

SOP Template: Outstanding Laboratory and Diagnostic Results

This SOP defines the process for managing **outstanding laboratory and diagnostic results**, including timely identification, follow-up procedures, communication protocols with healthcare providers, documentation standards, and patient notification guidelines. The objective is to ensure critical test results are reviewed promptly to facilitate accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and improved patient safety outcomes.

1. Purpose

To ensure that outstanding laboratory and diagnostic results are identified and managed in a timely, efficient, and safe manner, minimizing risk to patient care.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in ordering, reviewing, documenting, and communicating laboratory and diagnostic test results within the healthcare facility.

3. Definitions

- **Outstanding Results:** Laboratory or diagnostic reports that have not been reviewed or acted upon within established timeframes.
- **Critical Results:** Results indicating a life-threatening or significant abnormality requiring immediate clinical attention.

4. Responsibilities

- **Healthcare Providers:** Review, interpret, and act upon test results promptly.
- **Laboratory/Diagnostic Staff:** Ensure timely uploading of results and escalate critical findings as per protocol.
- **Administrative/Clinical Support Staff:** Monitor outstanding results and support follow-up communications.

5. Procedure

5.1 Identification of Outstanding Results

1. Run daily/weekly reports from the Electronic Health Record (EHR) or Laboratory Information System (LIS) to flag outstanding results.
2. Identify and prioritize critical results for immediate review.

5.2 Follow-up Procedures

1. Assign flagged results to the responsible healthcare provider.
2. Document any attempts to review or follow up on results in the patient record.
3. Escalate unresolved or critical results to a supervisor or designated clinician within predefined timeframes.

5.3 Communication Protocols

1. Notify healthcare providers immediately of any critical or abnormal results as per escalation ladder.
2. Use secure communication channels (EHR messaging, phone, or email) to discuss patient results.
3. Follow up to confirm receipt and action taken for critical results.

5.4 Documentation Standards

1. Record all outstanding results and follow-up actions in the patient's health record.
2. **Mandatory documentation includes:** date/time of result, person notified, action taken, and patient notification status.

5.5 Patient Notification Guidelines

1. Inform patients of significant or abnormal results as soon as possible, using appropriate methods (e.g., phone call,

- patient portal message, letter).
- 2. Document method, date/time, and outcome of notification in the health record.
- 3. Arrange appropriate follow-up appointments or referrals as needed.

6. Monitoring and Audit

- Conduct periodic audits of outstanding results and compliance with follow-up protocols.
- Review audit outcomes and implement corrective actions as needed.

7. References

- Local and national clinical governance policies
- Standard guidelines for laboratory and diagnostic reporting
- Electronic Health Record (EHR) system manuals

8. Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author
1.0	2024-06-01	Initial SOP template	SOP Committee