



The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure

The College Digital Strategy Board – leading on digital pathology in collaboration with the British Society for Haematology

The College has established a new Digital Strategy Board and is working with kindred organisations to support digital pathology.

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The College is exploring how to roll out digital, informatics and AI-led pathology with its new Digital Strategy Board. The new Board and the British Society for Haematology have collaborated to support the adoption of digital pathology in haematology, with the Digital Haematology Task Force.

The College's Digital Strategy Board (DSB) has been established to provide strategic leadership and coordination across digital pathology, working in partnership with the British Society for Haematology (BSH) and LabMed UK. The Board also includes representatives from the College's Pathology Informatics Committee and Digital Pathology Subcommittee.

Digital pathology, informatics and AI are now central to the future of pathology services, and the Board exists to ensure that activity across specialties is aligned, coherent and influential both within and beyond the College.

Key functions and aims of the DSB

The DSB brings together leaders from digital histopathology, pathology informatics and digital haematology, alongside close links to emerging AI and data science groups. Importantly, it will also provide a structured interface with organisations such as NHS England, the Department of

Health and Social Care (DHSC), professional bodies, research funders and umbrella industry groups. The Board acts as an overarching forum to share progress, identify cross-cutting issues, reduce duplication and agree a unified digital direction for the College and stakeholders.

A core function of the Board is to provide a single, credible voice for pathology in national digital health discussions. This includes early engagement on policy, infrastructure planning and regulation, helping to ensure that the profession's expertise informs decisions on digital systems, data use and AI adoption. Members have emphasised the importance of collaborative working, recognising that no single organisation can deliver the full digital transformation of pathology alone.

Education and workforce development are also key priorities. The Board is supporting closer alignment between service innovation, training and assessment, including exam digitisation, digital morphology teaching and improving AI literacy across the workforce. While delivery sits with College education teams, the Board helps connect these discussions to wider digital strategy.

The DSB will meet regularly and is supported by a shared collaboration platform to enable ongoing dialogue between committees and partners. Through coordinated working with stakeholders, the Board aims to help pathology lead, rather than react to, the digital transformation of healthcare.

The inaugural meeting

The Board's first meeting was held in November 2025, where the purpose and framing of the Board were identified and the initial discussions on key areas were started. A significant section of the meeting covered the wider context of digital infrastructure and market forces, including the cloud vendors that underpin research datasets and the cost implications to NHS bodies. The Board recognised the need for proactive engagement with NHS England and the DHSC to ensure the profession's voice is heard early.

Several members highlighted the need to modernise digital and AI capability in relation to pathology education and exams. There was widespread agreement that digital images should eventually be used in microscopy components of College exams, but the Board noted that multiple obstacles to successful delivery exist.

The Board recognised that it can help shape solutions, but exam delivery rests with the College Learning Directorate and the GMC. The Examinations Committee will be establishing a working group to explore this further.

Future outlook

The Board discussed the value of bringing wider membership from pathology and healthcare, including such potential members as the Institute of Biomedical Science and NHS England. The possibility of industry partners was also discussed, although there is a need to avoid biasing towards particular companies – umbrella bodies such as BIVDA were considered.

Other pathology specialties, like cytology, paediatric pathology and neuropathology, may eventually need representation, but the group agreed to start focused and expand gradually. The Board has also discussed hosting a College-wide Digital & AI Scientific Meeting in 2026.

Meet the author



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The BSH Digital Haematology Task Force

An example of the type of collaboration that the College envisages is already shaping up with the BSH Digital Haematology Task Force, which held its inaugural meeting in October 2025.

Established under the BSH Laboratory Special Interest Group, the Task Force will also contribute directly to the College Digital Strategy Board. This is viewed as a positive step towards bringing the BSH and the College closer together on key areas of shared interest to haematologists, particularly in relation to laboratory practice.

The Task Force has been created to support the safe, evidence-based adoption of digital pathology in haematology across the UK. Its specific aims are to:

- ascertain the use of digital haematology in the UK
- evaluate the available platforms and appraise the evidence
- develop national guidelines on adoption of the technology
- further the evidence base for digital haematology
- explore expanded use of digital pathology for education, including examinations.

This work will involve close collaboration with External Quality Assurance providers and industry partners, where required, and will require regular review and updating as technologies continue to evolve rapidly.

A central focus of the Task Force will be the critical appraisal of the evidence base underpinning digital haematology, including the validation of AI tools, and the development of national guidance to support adoption into routine practice. Where evidence is limited, particularly in relation to bone marrow aspirate digitisation, strategies to advance research and data generation will be explored.

Haematology now has a timely opportunity to follow histopathology into a new era of digital practice. The thoughtful adoption of digital pathology and AI has the potential to transform diagnostic workflows, improve access and consistency, and allow technology to support increasingly complex laboratory demands. Further developments and guidance from the Task Force will be shared in due course.

Meet the author



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