

UCR Earth & Planetary Sciences Museum Collections Use Policies

Access to Collections

UCRESM does not have a full-time staff member, so visitors to the collections should contact the Museum Scientist at least two weeks before arriving to set the time(s) of their visit. This will generally, but not always, fall within the range of 9am–5pm Monday through Friday. The Museum Scientist may choose to allow visits while they are unavailable under the supervision of a faculty member who has agreed to participate. They may also facilitate visits outside normal office hours at their discretion. Members of the public not belonging to approved research or educational institutions may be admitted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of department faculty and staff members and must be accompanied by them at all times. Access to collections may be denied if the nature of the request puts specimens at undue risk or if the requester has previously damaged specimens.

Access to specimen data is available to all members of the public for non-commercial use with the exception of some locality data when it is deemed that disclosure of such information would put scientifically, historically, or culturally significant resources at risk. Use of specimen data, including photographs and reproductions, for commercial use will be evaluated by the Museum Committee on a case-by-case basis and requires written approval.

Loans

Request to borrow specimens must be submitted to the Museum Scientist and include the purpose of the loan and list of specimens requested. Loans are only granted to qualified researchers and educators associated with reputable institutions. Qualified independent researchers must make arrangements with a nearby institute to borrow and house specimens on their behalf. Loans on behalf of students must be made by the academic supervisor. Loaned specimens may not be transferred to a third party by the borrower, instead they must be returned to UCR EPSM and a separate loan agreement generated for the party in question. Internal departmental loans can be made for an indefinite period of time, but external loans have a maximum duration of 1 year with the possibility of renewal at the request of the borrower.

Borrowers are responsible for the safety of the loaned material. Specimens should be transported and stored according to professional museum standards and examined in a hazard free environment. Specimen labels must stay with their specimens and remain unaltered. Specimens may not be reproduced, prepared, altered, or destructively sampled without prior written approval. In some cases, such as when loaning especially fragile materials, additional restrictions may be applied, to be discussed and agreed upon by UCR EPSM and the borrower prior to the start of the loan.

All loans must be documented by filling out the appropriate loan agreement form, adding a notice of the loan in the collections database, and leaving a placeholder loan card in the specimen drawer. After a loan has been returned, the placeholder loan card should be discarded, and the database entry modified to indicate the loan has ended.

An individual or institution's loan privileges may be revoked if they: 1) handle the object in such a way that preventable damage to the object is incurred; 2) fail to communicate any damages to the Museum Scientist; 3) fail to return loans in a timely manner; 4) alter specimens without permission; 5) or otherwise fail to abide by the agreed upon terms of the loan. Revocation and re-installation of privileges is at the discretion of the Museum Scientist.

Destructive Analysis, Specimen Modification, and Duplication

Request to perform destructive analyses on cataloged UCR EPSM specimens must be submitted in writing to the Museum Scientist and be approved by the Museum Committee. Destructive analysis of especially unique or valuable specimens requires exceptional justification and additional approval by the Department Chair. No destructive analysis of holotype or lectotype material will be permitted. Destructive analysis of specimens from one of the uncatalogued bulk collections only requires permission from the Museum Scientist. Other forms of specimen modification, such as removing matrix or application of consolidants, requires permission of the Museum Scientist and potentially the Museum Committee depending on the extent of the requested modification. Activities which are not inherently destructive but put specimens at increased risk of damage (e.g., casting and molding) also require prior approval from the Museum Scientist. When coating specimens for photography or other duplication purposes, the use of non-permanent substances is required unless explicit permission is otherwise granted. If there is reason to apply permanent or potentially permanent substances, a request must be submitted in the same manner as a request to perform destructive analyses. Electronic copies of all digital images of any specimen loaned must be made available to the UCR EPSM by the borrower, with no restrictions imposed on their usage following timely publication of the borrower's research, or one year after the collections visit or loan is returned, whichever is the shorter.

Request to conduct destructive analyses should include the following elements:

- The researcher's contact information, affiliation, and qualifications.
- A description of the research project and explanation of its significance.
- A description of the proposed analyses, including where they will be conducted and what kinds of data and physical products will result from the analyses.
- A list of specimens to be analyzed.
- Justification for why less destructive methods cannot be used in place of the proposed analyses.
- Justification for why the specimens in question should be analyzed instead of less valuable specimens.

- Discussion of how destruction will be mitigated (e.g., casting & molding prior to analysis).

If a request is approved, the analyses must be performed exactly as described in the proposal. Any alterations or additional analyses require additional approval prior to the analysis. Once the research is completed, whatever remains of the original specimen, any digital or physical copies, and any physical byproducts of the analyses (e.g., thin sections) must be returned to the UCR EPSM collections.