

Guidelines for requesting sampling and analysis of cultural history materials in Norwegian university museums' collections

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This document establishes joint routines and procedures pertaining to requests for sampling and scientific analysis of material held in the cultural history collections of Norwegian university museums. The routines are based on the administrative museums' common guidelines for analysis of scientific source material.

Furthermore, the guidelines apply to destructive analysis of scientific source material carried out in connection with archaeological field investigations and post-excavation study.

Requests are processed internally at the five university museums holding cultural history collections, by the Collections Manager or by a separate Analysis Review Committee. Museums are obliged to ensure that recognised ethical standards for research practice are adhered to when evaluating requests. In addition to balancing long-term preservation concerns and knowledge needs, aspects such as feasibility, reproducibility and impartiality are duly considered.

Research ethics

Requests for sampling and analysis must follow guidelines for ethical conduct in research. The applicant is responsible for familiarising herself/himself with these. Refer to:

<https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/guidelines/general-guidelines/>

Requests for access to materials of human origin require a more detailed assessment. For requests involving analysis of human remains, applicants must familiarise themselves with the guidelines of The National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains, which is a committee under The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH). Refer to:

<https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/about-us/our-committees-and-commission/skjelettutvalget/>

Requests for sampling and analysis of Sámi material may require application to the Sámi Parliament. Refer to: <https://sametinget.no/kulturminne-og-bygningsvern/sametingets-kulturminnevern/>

When is formal application required?

These guidelines apply to all types of material and objects that are held in the collections of the university museums. This includes archaeological, numismatic, Sámi, osteological and paleobotanical collections that are protected by the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act. Refer to:

<https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/1978-06-09-50>. They may also apply to other ethnographic and cultural-historical material in the museums' collections.

A formal application is required for all destructive analyses, i.e., methods of analysis that require removal of material or the risk of damage of material. Certain so-called non-destructive analytical methods may also be subject to application. Examples are X-radiography, x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), spectroscopy, microprobe, and laser analyses. If in doubt, contact the Analysis Review Committee or the Collections Manager at the respective museum.

Who can apply?

Applicants must state their institutional affiliation. In cases where, for example, sampling and analysis is requested as part of a student's research project, the student's academic supervisor, or

another permanent staff member at the institution, shall be the principal applicant on the application form. If the applicant has no formal institutional affiliation, responsibility for submitting results should be the laboratory that will carry out the analysis.

Special guidelines for analysis of animal skeletal material held at the University Museum of Bergen (UM)

Special procedures apply for requests for sampling and analysis of animal skeletal materials deposited in the Osteological Collections at the University Museum of Bergen (UM). Requests are processed by both the Sample Review Committee at UM and the administrative museum responsible for the collection in question. Consequently, a longer processing time must be planned for.

The Museum Committee of the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHRM) has adopted the following application procedures for sampling and analysis of zooarchaeological materials:

- Requests for sampling and analysis of animal skeletal materials shall be directed to the University Museum of Bergen (UM), which forwards a copy of the request to the administrative museum. In the case of animal skeletal material in the collections of NTNU University Museum, the NTNU application form shall be used.
- The administrative museum decides whether a permit for sampling and analysis shall be granted or denied
- UM's Sampling Review Committee evaluates the request and makes an informed decision, which is then communicated to the administrative museum
- The administrative museum informs UM as soon as possible of its decision, including comments on its assessment
- UM informs the applicant of the decision and assists with sampling and analysis
- Results are sent to both UM and the administrative museum in accordance with current procedures and guidelines

Special guidelines for analysis of human remains deposited in the Schreiner Collections

Special procedures apply for requests for sampling and analysis of human remains. A longer processing time should be anticipated

- Researchers who request to sample and analyse human skeletal material are advised to contact the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains for a research ethics assessment of the project
- Formal request to sample and analyse human skeletal material is sent to the respective administrative museum. Application includes completed sampling request form, project description, and other relevant documentation (e.g., statement from the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains).

There are separate procedures for the sampling and analysis of human skeletal materials in the collections of the administrative museums that have been deposited in the Schreiner Collections at the University of Oslo (UiO). Refer to: *Guidelines for the use and management of the Schreiner Collections of human skeletal remains at the Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Oslo*,

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accessible at <https://www.med.uio.no/imb/english/research/about/schreiner-collection/guidelines.html>). A longer processing time should be anticipated.

- The application shall be submitted to Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Oslo, which assesses the application in consultation with the administrative museum
- It is the administrative museum that decides whether a permit for sampling should be granted or refused
- If there is any doubt about the location of the material for which application is being made, contact the administrative museum, which shall forward the application to the relevant institution
- Sampling takes place on the premises of the Schreiner Collections; alternatively, skeletal remains are transferred to the designated analytical laboratory, which carries out the sampling.
- Unused material shall be returned to the Schreiner Collections.
- All analytical results shall be sent to both the Schreiner Collections and the administrative museum in accordance with current guidelines.

Release of material

If there are special circumstances that indicate that it is necessary to send objects to another institution for sampling and analysis, an assessment is made on a case-by-case basis. After the analysis part of the application has been assessed and the terms incorporated, the application is treated as a loan case in accordance with current regulations.

Once the sampling and analysis request has been evaluated and terms and conditions specified, the material is subject to a formal loan agreement between the institutions in accordance with current regulations. If objects are to be sent out of the country for analysis, an export license is required and shall be applied for. This applies to all archaeological objects, including coins, and Sámi objects and ship finds older than 100 years, as well as other objects specifically identified in the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act.

The Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo is the national decision-making body for the granting of export licenses for cultural history material. Application information is available at: <https://www.khm.uio.no/english/about/cultural-heritage-management/import-and-export/>.

Special guidelines for legally mandated excavation projects

Some analyses that are carried out in the field in association with legally mandated excavation projects or in connection with post-excavation work are not subject to application. In these cases, it is the project manager who evaluates sampling and analysis needs. This applies to all material that is collected as environmental sample material for the purpose of determining, identifying, dating, and interpreting the locality, cultural layers, and discoveries within the framework of the project plan (e.g., charcoal, soil samples, paleobotanical and osteological material), as well as artefacts considered as bulk material.

Sampling that results in destructive intervention with artefacts or human skeletal material (or adhered deposits on such material) shall be applied for and permission granted as described above. When in doubt, the Analysis Review Committee or the Collections Manager at the respective administrative museum should be consulted.

Special guidelines for research and conservation projects

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For research projects where extensive sampling and/or analysis is planned, an Agreement of Intent between the relevant museum and the project outlining the requested use of the museum's collections and resources shall accompany the formal request. For such projects, a sampling methodology plan shall be submitted. A formal request for sampling and analysis shall be sent to the administrative museum at the start of the project.

In the case of in-house sampling and analysis carried out at the relevant museum in association with conservation treatment, it is not necessary to apply for a permit for sampling and analysis taken to inform specific conservation measures. Such sampling shall be documented in the analysis module (Object database, UniMus) and archive in accordance with current museum guidelines. In the case of extensive sampling and analysis, a sampling methodology plan shall be prepared. This plan shall be submitted to, and quality assured by the in-house Analysis Review Committee.

Application

The completed application form shall be sent to the respective museum as far in advance of the deadline(s) for sampling and analysis as possible. [The form for NTNU can be found here.](#)

It must be clearly defined what is to be analysed, how, and why. Key information must be clearly stated in the completed application form. A project description and financing plan shall be attached.

Applications must include the following:

- An assessment of the relevance of the analytical results to the scientific question
- A list of the objects for which the request applies
- Number of samples (per object), as well as the size / weight / volume / location on object, and possibly other characteristics
- A description of which analyses, and analytical methods are to be used
- Specify who will carry out the sampling and whether assistance is required of museum staff
- Specify who will perform the analysis and in which laboratory.

Contact the respective museum to see if the material is available for analysis. If there is doubt as to whether application is required for the analytical method(s) in question, contact the respective museum.

Restriction

If specified, access to analytical results, including raw data, can be restricted until the project is completed and for a maximum of five-years after permission-to-sample has been granted. Restriction of access of analytical results shall be agreed upon in advance and shall have a defined time limit.

Submission of analytical results and report

Sampling and analysis shall be completed within one year from the date approval is granted, unless otherwise agreed. If the conditions cannot be met, the applicant must contact the administrative museum to request a new agreement.

The applicant is responsible for submitting the analytical results and report (with photo documentation) to the administrative museum. Results shall be submitted in accordance with the

deadlines and conditions specified in the permit. Failure to comply will result in rejection of future requests for analysis by the applicant, and possibly future research applications from her/his institution. The administrative museum registers the results in the object database / analysis module. Unless otherwise agreed, internal applicants register their results in the object database and analysis module.