

Position Statement

Subject: **Electronic Communication of Pathology Results**
Approval Date: November 2006, November 2008, November 2012
Review Date: November 2016
Review By: e-Health Task Force
Number: 3/2006

This statement is intended to clarify what the College sees as minimum requirements for information systems designed to handle pathology results.

VIEWING OF RESULTS

1. Results must be displayed in their full context in order to allow proper interpretation.
2. Wherever numeric pathology results are displayed, the relevant units of measurement and reference intervals must be simultaneously visible at all times. It is not adequate to provide access to this information through daughter windows in such a way that viewing it becomes discretionary.
3. Any textual comments issued with a report must be displayed before a viewer can exit from a result enquiry session.
4. Viewers must not have the capability to modify the result display in such a way that units of reference, reference intervals or textual comments can be omitted. Systems should incorporate the option to freeze the units of measurement and reference interval column(s) if the user wishes to scroll through cumulative results.
5. Electronic results displays must include a function that enables the viewer to identify clearly where a test was performed.
6. Where results from different pathology services are displayed adjacent to one another (e.g. in an Electronic Health Record), there must be a flag to indicate that this difference should be considered when interpreting and comparing the results.

GUARANTEEING OF RESULTS

1. The College does not support the truncation or modification of pathology reports following release by a pathology service for the purposes of electronic display formats.
2. As electronic systems may be beyond the control of the pathology service, results transmitted electronically should only be guaranteed if they have been 'rendered for display' and are not therefore subject to modification.
3. If 'atomic results' are transmitted, the pathology service should advise that whilst the integrity of individual results is guaranteed, no responsibility is accepted for the manner in which the results are displayed following transmission, and using or displaying results in an incomplete manner is not supported.

This Position Statement should be read in conjunction with the College's 'Chain of Information Custody' Guideline.