Great North Museum: Hancock

**Research Policy**

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**1. Introduction**

This document sets out guidelines for researchers working with collections at the Great North Museum (GNM) and at our off site stores at the Great North Museum Resource Centre (GNMRC).

For the purposes of this document, a researcher is defined as a visitor to the store carrying out one of the following activities;

* Scholarship: the study and analysis of collection items for the purposes of academic research or teaching.
* Pure Research: study of collection items for personal interest without a particular application in view.
* Creative research: study and analysis of collection items for the purpose of creating an artwork

**Requests for access to collections**

In principle, all museum objects and archive materials are available for public viewing and study.

Researchers should, in the first instance, make a request for access to the collection to the relevant Curator. The Curator will then determine if your request can be accommodated.

Where it is possible to provide the requested information remotely via email or video calls this will be the preferred option.

Where this is not possible or practical the Curator will seek to provide physical access to the specimens or objects, and will make an appointment with the researcher for this.

Appointments are within normal office hours, Monday to Friday.

There are some objects which require stringent access conditions due to their location, physical condition, legal status or other health and safety requirements. Users will be advised of these conditions when making an appointment and it may take longer for GNM staff to arrange access. In some cases it will not be possible for researchers to access these specimens.

In these circumstances, GNM staff will consider reasonable requests for data or images and try to provide these, subject to TWAM regulations governing charges for staff time and the use of copyright images. GNM staff reserve the right to refuse requests.

Where researchers wish to carry out destructive sampling, special permission is required. Researchers should fill out the **Destructive Sampling Request Form** via <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/research-and-sampling> and submit this for approval. Researchers should expect to wait for at least 10 working days or longer for a decision on their proposal.

There is separate guidance for research access and/or destructive sampling of Human Remains. Researchers should fill out the **Human Remains Research Access Policy and Sampling Request Form** via <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/research-and-sampling> and submit this for approval. Researchers should expect to wait for at least 10 working days or longer for a decision on their proposal.

**Guidance for visiting researchers - What visitors can expect**

Visiting researchers will be met at the Museum entrance and brought into the venue by the curator. Curatorial staff will be on hand to provide access to the requested material and answer any queries the researcher may have.

**Facilities**

Researchers will be provided with all the necessary health and safety information for working in the space.

Researchers will be provided with a dedicated workspace. Free WiFi via City Council is available. A desktop PC with guest access to the eMu collections database is available, but must be requested in advance.

A Stemi DV4 teaching microscope can be provided for close study of labels or small specimens. A geological microscope and a flexible light source are available for viewing geological specimens.

High power microscope facilities are not available in the resource centre. If electron microscopy is required, this can sometimes be organised through Newcastle University, at additional cost and subject to availability. Researchers should ask about this facility at the earliest opportunity, ideally when they make their initial request.

Researchers will be provided with gloves if handling the objects. The exception to wearing gloves when handling collections is in the case of members of source communities coming into contact with material from their homeland.

Basic stationary is available. Researchers must provide all other equipment they will need to carry out their research, including but not limited to IT equipment, cameras and photographic equipment, measuring equipment, sampling tools and printed resources. These cannot be provided by GNM staff.

**Guidance for visiting researchers - What is expected of visitors**

**Conduct**

Researchers are expected to behave in a professional manner and abide by all of the instructions given to them by GNM staff. Researchers will be asked to leave if their behaviour is deemed unacceptable.

**Working with the collection**

Many parts of the collection are rare, unique or fragile. Researchers must treat the materials with care and respect. They must follow all instructions from GNM staff regarding the use and handling of these collections.

A laptop or tablet is the preferred way to take notes in the research rooms. If you need to use a writing implement, a pencil is preferred as it reduces risk of damage to the object with ink. Other equipment may be used at the curator’s discretion.

If liquids or chemicals of any kind are needed as part of a sampling procedure, for example a solvent to clean samples, staff must be informed of this prior to a visit, so that the necessary Health and Safety measures can be put in place.

Artists wishing to work from the specimens must use dry media such as pencils or hard chalks. Paint, ink or wet media such as oil pastels are not permitted.

Food and drink are not permitted in the research rooms or stores. A café is available in the building.

Researchers are responsible for all specimens issued to them. They will be deemed liable for any damage to the specimens due to inappropriate use or handling.

**Research involving Human Remains and objects containing Human Remains**

Please see our **Human Remains Research Access and Sampling Policy** via <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/research-and-sampling>

**Research involving sensitive collections**

Please see our **Sacred Objects Policy** via <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/collections/sensitive-collections-and-repatriation>

**Personal property**

Personal property such as bags or coats should be deposited in designated areas. Security of the collection is paramount and the staff reserve the right to ask researchers to remove bags or coats from the research areas, or to ask a researcher to open a bag and show them the contents.

Researchers remain responsible for any valuables left in research areas, and staff accept no liability for loss or damage of these items.

**Research outcomes**

Where GNM’s collections or other research assets form a significant part of a research project we require that a copy of the completed study, whether published or not, be deposited with us for future reference. This must be in digital form. A hard copy may also be provided.

**Copyright**

Researchers may make drawings or take digital images for academic or personal research purposes only. Images can only be published or disseminated in any form with the express permission of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. Where images are used in publications researchers should consult the relevant curator to ensure that they are correctly cited.

If images or drawings are used for commercial purposes this will require additional authorisation and will incur a charge.

**I confirm I have read and understood this research policy and agree to abide by the guidance contained within.**

**Signed........... Date..........**