During the past decade, reliance on contract service vendors to provide drug development capacity and expertise has been high and has grown rapidly. At the same time, the vendor qualification process has become far more complex, as sponsors must assess a multitude of factors, including regulatory and ethical compliance, information technology expertise and data privacy, confidentiality and security, and operating and financial controls and oversight.

This Tufts CSDD Impact Report highlights the results of a recent Tufts CSDD study, in collaboration with The Avoca Group, that establishes the first comprehensive effort to benchmark the vendor qualification process across small, medium, and large drug companies. With the number of assessments needed to identify potential vendors expected to increase, uncovering and acting on opportunities to improve the qualification process will help companies streamline drug development. The study's findings suggest that, among other areas, prioritization, standardization, and risk-based approaches could help optimize the qualification assessment process.