in k clusters of n settings each ($i = kn$), where each cluster uniformly covers one sample spacing. Each cluster shall have the form:

$$T_K, T_K + \frac{T_{\text{sample}}}{n}, T_K + 2\frac{T_{\text{sample}}}{n}, \dots, T_K + (n-1)\frac{T_{\text{sample}}}{n} \quad (21)$$

where the number of settings in each cluster n is at least four and is the same for every cluster. The centres of the clusters are uniformly spaced, from just beyond the initial dead zone to a large distance over which the instrument is to be calibrated. The number of clusters k may be as small as two.

- b) In the second scheme, there are no clusters, and the sample spacing D_{sample} does not need to be known except very approximately. Calculate T_{sample} from Equation (20). Choose the time settings so that they are uniformly spaced between the initial dead zone and a large distance and each has a random time interval added. The random intervals should have a uniform probability density in the interval $-T_1$ to T_1 , where T_1 is at least $20 T_{\text{sample}}$ but less than 10 % of the longest time delay for the tests. The number of measurements i (that is different settings) should be at least 20.

Alternatively, prior knowledge of the magnitude of the uncertainty type A and the tolerable uncertainty in the measurements may lead the testing laboratory to select a different systematic or random distance sampling scheme.

6.2.4.2 Taking the measurement results

Select the first time setting of the time T_i of the series T_1 as defined above. Record the time T_1 of the delay generator and the measured location $L_{\text{otdr},1}$ of the event on the OTDR. Proceed with the time settings as selected in 6.2.4.1 Always record the time T_i and the measured location $L_{\text{otdr},i}$. Continue until all time settings are completed.

6.2.5 Calculations and results

Following the concept of Clause 5 use the time settings to calculate i reference locations $L_{\text{ref},i}$:

$$L_{\text{ref},i} = \frac{c(T_i + T_{\text{delay}})}{2N} \quad (22)$$

where

N is the group index setting of the OTDR;

T_i are the time settings defined in 6.2.3;

T_{delay} is the calibrated insertion delay of the test equipment (see 6.2.2).

Then, use the reference locations and the displayed locations $L_{\text{otdr},i}$ to calculate the set of i location deviations ΔL_i :

$$\Delta L_i = L_{\text{otdr},i} - L_{\text{ref},i} \quad (23)$$

To determine the location offset ΔL_0 and the distance scale deviation ΔS_L , fit the location deviation data to the simplified location deviation model (in which the distance sampling error is momentarily neglected):

$$\Delta L_{i, \text{model}} = \Delta S_L L_{\text{ref},i} + \Delta L_0 \quad (24)$$

Specifically, minimize the difference between the model and the data using the least-squares criterion that is, choose ΔS_L and ΔL_0 so that the summation

$$\sum_i (\Delta L_i - \Delta S_L L_{\text{ref},i} - \Delta L_0)^2 \quad (25)$$

is minimized. Record ΔL_0 and ΔS_L obtained from the approximation.

As in Figure 2, the slope of the linear approximation represents the distance scale deviation ΔS_L . The intercept with the vertical axis represents the location offset ΔL_0 . Record ΔS_L and ΔL_0 obtained from the calculation.

6.2.6 Uncertainties

6.2.6.1 General

A general discussion of the distance uncertainties can be found in Clause 5.

Note that the following list of uncertainties may not be complete. Additional contributions may have to be taken into account, depending on the measurement set-up and procedure. The mathematical basis given in Annex D should be used to calculate and state the uncertainties.

6.2.6.2 Distance scale uncertainty

The least-squares approximation outlined in 6.2.5 effectively uses the displayed distances between the measurement samples to calculate the distance scale deviation. It is assumed that the measurement samples near $L = 0$ and near the farthest location $L = L_{\text{max}}$ have the strongest influence on the distance scale deviation because the samples in the middle of the range have no influence on the slope of the distance error model.

Applying the standard formula for the propagation of errors to Equation (7) yields the distance scale uncertainty $u_{\Delta S_L}$ in which $\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle \cong D_{\text{ref}}$ was used.

$$u_{\Delta S_L} \cong \left[\left(\frac{u_{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}}{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{u_{D_{\text{ref}}}}{D_{\text{ref}}} \right)^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad \text{m/km} \quad (26)$$

where

D_{otdr}	is $D_{\text{ref}} \approx L_{\text{ref}}$ (for the long distances discussed here);
$u_{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}$	is the standard deviation expressing the uncertainty of the distance samples (on the basis of the location samples);
$u_{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle} / \langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle$	represents the slope uncertainty due to inaccurate distance readout; it is equivalent to the standard deviation of the slope, ΔS_L in the location model of Equation (16) which includes the marker placement uncertainty and the distance sampling error; the least-squares algorithm used for the determination of ΔS_L can be used to determine $u_{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}$; if applicable, ΔL_i may be averaged over the corresponding sampling interval;
$u_{D_{\text{ref}}}$	is the uncertainty of the reference distances;
$u_{D_{\text{ref}}} / D_{\text{ref}}$	represents the slope uncertainty caused by the digital delay generator and is equal to the relative timing uncertainty of the delay generator.

6.2.6.3 Location offset uncertainty

The location offset ΔL_0 is equal to the intercept of the least-squares approximation with the vertical axis. This intercept mostly depends on the first few samples, that is those samples which are closest to the location $L = 0$, and on the accuracy of the insertion delay T_{delay} .

The location offset uncertainty $u_{\Delta L0}$ can be calculated by using the standard formula for the propagation of errors:

$$u_{\Delta L0} = \left[u\sigma_{\Delta L}^2 + \left(\frac{c}{2N} \right)^2 u_{T_{\text{delay}}}^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad (27)$$

where

$u_{\Delta L}$ is the uncertainty of the differences between ΔL_i and the least-squares approximation near $L = 0$, which includes the marker placement uncertainty and the distance sampling error; it is equivalent to the standard deviation of $(\Delta L_i - \Delta L_{i, \text{model}})$ near $L = 0$; if applicable, ΔL_i may be averaged over the correspondent sampling interval; the least-squares algorithm used for the determination of ΔL_0 can be used to determine $\sigma_{\Delta L}$.

$u_{T_{\text{delay}}}$ is the uncertainty of the system insertion delay; the assumption is that the first-time setting will be very short or even zero, reducing the delay generator uncertainty to one of the insertion delays only.

6.2.6.4 Location readout uncertainty

As outlined in Clause 5, determine the largest difference between the location deviation samples ΔL_i and the least-squares approximation near $L = 0$. Then calculate the location readout uncertainty $u_{L_{\text{readout}}}$ (which includes the distance sampling error) by dividing the largest difference by the square root of 3. Alternatively, $u_{L_{\text{readout}}}$ can be determined either with the least-squares algorithm used for the determination of ΔS_L and ΔL_0 or with the following formula:

$$u_{L_{\text{readout}}} = \left[\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (\Delta L_i - \Delta L_{i, \text{model}})^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad (28)$$

6.3 Concatenated fibre method

6.3.1 Short description and advantages

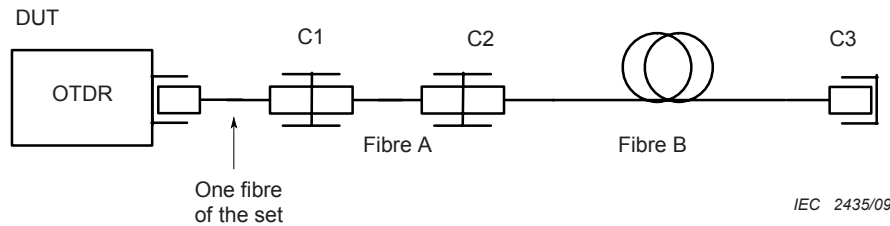
This method uses calibrated fibres with transit times precisely measured at the wavelength of the OTDR under test to calibrate the distance scale.

The method requires only connectorized lengths of fibre, and is thus both inexpensive and well suited to testing in locations where equipment such as that used in 6.2 cannot be carried. It may be viewed as a manual test method because it requires connecting and disconnecting short lengths of fibre a number of times to vary the locations of features. However, this process can be automated with optical switches, if desired.

6.3.2 Equipment

In addition to the test OTDR, the equipment includes, as shown in Figure 5:

- fibre A, to determine the location offset;
- fibre B, to determine the distance scale deviation;
- a set of incremental fibres, to determine the distance sampling error.



Key

C1, C2 and C3 optical connectors

Figure 5 – Concatenated fibres used for calibration of the distance scale

Normally these fibres will be cabled or packaged in some way for protection and connectorized for easy connection and disconnection. Alternatively, they may be used with a fibre optic switching mechanism that does not require connectors.

The requirements on these fibres are indicated below.

- a) Fibre A may be a simple fibre with an end reflection, or a fibre with an internal reflection or splice. Its length is not very important, as long as it puts the feature to be measured on a backscatter trace which is essentially undisturbed from the initial reflection(s) near the OTDR port.

Fibre A may be split into a short jumper fibre and a length as outlined before, with connectorized ends. In this way, the incremental fibres (see below) can be inserted after the first section of fibre A without having access to the front panel of the OTDR. The reflection from the near-end connectors shall be small enough to avoid placing the feature at the end of fibre A into the dead zone of the OTDR.

This alternative may be important in automated systems.

Fibre A can also be used as a lead-in fibre for measuring the distance scale deviation with the help of fibre B.

- b) Fibre B shall have reflective ends, for example by using the reflections from its connectors. Because the uncertainty is reduced by making this fibre longer, it is recommended that fibre B be at least 2 km long.

To calibrate the fibre, measure its optical transit time T_b as described in Clause 5.

Caution: for a correct distance calibration, the reflections from the two ends of fibre B (connectors C2 and C3) should be approximately equal. For example, if one end produces a reflection that saturates the OTDR and the other end does not, then the difference in waveforms can lead to inaccurate distance measurements. The effect of this difference on the measured distance scale deviation will be small if the fibre is long, however.

- c) When the sampling interval is not precisely known from the manufacturer and expected to be large, the set of incremental fibres will be used to vary the locations of the two reflections of the long fibre B by amounts less than the distance sampling interval of the OTDR. Their lengths should be selected in order to generate at least four distance increments which are evenly spaced over the distance sampling interval. As an example, if the distance sampling interval is 10 m, this can be accomplished with two fibres of lengths 2,5 m and 5 m. Separately and in combination, these can produce increments of 0 m (no fibre), 2,5 m, 5 m, and 7,5 m (both fibres). More generally, the fibres should generate length increments of

$$0, D_x, 2D_x, \dots, 1(n-1)D_x \quad (29)$$

where

$n \geq 4$, and

$n D_x$ equals the distance sampling interval of the OTDR under the conditions to be tested.

Except in unusual cases, calibrating the transit time of these fibres according to Clause 5 is unnecessary. Instead, their physical lengths should be measured. The difference between the true group index and the OTDR group index setting will be negligible on such short fibres.

6.3.3 Measurement procedures

6.3.3.1 General

The contribution of random noise to location deviation is usually small except when the displayed power level comes close to the noise limit of the instrument. Longer OTDR averaging is recommended in this case.

6.3.3.2 Preparation

Select the type of feature (in or at the end of fibre A) for which the location offset is to be determined and select the fibres accordingly. Also, establish the technique (automatic or manual) for placing the markers on the feature in fibre A and the reflective ends of fibre B.

Connect fibre A to the front of the OTDR, so that the feature at or near the far end of the fibre can be seen on the OTDR. Connect fibre B to the far end of fibre A, so that the reflections from both ends of fibre B may be seen on the OTDR.

6.3.3.3 Taking the measurements

Measure the location of the feature in fibre A with the OTDR. Record this first measured location as $L_{\text{otdr},1}$. Measure the length of fibre B with the OTDR, using the two reflections generated by this fibre. Record this first measured distance as $D_{\text{otdr},1}$.

Insert the shortest of the incremental fibres between the OTDR and the beginning of fibre A. Measure the location $L_{\text{otdr},2}$ and the distance $D_{\text{otdr},2}$. If fibre A is a split fibre, as described in 6.3.2, the incremental fibres may be inserted into the split instead of between the OTDR and the beginning.

Continue inserting successively increasing length combinations of the incremental fibres. Measure the location $L_{\text{otdr},i}$ and the distance $D_{\text{otdr},i}$ until $i = n$ and the total length of the incremental fibres is $(n - 1) D_X$.

6.3.4 Calculations and results

6.3.4.1 Distance scale deviation

Compute the distance $\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle$ (the length of fibre B) as the average of the n values of $D_{\text{otdr},i}$. Then compute the distance scale deviation as

$$\Delta S_L = \frac{\langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}{D_{\text{ref}}} - 1 = \frac{N \langle D_{\text{otdr}} \rangle}{c T_b} - 1 \quad (30)$$

where

D_{ref} is the reference distance;

N is the group index setting of the OTDR;

T_b is the one-way transit time for fibre B, as measured according to Clause 5.

6.3.4.2 Location offset

Let $\langle L_{\text{otdr}} \rangle$ be the average of all n values of $L_{\text{otdr},i}$. Compute the location offset on the basis of Equation (16):