

# Guidelines for requesting sampling and analysis of cultural history materials in Norwegian University Museums.

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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 guidelines also apply to destructive sampling of scientific source material carried out in connection with archaeological field investigations and post-excavation work.

The routines are based on an agreed policy between the Norwegian University museums, in accordance with their legally mandated responsibilities.

Requests are processed internally at the five university museums holding cultural history collections, by the Collections Manager or by a separate Analysis Review Committee. The museums are required to ensure that recognised ethical standards for research practice are adhered to when evaluating requests. In addition to accommodating long-term preservation concerns and legitimate knowledge needs of the scholarly and scientific community, 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.etikkom.no/en/><sup>1</sup>. Requests for access to materials of human origin require a more detailed assessment. For requests involving analysis of human remains, The National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains should be contacted before a complete sampling and analysis application is sent to the relevant museum. Refer to: <https://www.etikkom.no/en/our-work/about-us/the-national-committee-for-research-ethics-on-human-remains/>.

Please note that requests for sampling and analysis of Sámi material may require additional permission from the Sámi Parliament.

## When is formal application required

These guidelines apply to all types of material and objects that are protected by the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act and held in the cultural history collections of the university museums. Refer to: <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1978-06-09-50>. This includes archaeological, numismatic, ethnographic and cultural history (including Sámi), paleobotanical and osteological collections.

A formal request is required for all destructive analyses, i.e. methods of analysis that require removal of material or the risk of impairing material. Non-invasive analytical methods may also be subject to application. Examples are X-ray, X-ray fluorescence (XRF), spectroscopy, micro-probe and laser

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<sup>1</sup> All Norwegian University Museums comply to ICOM standards <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf>

analyses. In case of doubt, contact the Analysis Review Committee or the Collections Manager at the relevant museum.

### **Who can apply**

The applicant must be a permanent scientific member of staff at an institution for higher education and state her / his 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 employee filling this criterion, shall be the principal applicant on the request form.

### **Special guidelines: analysis of animal skeletal material held at the University Museum in 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 relevant managing university museum responsible for the collections in question. Consequently, a longer processing time must be planned for.

The Museum Committee of Universities Norway (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 relevant managing university museum
- The managing university 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 advice, which is then communicated to the managing university museum.
- The managing university museum informs UM of its decision, including terms and conditions
- UM informs the applicant about the decision and assists in sampling and analysis
- Results of the analysis are sent to both UM and the managing university museum in accordance with current procedures and guidelines

### **Special guidelines: analysis of human remains deposited in the Schreiner Collection**

Special guidelines apply for requests for sampling and analysis of human remains in the collections of the university museums that have been deposited in the Schreiner Collection at the University of Oslo (UiO). The application is processed by both the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains and the Analysis Review Committee or Collections Manager of the respective managing university museum. A longer processing time must be expected.

- The applicant shall submit all requests for sampling and analysis to the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains.
- Following advice from the National Committee for Research Ethics on Human Remains, which is sent to the applicant, the applicant submits a formal sampling and analysis request

to the relevant managing university museum. Application includes a completed sampling request form, project description and all relevant documentation and correspondence.

- The Analysis Review Committee or Collections Manager of the relevant university museum evaluates the application and makes the decision to approve or reject the application.
- The relevant university museum communicates its decision to the applicant, with a copy to the Schreiner Collection. All relevant documentation is included.
- Sampling takes place on the premises of the Schreiner Collection; alternatively, in the case of parts of the skeleton, these are transferred to the specified analytical laboratory, which carries out the sampling.
- Residual material shall be returned to the Schreiner Collection.
- All analytical results shall be sent to both the Schreiner Collection and the relevant university museum in accordance with established guidelines.

### **Release of material**

Normally, archaeological objects are not to be removed from their collections to other institutions for sampling and analysis. Under special circumstances, the relevant university museums may however consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. Once the sampling and analysis request has been evaluated and terms and conditions specified, the objects are subject to a formal loan agreement between the institutions. Loan conditions shall follow current museum loan policy and procedures.

If objects or samples 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 specified 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 follow-up are not subject to application. In these cases, the project manager 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 objects considered as bulk material).

Sampling that results in destructive interference with artefacts or human skeletal material (or adhered deposits on such material) shall be applied for and permission granted as described above. Exception can be made for burnt bone material when such material is the only way to obtain dating. When in doubt, the Analysis Review Committee or the Collections Manager at the relevant museum should be consulted.

### **Special guidelines for research and conservation projects**

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

In the case of in-house sampling and analysis carried out at a university museum in association with conservation treatment, it is not necessary to apply for a permit for sampling and analysis taken with the purpose of informing specific conservation measures. Such sampling must however be documented in the collections database and archive. In the case of extensive sampling and analysis, a sampling methodology plan shall be prepared. This plan shall be quality assured and submitted to the in-house Analysis Review Committee.

### **Application**

The completed request form shall be sent to the relevant museum as far in advance of the deadline(s) for sampling and analysis as possible.

It must be clearly specified on the written application form what is to be analysed, how and why. Key information must be complete and provided with sufficient detail. 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 / position of on object
- 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 relevant museum to see if the material is available for analysis. If you are in doubt as to whether application is required for the analytical method(s) in question, contact the relevant museum.

### **Embargo**

If specified, analytical results, including raw data, can be kept confidential until the project is completed and for a maximum of five-years after the sampling permission has been granted. Non-disclosure of analytical results shall be agreed upon with the relevant museum 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. If the conditions cannot be met, the applicant must contact the relevant museum to formally request a new agreement.

The applicant is responsible for submitting the analytical results and report to the relevant museum. Results shall be submitted according to the deadlines and conditions specified in the permit. Failure to comply will jeopardise future analysis requests for the applicant, and prejudice future research applications from their institution.

Norwegian research institutions that grant permission for sampling and analysis are responsible for ensuring that the project's results are registered in the University Museums IT (MUSIT) database's analysis module, prior to completion of the project. Internal museum applicants are responsible for entering their results into the MUSIT base.