

# TEXAS STATE

## FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CENTER



### **PROTOCOL FOR RESEARCH REQUESTS USING THE FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CENTER AT TEXAS STATE COLLECTIONS AND FACILITIES**

The Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS) is a multifaceted research and education facility that includes: 1) the Grady Early Forensic Anthropology Research Laboratory (GEFARL) that houses the Texas State Donated Skeletal Collection, 2) the outdoor decomposition facility known as the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility (FARF), and 3) the Osteology Research and Processing Laboratory (ORPL). The FACTS encourages the use of its collections, laboratories, and facilities for scientific research by investigators interested in human skeletal variation and taphonomy.

These guidelines outline the procedures for use of FACTS collections and facilities, and ensure that FACTS personnel are prepared to facilitate individual projects and to enable researchers to use their time and resources efficiently.

## **General Guidelines**

All researchers outside of Texas State University will provide the appropriate “Skeletal Collections Research Request Form” or “FARF Research Request Form” to the Director of FACTS within one month of anticipated arrival date. This can be accomplished by sending the completed and signed form by email (to [dwescott@txstate.edu](mailto:dwescott@txstate.edu)), fax (512-245-1900), or U.S. mail (to Dr. Daniel Wescott, Department of Anthropology, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666). All inquiries on the forms must be addressed completely. The FACTS also recommends researchers attach additional supportive materials such as research grant proposals, IRB approval, equipment training documents, and others. Student researchers must also submit a signed letter from his/her advisor/supervisor with the research request form. The letter should objectively discuss the scientific merit of the research, the role of FACTS in the research, the student’s level of proficiency in utilizing the necessary equipment, and the student’s previous experience in collecting the specified data.

Texas State University student researchers will provide the appropriate “Skeletal Collections Research Request Form” or “FARF Research Request Form” and letter from advisor to the Director of FACTS within two weeks prior to the proposed start date.

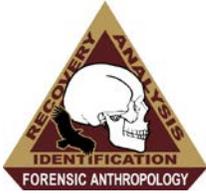
Approval to conduct destructive analyses or to sample biological tissues must be secured prior to submission of grant applications, and a “Request for Biological Tissues Sampling Form” must be submitted at least two months prior to the anticipated proposal due date. Destructive analyses require a review by the full FACTS Board. See “FACTS Policy on Biological Tissue Sampling and Destructive Analysis” for more details.

All researchers will sign a liability waiver form upon arrival at FACTS.

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All researchers will follow proper safety and handling procedures, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

All researchers must strictly safeguard demographic and personal data associated with donors. Donor names will not be provided. However, in some cases health, occupation, and other types of personal data may be requested.

All researchers will provide FACTS with a copy of photographs and radiographs taken, data collected, and manuscripts written (dissertations, theses, book chapters, journal articles, and other publications) related to research facilitated by FACTS.

All researchers will acknowledge the role of FACTS in publications and presentations including results obtained from the research facilitated by FACTS.

Funds must be available to defray costs if FACTS faculty or staff is asked to collect data for the researcher. Documentation of available funds may be required before approval to use FACTS collections or facilities is granted.

## **Research Involving the Texas State Donated Skeletal Collection**

### ***Use of the Donated Skeletal Collection***

The Texas State Donated Skeletal Collection is available for research from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday during Texas State University operation days. If you require availability outside these times prior approval must be granted by the Director of FACTS.

The FACTS encourages researchers to provide their own data collection equipment. If the researcher plans to use equipment owned by Texas State University they must request permission prior to coming to the facility.

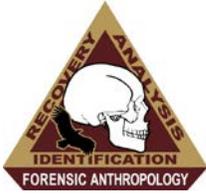
Researchers may take photographs at GEFARL of skeletal remains to document their research and for personal use.

Plain-film and digital radiography of the collection is permissible. Researchers wishing to employ radiographic equipment must have prior approval from the Director of FACTS. Documentation of equipment safety and user training is required.

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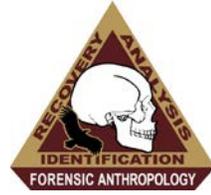
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### ***Request Procedure***

Submit the “Skeletal Collection Research Request Form” to the Director of FACTS.

Destructive analyses of the skeletons are generally not permitted. If your research involves sampling of biological tissues or destructive analyses, the “Request for Biological Sampling Form” must also be submitted. Please see the “FACTS Policy on Biological Sampling” document for more details.

### ***Review of Research Request to use Skeletal Collection***

The review process has three primary goals: 1) ensure that the proposed research has a solid scientific foundation, 2) confirm that FACTS collections and facilities are adequate to address the proposed research, and 3) safeguard that any requests minimize the potential for destruction, loss, or alteration of the preserved osseous and soft tissue.

The FACTS Director will review all research requests involving nondestructive analyses of the Texas State Donated Skeletal Collection.

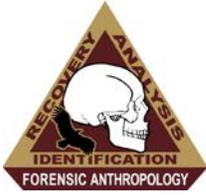
The review process involves:

1. The Director and Coordinator will examine all documentation submitted to ensure its completeness, to evaluate the scientific merit of the study, and to ensure space and collection availability for the researcher.
2. The Director may consult with other FACTS faculty or additional experts depending on the techniques that will be used in the research.
3. A decision regarding approval to use the skeletal collection will be provided to the researcher within three weeks of receipt of the request. At this time the Director will provide the researchers with information regarding fees and other costs that must be paid to FACTS.
4. If the request is granted, the Director will provide a letter of support for grant proposals, if necessary. A request for a letter of support should be sent to the Director at least two weeks prior to the grant proposal deadline.
5. If the research is approved, the Director or Coordinator of FACTS will work with the researcher to establish dates for the research visit(s) and ensure space is available for the researcher.

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## Research at the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility

### ***Use of FARF***

Daily access to the FARF is not restricted to normal business hours given the requirements of many studies. A member of FACTS will be available to monitor and guide the researcher at FARF during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.). Funds must be available to defray costs for faculty and staff in situations where the study requires access over the weekends, overnight, or on holidays.

Researchers must be appropriately dressed at all times at FARF. Appropriate dress includes closed-toed shoes, long pants, shirts with long sleeves or short sleeve shirts worn with sleeve covers, and weather-appropriate gear.

Researchers must provide their own personal protective equipment (PPE) or have funds available to defray PPE costs to FACTS. Minimal PPE at FARF includes gloves and shoe covers. Additional PPE may be required depending on the study protocol.

Researchers may photograph their research for the purposes of documentation provided they supply their own camera, lighting, and associated materials. Clearance for use of photographs other than for personal use and documentation must be secured by submitting a written request to the Director of FACTS. Non-personal use includes publications, electronic transmission, general distribution, or commercial use.

Plain-film or digital radiography of bodies is permissible provided the researcher has a portable x-ray system. Researchers wishing to employ radiographic equipment must have prior approval from the Director of FACTS. Documentation of equipment safety and user training is required.

Funds must be available to defray costs if FACTS faculty or staff are asked to collect data for the researcher. A fee may apply for the use of some equipment and assistance from FACTS faculty.

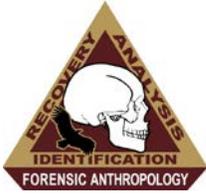
### ***Request Procedure***

Submit the completed and signed "Forensic Anthropology Research Facility Request Form" and other appropriate documents to the Director. If your research involves destructive analyses (i.e., methods that will damage the skeleton) or collection of biological tissues from the body (i.e., hair, skin, fingernails, toenails, muscle, organs, body fluids, cartilage, and bone), the "Request for Biological Sampling Form" must also be submitted at least two months prior to start date. Please see the "FACTS Policy on Destructive Analysis" document for more details.

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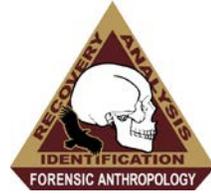
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Proper funding must be available before the research start date. If a grant proposal is submitted for funding it should include costs to pay all appropriate fees and costs associated with FACTS. Funds must also be available to defray costs if FACTS members are asked to collect data. Documentation of funding will be required.

### ***Review Process for FARF Research Requests***

The review process has three primary goals: 1) ensure that the proposed research has a solid scientific foundation, 2) confirm that FACTS collections and facilities are adequate to address the proposed research, and 3) safeguard that any requests minimize the potential for destruction, loss, or alteration of the osseous and soft tissue.

Review of FARF research requests will include:

1. The FACTS Director and Coordinator will review all research requests involving nondestructive analyses conducted at FARF. The review will evaluate the scientific merit of the study, how the study will impact FARF, and the availability of space and donated bodies.
2. The Director may consult with other FACTS faculty or additional experts depending on the techniques that will be used in the research.
3. The Director will render a decision within three weeks of receipt of the request and provide the researchers with an estimation of fees and other costs that must be paid to FACTS.
4. In most cases a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or contract between FACTS and the researcher will be drafted. The agreed upon MOU/contract must be signed by the researcher and FACTS Director before access to FARF will be granted.
5. If the request is granted, the Director will provide a letter of support for grant proposals. A request for a letter of support should be sent to the Director at least two weeks prior to the grant proposal deadline.
6. If the research is approved, the Director or Coordinator of FACTS will work with the researcher to establish dates for the research visit(s).

## **Requests for Biological Tissues Sampling**

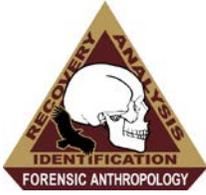
### ***Request Procedure for Destructive Analyses***

Sampling and other protocols involving destructive analyses are outlined in the “FACTS Policy on Biological Tissue Sampling and Destructive Analysis” document. Destructive analyses include sampling biological tissues (both hard and soft tissues) and research procedures or protocol that cause damage to bone.

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If the research involves the collection or destruction of biological samples at FARF, ORPL, or GEFARL, the “FACTS Policy on Biological Tissues and Destructive Analysis” must be signed and a “Request for Biological Tissues Sampling Form” must be submitted in addition to the “FARF Research Request Form” or “Donated Skeletal Collections Research Request Form.”

Prior approval must be provided by the Director before any biological tissue can be sampled from FARF, ORPL, or GEFARL.

Researchers must show evidence that funds and equipment are available to conduct the proposed research involving destructive analyses and to defray costs associated with assistance from FACTS staff and faculty.

### ***Review Process for Destructive Analyses***

The review process has three primary goals: 1) ensure that the proposed research has a solid scientific foundation, 2) confirm that FACTS collections and facilities are adequate to address the proposed research, and 3) safeguard that any requests minimize the potential for destruction, loss, or alteration of the preserved osseous and soft tissue.

Approval to conduct sampling of biological tissues or destructive analyses requires a majority vote of FACTS Board members.

Submissions received by the third week of each month will be reviewed within the first two weeks of the subsequent month. Submission received after the third week will be considered submitted the following month. The Director will contact the researcher with a decision or request for additional materials for review by the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month after submission.

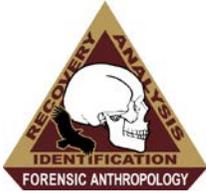
The FACTS Board review will be conducted in the following manner:

1. The FACTS Director and Coordinator will do an initial review of all requests for destructive research. The Director may then ask for additional information or seek consultation with FACTS faculty or other experts.
2. The Director will provide FACTS Board with all material related to the request as well as information from other experts at least one week prior to the Board meeting.
3. The Director will present the research request during the Board meeting, and Board Members will discuss the merits of the research. Upon completion of the discussion, the Board Members will vote “yes” for approval or “no” for non-approval. A majority vote of the Board members is required for approval of destructive analyses. In some cases the Board Members may request additional information before voting.

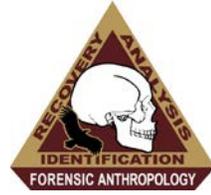
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4. In most cases a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or contract between FACTS and the researcher will be drafted. The MOU or contract must be signed by the researcher, FACTS, and other appropriate representatives before access to the biological tissue will be granted.
5. If the request is granted, the Director will provide the researcher with a letter of support for grant proposals. The Director should be contacted a minimum of two weeks before the grant proposal deadline if a letter of support is requested.
6. If the request is approved, the Director or Coordinator of FACTS will coordinate with the researcher to obtain the biological tissue requested.

I have read the above document and understand the policy.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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