

Guideline

Subject: Component of Pathology Testing undertaken in another Accredited Pathology Laboratory
Approval Date: June 2017, July 2021
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1. Definitions

To assist with understanding this document, the following definitions are provided for terms that are used in subsequent sections:

“pathologist of record”	The pathologist responsible for the initial report on the material in question and who initially received the request and the specimen.
“pathologist of referral”	The pathologist responsible for provision of the component of the pathology test undertaken in a different Accredited Pathology Laboratory to the pathologists of record. Implicit in this concept is that the pathologist of referral would personally provide that opinion unless the request is clearly made to a pathologist in his or her capacity as a Department or Service Head.

2. Policy Statement

The College’s preferred position is that all pathology testing should be undertaken within a single Accredited Pathology Laboratory (APL). However, under exceptional circumstances, a specimen may be referred to a second APL for testing. In such cases, the second APL must be NATA/RCPA accredited.

In principle, laboratories should not be accredited to undertake just one component of testing. However, it is acknowledged that certain laboratories may be granted NATA/RCPA accreditation to perform only a specific part of a testing process.

The pathologist of referral in the second APL will either provide results or provide a testing opinion back to the pathologist of record in the first APL. In any case, it is the responsibility of the pathologist of record to collate all results and issue a combined final report back to the requester. The pathologist of record also takes responsibility for any follow up of the result.

The College has further guidance if the specimen is being referred for a second opinion, see [RCPA Policy: Provision of Second Opinions with particular reference to Morphological Examination.](#)