

Hollister Herbarium Loan Policy

Institutional specimen loan policy

Administrative unit	Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences
Policy owner	Director and Curator, Hollister Herbarium
Approval authority	Department of Biology and Tennessee Tech
Effective date	June 1, 2026
Review cycle	Every three years or sooner if requirements change

Purpose

HTTU lends specimens to qualified institutions for legitimate research and education when the benefit justifies the risk and the borrower can provide appropriate care. Loans are institutional transactions. Specimens are not normally sent to private addresses or held as personal loans.

Requests and approval

- A request must come from a curator, collection manager, department head, or other responsible institutional official and name the researcher responsible for the work.
- The request should identify the taxonomic or geographic scope, purpose, number or type of specimens needed, proposed methods, destination, requested duration, and any anticipated sampling or imaging.
- The Director and Curator may approve, modify, decline, or postpone a request based on condition, rarity, legal restrictions, workload, shipping risk, prior compliance, and research value.
- Fragile, unique, historically significant, restricted, or irreplaceable material may be supplied as images, data, or an on-site consultation instead of a physical loan.

Loan term and renewal

The standard loan term is twelve months unless the loan invoice states otherwise. A renewal must be requested before the due date and is not automatic. HTTU may recall material at any time. Borrowers must report changes in the responsible researcher, institutional address, or storage location.

Borrower responsibilities

- Store specimens in secure, pest-managed museum conditions and protect them from light, moisture, dust, chemicals, smoke, vibration, and unauthorized handling.
- Keep HTTU folders, labels, barcodes, and sheets intact and separate from other institutional material.
- Do not remount, repair, clean, fumigate, freeze, chemically treat, dissect, sample, transfer, or forward specimens without written permission.
- Notify HTTU promptly of loss, damage, infestation, contamination, or an emergency affecting the loan.
- Comply with permits, legal restrictions, material transfer terms, sensitive-data conditions, and any special instructions included with the loan.

Annotations and research results

Researchers should provide permanent, archival annotation slips for determinations or nomenclatural changes. Annotations should include the accepted name, identifier, date, and relevant notes. Labels and prior annotations must not be altered, covered, or removed. Publications and derived datasets should cite HTTU catalog numbers, and a copy or stable link should be provided to HTTU.

Destructive sampling

A loan does not authorize destructive sampling. Sampling requires a separate written request and approval under the HTTU Destructive Sampling Policy. Approved removal must be documented on the specimen and loan record, and unused material or derivatives must be handled as specified in the approval.

Shipping and return

1. HTTU prepares outgoing loans using secure, moisture-resistant, trackable packaging appropriate to the material and destination.
2. The receiving institution acknowledges receipt and reports discrepancies or damage promptly.
3. The borrower returns the complete loan in its original order and packaging or in equivalent protective packaging, using tracking and any carrier or insurance conditions specified by HTTU.
4. HTTU inspects returned material, closes the transaction in the loan register, and quarantines or treats the material if pest risk is suspected.

Overdue or noncompliant loans

HTTU will contact the borrowing institution about overdue material. Repeated nonresponse, unauthorized sampling, poor care, or other serious noncompliance may result in recall, suspension of future loans, or notice to the responsible institutional official.