



IFBLS

International Federation of
Biomedical Laboratory Science

IFBLS Position Paper

Point-of-Care Testing (PoCT)

Definition

Point-of-Care Testing (PoCT) refers to diagnostic and monitoring pathology testing performed in close proximity to a patient, by healthcare professionals who have received appropriate laboratory training. When supported by appropriate supervision, training, and governance, PoCT can contribute to timely clinical decision-making and improved patient outcomes by enabling rapid access to results.

Scope

The increasing availability of PoCT technologies has expanded their use across many healthcare settings including but not limited to acute, community, and remote care. Its use should be limited to situations where the immediate availability of results provides a clear and meaningful benefit to patient management and where appropriate supervision and quality controls are in place.

Patient self-testing is outside the scope of this position paper.

The IFBLS takes the following position:

- Point-of-Care Testing is an integral component of biomedical laboratory science practice, requiring structured supervision and oversight by laboratories, compliant with accreditation and regulatory requirements to support safe and reliable testing.
- Biomedical Laboratory Scientists are responsible for the scientific and quality governance of PoCT services, including the establishment of supervisory frameworks, operator competency requirements, implementation of a quality management system, and ongoing performance monitoring, regardless of where testing is performed.
- PoCT results are generally not accredited laboratory results; however, certain PoCT services (such as blood gas analysis) may operate within the accredited scope of a medical laboratory. In all cases, PoCT must be governed through laboratory-led quality and supervisory frameworks to ensure results are clinically reliable and fit for their intended use.
- Personnel performing PoCT must be appropriately trained, competent, and authorised, to operate the devices, with training and competency assessment that

is documented, device-specific, and maintained in accordance with recognised best practice for supervised PoCT services.

- PoCT services must operate within a defined quality management framework, incorporating a risk-based approach to quality control, including internal quality control, participation in external quality assessment where appropriate, documented management of errors or non-conformities, and ongoing monitoring of operator and device performance.
- The selection and use of PoCT devices must be subject to formal evaluation and approval processes, ensuring that equipment performance, operating conditions, and limitations are appropriate for the intended clinical context and user group.
- PoCT results must be traceable and clearly identifiable, with documented processes for result recording, reporting, and information management that support patient care, audit, and medico-legal requirements.
- PoCT services must incorporate risk management and safety considerations, including defined supervisory responsibilities, mechanisms for identifying and addressing errors or hazards, and alignment with organisational clinical governance structures.

Conclusion

PoCT is a valuable component of modern healthcare delivery when implemented within a supervised, laboratory-led governance framework. IFBLS affirms that Biomedical Laboratory Scientists play a central role in ensuring PoCT services are designed, supervised, and managed in a manner that supports patient safety, clinical reliability, and professional standards, consistent with international standards and national pathology policies.