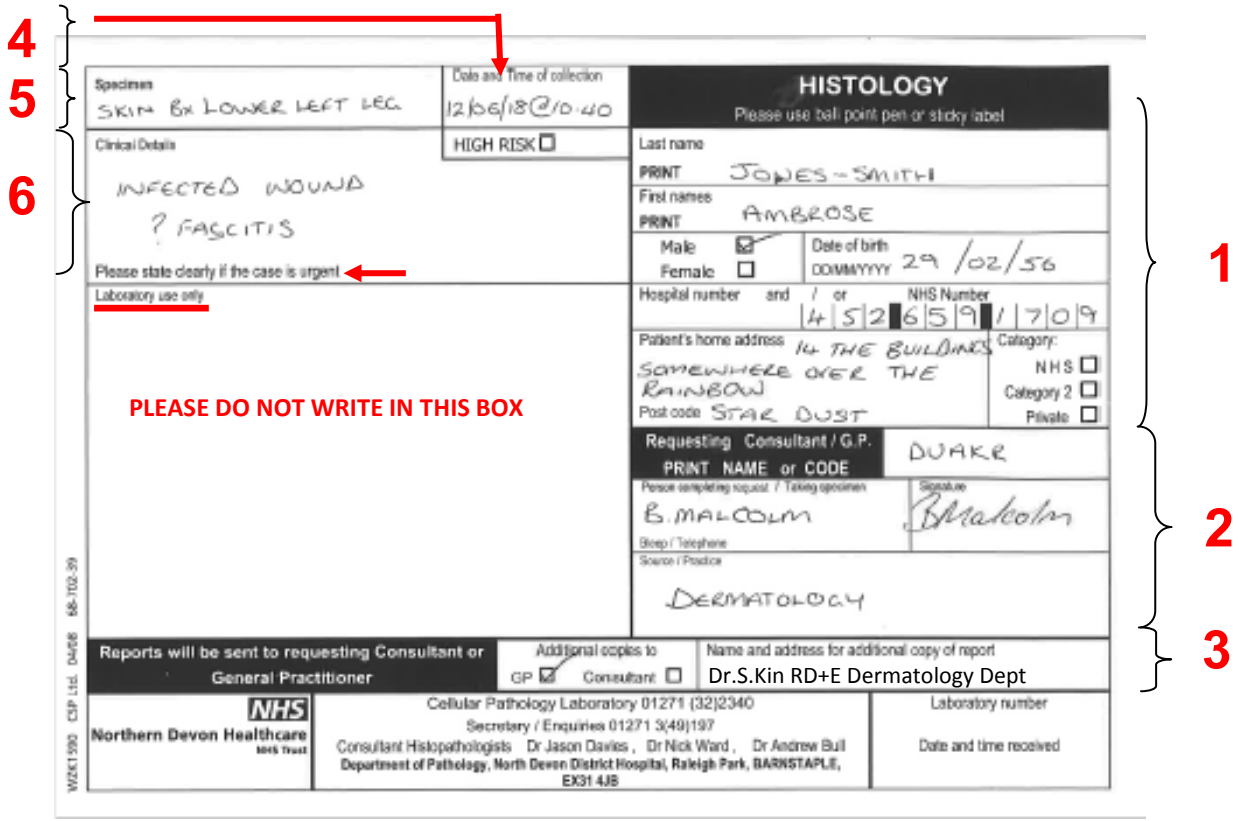
A Guide to Completing Pathology Request Forms

Cellular Pathology



1. **Three Key Identifiers** must be entered, clearly indicating whom the patient of the sample is from: include both first and last names. (Abbreviated or preferred names are not acceptable). D.O.B . Either the NHS number or Hospital number. Please note; pre-printed patient ID labels are acceptable if three key identifiers are displayed. Male/Female information is important, some diseases are gender specific affecting prognosis, if gender cannot be identified by name this will affect/prolong prognosis. The address is not a key identifier however if present can help with patient identification

Request forms without the required three key identifiers, cut off labels or with incorrect information will be REJECTED.
(See specimen acceptance policy for full details)

2. Lab staff need to know who is responsible for the requesting and taking of samples, more importantly where this is to indicate where the final lab report is to be sent. The requesting practitioner (e.g. Consultant overseeing care) may be different from the person actually completing the request form and taking the specimen, but both boxes should be completed. The lab will always send the clinical report to the person named in the 'Requesting Consultant / GP' box. If this box is empty then it will be sent to the person who completed the form/took the specimen. When no requester or location information is included, results will only be available on the Pathology computer system.

3. When additional copies of the report are required it is important to complete this box when different from the requesing consultant /GP. This is important when the Consultant has told the patient to go back to the GP, but the Consultant has not ticked the GP box the GP doesn't have the result/report when the patient is with them. Additional copies will be sent to named persons in this field. Make sure there is sufficient information e.g. to address an envelope. 'Dr Kin, Exeter hospital' is not sufficient and would not be sent, whereas, 'Dr S. Kin, Dermatology Dept, RD+E' is sufficient. If a GP phones us for a copy of a report that a hospital consultant has initiated, we can only give the GP a copy if the 'Additional copy to GP' has been ticked.

4. Both **TIME** and **DATE** of Collection are important as without will affect the order of tests displayed in the computer system along with turnaround time calculations. The time helps us gauge how long the specimen has been in fixative.

5. Indicating the type and site of the specimen(s) is important as related clinical advice could vary. Multiple specimens should be clearly labelled and differentiated both on the specimen containers and the request form.

6. If the specimen is clinically urgent, it is important to indicate it as during periods of annual leave or sickness, a non-urgent waiting list will operate.