

Shipment of Parcels: Policy and Procedure

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GROUP 4	Site Services	GROUP 5		GROUP 6	

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STATEMENT

This policy and procedure document relates to the shipment of packages by academic and Research Operations staff. Packages containing samples, dangerous goods and equipment are often sent from St George's, University of London (from now on referred to as St George's) to collaborators at other institutions. Additionally, samples are often sent away to laboratory service providers for further analysis. Small equipment is often sent away for repair. The packages must be shipped safely and securely in accordance with guidance.

DEFINITIONS

The Institutes	Infection and Immunity Research Institute (IIRI) Molecular and Clinical Science Research Institute (MCSRI) Institute for Biomedical and Medical Education (IMBE) Population Health Research Institute (PHRI)
Shipment	The action of sending goods
Dry ice	Solid carbon dioxide (CO ₂) pellets
Courier	Agent who collects goods from St George's and delivers them to destination
Waybill	Document accompanying package giving details and instructions relating to the package. Helps to ensure timely, accurate and secure delivery. Referred to as airwaybill for international shipments
Sender	Person sending the package
MTA	Material Transfer Agreement is a contract that governs transfer of tangible research materials between two organisations, when recipient intends to use it for their own research purposes.
IATA	International Air Transport Association which has strict regulations regarding the transport of goods by air
UN3373	Human or animal materials being transported for diagnostic or investigative purposes only

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1.1 SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

This document is a combined policy and procedure that applies to everyone involved in laboratory-based research and teaching in Jenner Wing at St George's, including Research Groups in IIRI, MCSRI, IMBE and PHRI. It is also applicable to Research Operations staff.

1.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TASK

The sender contacts the [Joint Research and Enterprise Services](#) (JRES) in advance to set up a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) if required.

The sender then informs the [Head of Laboratory Services](#), that they wish to make a shipment. They are sent a form which they complete by giving the address and contact details of the recipient, contact details of the sender themselves, information about the item to be shipped and any special considerations. The form is then sent back to the Head of Laboratory Services, who arranges assistance with packing and organises the safe shipment of the parcel.

The sender prepares the item to be shipped, making it safe, ready for packaging and shipment by Research Operations staff. Research Operations staff will assist in ensuring that the package is shipped promptly, making it easier to address any issues during the process.

Shipment itself must only be carried out by trained Research Operations staff; never independently by researchers. It is easier in this way to keep track of the process should any queries arise.

1.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Shipment of biological samples must be in accordance with [Transport of Biological Material policy, UK Government guidelines](#) or [IATA](#) if the item is to be shipped by air.
- Samples on glass slides must be packaged securely in a suitable slide holder, to protect the slides from breaking, which could potentially lead to injury.
- If samples to be shipped are human tissue, the shipment must be correctly recorded, as required by the [Human Tissue Act](#) (HTA).
- If packages contain radioactive samples, controlled drugs, toxins, toxic chemicals or potentially explosive reagents, [SHE Office](#) must be informed and appropriate guidance followed prior to shipment.
- If a small piece of equipment is to be sent, it must be prepared for safe handling before it is packed. It should be checked for any sharp edges and rotating, movable or loose parts should be secured. Equipment that is used in laboratories should be decontaminated with an appropriate decontaminant. Plugs and flex should also be secured.
- **Special consideration must be made if equipment contains lithium batteries**, both integral and separate. Lithium batteries are a fire hazard, particularly if they are damaged. When packaging, the equipment and battery must be protected, at all costs, from damage. Lithium batteries must never be packaged in such a way that they are capable of generating heat and starting a fire. If possible, each battery should be wrapped in non-conductive material.
- Shipment of solid carbon dioxide, or dry ice, is regulated as a dangerous good regardless of the hazard classification of any other materials in the package. **Dry ice may cause burns**, and if not packaged properly, can result in dangerously high-pressure build-up inside a sealed container.
- For further health and safety advice regarding research shipments please contact the [Head of Laboratory Services](#).

1.4 STEPS TO TAKE TO SEND SHIPMENTS

SHIPMENT OF SAMPLES SENT BY COURIER

1. Contact the [Joint Research and Enterprise Service](#) in advance of making the shipment, to check whether a [Material Transfer Agreement](#) (MTA) is required. If so, sender must ensure that the MTA is set up. If a sample is to be shipped for sequencing, the sender must contact JRES with respect to any MTA requirements.
2. Once the MTA, if required, is in place, inform the [Head of Laboratory Services](#) that you would like to make a shipment. The Head of Laboratory Services holds a Shipment Request form which will be sent to you for completion. Discuss with the Head of Laboratory Services which courier to use.
3. Complete the form, providing your contact details, the address and contact details of the recipient, information about the samples to be shipped and any special considerations, such as potential hazards, conditions required for shipment (e.g. samples to be shipped on dry ice, fragile equipment requiring protective packing material).
4. Return the completed form to the [Head of Laboratory Services](#) who will arrange Research Operations assistance in packing the samples ready for shipment.
5. Provide the Head of Laboratory Services with a sub-project code. DHL and FedEx accounts are attached to a purchasing card and payments for the shipping are reimbursed using this code. Should a courier provide a quotation for shipment, Research Operations staff will generate a purchase order, using the code given.
6. If the recipient is to pay for the shipment, inform the [Head of Laboratory Services](#) giving their account details and the waybill will be generated accordingly.
7. Prepare the samples to be shipped so that they can be shipped safely in accordance with [Transport of Biological Material policy](#), [UK Government guidelines](#) or [IATA](#), if the samples are to be shipped by air. Ensure that the samples are going to be safe and secure during transit. If samples are to be transported in microcentrifuge or Falcon tubes, ensure that the lids are closed properly and seal tubes with Parafilm as an extra precaution. These must then be sealed in either a box or plastic bag with sufficient absorbent material to contain any spill.
8. Contact the [Head of Laboratory Services](#) to arrange handover of the item to Research Operations staff for packing and shipment.

Once in receipt of the samples to be shipped and all relevant information, Research Operations staff assist in the packing of the samples, taking into consideration specific conditions required, such as providing on request (at an extra charge) a polystyrene box with a cardboard outer box in good condition for packages to be shipped on dry ice.

If the sender is providing their own packaging or if packaging is being reused, it must be undamaged and in good condition. There will be no extra charge incurred in these instances.

If infectious material (UN3373) is to be shipped, packaging to [UN3373 standard](#) must be used.

Research Operations staff will address and label the package in accordance with [Transport of Biological Material policy](#), [UK Government guidelines](#) or [IATA](#) regulations, should the item be shipped by air.

Research Operations staff will arrange for the chosen courier to collect the samples, completing any relevant on-line documentation on behalf of the sender.

If samples to be shipped are not temperature dependent, it is possible to ship on a Friday, however, any queries which may arise cannot be dealt with over the weekend. It is recommended that shipment of samples on dry ice is carried out by Wednesday at the latest if they are to be shipped to Europe; by Monday or Tuesday if the samples are to be shipped further afield.

SHIPMENT OF EQUIPMENT SENT BY COURIER

Follow the procedure given above from step 2 to 5.

Step 6 Prepare the equipment for safe packing and shipment by cleaning and decontaminating with an appropriate decontaminant. All moveable, rotating and loose parts must be secured. Secure plugs and flex.

Step 7 Contact the [Head of Laboratory Services](#) to arrange handover of the item to Research Operations staff for packing and shipment.

1.5 RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND OTHER REFERENCES

[Transport of Biological Material policy](#)

[Manual handling](#)

[UK Government guidelines](#)

[IATA](#)

1.6 CONTACT FOR FURTHER ADVICE

Head of Laboratory Services – [Penny Lympny](#)

SHE Office – health@sgul.ac.uk

Joint Research and Enterprise Services (JRES) – enterprise@sgul.ac.uk