

2026

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Laboratory Sample Receipt and Handling

Procedure for receiving, labelling, storing and tracking patient samples

DOCUMENT NO.

SOP-LAB-012

VERSION

3.0

EFFECTIVE DATE

15 March 2026

Document Control

Document title	Laboratory Sample Receipt and Handling
Document number	SOP-LAB-012
Version	3.0
Effective date	15 March 2026
Owner	Quality Manager
Approved by	Laboratory Director
Review cycle	Every 12 months or when the process changes

Revision History

Version	Date	Description of change	Approved by
1.0	2 Feb 2023	First issue	Lab Director
2.0	10 Jun 2024	Added cold-chain checks	Lab Director
3.0	15 Mar 2026	Revised rejection criteria	Lab Director

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01 Purpose

To ensure that all samples received by the laboratory are correctly identified, transported, stored and tracked so that test results are reliable and traceable.

02 Scope

Applies to all blood, urine and other clinical samples received at the central laboratory from collection centres and home collection.

03 Definitions

Term	Definition
LIMS	Laboratory information management system
Pre-analytical error	An error that occurs before testing, such as wrong labelling
Rejection	Refusal of a sample that does not meet acceptance criteria
Cold chain	Maintaining samples within the required temperature range

04 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Sample reception staff	Receive, check, register and distribute samples
Phlebotomist	Collect and label samples correctly
Section in-charge	Accept samples into the department
Quality manager	Monitor rejection rates and train staff

05 Procedure

Receipt and Checking

Check every sample against the request form before accepting it.

1. Verify patient name, ID and test requested on the label and form.
2. Check sample type, container, volume and condition.
3. Check transport temperature for temperature-sensitive samples.
4. Record time of receipt in LIMS.

Safety

Wear gloves and a lab coat. Treat every sample as potentially infectious.

Rejection Criteria

Samples that do not meet criteria must be rejected and recollection requested.

5. Unlabelled or mislabelled sample
6. Haemolysed sample for tests affected by haemolysis
7. Insufficient volume
8. Wrong container or anticoagulant
9. Transport temperature outside range

Registration and Distribution

10. Register accepted samples in LIMS and print barcodes.
11. Sort samples by department.
12. Deliver to departments within 15 minutes.
13. Store samples waiting for testing at the required temperature.

Storage After Testing

14. Store tested samples for the defined retention period.
15. Label storage racks with date.
16. Dispose of expired samples as biomedical waste.

06 Records and Forms

Record / form	Kept by	Retention
Sample receipt register (LIMS)	Reception	2 years
Rejection log	Quality manager	2 years

Record / form	Kept by	Retention
Temperature log	Reception	1 year

07 Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target	Frequency
Sample rejection rate	< 1%	Monthly
Registration within 10 min	95%	Weekly
Labelling errors	0	Monthly

08 Appendix A: Sample Rejection Form

Date and time	
Patient ID	
Sample type	
Reason for rejection	
Informed to	
Recollection requested (Y/N)	

Prepared by

Checked by

09 Appendix B: Daily Temperature Log

#	Check	Yes	No	Remarks
1	Morning reading recorded	☐	☐	
2	Afternoon reading recorded	☐	☐	
3	Evening reading recorded	☐	☐	

#	Check	Yes	No	Remarks
4	Deviations reported	☐	☐	

Prepared by

Checked by

10 Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood this document and will follow it.

Name and signature

Date