Server Cell 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.

A **request message** is sent from a client to a service and contains information inside the top level *<request>* tag that allows the service to satisfy the request. The *<request>* tag contains a *<message_header>*, *<request_header>* and *<message_body>*.

The service sends back a **response message**, inside a top-level *<response>* tag, which informs the client about the status of the request and may also contain the actual results. The *<response>* tag contains its own *<message_header>*, *<response_header>* and *<message_body>* and it may optionally echo the request's *<request_header>*.

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