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**Great North Museum: Hancock**

**Application for Research Access to and/or Destructive Sampling of Human Remains**

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The Great North Museum: Hancock is responsible for human remains from collections owned by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (SANT) and the Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHS).

The human remains within these collections are overseen by the GNM: Hancock’s curatorial team and are the specific responsibility of the Keeper of Archaeology and the Keeper of Biology. In total, the GNM: Hancock has approximately 120 assemblages of human remains. These range from single items, such as the 2 Egyptian mummies, to complex assemblages that may contain many individual bones.

These collections are held, amongst other things, to benefit the wider research community and the underlying assumption, in accordance with established guidelines on good practice[[1]](#footnote-1), is that they are available for research and to sample.

Destructive sampling of human remains has become an increasingly important aspect of research and samples may be taken for a variety of reasons, including radiocarbon dating; carbon and nitrogen stable isotope studies for shedding light on ancient diets; strontium and oxygen isotopic analyses to investigate geographical origins of people; DNA analysis for exploring genetic questions and for studying infectious diseases; and the cutting of histological sections to study changes due to age, disease and other factors.

When dealing with requests to sample human remains the GNM: H will balance the benefit of creating new knowledge through the use of destructive sampling against the need to preserve the collections for future generations. If it is at all possible to answer a specific research question without destructive sampling the request will be denied. The GNM: H will also take into account academic credentials and the institutions involved in any research project before making a recommendation to proceed with a request. All sampling decisions will keep in mind questions of public interest as well as the views of the two societies who ultimately own the collections. The Keepers of Biology and Archaeology can advise on a particular course of action but the final decision lies with the relevant society.

All sampling of human remains should be minimally destructive and any removal of material fully documented. In addition, any relevant research findings will be shared with the Museum and added to the relevant collection’s documentation.

All requests to sample human remains should be directed, in the first instance, to the relevant Keeper, who can answer any questions and provide additional information.

Further details about human remains collections and their care can be found in the Museum’s **Human Remains Policy**, which is available via <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/sensitive-collections-and-repatriation>

**Research Access**

**PART A:** to be completed by all applicants

Applicant Name:

Academic affiliation:

Email:

Postal address:

Telephone:

Academic status of applicant Masters student/PhD student/University employee (please specify job title)/Other (please specify):

Name of supervisor:

Email:

Telephone:

Postal address:

For student applications a letter of recommendation from your supervisor should be submitted together with this form.

Aims and purpose of research. Please explain the nature of your research and why the skeletal material you are requesting access to is needed for it. Include the overall rationale for your research and how the relevant Great North Museum: Hancock collection contributes to this.

Data to be recorded and methods to be used:

Dates when access is required:

Is loan of material requested? YES/NO

Please note that we are unable to loan material to individuals. The GNM will consider loans to public museums, galleries, libraries, archives, educational institutions and other public domains that can prove to have an acceptable level of security and suitable environmental conditions. Requests will be welcomed from the UK and international institutions.

Please refer to our full **Loans Policy** via <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/loans>

Does the work involve destructive analysis YES/NO

**If yes, please fill in PART B of this form**

Is publication intended? YES/NO If yes please give details

We draw your particular attention to the following Destructive Sampling terms and conditions:

• I undertake to return any remaining material.

• I will provide a copy of any publication resulting from the analysis of these samples or image made of the samples for publication.

• I submit that the analysis of these samples is intended solely for academic research, for exactly the purpose stated above and no other and is not for commercial purposes. No material is to be forwarded to other researchers not named on this form or used for any other purposes without the express written permission of the Great North Museum: Hancock.

I have read and accept the procedures and terms of access Signature of applicant (scanned signature acceptable)

Name:

Date:

Countersignature by supervisor (students only; scanned signature acceptable)

Name:

Date:

**PART B**: to be completed by applicants conducting destructive analyses

Please detail what destructive techniques are to be used

What specific research questions will the analyses address?

What is the likelihood of useful information being obtained?

Please indicate:

1. What skeletal elements are to be sampled and at what location on the bone
2. How many specimens will be sampled
3. How much tissue will be taken from each specimen
4. How samples will be removed.

Please also specify the context numbers that you intend to sample from, if known at this stage.

Please return completed forms to:

Andrew Parkin ([andrew.parkin@twmusuems.org.uk](about:blank)), for archaeological and ethnographic enquiries.

Dan Gordon ([dan.gordon@twmuseums.org.uk](about:blank)), for natural science enquiries.

1. *Science and the Dead. A guideline for the destructive sampling of archaeological human remains for scientific analysis* (2013, English Heritage)

   *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums* (2005, DCMS). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)