

Appendix B TNM classification of malignant tumours of the thyroid (UICC TNM 9)¹

Primary tumour (pT)

pTX	Primary tumour cannot be assessed
pT0	No evidence of primary tumour
pT1a	≤10 mm, limited to thyroid
pT1b	≤20 mm but >10 mm, limited to thyroid
pT2	>20 mm, ≤40 mm, limited to thyroid
pT3a	>40 mm, limited to thyroid
pT3b	Tumour of any size with gross extrathyroidal extension invading strap muscles (sternohyoid, sternothyroid or omohyoid muscles)
pT4a	Tumour invades beyond thyroid capsule and invades any of subcutaneous soft tissues, larynx, trachea, oesophagus, or recurrent laryngeal nerve
pT4b	Tumour invades prevertebral fascia, mediastinal vessels or encases carotid artery

UICC TNM 9 staging applies to carcinomas and includes papillary, follicular, oncocytic (Hürthle cell), poorly differentiated and anaplastic carcinomas.

Multifocal tumours (≥2 foci) of all histological types should be designated (m), the largest focus determining the classification, e.g., pT2(m).

Regional lymph nodes (pN)

pNX	Cannot assess regional lymph nodes
pN0	No regional nodes involved
pN1a	Metastasis in level VI (pretracheal, paratracheal and prelaryngeal/Delphian) lymph nodes
pN1b	Metastasis in other unilateral, bilateral, or contralateral cervical (levels I, II, III, IV or V) or retropharyngeal or superior mediastinal lymph nodes

Distant metastasis (M)

M0 No distant metastases

M1 Distant metastases

Residual primary tumour (R)

RX Cannot assess presence of residual primary tumour

R0 No residual primary tumour

R1 Microscopic residual primary tumour

R2 Macroscopic residual primary tumour Clinical staging

This is mentioned for ease of reference as it may be discussed in the MDT meeting and in relation to clinical trials, but we recommend that pathology reports include only the pathological TNM staging. The translation of the pathological data into staging differs with the tumour type.

In papillary and follicular carcinoma, there is evidence that prognosis is poorer in older patients and therefore different criteria are applied to patients under 55 years from those to patients aged 55 years and older. In medullary carcinoma, no age stratification applies.

All undifferentiated/anaplastic tumours are regarded as categories within stage IV.

Papillary or follicular carcinoma* under 55 years

Stage I	Any T	Any N	M0
Stage II	Any T	Any N	M1

Papillary or follicular carcinoma* 55 years or over

Stage I	T1a, T1b, T2	N0	M0
Stage II	T3	N0	M0
	T1, T2, T3	N1	M0
Stage III	T4a	Any N	M0
Stage IVA	T4b	Any N	M0
Stage IVB	Any T	Any N	M1

Medullary carcinoma

Stage I	T1a, T1b	N0	M0
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Stage II	T2, T3	N0	M0
Stage III	T1, T2, T3	N1a	M0
Stage IVA	T1, T2, T3	N1b	M0
	T4a	Any N	M0
Stage IVB	T4b	Any N	M0
Stage IVC	Any T	Any N	M1

Anaplastic/undifferentiated carcinoma

All are considered stage IV			
Stage IVA	T1, T2, T3a	N0	M0
Stage IVB	T1, T2, T3a	N1	M0
	T3b, T4a, T4b	Any N	M0
Stage IVC	Any T	Any N	M1

*Including papillary, follicular, poorly differentiated and Hürthle cell (oncocytic) carcinomas.

References

1. Brierley JD, Giuliani M, O'Sullivan B, Rous B, Van Eycken L (eds.). *TNM Classification of Malignant Tumours* (9th edition). Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell; 2025.