

# i2b2 Messaging Overview

All cells in the **i2b2 hive** must communicate using standard *i2b2 XML messages*. This message specifies certain properties that are common to all cells and are essential to the administration tasks associated with sending, receiving and processing messages.

All requests are sent using a `<request>` tag and responses are returned using a `<response>` tag. The same `<message_header>` tag is used for both. The `</request_header>` is used for requests but may be echoed back (optionally) in the response. The response must include a `<response_header>`.

The XSD specification of the i2b2 message permits individual cells to add cell-specific XML in the `<message_body>` tag. This cell-specific XML does not need to extend the i2b2 message schema since the i2b2 schema will allow insertion of tags from any namespace into the `<message_body>` tag.

The following image illustrates the basic top-level elements contained within the request and response messages.

