



Museum of
**Natural
History**

Destructive Sampling Policy

Destructive sampling policy and application document



September 2016

Oxford University Museum of Natural History Destructive Sampling Policy

This document explains the Policy for Destructive Sampling of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History (the Museum), the criteria used to evaluate requests for destructive sampling, and the practical procedures to be followed.

The Museum encourages the use of its collections for scientific study. For the advancement of knowledge it is recognised that in certain cases, the destructive sampling of specimens is necessary. Guidelines are given in this policy to ensure use of the collections provides maximum benefit for both present and future users.

For the purpose of this policy, destructive sampling is defined as the irreversible alteration or destruction of all or part of a specimen for scientific analysis. Typical examples of destructive sampling covered by this policy include (but are not limited to) removal of any part of a specimen, DNA extraction from whole or parts of specimens, anatomical dissection and development of fossils.

Scope

This policy applies to all specimens held in the Museum, with the following exceptions.

- Dissection of invertebrate specimens for anatomical study is not covered by this policy, but written permission for these activities is still required, either directly by collections staff or as a condition attached to a loan. Further details are given in the Museum's Policy for the Loan of Specimens.
- Destructive sampling of human remains, which is covered by the *Policy on Human Remains held by the University of Oxford's Museums* (2006) (www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2006-7/supps/2_4787.pdf).

Loans of specimens for destructive sampling must also adhere to the Museum's Policy for the Loan of Specimens. All destructive sampling must comply to the Museum's Collections Development Policy, particularly the sections relating to disposal of specimens.

Criteria

Decisions on destructive sampling requests are made on a case-by-case basis. The following criteria are used to evaluate such requests:-

- The scientific and historical importance of specimens.
- The potential scientific knowledge to be gained by the sampling.
- Whether freshly collected material or material from a source other than the Museum's collection could be used.
- The likelihood that the proposed techniques will produce useful data.
- The experience of the applicant in using such techniques.
- Restrictions imposed on the use of specimens collected under specific permits.
- Any legal restrictions, for example those imposed by CITES.

Conditions

The following conditions apply to requests for destructive sampling.

- Approval by the Head of Collections is required before any sampling is carried out.
- Requests by postgraduate researchers should be made through their academic supervisor.
- The person who will carry out the sampling will be agreed in advance. Sampling may be undertaken by the applicant or by Museum staff at the discretion of the Head of Collections, and a fee may be charged for this service.
- Depending on the type of sampling, ethical approval at the enquiring institution and at the University of Oxford may have to be gained before sampling.
- Samples may only be used for the study outlined in the original written request. Any changes in the proposed use of sampling must be confirmed in writing by the relevant staff member in the Museum.
- The recipient may not transfer specimens or derivatives thereof to a third party except by prior written agreement of the Museum.
- All samples and derivatives (thin sections, etc.) made from them remain the property of the Museum and should be returned within 6 months of the conclusion of the study unless it is agreed in advance that they can be retained by the applicant. This may require formal disposal of material from the Museum collections and this is covered by the Collections Development Policy.
- Samples are provided for non-commercial purposes only. The research and the results of the research may not be commercially exploited in any way without prior written agreement of the Museum Director. Such agreement may be refused at the Museum's absolute discretion or granted subject to further conditions as the Museum may decide. [prior informed consent].
- In all publications giving specimen descriptions or data, full and correct museum accession numbers must be associated and the Museum should be acknowledged. A copy of the publication should be sent to the Museum as soon as published or available.

Extraction of genetic or other material

The following additional conditions apply for extraction of genetic material (DNA or RNA), biomolecules or any other chemical extracts from the Museum's specimens.

- The use of extraction protocols maintaining integrity of specimens is strongly encouraged.
- The Museum does not provide facilities for the storage of processed samples. Long-term storage or archiving of DNA or any other extractions is the responsibility of the applicant.
- DNA sequences derived from the Museum's specimens should be submitted to Genbank (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genbank/>). For the purpose of traceability, Museum accession numbers should be included in the Genbank submission. If not otherwise available in published form, Genbank accession numbers must be supplied to the Museum within six months of publication.
- Permission for extraction of genetic material is made in accordance with the conditions set out by the Nagoya Protocol.

The Applications procedure

- Requests should be made in advance in writing.
- Requests are formally submitted by completion of the Destructive Sampling Request Form as set out below.
- Requests are evaluated by collections staff in consultation with the relevant Head of Collection.
- Requests to sample human remains, rare or historically important specimens will be discussed at the Museum's ethical review committee.
- The Museum reserves the right to refuse approval for destructive sampling.

Oxford University Museum of Natural History Destructive Sampling Request Form

Name:

Position held:

Institutional address:

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

Brief outline of research project, including duration and expected outcomes:

Details of requested material, including accession numbers and reason for requesting this specific material:

Brief outline of analytical techniques, examples of previous use by the individual/laboratory undertaking the analysis:

Details of the sampling technique to be employed and the individual undertaking the sampling:

I agree to abide by the conditions of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History Destructive Sampling Policy as set out above:

Signed:

Date:

<p>Approved by Head of Earth/Life Collections? Name: _____ Date: _____</p>	<p>For OUMNH use only</p>
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