

1. Policy

The South Australian Museum (SAM) has a legal, professional, and ethical obligation to accumulate and care for objects and specimens of scientific and historical interest¹. The Museum also recognizes that destructive analysis of some items may provide new and valuable knowledge in a particular area.

Destructive analysis is a procedure that destroys or alters all or a portion of an object or specimen. The purpose of this policy is to establish parameters for permitting responsible and ethical use of collection items that balances the needs/desires of new research opportunities against the integrity and significance of museum collection items.

Requests to destructively sample a collection item (including but not limited to tissue sampling for molecular studies, destructive morphological studies, isotope analysis etc.) follow the loan policies of the South Australian Museum with the additional protocols specified below. All requests must be directed to the South Australian Museum Research and Collections Committee using the accompanying application form. While every effort will be made to accommodate researchers' requests, decisions concerning requests for destructive sampling of collection items are made on a case-by-case basis. Some requests may also be subject to state and/or federal legislation.²

No material may be removed from specimens without prior consent of the Collection Manager or an appropriate member of the curatorial staff. In the case of type material, or other items of high value/significance as determined by the Research and Collections Committee, permission from the Museum Board is required. Permission for removal of material is contingent upon adherence to the Destructive Analysis Policy and completion of the application form and SAM Agreement.

Requests for tissues from the Australian Biological Tissue Collection (ABTC) are subject to a separate policy and [request forms](#) are available from the ABTC Collection Manager³.

Requests for destructive analysis must include:

- Description of the objectives of the project and its potential scientific value.
- Description of sources of all material to be utilised in the project, not just the material that is the subject of the request.
- Justification for why samples are needed from the SAM collection.
- Nature, and amount (as a percentage of the object and/or as an actual measurement), of material required, including sampling area of the collection item(s) and technique.
- Specifics about the choice of technique to be utilised. In all instances non-destructive and minimally invasive techniques are preferred over sampling methods that consume large portions of any collection item. The researcher must adequately justify their choice of method.
- Qualifications of the investigator(s) to perform the destructive analysis.
- Evidence of experience with the techniques to be used.

¹ South Australian Museum Act 1976

² The Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1988, South Australia. CITES and/or other legislation as appropriate

³ South Australian Museum – Grant Policy – Australian Biological Tissue Collection

- Graduate students must include a signed letter from their supervisor, who will then be responsible for proper use of the sample.

Approval is subject to the following terms and conditions

- Type specimens, items of high value and/or significance may not be sampled except in rare instances. Requests for the destructive analysis of such items will be subject to the approval of the Museum Board and may include special conditions. Full documentation and a set of diagnostic images for each item must be arranged before any sampling takes place. The items must be returned to the Museum as quickly as possible.
- Damage to collection items must be minimized. Normal practice will be for material from collections to be taken by South Australian Museum staff responsible for the specimens or objects, and will normally be taken from items already in fragments and from obscured portions of the object(s).
- In cases where some damage to the specimen will result from the sampling, researchers may be asked to undertake proper post-analysis treatment to stabilize the object(s) or make them aesthetically 'whole'.
- In some cases the Museum may require specialist conservation work to be carried out to generate the samples required and or to restore any damage deemed necessary as a result of sampling. In such cases the Museum would expect this specialist work to be carried out by the conservators at Artlab Australia, in which case costs would be payable by the applicants.
- Each collection item, or its entry in the Museum specimen database, must be annotated to indicate the material removed, the nature of the study, the researcher's name, institutional affiliation and the dates of activity and approvals.
- The South Australian Museum must be cited and acknowledged in any resulting publication, an electronic copy of which must be sent to the Collection Manager. If no publication is contemplated then a report on the processes and outcomes of any analyses must be provided no later than two calendar years following the date of the approval for the removal of the samples in question.
- Unless otherwise stated the researcher must return to the South Australian Museum any unused removed materials or products remaining after investigation for archiving and future research. All unused DNA samples must also be returned.
- Any genetic sequence data derived from these specimens must be deposited in a public database such as GenBank (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/GenBank/index.html>), the accession numbers should be provided to the South Australian Museum and/or included in the annotation. Ensure that any sequences are accompanied by the appropriate catalogue and artefact number.
- Although the South Australian Museum will endeavour to provide items to bona fide researchers free of charge there may be occasions when a fee may be levied in order to recover costs associated with the preparation of loan material. (Refer [Collections Services doc](#)). As an alternative, applicants may offer to make available exchange material (e.g. tissue samples or specimens/objects) that would have value as additions to the SAM collections.
- Requests for material for commercial purposes will be subject to separate agreements.
- Other terms and conditions may be applied to specific requests, subject to negotiation.
- The researcher agrees to indemnify the South Australian Museum for any costs or claims for infringement of copyright in relation to material supplied to the client.
- Requests will not be approved to institutions or researchers who have not made good use of samples in the past or who have not fulfilled all stated requirements.
- The Board reserves the right to withhold approval on any grounds it deems appropriate.

Additional conditions where requests are made for samples of human remains

- At present the Museum is reviewing its approach to the use of human remains in research and pending finalisation of this no new requests for destructive sampling will be accepted.

The South Australian Museum will review its Destructive Analysis Policy every three years. The next review will take place in March 2019.

2. Procedure

Prior to any formal requests for access to South Australian Museum items, prospective applicants should approach the relevant Museum collection manager and discuss their research aims and requirements.

Following such preliminary discussions, if a researcher decides to proceed with a request for destructive sampling, the request will be made using the appropriate South Australian Museum form.

Requests for destructive sampling will be approved only after they have been considered by the Museum's Research and Collection Committee following a three stage process.

Stage 1: The applicant submits an application form to the relevant Museum collection manager in which the following information is required:

- a) An explanation of the aim(s) of the project, methods and techniques to be applied and why destructive sampling is needed. Specify the destructive process to be undertaken.
- b) An explanation of why specific material is required from SA Museum specimens and what other material will be utilized from other sources.
- c) Provision of evidence of experience and competence in the methods to be used, supported by relevant publications or other evidence.
- d) Provision of evidence that the research will be carried out at a professional level and in a reasonable time frame.
- e) Agreement to return unused material to the Museum.
- f) Agreement to payment or offers an exchange of material *in lieu* of payment.

Stage 2: The application is reviewed by the relevant South Australian Museum staff member who has responsibility for the collection from which the proposed study material would be obtained. The Museum staff member prepares advice for the Museum Research and Collections Committee that:

- a) Identifies the specimens requested, including specimen accession or registration numbers or other identifying numbers or notes.
- b) Identifies the significance of the specimens, commenting on aspects such as uniqueness, if they have a secret or sacred status (cultural items), status as biological type specimens, market value if relevant.
- c) Reports on the current state of preservation or conservation of the item.
- d) Comments on the impact of the proposed destructive sampling on the specimen(s). Impact can include risks to the integrity of the object, aesthetic degradation or loss of aspects of its scientific value.
- e) Comments on the value of the proposed research to the extent that they are able and/or indicates where further advice might be required.

Stage 3: The applicant and SAM staff member submissions are considered at a meeting of the Research and Collections Committee. The Committee may:

- accept the application and approve the sampling;
- delay a decision pending further information
- reject the application

The Committee will inform the applicant of the acceptance or rejection of the application. Alternatively the Committee may send a request to the applicant for further information to assist in making their decision. If the request is assessed as concerning cultural items or specimens of high value/significance, the Committee will arrange for the request to be tabled with a recommendation at the next meeting of the Board Collections Committee. The Board will then make the final decision of approval or rejection and communicate this decision to the Research and Collections Committee, who will inform the applicant.

DESTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS APPLICATION FORM

Applicant Section:

Name of applicant:	Date:
If applicant is a student researcher, name of adviser/supervisor:	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor support letter attached
Institution, Address and Contact Details:	

Proposed Research (explain the aim of the project, methods and techniques to be applied and why destructive sampling is needed):
Specify the destructive process to be undertaken.
Explain why you require this material from SA Museum specimens and what other material will be utilized from other sources:
Attach recent publications by researcher relevant to the application, and a statement of experience and competence.
Time frame for sampling, analysis and reporting.

I agree to pay the service fee charged by the South Australian Museum in order to recover the costs of obtaining the samples.

In lieu of a fee I will arrange for an exchange of agreed material to be provided to the South Australian Museum

The material requested in this application will be used for non-commercial research purposes as described in this application.

I agree to the timely return to the South Australian Museum of any unused removed materials or products remaining after my investigation.

Signed: _____ (Researcher)

If a student researcher, **Signature of Supervisor:** _____

SAM Collection Manager/Researcher Section

Name:	Section:
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Registration number(s), description and number of items to be sampled (insert or attach table if needed):

SAM Collection Manager/Researcher comments on the specimen(s) being requested.

Please discuss under the headings of:

- **Significance of item/specimen(s)**

- **Current state of preservation or other quality considerations**

- **Impact of sampling (on specimen integrity, commercial value, etc)**

SAM Collection Manager/Researcher comments regarding:

- **Appropriateness of the competence and Experience of Researcher**

- **The value of the research:**

Any other comments regarding this request:

Applicant will be charged for recovery of costs

Applicant has offered the following exchange material in lieu of charges:

Signature of SAM Collection Manager/Researcher:

SAM Research & Collection Committee

Application tabled at meeting, date:

<input type="checkbox"/> Application approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Application rejected	<input type="checkbox"/> Application returned for further information
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