

## Responsibilities of the reference and referring laboratory

- **These guidelines apply to clinical specimens rather than those for public health surveillance.**
  - **The reference laboratory is ANY laboratory to which samples are sent. The term reference laboratory is used in the recommendations below but this does not refer specifically to ESR.**
  - **The referring laboratory is the laboratory from which the request originates.**
1. If the result is urgent and critical to patient management the reference laboratory will try and contact the requesting clinician prior to informing the microbiologist at the referring laboratory.
  2. All non-urgent results not requiring immediate clinical attention will be communicated to the clinical microbiologist at the referring laboratory who will contact the requesting clinician. The contact details for the clinical microbiologist or team must be clear on the form.
  3. When the reference laboratory receives a request with no or insufficient clinical details an electronic comment to the requester can be released outlining that the specimen will not be processed unless relevant clinical details are provided and that the specimen will be stored at the reference laboratory for a specified time after which it will be discarded.
  4. Scientists and clinical microbiologists from the referring laboratory should not contact the scientists at the reference laboratory to request additional testing. It is recommended that any such requests should go through the clinical microbiologist overseeing the reference laboratory.