

## Policy

**Subject: Reporting of Pathology Specimens outside the Laboratory**  
**Approval Date:** June 2006, November 2008, June 2014, September 2015,  
September 2019, February 2020  
**Review Date:** February 2024  
**Reviewed By:** BPPQ  
**Number:** 1/2006

---

The College recognises that there are occasions when Fellows may wish to report on pathology specimens from outside the main laboratory. This includes, but is not limited to, pathologists reporting from home. It is also recognised that there will be circumstances when a pathologist is required to provide advice from off site after hours, and it is considered that these guidelines would not apply for those occasions.

Any testing or reporting, including off-site activities must be NATA/RCPA or IANZ accredited and particular attention must be paid to the following:

1. Off-site reporting must not be greater than 50% of a pathologist's practice.
2. The pathologist must participate in Quality Assurance Program activities in the laboratory where they are employed or contracted.
3. The off-site work set-up must comply with Quality Assurance Program requirements and be subject to Internal Audit process and management reviews. This includes infrastructure (e.g. a suitable microscope and adequate lighting), resource materials (e.g. books and internet references), and access to the laboratory database for checking previous pathology patient data.
4. The off-site work set-up must comply with Workplace, Health and Safety requirements.
5. The pathologist must be vigilant in regard to distractions that could interfere with the reporting process, such as interruptions by household members and comply with safe work hours.
6. Laboratory supervision must not be compromised when the pathologist is reporting off-site during working hours.
7. The off-site work area and the pathologist must be accessible to NATA/RCPA and IANZ assessors performing accreditation visits.
8. Confidentiality of all patient related materials such as slides, request forms and other health record documents must be maintained at all times.

9. There must be adequate computer password protection, fire walls and/or other information technology (IT) security measures in place to prevent unauthorised access to patient results.
10. The pathologist reporting off-site must be available to the requestor for consultation about cases on which they have reported.
11. There must be established mechanisms for discussing cases, where necessary, with scientists and laboratory staff, and for consulting with other pathologists, both on a case by case basis and by participation in laboratory based reviews and staff meetings.

There must be established processes for reviewing and correcting reports if required. Reports must be signed out/validated by the pathologist who has performed the reporting.

Whilst this policy relates to Australian circumstances, it is considered that the same principles should apply in other jurisdictions.