

Analytical Sampling Policies and Procedures

The Peabody Museum encourages a multidisciplinary approach to collections research. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to remove samples, conduct invasive tests, or otherwise modify items in the collection in order to maximize their research potential. Decisions about the appropriateness of such requests must balance the legitimate needs of the scholarly and scientific community with the long-term preservation of the collections, including future research needs.

The Museum supports the judicious sampling of its collections in situations determined to afford significant information not available through non-destructive examination. Analytical sampling includes any procedure for which a sample of any size is removed from an object or any procedure that permanently alters an object macroscopically. The Museum is always mindful that analytical sampling requests require the removal of original materials, which, once removed, are no longer available for further study.

GENERAL POLICIES

Analytical sampling requests are reviewed by the Collections Review Committee (CRC) and a recommendation made to the Director. Only the Director has the authority to approve or decline analytical sampling requests. Permission for the analytical sampling of Peabody Museum collections must be sought by all researchers, including outside researchers, Peabody Museum curators and staff, and Harvard University students and faculty.

In general, approved sampling of Osteology collections is undertaken by the Associate Osteologist and sampling of Archaeological and Ethnographic collections by the PMAE Conservation and/or Collections Management departments.

Material sampling and analysis that occurs in the course of conservation treatment is performed by the Museum's in-house conservators according to current *Standards of Practice* (SOP-IILA.2; SOP-ITI.AA) of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

If the application is approved, non-Harvard requestors will be charged a rate of \$65/hour for sample processing, with a minimum charge of 3 hours per sample per research project. The rate will be discounted by 50% for Harvard faculty and students. The Senior Registrar will inform requestors if additional hours are required to complete sample processing and/or if other costs apply (see below).

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ANALYTICAL SAMPLING

Prior to submitting a written request for permission to conduct analytical sampling, researchers are encouraged to schedule a visit to the Museum. This visit will enable the researcher to conduct a collections assessment and to select the specific items for which sampling permission is sought. For information on arranging research visits, please contact pmresearch@fas.harvard.edu.



The research request should include the following information:

- Date of request.
- Requestor's name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. For joint projects, the requestor is defined as the principle investigator(s), however, all individuals/institutions participating in the project to whom data will be released must be listed as well.
- Description of the project, including its significance (i.e., the research question being investigated), research methodology, and expected results.
- Type(s) of analysis proposed, why they are appropriate to the nature of the research, and complete information about who will perform these analyses, including names of each institution/laboratory and full contact information.
- Justification if requestor is seeking permission to take samples of the objects directly.
- Explanation of available non-invasive or non-destructive approaches and a clear justification as to why a non-invasive technique cannot be used to address the proposed research questions.
- Discussion of other possible sources of objects and explanation of why the Peabody Museum's collections represent the only or best source for sampling.
- List of specific items requested for sampling, including complete Peabody Museum numbers. The PMAE is not able to review blanket requests that do not list specific object numbers.
- Sample size and/or weight requested for analysis and when applicable a description of the location on the object from which the sample will be taken (e.g., an image of the object with an arrow pointing to the sample location). Justification for amount of sample requested.
- Date by which return of un-analyzed and remnant samples is expected.
- If the requestor is a student, the request must be accompanied by a letter supporting the project from the faculty member supervising the student.

The CRC cannot review incomplete proposals. In the event that information is missing or not provided with sufficient detail for review, the Registrar will inform the requestor and CRC consideration will be given at the next available monthly meeting after a complete proposal has been submitted.

Requestors must thoroughly and compellingly justify the need for invasive sampling. The PMAE may decline a request if it determines that a non-invasive technique not addressed in the proposal is available and can be effectively substituted for the proposed destructive technique.

Any subsequent changes to project descriptions (e.g., additional analyses, change of testing laboratory, change in sample size, etc.) require additional permissions that must be formally requested in writing.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

All analytical sampling requests are considered in committee and require approval by the Director.

In reviewing requests, the Museum will consider the following criteria:

- Soundness of the research proposal, potential for significant scientific impact, and plans for the dissemination of results.
- The appropriateness of the Museum's collection to the project.
- The ability of the proposed analytical methodology to generate results applicable to the research question.
- The number of objects requested for sampling and the time required to prepare requested objects for sampling.
- The size of proposed samples and the degree to which samples will damage or impact the future study of the object(s).
- The uniqueness of the object(s) within the Peabody's collection and the impact sampling will have on the future use of the object(s).
- The history of requests for similar sampling methods on the requested objects or comparable objects and the results of those testing efforts.
- The availability of non-destructive techniques that might produce the same results.
- The history of the requestor's previous proposals and the likelihood based on past experience that remnant samples and data results will be returned for future use.

The PMAE reserves the right to limit sample quantities based on, but not limited to, factors such as the nature of the requestor's research question or the ability of Museum staff to properly prepare objects for sampling. In some cases, the Museum may require a pilot project comprised of a smaller number of samples and consider a request for access to a larger number of collections objects only after the outcome of the test sampling has been evaluated and results are determined to be attainable.

As Museum procedures require thorough documentation of approved analytical sampling projects, objects are not immediately available for sampling and a minimum of eight weeks from the time that approval is granted and a final list of samples has been determined is required prior to actually conducting the sampling. Larger quantities may take longer to prepare for sampling.

PROCEDURES FOR APPROVED REQUESTS

If the request is approved, the researcher will be required to complete a Permission to Conduct Analytical Sampling form and agree to the following conditions:



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- No alteration, sampling, or testing of items in the Museum's collection is permitted without prior written permission through a completed Permission to Conduct Analytical Sampling form. Under no circumstances is sampling permitted in the absence of the form, including on the basis of verbal discussions with Museum staff or administrators.
- All costs of analysis, including packing, round-trip shipping, and staff processing costs, are the responsibility of the researcher. If the Museum determines that the request requires additional documentation prior to sampling via CT or laser scans (e.g., when the visible appearance of collections will be appreciably altered by sampling) or if the request presents a burdensome effort to prepare the objects for sampling in excess of standard preparation time, the researcher may also be assessed additional costs of imaging and/or staff time. The Senior Registrar will notify the requestor of these costs prior to the preparation and signing of the Permission to Conduct Analytical Sampling form.
- Requestors will be required to sign outgoing receipts and may also be required to sign loan forms depending on the terms of the project.
- It is the responsibility of the requestor to inform any sub-contractors (e.g., testing laboratories) of Museum policy and to ensure that samples are returned to the Museum's Registrar and data is reported to the coordinating Museum Collections Steward. Samples and data may not be returned to any other Museum staff member.
- The researcher will provide the Peabody Museum with a complete copy of analytical outcomes, including raw data, resulting from the sampling within one year of the date on which the researcher signed the Permission to Conduct Analytical Sampling form. The document provided should be a spreadsheet and must include Peabody Museum numbers, laboratory numbers, and both positive and negative data results.
- The Museum will, in the majority of cases, withhold these results from other researchers for five years from the date on which the researcher signed the Permission to Conduct Analytical Sampling form; thereafter, they will be generally accessible. The Peabody Museum reserves the right to release data before expiration of the five-year moratorium period under extraordinary circumstances and in consultation with the researcher. Requests for the early release of data will be reviewed by the CRC and approved by the Museum Director prior to distribution.
- The researcher agrees to donate one copy of any article, thesis, or other written or visual results of this research to the Peabody Museum upon completion.
- The researcher must agree to return to the Museum any unanalyzed/unprocessed remnant samples, including thin sections or sample blocks, within one year of the date on which the researcher signed the Permission to Conduct Analytical Sampling form.
- The researcher is not permitted to retain samples, unprocessed remnant material or residues, or sampling products for additional future testing (e.g., mounted petrological slides, polished metal



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sections, resin-mounted teeth, etc.). Should additional testing be required to verify results, a new analytical sampling request must be made to the Museum.

- In cases where the Peabody instructs the researcher to dispose of processed samples and their residues, rather than returning them to the Museum, the researcher is responsible for this disposal in accordance with the policies and procedures of their home institution and all applicable laws.
- Requests for new sampling cannot be reviewed for researchers with outstanding remnant samples and/or data.
- Failure to follow Museum policy or guidelines may jeopardize future privileges for the researcher.

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