

Analytical Sampling Frequently Asked Questions

The following information is provided to further clarify the Peabody Museum's Analytical Sampling Policies and Procedures. Please visit our web site at <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/147> for additional information.

SAMPLES

What constitutes one sample?

Because this differs depending on the material sampled and the tests being performed, the Museum defines a single sample as that material which is assigned a unique sample number during our internal processing procedures. Museum staff can confirm the number of samples your proposal contains upon request.

How are samples selected?

We strongly encourage researchers to make a preliminary visit to the Museum and work with our research department to determine if there are appropriate objects for sampling before making your request. This will ensure that you submit a more complete application package and that you are more likely to achieve good results if your application is approved. For additional information on scheduling a research visit, please visit our web site (<https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/collections>).

Will you take the sample for me or do I need to come to the Museum and do it myself?

The Peabody will determine whether Museum staff will take the sample or you will be allowed to do so. If you are permitted to undertake your own sampling, you must schedule an appointment and coordinate with the Museum's research staff. Because samples must be processed by the Peabody Museum before they can be released, you should not plan to be able to leave with the samples immediately after you have taken them.

PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS

What do you mean by internal processing?

Before we can release a sample, Museum staff must process the sampling request. Processing includes administrative recording of the sampling request, issuing of related paperwork, and processing of the object being sampled. We collect data such as dimensions and weight of the object before and after sampling and we document everything with digital images. In some cases, depending on the impact a sampling request may have on a particular object, we may also require that the object undergo CT scanning to better document its original scope before it is permanently altered through destructive sampling. In all cases, basic processing is required. Museum staff will inform you in advance if any special processing is required and we will provide you with those additional costs.

How long does internal processing take?

The timeframe for internal processing varies depending on the nature of the request. In general, it takes us 3-5 hours to process each sample. Since the Museum receives hundreds of analytical sampling requests per



year, we cannot guarantee a specific timeframe for sample delivery. If your request is approved, Museum staff will provide you with an estimated timeframe for the release of your samples or objects.

Can I bypass the internal processing or pay for expedited service? I need my sample ASAP.

Processing takes place on a first come-first served basis and we cannot bypass the process or move specific requests to the front of the line. When your request is approved, we will give you an estimate timeframe for receipt of your samples and you should plan your work accordingly. The Museum charges standard fees for all sampling requests and does not offer an expedited service option.

I have a colleague who works at the Peabody. Can I just return my samples to him/her?

No. All samples must be returned to the Peabody Museum's Registration Department, care of the Senior Registrar. Please do not give your return samples to other Museum staff. It is your responsibility to return samples according to policy and future requests cannot be processed if you have outstanding samples, even if you returned them to someone else at the Museum. Please return samples to: Senior Registrar, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

ADDITIONAL TESTING

My initial testing is complete. Do I need permission to send my sample to another lab for further testing?

Yes! Your approval was only for the specific test(s) and lab requested. You may be required to return your sample to the Museum first and make a new request to send it to a second lab, even if you are conducting the same test.

I'd like to pass my sample/object onto a colleague so they can undertake their own tests. Is this OK?

No. You must return your samples to the Museum and your colleague must make his or her own sampling requests. The Peabody tracks analytical tests, individual samples, and the resulting data so we do not permit researchers to distribute their approved samples to other researchers.

I want to conduct XRF testing during my research visit. Do I need permission?

Yes. Please inform the Peabody staff member with whom you are planning your research visit of all your research goals and proposed methods of analyses. Requests for non-invasive testing follow different policies and procedures. Please note that all requests to conduct non-invasive analysis must be made in advance. We cannot accommodate unscheduled requests made during your research visit.

FEES

Can fees be waived?

In October 2016, the Peabody instituted a required fee schedule for analytical sampling to cover staff processing time. Much thought and consideration went into this decision, weighing the benefits of sampling against the workload required to process sampling requests. We have seen a 200% increase in analytical sampling requests over the past several years, to the point that the Museum can no longer keep up with demand. To this end, we have developed a fee structure to assist with administrative processing costs of



Peabody Museum
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addressing the large numbers of requests we receive. These fees cannot be waived, nor may researchers undertake required documentation and processing themselves in order to save on such costs.

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