SJH CENTRE FOR LABORATORY MEDICINE & MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY			
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PROVISION OF LABORATORY SERVICES TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES BY THE LABMED DIRECTORATE

1. SCOPE

The Centre for Laboratory Medicine and Molecular Pathology (LabMed) Directorate of St James's Hospital (SJH) is committed to the provision of quality and safe services to External Agencies where a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is in place. SJH will deliver laboratory services to adult patients (aged 16 years and older) referred from External agencies across the Republic of Ireland and only provides specialised paediatric referrals for specialised testing services.

This procedure aims to:

- **D**efine the process for accessing high quality, safe and comprehensive laboratory testing services provided by the LabMed Directorate via an agreed SLA
- **D**irect External agencies who routinely refer adult patient specimens for analysis to the LabMed Directorate at St. James's Hospital in a manner that is compliant with our laboratory procedures and with ISO 15189 accreditation requirements.
- **D**irect External agencies who refer paediatric specimens for specialised and restricted testing services provided by designated laboratory disciplines in the LabMed Directorate in a manner that is compliant with our laboratory procedures and with ISO 15189 accreditation requirements.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of:

- The Laboratory Clinical Director, Laboratory Manager, Quality Manager, IT Manager in conjunction with the heads of departments, to ensure that this procedure is adequate.
- External Agencies and their local teams must adhere to the procedure at all times.

3. REFERENCES

ISO 15189 – Medical Laboratories – Requirements for Quality & Competence (REF-GEN-0254)

HSE Communication of Critical Results for Patients in the Community National Laboratory Handbook (REF-GEN-0199)

The Communication of Critical and Unexpected Pathology Results, Royal College of Pathologists (UK), 2017 (REF-GEN-0173)

4. DEFINITIONS

CPL: Central Pathology Laboratory

DOB: Date of Birth

MRN: Medical Record Number

SJH : St James ‘s Hospital

5. DOCUMENTATION

LP-GEN-0001: Specimen Collection & Handling

LP-GEN-0002 Specimen Transport

LP-GEN-0003: Specimen Reception

LP-GEN-0007 LabMed User Guide

6. GENERAL

In order for an external agency (e.g. hospital, private/specialist clinic, occupational health provider etc.) to access SJH laboratory services, an SLA must be agreed and in place with all external public or private agencies. Please contact the Laboratory Manager to initiate SLA discussions. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) defines the following:

- The parties involved in the agreement, and both the duration and renewal of the agreement
- The scope of the laboratory testing services being provided including the clinical laboratory disciplines being accessed, and any limitations in the services being offered (e.g. defined workload targets).
- Specimen delivery and transport details including packaging instructions, specimen and request form requirements and specimen tube requirements
- Where required, SJH will refer patient specimens from external agencies to relevant and approved external referral laboratories as part of laboratory testing algorithms and clinical requirements

- Results reporting methodology (electronic or manual), timelines and IT requirements including details on critical results management.
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Agreements (DPA)
- Operating hours and details on out of hours' services
- Charges and costs associated with the requested laboratory services and payment details

All external service users are required to comply in full with both SLA and LabMed User instructions as per the SJH website: https://www.stjames.ie/services/laboratorymedicinelabmed/ . External service users can access services in the following laboratories: Biochemistry, Haematology, Coagulation, Haemostasis Molecular Diagnostics (restricted services), Immunology, Histopathology (restricted services), Microbiology & Virology, Cancer Molecular Diagnostics and our Reference laboratories (National MRSA Reference laboratory, Irish Mycobacterium Reference Laboratory, Gonococcal Reference laboratory).
Near Patient Testing (NPT) services and Blood Transfusion laboratory testing services are not offered to any external agencies outside SJH as part of an SLA agreement.

An external agency is defined as:

- A public hospital (HSE / Voluntary)
- A private hospital
- A private clinic: Private patients are individuals who choose their own consultant and pay for their own treatment. Private clinics are defined as consultant led private businesses who charge private patients a fee for any laboratory tests (e.g. blood tests) delivered by the LabMed Directorate at St James's Hospital.

The defined timelines for delivery and receipt of External agency samples collected by their own Phlebotomy services for testing in the LabMed Directorate is Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm although exceptions may occur depending on the laboratory tests ordered (see Appendix 1 for laboratory specific instructions). Please do not deliver samples after 6pm on weekdays as it places a significant burden on our on-call scientific teams and delays the processing of urgent samples. There is no routine or on-call weekend testing service available to External Agencies unless specified in the SLA.

Electronic test requesting and results reporting is the method of choice in the LabMed Directorate. From a patient safety perspective this is the preferred mode as it eliminates all the potential errors associated with the manual system, thus ensuring the correct results are reported on the correct patient in a timely manner**.** It ensures the following:

Accurate demographic information transfer

Accurate tests request transfer

Sample tracking to ensure full audit trail

Electronic test ordering and results reporting

Potential to electronically upload results into referral laboratory's LIMS

Avoids unnecessary follow up on outstanding reports

Mitigates against any risk of data breaches and helps comply with the General Data Protection Regulations.

7. PROCEDURE

7.1 Provision of Emergency Contact Details (Mobile Phone) for Reporting of "Critical" Results Outside Normal Laboratory Hours.

7.1.1 All External Agencies are responsible for developing a system whereby test results returned from the SJH testing laboratories are examined and appropriate action taken in a timely manner 24/7 365 days per year.

7.1.2 It is recognised that occasionally, unexpected critically abnormal results are found on analysis, such that laboratory staff become aware of a potential emergency before the treating External agency personnel. In these circumstances, laboratory staff must follow procedures to contact the requesting External agency to relay the result. Critical results will only be phoned to the referring External agency (e.g. hospital) upon which the patient request form is received. Laboratory teams will not communicate results to any other external parties.

7.1.3 External agency patient samples are frequently analysed outside routine hours. All External Agencies must have a system in place whereby appropriately trained staff receive patient results, and communicate same within the timeframe indicated. Most diagnostic laboratories within the LabMed Directorate operate a normal service

between 8am and 8pm with additional on-call services 24/7 restricted to the Biochemistry, Haematology including Coagulation, Blood Transfusion and Microbiology laboratories. In additional to these laboratories, Histopathology services are available on Saturdays from 9am to 1pm.

7.1.4 All External agencies must provide up-to-date 24/7 contact information for the reporting of 'critical' patient results outside normal laboratory hours. This is a mandatory requirement for access to SJH LabMed laboratory services.

7.1.5 For private clinics, SJH laboratories require a register of Consultants who refer specimens to the laboratory from external agencies, including details of the appropriate contact number for transmission of critical results, during working hours, and out of hours. This phone number must be answerable by the medical personnel in the Private practice (not just an answer service). Additionally, medical personnel are given the option of supplying their personal mobile phone number or other contact details for emergency use only directly to SJH.

7.1.6 All medical personnel operating from private practices requiring laboratory medicine services must provide 24-hour contact details for reporting of "critical" patient results outside normal practice hours. This is a mandatory requirement for access to the Hospital's laboratory services. Failure to put a robust 24/7 service in place for critical results may result in termination of laboratory services to this practice due to the significant risk to patient care.

7.1.7 Please refer to the SJH policy on the provision of services to General Practitioners for any further details relating to medical personnel operating from private clinics (Reference MP-GEN-0032).

7.2 Patient Identification

The practice phlebotomy/nursing staff must have in place a system to positively identify the patient before taking specimens and labelling them. Responsibility to ensure that pre-collection requirements have been met (e.g. fasting) also lies with practice phlebotomy/nursing staff. Persons who request the laboratory examination of the specimen have the responsibility of ensuring that the patient is correctly identified, the

request form (electronic or hardcopy) is correctly completed and the specimen is correctly labelled before transporting to the laboratory for processing.

To avoid patient upset, please ensure that all patient details (Specimen and request forms) are correct and verified with no discrepancies before transporting to the laboratory.

It is the responsibility of the SJH LabMed Clinical and Scientific teams to assess the suitability of the request received (test requested, request form information, specimen type and specimen quality) and the relevant clinical details provided by the requestor to support the laboratory request for testing. The LabMed team reserves the right to reject any requests that do not comply with laboratory policies/procedures and ISO 15189 requirements. See our Policy on Specimen Collection and Handling procedures (LP-GEN-0001) on the LabMed user guide.

7.3 Criteria Required for Labelling <u>Patient Specimens</u>

7.3.1 The use of printed labels produced by the External agency IT system that are suited to the sample container size are the preferred labelling method as it improves the transfer of accurate and legible information.

7.3.2 Addressograph/patient labels must clearly distinguish between patient Surname and patient Forename.

7.3.3 Refer to LP-GEN-0001 for Specimen Collection and Handling details including mandatory and desirable criteria for specimens.

7.3.4 We note the following for information purposes:

- In certain cases, information relating to the timing of specimens is required, for example, in dynamic function testing, to identify peak and trough or pre- and post-treatment specimens or where diurnal variation and circadian rhythms are important for interpreting the result
- The sex of patient is particularly important where requested investigations have sex-related reference ranges such as hormone testing. No sex specific reference ranges will be reported if sex is not provided.

- The labelling of the specimen with the specimen type and/or specimen site (as appropriate) is a mandatory requirement for Histopathology specimens i.e. tissue samples; and is highly recommended for all non-blood specimens i.e. sputum, MSU, ear swab, etc. This information is a mandatory requirement on the associated request for all such samples.
- It is best practice to record the signature of the person taking the specimen

7.3.5 Specimens that fail to meet minimum criteria will be rejected for analysis and will not be processed. There is no process in place for laboratory personnel to retrospectively change patient details for specimens after they are received into the laboratory and rejection processes will proceed.

7.4 Criteria Required for Patient <u>Request Forms</u>

All external agencies are required to Complete and submit a Laboratory Request Form (unless ordered electronically where a hard copy request card is not required but an electronic generated request slip is required for scanning in our Specimen Reception areas).

Note: Blank or incomplete request forms are not acceptable and will result in specimen rejection. A repeat sample will be required which inconveniences your patients and delays test results.

The laboratory accepts both manual and electronic request forms with the following requirements to be met for all request forms received:

7.4.1 The Request Form accompanying the sample/specimen must be legibly written. The legibility of the manual request form is vital to ensure all patient details are accurate. A clearly <u>typed or printed (i.e. use of block capitals)</u> request form must be sent to reduce the risk of errors in patient identification, test selection or location.

7.4.2 Original hospital request forms with tests added manually and/or with other tests crossed out are not acceptable. Manual request forms must be supplied by the hospital referring the specimen to SJH, and not utilising request forms sent by other third party agencies.

7.4.3 Patient's Clinical details and relevant history (including any drug, anticoagulant therapy or antibiotic therapy) will help in interpretation of results.

7.4.4 Refer to LP-GEN-0001 for Specimen Collection and Handling details including mandatory and desirable criteria for request forms.

7.5 Additional Request Form Information

7.5.1 The following additional information is strongly recommended on the request form, to assist in processing the request and interpreting the results:

- Patient's clinical details and relevant history
- Any patient preparation conditions, such as fasting
- The time of specimen collection
- Please ensure sufficient specimens/aliquots are sent as per Appendix 1. All analyses may not be completed if there is an insufficient number of specimens provided.
- Where requests are being sent on one or both of a pair of twins, please highlight this on the request form(s). There is an increased risk of data entry errors where the surname, date of birth, gender and address are identical for both twins. Highlighting this will ensure extra checking by laboratory staff when entering these requests.
- Where available a patient addressograph label and the External agency stamp must be used on all sheets of the request form as it improves the transfer of accurate clear information.
- Where GP private patient samples are being referred by the External agency (e.g. hospital) to SJH, the results will only be reported back to the referring external agency/hospital, not the GP.
- Certain investigations may require additional information (including evident of patient consent for test analysis) on the specimen or request form. These are detailed in each department's section of the LabMed User Guide at www.stjames.ie (click on the Lab Services tab) or by clicking on this link Lab User Manual

- Add-on Requests: Time limits for requesting additional tests/examinations are detailed the individual department sections of the Online User Guide (LP-GEN-0007) as these may be department/specimen/test specific. Add-on requests are processed by **scientific staff** in the relevant department. Add on testing is only completed if a suitable sample is available (i.e. if analyte/sample stability allows).

7.6 Referral of Paediatric Specimens

The referral of paediatric specimens must be received from a Paediatric Hospital via the courier service and is specific to each laboratory discipline as follows:

7.6.1 Immunology: Paediatric specimens are accepted from External hospitals with SLAs in place

7.6.2 Biochemistry: Paediatric specimens not routinely accepted with the exception of restricted services including our Porphyria and molecular services as well as specific test requests.

7.6.3 Coagulation: Paediatric samples are not routinely tested in the Coagulation laboratory. In exceptional circumstances a sample may be referred from a hospital in the CHI Ireland group where an urgent analysis is required for a specialised test not available within the CHI Ireland group.

7.6.4 Histopathology: Paediatric specimens are accepted from External agencies with SLAs in place

7.6.5 Microbiology: Paediatric specimens are not routinely tested in the Microbiology laboratory.

7.6.6 Haemostasis Molecular Diagnostics: Paediatric specimens are accepted from a limited number of External hospitals with SLAs in place

7.6.7 Blood Transfusion & Near Patient Testing: Paediatric specimens are not accepted under any circumstance

7.7 Specimen Transport

7.7.1 It is the responsibility of the requestor to ensure that all specimens are delivered safely and securely to the LabMed Specimen Reception area; in a manner that does not pose a threat to the health and safety of anyone coming in contact with the sample and is in compliance with regulations. Leaking / damaged specimens will not be accepted.

7.7.2 The packaging used for samples for transport to the laboratory must be in accordance with current "Agrement Dangereux Routier" (ADR 2019) Safety Legislation and in accordance with SJH laboratory policy available at LP-GEN-0002 Specimen Transport. Advice should be sought from the Laboratory if required. Transport timelines must prevent deterioration of the specimen(s).

7.7.3 The main safety principle of packing and labelling all specimens in such a manner so that they present no threat to those sending, transporting or receiving them must be observed. The specimen transport bag prevents the contamination of other containers, request forms, the hands of the specimen receptionist and the immediate environment. The specimen is preserved and stabilised during transport or storage.

7.7.4 Samples should be sent to the laboratory as quickly as possible after they are obtained in order to avoid sample deterioration which can cause subsequent inaccurate and possibly misleading results. Of particular risk is falsely elevated potassium.

7.7.5 Certain investigations may require that the specimen is transported under specific conditions or within a specific time interval. These are detailed in each department's section of the LabMed User Guide at www.stjames.ie (click on the Lab Services tab).

7.7.6 Transport of precious specimens such as histopathology patient blocks and slides to SJH in suitable containers is essential to maintain the safety of often irreplaceable specimens. Do not refer blocks/slides in envelopes.

7.7.7 Transport of frozen specimens to SJH requires maintaining a continuous suitable temperature using appropriate packaging in addition to appropriate transport services provided by external courier services. Frozen specimens must not be transported in packaging that does not maintain the appropriate temperature (e.g. envelopes, cardboard boxes) but alternatively, proper insulated packaging solutions should be used to ensure that precious frozen samples such as Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) remain frozen at all times.

7.7.8 Do not transport blood specimens in unsuitable containers whereby specimens are placed directly into padded envelopes, which are not safe for transport. Please ensure your teams are using (i) a leak-proof primary receptacle(s) for all blood specimens and (ii) an outer rigid packaging of adequate strength for its capacity, mass and intended use with absorbent material.

7.7.9 From a sustainability perspective, we are happy to recycle and return packaging to users to avoid additional costs.

7.7.10 Our specimen reception team are happy to engage with external agencies to ensure specimen transport and receipt to SJH is optimised for excellent service to our patients and users.

7.8 Results Management

7.8.1 External Agencies should where possible avail of electronic requesting and reporting system, such as, DMF (MediBRIDGE) system which uses an encrypted technology

7.8.2 Communication and collaboration on accessing laboratory services offered by the LabMed Directorate to the External agencies will be through the Laboratory Manager or Chief Medical Scientists/Head of Department

7.8.3 Additional communication is facilitated through the SJH website and by direct contact with the laboratory.

7.8.4 Urgent specimens must be clearly labelled and the laboratory phoned to alert them of the delivery of urgent specimens to SJH for testing. In the event where an urgent report is required, the User must alert the laboratory by telephone to clearly state the nature of the urgency and must ensure it is clearly indicated on the Request Form.

7.8.5 The laboratory and administration teams are not resourced to issue routine laboratory results by phone except in emergency situations or systems failures (e.g. IT system downtime).

7.8.6 The Laboratory Manager, Mrs Fiona Kearney, can be contacted at fikearney@stjames.ie for further information or via Ms Aisling O'Gorman, Directorate Services Manager (DSM) at aogorman@stjames.ie.

7.8.7 Phoning the laboratory for results: Please contact the Blood Sciences office at 01 416-2051, the Microbiology office at 01 416-2966 and the Histology office at 01 416-2992.

7.8.8 The laboratory administration teams can be contacted at the following email addresses: **histologyrequests@stjames.ie or bsladmin@stjames.ie or microbiology@stjames.ie**

7.9 Ensuring Safe Disposal of All Materials Used in Specimen Collection

7.9.1 Dispose of all materials used in the collection and phlebotomy of patient specimens in a safe and secure manner in line with local regulations.

8. TRAINING

Training on this procedure should be performed at local practices who are approved to access laboratory services at St James's hospital.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Specimen and Request Form Requirements for Specimens from External Agencies/Laboratories

Appendix 1: Specimen and Request Form Requirements for External Agencies/ Laboratories

Refer also to the following documents, available on our website:

- LP-GEN-0001 for Specimen Collection and Handling procedures (includes sample and request form labelling requirements).
- LP-GEN-0002 for Specimen Transportation procedures.

Do not refer GP specimens to SJH for routine testing.

- **Transport of Frozen Specimens**

Frozen specimens which are transported to SJHLMD by external users are often precious specimens requiring specialised testing, as per our LabMed User Guide (www.stjames.ie). Frozen specimens must be transported in dedicated pre-frozen containers to ensure specimens remain frozen at all times during transport. SJHLMD recommends the use of a combined outer polystyrene package (Sarsdedt ref 95.1001) with an inner frozen sealed container (ref 95.1123) in which the specimen is placed.
Outer packaging must be clearly labelled with 'Frozen specimen' so users in SJHLMD can ensure that the specimen is processed correctly.
Samples that are not transported in dedicated pre-frozen transport containers are subject to thaw and SJHLMD will not be responsible for the rejection of frozen specimens that are not transported in the correct packaging.

- **Biochemistry and Immunology Laboratory Specimen Requirements from External laboratories**

In order to streamline the handling of all specimens in Biochemistry and Immunology we are aiming to standardise the tube type used by all our users both within St. James's Hospital laboratory and received from external users. We are now using the Hitachi pre-analytical system to help us prepare samples for analysis. This instrument has been designed to handle tubes which adhere to certain size characteristics. In our case this demands tubes with dimensions of **13 x 75mm or 13 x 100mm only**. Tubes that don't meet these dimensions cannot be handled automatically and must be processed manually adding significant work for laboratory staff and delaying the analyses; this can also lead to errors in further aliquots being made for other areas. A further requirement is that whole-blood sample tubes must contain a **GEL** barrier which prevents erroneous sampling on our chemistry analysers. The latter is required if whole blood is received

To achieve these objectives all our users are requested to only send us samples that fulfil the above criteria. This can be achieved by the following methods.

Aliquot Serum samples

1. Do not refer 1.5mL Eppendorf tubes in any instance as they cannot be handled by our pre-analytics systems

2. Centrifuge blood-sample locally and transfer serum/plasma to a fully labelled 13mm tube (preferred type is the Sarstedt 13 x 75mm 5mL PP. part no. 55.525 and corresponding cap part no. 65.806). This is a polypropylene tube which is much stronger than the standard polystyrene tube which we have found can crack during sample transport.

3. For external agencies referring low volume specimens (e.g. paediatric specimens), Sarstedt false bottom tubes (ref 60.611.011) are recommended for use to avoid issues with sample pipetting by our automated pre-analytics systems.

4. Please note for any of the following endocrine tests one additional aliquot of serum/plasma is required:

    - Androstendione /Testosterone/DHEAS/17-OHP 500µl serum minimum.
    - Aldosterone 500µl (spun and frozen EDTA sample)
    - Gastrin 500µl
    - Renin 600µl (spun and frozen EDTA sample)
    - Thyroglobulin/TgAbs 500µl
    - TRAB 400µl
    - CGA 200µl

5. Please note SHBG requires **a separate** sample from steroids.

Whole blood samples

Take blood sample into **13mm** evacuated tube (plastic not glass) containing **GEL** barrier (preferred type Greiner 13 x 100mm Red capped plain serum Gel tube part no. 456071. Blood samples taken into appropriate GEL tubes can be centrifuged locally for 10 minutes prior to transporting to our laboratory. Samples taken into Sarstedt Monovette blood-collection tubes are not suitable.

- **Transport of Samples to the National Coagulation Laboratory**

Samples can be received in the Coagulation Laboratory between 8:30am and 4pm Monday to Friday. When sending samples to the laboratory; the transport time from the referral laboratory should be taken into account in order that samples are received within these hours. Samples can only be sent outside these hours by prior arrangement with the Coagulation Laboratory.
When sending requests for Heparin Induced Thrombocytopenia (HIT) test and Thrombophilia Screen / Lupus Anticoagulant Screen, the specific laboratory request form with full clinical details must be sent with the samples. Samples for prothrombotic molecular analysis and APCR tests require confirmation of patient consent to be recorded on the SJH thrombophilia screen request form. It is not necessary to send the consent form with the request; this should be kept with the patient record.

Separated samples

- Samples which are not sent on the day of phlebotomy to St James's Hospital should be separated and frozen in the requesting laboratory until the following day for transport.

- All plasma samples must be separated by a double centrifugation procedure according to the following instructions in order to prepare platelet poor plasma (Platelet count $<10x10^9$/L).

- Check all Coagulation samples prior to centrifugation for clots.

- Centrifuge samples at 3000g for 10 minutes at room temperature.

- Pool plasma from all samples into a non-activating centrifugation tube and centrifuge for a second time at 3000g for 10 minutes.

- Aliquot samples into microtubes to a volume of 750µl. The microtubes should not be overfilled, it is important that an adequate number of microtubes are received in order to perform all tests requested. The minimum number of microtubes required is 6 x 750µl (depending on the number of tests requested).

- Label microtubes with a permanent marker detailed with name and DOB for the patient. If samples are from different time points clearly label the samples with full details of time taken and if pre / post treatment.

- The separated sample should be sent in capped microtubes only (2ml capacity). Microtubes such as those provided by Sarstedt (product code for the tube is 72.609.001 and the cap is 65.716.) or equivalent tubes with the same specification from an alternative supplier should be used for sample separation.

- Multiple aliquots of samples for testing must be sent. This is to facilitate testing on more than one occasion as not all tests are analysed on the same day and may require reanalysis for verification of abnormal results; therefore a number of aliquots are needed to complete a full test profile. State the type of separated sample on the request form (Serum / Plasma).

- If samples are not being sent to the laboratory immediately, they should be frozen overnight at a minimum temperature of –30ºC for transfer to the coagulation laboratory the following day.

- Frozen samples must be sent to the laboratory in appropriate frozen sample transport containers. **All samples must remain in the frozen sample container for the duration of the transport and must not be removed from this container into a freezer in the courier van**. Aliquoted samples received which have not been stored in the appropriate frozen container may not be suitable for testing.

- NOTE: The Coagulation laboratory can no longer store separated samples in freezer vials other than those detailed above or with the same specification. This is due to freezer storage capacity and indexing requirements. All samples should be stored in microtubes (750µl) prior to freezing for transport. It may not be possible to complete testing in samples received in incorrect vials.

- **Haematology Requirements**

Requirements for Immunophenotyping and all other tests are detailed in the LabMed User Guide for external agencies on http://search.stjames.ie/Labmed/.

Flow Cytometry (Immunophenotyping)

- Specimens should be accompanied by a correctly completed Immunophenotyping request form, *HAEM-FORM-0095,* (or a Bone marrow, Haematology or Cytology/Histology request form are suitable alternatives) that comply with minimum labelling requirements.

- All persons making requests for immunophenotyping are asked to supply material for morphological examination.

- External Bone marrow aspirate specimens should be accompanied by bone marrow aspirate slides, peripheral blood samples accompanied by a blood film and all requests should be sent with a current FBC result.

Haemoglobinopathy

- The haemoglobinopathy laboratory has produced a request form specifically for haemoglobinopathy requests HAEM-FORM-0436. This is available for download by all users on the LabMed User Guide. Request forms from other hospitals are also acceptable.

- A copy of the most recent FBC and ferritin result and a freshly made peripheral blood film are also desirable for Haemoglobinopathy screen requests but not mandatory.

Haematinics

- Cyclosporine and Tacrolimus do not require plasma separation at the time of receipt into the laboratory.

- Homocysteine EDTA samples must arrive unfrozen on ice and must be either frozen immediately here in the lab (if already separated) or spun immediately and frozen within an hour of collection.

- **Histopathology & Cytopathology Laboratory External Specimen Receipt Requirements and Sample Identification**

  Any wet specimen or cytology sample for processing and reporting in SJH should be received in the Histopathology Specimen Reception between the hours of 8am and 5pm. Please do not send wet specimens or cytology samples after 5pm as the Histopathology and Cytopathology Laboratory is closed with no personnel available to deal with the specimen if required. Large wet specimens or specimens that would normally require opening to facilitate with fixation should be sent immediately to the laboratory. Delays in specimen opening can cause serious implications to the pathology. Wet and fresh specimens must be accompanied by a chain of custody form (HLF16 Chain of Custody Log, or a local version) detailing the number of specimens and date/ and time sent. Specimen request forms must be provided with all specimens received and can be found on the SJH webpage.

- **Microbiology Fungal Biomarker Requests**

  Please use the Fungal Markers Request Form LF-MICRO-0642 when requesting the fungal biomarkers β-D-glucan (BDG) and Galactomannan, available on the Laboratory User Guide GP & External Request Forms | St James's Hospital . External Agency request forms will not be accepted.

- **Reference Laboratories**

  External Agencies utilising the services of the reference laboratories at SJHLMD can access individual laboratory access information, user guides and sample request forms on our website www.stjames.ie via the Healthcare Professionals section, then click on the LabMed User Guide option for individual services:

  - Irish Mycobacteria Reference Laboratory (IMRL): users must comply with the guidelines as described in the Irish Mycobacteria Reference Laboratory user guide available on the IMRL section of the LabMed User Guide: how to access the service: http://www.stjames.ie/services/laboratorymedicinelabmed/irishmycobacteriareferencelab and request form (LF-IMRL-0195).
  - Gonococcal Reference Laboratory (GCRL): users must comply with the guidelines as described in the National Gonococcal Reference Laboratory user guide available on the National Gonococcal Reference Laboratory section of the Lab Med User Guide: how to access the service: http://www.stjames.ie/services/laboratorymedicinelabmed/NationalGonococcalReferenceLaboratory/and request form (LF-MICRO-0504).

- National Methicillin Resistant Reference Laboratory (NMRSARL): users must comply with the guidelines as described in NMRSARL user guide available on the NMRSAL section of the LabMEd User Guide: how to access the service: http://www.stjames.ie/services/laboratorymedicinelabmed/nationalmrsareferencelab and request form (LF-MRSA-0049)

Request Form Requirements (refer to LP-GEN-0001 on our website)

The legibility of the manual request form is vital in ensuring that all patient details etc are accurately entered into our computer system. On many occasions it is very difficult to decipher this information. This can be due to the fact that "back copies" of NCR request forms are used which can be of very poor quality. Also poor quality photocopied forms make it difficult to accurately read the details. St. James's is promoting the use of electronic requesting which will avoid errors in transcription and includes a sample tracking system. Further details can be got from the Laboratory Manager.

In the absence of an electronic request a clearly typed or printed request forms should be sent to reduce the risk of errors in patient identification, test selection or location error.

However, electronic requesting is the method of choice as it ensures the following:

- Accurate demographic information transfer
- Accurate tests requests transfer
- Sample tracking to ensure full audit trail
- Electronic results reporting
- Potential to electronically upload results into referrer's LIMS.

Note: From a patient safety perspective this is the preferred mode as it eliminates potential errors with the manual system, this ensuring the correct results are reported on the correct patient in a timely manner.