

**QM PROCEDURE: Procedure for Outward Research Loans
(Cultures & Histories and Biodiversity & Geosciences Programs)**

1.0 PURPOSE

These procedures ensure that all QM staff are aware of the processes they must follow when preparing and approving outward research loans from within the Cultures & Histories and Biodiversity & Geosciences Programs.

2.0 SCOPE

These procedures apply specifically to the program staff of the Cultures & Histories and Biodiversity & Geosciences Programs. (For the purposes of this document, due to the different staffing structures in the two Programs, the term “Program Staff Member” refers to the Biodiversity & Geosciences Program and can mean either a Curator or Collection Manager whichever is relevant to the specific Collection area; while “Curator” or “Collection Manager” is specific to the Cultures & Histories Program.)

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Accessioned items are objects or specimens or specimen lots that have been incorporated into the ‘State Collection’ through the formal process of Registration (numbering), and Accessioning (recording locality and other contextual information in an electronic database).

An **Approved institution** is an institution which the Queensland Museum currently has a working relationship with or one which has formal recognition through State or Federal Government and/or is accredited with a professional organisation, such as Museums Australia.

Biological Material includes any living or dead specimens, biologically-derived material such as tissue samples, skeletal elements or parts of specimens, or material which contain biological agents including bacteria, viruses, micro-organisms, genetically modified organisms / micro-organisms which might pose a risk to health and safety of individuals or the environment.

A **Collection Item** is an object or specimen and associated data that has been formally acquired by the QM.

Collection Management Systems (CMS) is the term used to describe all QM recognised data systems that manage and report on the Collections. It includes both electronic (Vernon CMS) and hard copy Records.

Destructive analysis is a procedure that destroys, permanently devalues, or negatively alters in a significant way all or a portion of an object, or specimen.

Exhibition Loans are temporary transfers of Collection Items to and from QM (Loans in, and Loans out, respectively), for the purposes of exhibition or display.

Program Head is the Head, Biodiversity & Geosciences Program, or Cultures & Histories Program, responsible for the Natural or Cultural Collections and Research at the QM.

QM means the Queensland Museum

QMATSICC is the Queensland Museum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee, a group of community representatives which has the responsibility of advising the QM Board of issues, and to consult with communities.

Record is the corresponding data entry related to an Item. Paper-based Records, including photographic prints, not yet digitally captured remain part of the Research Collection.

Research Collection consists of Objects or Specimens for research or loan generally intended to be kept indefinitely, but not individually registered or had a significance assessment undertaken (see Lot). Specimens retained for destructive analysis are managed as part of the Research Collection.

Research Loans are temporary transfers of Collection Items to and from QM (Loans in, and Loans out, respectively), for the purposes of authorised research.

Reserve Collection items are held by various programs and campuses of QM specifically for the purpose of public display, teaching, public education and or interpretation, non-scientific Loans, etc. The former group of Items do not meet QM criteria for state significance, are not accessioned into the State Collection, nor intended to be held in perpetuity.

Specimen means any animal or plant, or any part, product, egg, seed, or root of any animal or plant or geological sample.

State Collection is the official collection of specimens registered by QM through acquisition or transfer. It is the sum total of all Accessioned specimens of scientific or historical significance vested in the Board of the QM. In practical terms the State Collection refers to specimens that have been registered and are recorded in the Collection Management System.

4.0 ACTIONS

4.1 The Collections

The Biodiversity & Geosciences Collection is highly diverse, comprising potentially all zoological phyla, rocks, fossils, minerals and meteorites, each stored and preserved in specific and different ways appropriate to their research potential. These range from glass microscope slides, frozen tissues, DNA extracts, bones and bone fragments, skins, feathers and fur samples, pinned insects, ethanol-preserved or dried whole animals, thin sections, lithological powders, polished sections, sediments, mineral separates and oils etc. Consequently, management and lending procedures for the purpose of research loans need to be flexible and appropriate for the different classes of specimens.

The Cultures & Histories Collection is equally diverse. The Program collects and cares for tangible and intangible cultural heritage Archaeology (Indigenous, Aboriginal, classical, maritime and historic), Oceanic Anthropology (including Australia, Torres Strait, Papua New Guinea, Pacific collections), Queensland History (including Social History, Rail and Transport History in Queensland), and the role of science and technology in society. Objects in these collections are comprised of various and component materials. Consequently, as with the Biodiversity & Geosciences Collections, procedures for the purpose of research loans need to be flexible and appropriate for different types of objects and to accommodate community consultation where required.

4.2 Research loans

Research loans are granted under the following conditions:

- Research loans are made to an approved institution not to an individual.
- Loans may be granted to graduate students in certain circumstances where the student's supervisor (from an approved institution) accepts responsibility for signing the loan agreement, overseeing the process and ensuring the return of collection material.
- Requests for loan should be received at least 3 months prior to the material being required.
- Research loans may be made for the purposes of destructive sampling if the sampling has to be carried out 'offsite' rather than at QM. However, this type of research must be conducted within the specific parameters of the *QM205 Genetic Resources Acquisitions and Loans* or *QM303 Procedure for Destructive Analysis* which requires the completion of a separate *QM304 Application for Destructive Analysis*.
- The borrowing institution should not under any circumstances 'on lend' or transfer loan material to other institutions or other locations without the express written permission of QM.
- Where necessary international institutions must be registered with either CITES, or the Department of Environment, or have a General Permit in accordance with the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act, prior to requesting a loan.

Research loans differ from standard exhibition loans for the following reasons:

- Unregistered material may be borrowed – sometimes this is with the intention of the borrower conducting research for the purpose of assisting with the registration process.
- There is no loan fee charged for loans which are only being used for research purposes. For most Biodiversity & Geosciences loans QM will cover the cost of transporting the loan to the borrower (unless they are able to collect it themselves) and the borrower is required to cover the cost of returning the loan. This is

acknowledged as a reciprocal arrangement to facilitate loans between QM and other institutions. However, with regard to loans from the Cultures & Histories Program, costs will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the type of material being borrowed.

- In most cases there is no requirement for an accompanying QM Courier to travel with the items.
- In most cases the borrowing institution will only be required to provide evidence of basic / nominal insurance coverage.
- The borrowing institution is not required to complete a Venue or Facility report, but will be required to provide appropriate storage, environmental conditions and security as outlined in the Conditions of Loan issued as part of the Loan agreement process.

4.3 Loan assessment and approval process

Researchers from the borrowing institution may contact a Program staff member or Curator directly to ascertain information regarding specific collection items prior to formalising a loan request. The researcher may already have in mind the material they wish to borrow (if they are familiar with the collection) or they may need assistance in determining specific items. The Program staff member or Curator must assist the researcher in this role. If the researcher needs to see collection material in order to determine specific items for loan, it is the responsibility of the Program staff member or Collection Manager to provide physical access to collection material.

(It is important that the staff ensure information in the Vernon database relating to each item requested for loan is correct and as complete as possible. This must be done in relation to the principles of due diligence as outlined in *QM305 Due Diligence Policy* and *QM306 Due Diligence Procedure*, specifically in relation to the Museum's legal ownership of the items in question.)

Once a final decision has been made regarding what items are required, the borrowing institution on behalf of the researcher must make a formal request in writing or via email (verbal or other informal arrangements are not sufficient).

With reference to the **Cultures & Histories Program**, due to the nature of some of the material which may be requested for loan, the Curator is required to complete a *QM307 Research Loan Assessment Form*, which must be circulated to the Collection Manager and Conservation staff for comment and information, which is finally passed to the Program Head for approval.

(It is during this process that the Curator and other staff can outline exactly how they wish the material to be handled during the research process and prior to its return, for example stipulating that material must come back packaged / sorted in the same way it was sent, or if material is further sorted or identified as part of the research process, sufficient original information is retained with specimens to enable easy identification by Museum staff. If necessary specific additional requirements can be added to the *Research Loan Agreement*

template in Vernon, by making a request via Service Desk to the Collection Management Systems staff.)

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community approval may be required dependant on the type of material being requested for loan, the type of research being conducted or the specific borrowing institution or researcher involved,. If this is the case, the Curator will inform the researcher and may ask for further information or documentation before approval can be granted. The Curator is then responsible for discussing the issue of community approval directly with the appropriate QM staff members and/or QMATSIICC as part of the loan approval process.) and documenting this process appropriately.

With reference to the **Biodiversity & Geosciences Program**, the formal request for the loan should go to the appropriate Program staff member responsible for the collection in question. They are responsible for completing a *Research Loan Agreement* via the Collection Management System (CMS – Vernon). (See Vernon help Sheet, *Producing an Outgoing Research Loan Form – Biodiversity & Geosciences* for specific instructions). This should then be forwarded on to the Program Head for final approval.

4.4 Outward loan

The *Research Loan Agreement* is produced in triplicate via the CMS, one remains QM's copy, one is the 'Receipt' which must be signed by a representative of the borrowing institution and returned to QM on receipt of the loan, and the last one is the borrowing institution's copy to be retained by them. A set of loan conditions is also attached to the agreement. The relevant Program Head needs to sign the QM and borrowers copies in the 'Comments' section in order to formalise approval of the loan – this can be done by sending an electronic copy of the document to the Program Head, they can then digitally sign it using Adobe "Sign and Certify" function, lock the document, and return the signed copy; or alternatively a hard copy can be signed manually.

It is the Program staff members or Collection Manager's responsibility to forward the documents with the loan items and to follow up with the borrower to ensure that the receipt is signed and returned to the Museum.

Research loans from the **Biodiversity & Geosciences Collection** to Australian and international institutions must be packaged and transported in accordance with the *QMN200 Guidelines for Packing and Transport (Biodiversity & Geosciences Program)*.

Research loans from the **Cultures & Histories Collection** to Australian and international institutions must be packaged and transported in accordance with the *QMN52 Guidelines for Packing and Transport (Cultures & Histories Program)* unless advised otherwise by Conservation on the *Research Loan Assessment Form*. Depending on the nature of the material being borrowed, Conservation may advise the need for condition reports or not, again this will be noted by them on the *Research Loan Assessment Form*. (Regardless of whether or not condition reports are required, if unregistered material is being borrowed, the Collection Manager should take photographs in order to use this for identification purposes on return of the material.)

In the case of archaeological material, the Collection Manager should take weights and detailed photographs of bags, sub boxes and larger boxes prior to a research loan going out; updating the Vernon record with as much information as possible.

The initial maximum timeframe for any loan is 12 months. Requests for extensions to loans must be made in writing (or via email) by the borrowing institution to the relevant Program staff member or Curator prior to the expiration date of the initial loan agreement.

(All paper based documents should be retained as hard copies in a designated Research Loan File, but also scanned and attached to the relevant record(s) in Vernon).

4.5 Maintaining Loans

It is the responsibility of the Program staff member or Collection Manager who arranged the original loan to manage the outward research loan, including the accurate maintenance of database records in the Vernon system. Once a loan period is within a month of expiring, it is the responsibility of the Program staff member or Collection Manager to liaise with the borrowing institution regarding arrangements for the return of the loan.

4.6 Return of loan

In relation to the **Biodiversity & Geosciences Collection** material, the number one principal to be acknowledged is that packages that declare in writing that they contain any form of biological material (specimens, types, samples for destructive analysis etc.) should be **automatically considered to contain potential biological hazards**, and therefore should be opened and treated only by authorized Biodiversity & Geosciences Program staff qualified to handle such material and in accordance with *QMN101: Policy for Handling Hazards in the Collection* and *QMN102: Procedure for Handling Hazards in the Collection*.

All elements of unpacking, handling and storage of biological material should be undertaken within the Physical Containment PC1 areas on Level 6, the Conservation Laboratory on Level 5, the Biological Laboratories at MTQ, or the freezers on L1 at QMSB and at Hendra.

Staff of QM Central Records, the Loading Dock Officer or any other QM staff member who receive inward loans should forward to the appropriate Program staff member as indicated on the packaging. Rapid processing of biological samples subject to degradation is especially important. Under no circumstances should packaging be opened or documentation detached from the specimen within the package unless it is undertaken by an authorised officer. If it is unclear who the package should be directed to, the Program Head is the default receiver.

The appropriate Program staff member, in consultation with Conservation Staff if necessary, will determine if fumigation is required before placing borrowed specimens back in proximity to the QM Collection.

Returning specimens should be unpacked only by the authorised staff member who initiated the loan. The Program staff member should contact the borrowing institution acknowledging safe receipt of the material, within 28 days of receiving the specimens.

In relation to **Cultures & Histories Collection** material, returning items must be taken to the Conservation Section (if returning to QM&S and MTQ, or to an agreed quarantine area if at the other campuses) for assessment, quarantine and potential freezing purposes, before the packages are opened. Once the packages are opened and the exact contents have been confirmed by the Collection Manager as the actual items which were despatched, they should contact the borrowing institution to confirm safe receipt of the material, within 28 days of receiving the objects.

4.7 Responsibilities

The Code of Conduct prescribes standards for the ethical behaviour of QMN staff and volunteers. In all activities relating to the Collections an employee must not be in conflict of interest with the purposes of QMN. If a conflict develops, the interests of QMN will take precedence.

Responsible officers:

- Collection Managers / Curators – are responsible for implementation of the QMN Outward Loans Procedure in accordance with **due diligence**, and in regard to international loans for ensuring adherence to PCOL regulations.
- Program Head – is responsible for assessing potential risks and who will ultimately decide whether a loan goes ahead.

5.0 POLICY BASE

These procedures have been developed in accordance with the principles of the *Queensland Museum Collection policy*.

6.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

| VERSION | DATE | AMENDMENT |
|---------|------------------------------|--|
| 0.1 | 26/10/2010 | Draft for review – assembled by Program Head |
| 1.0 | 23/03/2011 | Combined Biodiversity / Geoscience information into one document. Reviewed and updated |
| 1.1 | 16 th August 2013 | Updated with new branding information |
| 1.2 | February 2015 | Biannual review completed |
| 1.3 | June 2015 | Document revised to include all Research loans (NE & CE) – draft circulated for |

| | | |
|-----|-------------|--|
| | | comment |
| 1.4 | August 2015 | Comments from Program staff incorporated into final document |

7.0 AUTHORISATION

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Approved by: | Prof. Suzanne Miller |
| Title: | CEO, QMN |
| Approval date: | December 2016 |
| Signature: | |

8.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Procedure owner/creator: | Head, Collection services |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|

9.0 REVIEW PROCESS

This document will be reviewed every 2 years and at other times if any significant new information or legislative or organisational change warrants a change to this document.

Once printed this document is no longer a controlled document.