



# HISTOLOGY USER MANUAL



## Histology User Manual

### Introduction

This handbook is intended to serve as a user guide to the services available from the Unilabs Histology Laboratory based at Stephenson Way, London. It is aimed for use by all staff groups involved with requesting Histological investigations.

### About Us

Unilabs Histology Laboratory is an UKAS accredited medical laboratory (No. 9344); accredited to ISO15189:2012 for the scope described in the UKAS Schedule of Accreditation which can be found on the UKAS website: <https://www.ukas.com/find-an-organisation/>

Users of the Histopathology service should refer to the UKAS schedule of accreditation for a list of currently accredited tests. (No 9344):

[https://www.ukas.com/wp-content/uploads/schedule\\_uploads/00007/9344-Medical-Multiple.pdf](https://www.ukas.com/wp-content/uploads/schedule_uploads/00007/9344-Medical-Multiple.pdf)

We provide a wide spectrum of tests for both Histopathology and Immunohistochemistry with rapid turnaround times.

Histology tests include:

- Interpretive microscopy
- Special stains
- Frozen sections
- MOHS

Immunohistochemistry tests are all listed here:

[https://assets.unilabs.com/m/1bceab4fd5ae78b1/original/Unilabs\\_UK\\_20240327\\_IN-HOUSE\\_UNILABS\\_LONDON\\_IHC\\_REPERTOIRE.pdf](https://assets.unilabs.com/m/1bceab4fd5ae78b1/original/Unilabs_UK_20240327_IN-HOUSE_UNILABS_LONDON_IHC_REPERTOIRE.pdf)

### Contact Details

Address:

Unilabs  
Histology Department  
24-32 Stephenson Way  
London  
NW1 2HD

Telephone enquiries: +44 (0)020 7299 4490

E-mail enquiries: [UKdiagnostics\\_1@unilabs.com](mailto:UKdiagnostics_1@unilabs.com)

**Opening hours:** from 07:00 – 19:00 Monday to Friday (except bank holidays). Saturday 08:00 – 12:00. Sunday closed.



### **Protection of Patient Information**

All patient information is handled in accordance under the terms of the Data Protection Act (2018).

All staff complete Unilabs statutory mandatory GDPR and Information Governance training online and comply with the departmental quality manual.

### **Quality Assurance**

The laboratory operates daily internal quality control (IQC) procedures and participates in recognised national external quality assurance (EQA) schemes covering and consist of six distributions over a twelve-month period:

#### **Histology**

- Specialist Techniques
- Tissue Diagnostics Scheme
- MOHS Procedure Scheme
- Frozen Sections and Mega Blocks

#### **Immunohistochemistry and *In-Situ* Hybridisation Modules**

- General Pathology
- Breast Pathology (Hormonal Receptors – ER Only)
- Breast Pathology (Hormonal Receptors – ER and PR)
- Breast Pathology HER2 IHC
- Lymphoid Pathology
- Alimentary Tract Pathology (GIST)
- Mismatch Repair (MMR) Proteins
- Low-Level Expression of HER2 in in Breast Cancer (PILOT)

### **Complaints**

Complaints may be made directly to the department, or via Customer Services telephone number +44 (0)020 7299 4490 or email [UKdiagnostics\\_1@unilabs.com](mailto:UKdiagnostics_1@unilabs.com)

### **Histology**

Histology is the examination of tissues to identify or exclude morphological abnormalities for the purposes of diagnoses.

The Histology section of the laboratory provides a service to private hospitals and clinics using state of the art equipment. Our laboratory provides a comprehensive range of tests suited for all private clinic needs.

#### **Sample Types**

Histology specimens are received by the laboratory as below:

- Fixed, fresh and frozen tissue; excisional and incisional biopsies and surgical resection specimens
- Formalin fixed tissue samples (including breast; gastrointestinal; skin; urological; bronchial/lung/thoracic; endocrine including thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal; lymphoreticular including lymph nodes, spleen, and bone marrow trephine biopsies, liver; bone and soft



tissues; gynaecological; head and neck.

### **Histology Specimen Container and Additives**

Please adhere to the following when sending a sample for histological examination:

- For samples requiring routine histopathology, the patient's tissue sample should be placed inside an appropriately sized specimen container containing 10% formalin immediately after removal to ensure integrity of the tissue and to allow for adequate fixation
- Bouins fixative can be provided for testicular biopsies on request
- Michel's Medium can be provided for skin specimens requiring immunofluorescence on request
- The volume of fixative should be at least ten times the volume of the specimen
- For large specimens where this is not possible, the specimen must be at least totally immersed in the formalin
- For bowel resection specimens – please open along the anti-mesenteric border but **DO NOT OPEN THROUGH THE TUMOUR**. The bowel should be cleaned of faecal material before placing into formalin as per above guidelines
- For samples requiring specialist testing – please contact us if you are unsure if any specific fixation requirements are necessary

### **Immunohistochemistry**

Immunohistochemistry is a reflex test which follows a preliminary diagnosis. Most often it is employed to identify proteins within tumour cells which enable precise diagnosis of tumour type, e.g melanoma or specific lymphomas. It may also be used to identify the presence of particular micro-organisms such as HPV and other viruses. Immunohistochemistry is also used to identify the potential effectiveness of targeted chemotherapy, consequently assisting the patient's treatment pathway.

A provisional report will be initially produced with a supplementary report being added usually within 2-3 working days.

Unilabs IHC full test repertoire can be found here:

[https://assets.unilabs.com/m/1bceab4fd5ae78b1/original/Unilabs\\_UK\\_20240327\\_IN-HOUSE\\_UNILABS\\_LONDON\\_IHC\\_REPERTOIRE.pdf](https://assets.unilabs.com/m/1bceab4fd5ae78b1/original/Unilabs_UK_20240327_IN-HOUSE_UNILABS_LONDON_IHC_REPERTOIRE.pdf)

### **Referral Cases/Second Opinion Work**

Referral cases and second opinion work are often requested to be sent to Unilabs Histology.

Unilabs Histology are also involved in routinely using specialist testing and in the instances where the Unilabs consultants may require second opinions. These referral sites are audited on a regular basis by Unilabs and are all compliant with the necessary recommended accreditation/s.

The following referral sites Unilabs use are:

<b>Referral Site</b>	<b>Specialist Service</b>
Charring Cross Hospital	Immunofluorescence
Moorfields/UCL Institute of Ophthalmology	Ocular pathology



Queen Elizabeth University Hospital	Specialist cytology services
Royal London Hospital	Renal Pathology
Royal Marsden Hospital	Flow cytometry
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital	Bone/soft tissue specialists
Sarah Cannon Research Institute	Molecular tests
Scottish HPV Reference Laboratory	HPV Genotyping
St Johns Institute of Dermatology	Dermatopathology specialists
TDL-HSL Molecular	HPV subtyping

### Turnaround Time

Turnaround times for histology specimens (excluding cases requiring extra fixation, decalcification, referral or other additional investigations) is in accordance with each individual pre-approved client contractual agreement. Unilabs Histology aims to have all results available to meet all individual client contractual agreements as required.

These requirements will also ensure that 80% of results are available in 7 calendar days and 90% of all results in 10 calendar days, which is in accordance with guidance issued by the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH).

Due to the complex interpretive nature of histopathology specimens these targets may not always be achievable.

### Specimen Acceptance/Rejection Criteria

All Histology specimens should be sent with a completed request form. It is essential that the following criteria are fulfilled when completing a sample request form in order for the laboratory to accept the sample and to avoid delays caused by discrepancies:

- Complete the sample request form fully
- Please use the addressographs where possible
- Please print clearly making sure the following is stated:
  - FULL patient name or unique code identifier (clearly indicating which name is the forename and surname)
  - Date of birth
  - Hospital number
  - Hospital/clinic name and name of clinician
  - Specimen or sample type
  - Specimen collection date and time
  - Relevant clinical details and patient history
- Insurance details if coming through an insurance provider

Unilabs Histology laboratory protocol is that there must be a minimum of THREE matching identifiers to fulfill adequate specimen acceptance criteria.

Please indicate on the request form (and accompanying dispatch log) if a sample is urgent, along with information of how the clinician is to be contacted with the result and the date the report is required by.



If special stains or additional tests are requested by the clinician, these should be clearly stated on the request form.

#### **Factors Affecting Specimen Acceptance/Rejection and Overall Report Quality**

- Use of correct sample container and fixative type
- Correct amount of fixative proportional to the specimen type and size, including container size
- Fixation time of fresh samples if there is a delay in sending/collection ie: overnight/weekends
- Use of correct request form and completing details to adhere to laboratory acceptance criteria
- Adequately labelled specimen container, including specimen type/site

#### **HIV Positive/High Risk Patients**

Please indicate clearly on the request form if a specimen is high risk or suspected to be high risk. Histology samples must be clearly labelled with “Risk of Infection” or “High Risk” hazard stickers if the patient is a known or suspected carrier of HIV, Hepatitis B/C, TB or SARS-CoV-2. The request form must also state the reason for the risk of infection.

All doctors responsible for the care of patients have a duty of care towards other members of staff to ensure this is carried out.

#### **Package and Transportation of Samples**

Histology samples must be transported to Unilabs Specimen Reception at:

Unilabs Histology Department 23-32 Stephenson Way London NW1 2HD
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#### **Packaging**

At Unilabs we ask our users to follow the correct handling procedures to ensure:

- The specimens are received and processed appropriately to support a timely diagnosis
- The risk to healthcare associated infections is completely minimized
- To ensure correct labelling and positive patient identification

Most Histology specimens are generally classified and, “Biological Substance, Category B” and should be handled and packaged in accordance with UN3373 regulations. Any sample which is to be transported to Unilabs for diagnostic purposes must adhere to the following instructions for packaging:

##### **1. Primary Packaging**

A specimen container/pot should be of relevant size to the specimen and contain the appropriate fixative. Ensure that the lid is securely tightened to avoid leakage during transportation

##### **2. Secondary Packaging**

A biohazard polythene bag provides the secondary packaging layer into which the specimen container is placed. There should be absorbent tissue paper within this bag to soak up any leakages that may arise. This bag needs to be sealed and the corresponding request form placed



into the outside pocket of the bag.

3. Outer Packaging

This should be the hard outer packaging. For same day collections in London, Unilabs-IHS couriers provide these containers. For specimens being sent using the overnight courier or postal service then the appropriate UN3373 compliant transport containers can be provided by Unilabs-IHS on request.

4. Specimen Labelling

It is imperative that all specimen/sample containers and pots are clearly labelled on the container and NOT on the lid. Addressographs must be used where possible.

## **Transport**

### **Courier Transport**

Unilabs employs fulltime couriers who are fully trained in transportation of Category B UN3373 diagnostic specimens, carry medical transport containers and are supplied with emergency spill kits, for which they are also fully trained in how to manage these situations in the unlikely event that a spillage should occur during transport. Local foot couriers visit consultant practices and hospitals within a one-mile radius of the laboratory on request daily to collect specimens and replenish stock supplies. Couriers with a vehicle will collect specimens within central and greater London.

### **Same Day and Overnight Couriers**

For clients throughout the UK, Unilabs subcontract to a reputable medical courier company. These couriers are fully trained in transportation of Category B UN3373 diagnostic specimens, carry medical transport containers and are supplied with emergency spill kits, for which they are also fully trained in how to manage these situations in the unlikely event that a spillage should occur during transport. Our courier suppliers are certified with Quality Management Systems (QMS) ISO14001 and UKAS ISO9001: 2008 standard.

### **Postal Packs**

Robust UN3373 approved postal packs can be requested from Unilabs and are suitable for laboratories that are sending referral cases, small histology specimens or Cytology ThinPrep™ vials. The postal packs are pre-paid and extremely user-friendly featuring specimens containers and packaging materials. These can be requested by contacting Customer Services: telephone number +44 (0)20 7299 4490 or email [UKdiagnostics\\_1@unilabs.com](mailto:UKdiagnostics_1@unilabs.com)

For any courier queries and cancellations please contact the Cellular Pathology Secretaries on +44 (0)20 7299 4490 (ask for Secretaries) or email: [histology.secretary@unilabs.com](mailto:histology.secretary@unilabs.com)

## **Urgent Samples**

For sample requiring urgent results, please indicate this on both the sample request form and corresponding dispatch log, also ensuring that the method of contacting the requesting clinician with the result is stated clearly, along with the date the report is required by.



## Results

Histology results are available on the UnilabsConnect Portal once authorised:

Login page for UnilabsConnect Portal: <https://reports.unilabs.co.uk/cpoe.frontend.p4c/#/login>

UnilabsConnect User Manual:

<https://unilabs.co.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/UnilabsConnect-User-Manual-1.pdf>

IHC Results are available on the IHSConnect Portal once authorised

Login page for IHSConnect Portal: <https://www.ihsconnect.unilabs.co.uk/>

IHSConnect User Guide:

<https://unilabs.co.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/IHSConnect-User-Guidance.pdf>

**Please contact the laboratory with any queries or for additional information.**

To request additional histology specimen request forms to be sent with histology samples to the laboratory please contact Cellular Pathology Secretaries on +44 (0)20 7299 4490 (ask for Secretaries) or email: [histology.secretary@unilabs.com](mailto:histology.secretary@unilabs.com)

Alternatively a histology specimen request form can be printed from here:



**Please note: New clients should contact [UKdiagnostics\\_1@unilabs.com](mailto:UKdiagnostics_1@unilabs.com) to register with us BEFORE sending specimens**