



Oxford University Museum of Natural History
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Policy for the Loan of Specimens

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The Oxford University Museum of Natural History's collections are an important resource for scientific research, academic teaching and public education. They are kept, displayed and used in secure conditions with particular care to avoid damage by light, temperature, humidity, pollutants, biological or mechanical agencies. The Museum requires that Borrowers fully cooperate with all conditions of loan. By doing so, they help to ensure that the same high standards of collections care are maintained while specimens are used outside the Museum.

In this document we explain:

- **What we mean by a loan, and other definitions relating to loans**
- **Who we will loan to**
- **What specimens we will loan**
- **The purposes for which we will permit a loan**
- **How we administer the loan**
- **Our rights, and our responsibilities to the borrower**
- **The conditions we will impose on the borrower**
- **How you should refer to loaned specimens in any publications**
- **What happens if you lose or damage a specimen**
- **The sanctions we will impose if the loan conditions are not adhered to**

1. **What we mean by a loan, and other definitions relating to loans**

A **loan** refers to the transfer of any specimen(s) from a particular Collection of the Museum (the **Lending Collection**) to an individual who is not a member of that Collection staff (the **Borrower**) for a fixed period of time, after which the specimen(s) are to be returned to the Lending Collection. Ownership at all times remains with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Specimens may be from the Museum's permanent collections or from our collections of duplicate/surplus material.

The Lending Collections are:

- Hope Entomological Collections (insects and arachnids)
- Zoological Collections (other animals)
- Geological Collections (fossils)
- Mineralogical Collections (minerals and rocks)

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History is the **Lender**, and the member of its staff responsible for day to day management of a loan is the **Loan Manager**, a designated individual in each Collection. '**You**' means the Borrower. '**We**' means the Lender.

Approved borrowers are those who have borrowed specimens from us in the past and have complied with all conditions relating to their use and return.

Scientific Loans are for the purpose of scientific study, including but not limited to identification, phylogenetic assessment and type specimen assessment.

Non-Scientific Loans are for non-scientific purposes, including but not limited to photography, display, exhibition and education.

The *Loan Agreement* specifies full details of the loan, including:

- Name, institution, address and other contact details of the Borrower
- Details of specimen(s) to be loaned
- Purpose of the loan
- Dates of the loan
- The conditions of the loan
- Name and contact details of the Loan Manager

The Borrower will be required to sign his agreement to the details and conditions of the loan.

Type specimens are the single most important category of natural history material, being the unique specimens on which species names are based. Where loans of type specimens are possible, special conditions may be imposed.

2. Who will we loan specimens to?

- 2.1. A loan may be made at the request of the Borrower or at the request of a member of the Lending Collections staff.
- 2.2. We make Scientific Loans to staff from other collections or sections of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, research staff affiliated to Departments and Colleges of the University of Oxford, and to those working for other universities, colleges, museums, or research institutions.
- 2.3. We make Non-Scientific Loans to staff as in (2.2) above, and to representatives of other institutions, and to community and charitable organisations.
- 2.4. We will not lend any specimens directly to undergraduate or postgraduate students. All such loan requests must be made through the student's supervisor/major professor, although initial contact may be established through the student.
- 2.5. We will not lend any specimens to any institution except through a named individual who will sign his/her agreement to the loan terms and conditions and share responsibility for the loan with the institution itself.
- 2.6. We will not lend any specimens directly to visiting workers at other institutions. All such loan requests must be made through the institution's employees, although initial contact may be established through the visiting worker.
- 2.7. In case of unfamiliarity with the borrowers work, we may ask for a written statement of research qualifications, and/or examples of completed work, and/or referees, and/or a description of the borrower's research project.
- 2.8. Loans to private addresses will only be made in exceptional circumstances, usually only if the borrower and the quality of their work is personally known to a member of staff or our associates.
- 2.9. We will not normally make loans to commercial companies.
- 2.10. We will only make loans to destinations where appropriate secure and safe holding facilities are available, and only to countries/regions where secure and safe transport to/from can be made.

3. What specimens will we loan?

- 3.1. We will supply specimens from the permanent collections for 'Scientific Loans'. We prefer to supply specimens for 'Non-scientific Loans' from our non-permanent

- collections, but may in certain circumstances supply specimens from the permanent collections.
- 3.2. We will consider permitting Scientific Loans of type specimens where a researcher is unable to inspect such specimens in our Museum and where digital images do not supply the necessary information for the researcher.
 - 3.3. We will not loan any specimen which we consider too fragile or unstable to be transported or used safely.
 - 3.4. Specimens of unique historical nature, or exceptional value, or from certain historical collections, will be loaned only in exceptional circumstances. The Assistant Curator may at their discretion seek the permission of the Director or the Board of Visitors before approving the loan of such specimens.
 - 3.5. We may loan specimens/species covered by CITES, but the approval of the Board of Visitors (or their representative) may be required at the discretion of the Assistant Curator of the lending Collection. Such loans are then made in accordance with the relevant international legislation (European Council Regulation 338/97 and European Commission Regulation 939/97). Such loans will be subject to additional conditions, as outlined in the separate CITES policy document.
 - 3.6. We will not loan any specimen that has associated hazardous properties (for example, if they are toxic, asbestiform or radioactive) unless we are satisfied that the borrower has appropriate experience, training and working conditions to handle such material safely, and will conform to all relevant legislation, for example, the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002, and the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999.
 - 3.7. We will not loan any specimen we believe to be of a sensitive nature.
 - 3.8. Policies and procedures regarding potential loans of human remains are outlined in the Human Remains policy document.
 - 3.9. We will not loan any specimen if the ownership of title to that specimen is uncertain or in dispute.

4. How long will we will loan specimens for?

- 4.1. All loans are made for a finite period of time. The Museum does not loan any specimens on a 'permanent' basis.

Scientific Loans:

- 4.2. The normal loan period for scientific loans will not exceed 12 months, if shorter period apply these will be specified on the Loan form, as will any extensions granted to this time scale.
- 4.3. Depending on the proposed use of the specimen and/or fragility and nature of the specimens, shorter loan periods may be specified.
- 4.4. Shorter loan periods will be specified if specimens are likely to be required for other purposes by the Lending Collection.
- 4.5. If the tenure of the Borrower or any individual (e.g. visiting worker or research student) on whose behalf the Borrower has requested the loan is shorter than our standard loan period for a Scientific Loan, we will only lend the specimen for the period of tenure.
- 4.6. Any request for extension must be made to the Loan Manager prior to the expiry date. An extension to loan will require the approval of the Assistant Curator of the lending Collection. If granted, extensions are for a further six month increment up to a maximum of two years in duration. Any outstanding loans after this period will be individually assessed.

4.7. The Museum reserves the right to recall a loan at any time.

Non-scientific loans:

4.8. Non-Scientific loans will be made for the length of time which the specimens will be used by the Borrower. This, for example, may be as short as an hour for a tutorial held in the Museum; as long as a year for a specimen loaned for an exhibition of that duration.

4.9. Any request for extension must be made to the Loan Manager prior to the expiry date. The length of extension will depend on the reason for loan. An extension to a loan will require the approval of the Assistant Curator of the lending Collection.

4.10. The Museum reserves the right to recall a loan at any time.

5. What conditions will we impose on the borrower?

Security and environmental conditions:

5.1. You must ensure that the conditions in which specimens are stored and used by you are at least as good as those in which they are kept or used at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. These conditions and the extent to which specimens can tolerate variations in conditions will depend on the material concerned.

5.2. You must ensure that specimens are kept and used in a secure place at all times, and are only handled by yourself or by individuals nominated by you. Handling of specimens should be kept to a minimum to avoid wear and tear or accidental damage. Specimens should always be handled with clean hands.

5.3. When not in use, loaned specimens must be stored in a secure places with access restricted to you or individuals nominated by you.

5.4. All dry entomological and zoological specimens must be protected from pest attack including that of the museum beetle *Anthrenus* spp.

5.5. Specimens preserved in a liquid medium must not be allowed to dry out and must be maintained at the correct concentration of preservative (normally 75% ethanol).

5.6. We may require specific other conditions of care for certain kinds of material and these will be specified as a condition of loan on the Loan Agreement.

5.7. We may also require evidence that the required conditions of care will be met before releasing a loan to you. In this case we will ask you for this information when we agree to make the loan to you.

5.8. You must agree to permit the Loan Manager or other representative of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History access to inspect the specimens or their storage conditions at any time during the period of the loan.

5.9. For Non Scientific Loans we are aware that the borrower may not have experience of handling the material concerned. If necessary, we will provide advice on the handling and care of specimens, but may decline to loan specimens if we believe the loan would be hazardous to their long-term preservation.

Scientific Research:

5.10. If you have requested a Scientific Loan, we must be informed of all scientific procedures you wish to carry out on the specimen(s). Permission must be obtained in advance before you carry out any procedure that will alter or damage any part of the specimen. We may require you to provide brief annual reports of the research until it is concluded.

5.11. Every specimen that you identify must be individually labelled with the OUMNH reference number; the determination, re-determination or type designation; the name

of the identifier and the date. This must be written legibly in permanent ink, or using a laser printer/photocopier, on conservation grade card or paper, and unambiguously attached or associated with the specimen to which it belongs.

- 5.12. If as part of your research you designate an OUMNH specimen as a type specimen, or if you refer to *any* specimen in a publication (cited and/or figured), you must quote its accession number. For unaccessioned specimens, please apply to the Loan Manager for a number. The method of marking/labelling specimens will be advised by the Loan Manager.
- 5.13. The standard acronym to be used in publications is OUMNH, with further prefixes as specified on the loan form
- 5.14. It is a condition of every loan that at least one copy or pdf of every publication that features any of our specimens is sent to us immediately upon publication.
- 5.15. If experimental protocols are used that differ from published methods, Borrower agrees to provide copies to the Loan Manager. The Oxford University Museum of Natural History undertakes not to publicise such innovations until they have been published.

Dissection, developing, trimming, sectioning and sampling:

- 5.16. Dissection is a normal procedure for identification of many organisms. However you may not dissect any specimen unless you have the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection. This will normally be given where a purpose of the loan is for you to carry out identifications of the specimens, and will normally be specified as part of the Loan Agreement. If you do dissect a specimen then all parts removed must be returned with the specimen at the end of the loan. For Entomological material, a list of preferred mounting mediums and methods is available on request from the Loan Manager.
- 5.17. You may only unpin/re-pin specimens if you have the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection. If this permission has been given, you must retain and return the original pin with the specimen.
- 5.18. Development is any mechanical or chemical process whereby rock matrix or associated minerals are partially or completely removed from a geological specimen to reveal more of a fossil or mineral. You may not develop any geological specimen unless you have the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection who will first agree with you the method and extent of any development that you would be permitted to carry out. Any permission for development of a specimen will normally be specified as part of the Loan Agreement.
- 5.19. You may not trim, cut section(s) or remove samples of an specimen for any procedure unless you have the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection, who will first agree with you the method and extent of trimming, sectioning or sampling of the specimen that you will be permitted to carry out. It is important that a minimum quantity of material is removed, and that future research or display potential of a specimen is as far as possible not compromised by the sampling procedure. Any permission for trimming, sectioning or sampling a specimen will normally be specified as part of the Loan Agreement.
- 5.20. The ownership of all pieces/sections/samples removed by the Borrower remains with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History unless transfer of ownership of pieces/sections/samples has been explicitly specified in the Loan Agreement.

- 5.21. It is sometimes acceptable for the Borrower's institution, or an institution of their choice, to retain a part of a set of specimens for its permanent collections where the Borrower has carried out identifications either at the request of the staff of the Lending Collection or as part of his/her research programme. The quantity and nature of specimens to be retained, and whether this will be a gift or by exchange for other specimens, must be agreed in advance with the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection and confirmed in writing. The Lending Collection may require the return of the complete loan before sending back to the Borrower any specimens to be retained by his/her institution.

Imaging or reproduction:

- 5.22. The Museum retains copyright of all images and reproductions of its specimens used for non academic purposes. You are not permitted to photograph, cast or produce facsimiles of any specimen without the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection. This will normally be specified as part of the Loan Agreement.
- 5.23. If permission is given for you to photograph, cast or produce facsimiles of any specimen, the Museum may require you to deposit with it a copy of the image, cast or facsimile, and this will be specified as part of the Loan Agreement.

Specimen labels:

- 5.24. Unless you are identifying/re-identifying mixed species, you may not remove, obscure or alter any label attached to a specimen, its mount or its container without the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection. If permission is given for a label to be removed, the label must be preserved and returned with the specimen. Any permission for removal, obscuring or altering a label, and the method to be used, will normally be specified in the Loan Agreement.

Cleaning or coating a specimen:

- 5.25. You may not wash or immerse a dry specimen in any fluid, or coat it in any material unless this is part of a scientific procedure which you have agreed with us, or you have the written permission of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection. If permission has been given, it will normally be included as part of the Loan Agreement.

Insurance and indemnity:

- 5.26. While the value of most specimens sent out on loan is of a purely scientific nature, some specimens have a high financial value or would be particularly expensive to replace. The Museum values its collections highly and may require that specimens that are sent out on loan are insured or indemnified under the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS).
- 5.27. The Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection will decide whether insurance or indemnity is required and will specify the insurance/indemnity value on the Loan Agreement. In this case, the loan will not be released until you have given evidence to the Loan Manager that insurance/indemnity has been arranged.
- 5.28. Insurance can be arranged either by the Borrower's institution or by Oxford University Insurances Section. Unless agreed otherwise with the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection, the Borrower agrees to pay all premiums.
- 5.29. Even if insurance or indemnity is not a requirement of the loan, the Borrower should be aware of their liability relating to loss or damage in section 10. below.

6. How the loan is processed

Applications for loan:

- 6.1. Any request for a loan must be made either in person by a visiting researcher, or in writing. Before considering whether to release specimen(s) on loan we need to have full information about the Borrower, the reason for the loan, the requested duration of the loan and the specimens to be borrowed.
- 6.2. Loans will only be permitted by the written agreement of the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection, who will sign off the Loan form prior to the loan taking place.
- 6.3. If all criteria for loaning specimen(s) are met and the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection has approved the loan, a Loan Agreement will be drawn up by the Loan Manager who will be allocated to manage the loan on a day-to-day basis. His/her name and contact details will be recorded on the Loan Agreement. All enquiries relating to a loan should be addressed to the Loan Manager in the first instance.
- 6.4. The Loan manager will make a record of the condition of the specimens prior to commencement of the loan. This enables us to establish whether any damage has been caused by a Borrower and assists should repairs be necessary.
- 6.5. The Borrower will be required to sign his/her agreement to the details and conditions of the loan specified in the Loan Agreement. This must be done either before the loan is released from the Museum (the signed loan agreement will be retained by the Museum and a copy will be given to the Borrower) or immediately upon receipt of the loan (the borrower must send the signed Loan Agreement and return it to the Loan Manager by return post or email. A copy will be supplied for the Borrower to retain).
- 6.6. We will label all specimens (or batches of unsorted specimens) with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History's accession or reference number, and ensure the specimens/their individual packaging are clearly identified as coming from our Museum. Full information will be supplied with specimens.
- 6.7. We will package specimens securely in appropriate containers and arrange their collection by you or their transport to you by post or courier.
- 6.8. We will inform you when specimens have been sent off to you. If you have not received the specimens within 14 days (48 hours for Royal Mail Special delivery), you must inform us promptly.
- 6.9. You must acknowledge receipt of specimens promptly by post or email, and return the signed Loan Agreement by return if it has not already been received by us.

Returning specimens:

- 6.10. Specimens remain at all times the property of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, and must be returned promptly by the date they are due. If you wish to apply for an extension to the loan, this must be received before the Return date.
- 6.11. We will ensure specimens are packaged in a suitable way for transport to you. You must ensure that at least the same quality of packaging is used when you return specimens to us. Specimens must be packaged securely to prevent pilfering, movement and abrasion, ingress of water, or breakage by impact of falling objects. Where possible, the same packaging should be used to return specimens as that in which they were originally transported to you.
- 6.12. You must return the specimens to us by the method specified on the Loan Agreement. This may be:
 - by hand to the Museum porters or to the staff of the Lending Collection
 - by UK Royal Mail Special Delivery service

- by Airmail, which must be Registered Airmail if type specimens are being sent
 - by a courier company approved by us
- 6.13. When returning specimens, you must mark the outside of the package with the name of the Loan Manager and the full postal address of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History using indelible ink/print. If you are returning specimens from an overseas institution, you must mark the package: '*Scientific specimens of no commercial value*' and include the relevant importation permits, copies of which will be supplied on request. When returning material in liquid, all relevant Dangerous Goods regulations must be adhered to.
- 6.14. For Scientific Loans, we will normally bear the cost of transporting the specimens to your institution, and you will be responsible for the costs of returning the specimens to the Oxford University Museum of Natural History at the end of the loan. Any exception to this must be agreed with the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection before the loan commences and will be specified in the Loan Agreement.
- 6.15. For Non-Scientific Loans the Museum will normally require the Borrower to pay for transport of specimens from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History to the Borrower, and at the end of the loan, from the Borrower back to our Museum. The Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection may waive this requirement at their discretion. All arrangements for transport of specimens will be specified in the Loan Agreement.
- 6.16. We will inform you promptly when a specimens has been returned safely to us, or if there has been any loss or damage in transit.

7. Our rights, and our responsibilities to the borrower:

- 7.1. We will make a decision as to whether a loan should be made to you based on the information you supply when you apply for the loan, on your past record as a borrower, and on any references we have received in support of your request. The decision of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History as to whether a loan should be made, extended, or refused, is final.
- 7.2. We will retain all loan applications, Loan Agreements, and other correspondence and communications relating to loans or loan applications. We will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in regard to the ways we hold, use and reveal data relating to loans.
- 7.3. We will inform you of any changes to conditions of loan or to any changes in the contact details of the Loan Manager.
- 7.4. We will warn you of all hazards that we are aware of relating to the nature or condition of specimens and any special handling or treatment they require, but we cannot take any responsibility for any accident or damage caused to you or any third party as a result of any loan of specimens to you.

8. Transfer of specimens to a third party or to another institution:

- 8.1. We will not permit the transfer of any loan to a third party or another institution, except under the circumstances specified in 8.3 below).
- 8.2. The Loan Manager must be informed of any changes in the contact details of the Borrower. If the borrower relocates and wishes to continue study of the material at another institution, then the current loan will be terminated and a new one instigated.
- 8.3. We recognise that on occasion, it may be necessary to transport specimens to a different study location (such as to consult a reference collection at a different institution). Prior written approval must be sought from the Assistant Curator of the

Lending Collection by the borrower before any specimen transfer will be permitted. The borrower must supply full details of the temporary location of the object, itinerary and method of transport. We will not routinely authorise cross-boundary shipments of this nature.

- 8.4. All conditions relating to the loan will continue to apply even where permission is given for the transfer of a loan to a third party or another institution.

9. What will happen if you lose or damage a specimen

- 9.1. It is recognised that accidents can happen. If you lose a specimen or damage it in any way, you must inform the Loan Manager immediately, and you must carefully retain all parts of a damaged specimen.
- 9.2. You must not attempt to repair a damaged specimen. If a repair is possible, this will be undertaken by a member of the Lending Collection's staff or by a specialist conservator nominated by the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection. You as borrower must agree to pay all costs associated with this repair including transport to/from the conservation laboratory, materials and labour costs. The decision as to whether a specimen can be repaired rests solely with the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection.
- 9.3. Where a specimen is lost or cannot be repaired, and a replacement specimen can be purchased, you as Borrower will agree to pay both for the replacement specimen and for all reasonable costs necessary to achieve this purchase, for example a commissioning a dealer to seek out a replacement specimen. Such specimens will be selected by the Assistant Curator of the Lending Collection, and will as far as possible be the same species, locality and quality as the lost or damaged specimens.

10. What happens if you break the Loan Agreement?

- 10.1. If you as Borrower breach of any of the conditions in the Loan Agreement, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History is entitled to immediate return of all our specimens loaned to you, and you as Borrower agree to pay all our costs of specimen recovery.
 - 10.2. If you break the Loan Agreement, we will remove your name from our lists of Approved Borrowers and may decline to loan specimens to you in the future. We may also decline to loan specimens to your institution again in the future unless we have had the full cooperation of the Head of Department or most senior manager in retrieving our specimens promptly and in good condition.
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