

Electron Microscopy, CMI
Anatomy, School of Medicine, NUI Galway
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP No:

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TITLE: SOP for dropping off samples for Electron Microscopy and/or Atomic Force Microscopy in the Human Biology Building during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

This SOP describes the procedure users must follow to drop off samples for Electron Microscopy (EM) and/or Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM). During the early stages of the reopening, EM and AFM will be performed by the STOs for untrained and inexperienced users. These measures must be taken in order to prevent transmission of COVID-19 within the Human Biology Building and to also allow efficient contact tracing as required if an individual working in the building tests positive.

Procedure

Prior to sample drop off

Users who wish to have samples imaged by EM or AFM must first consult with an STO to determine a time and date for the sample drop to take place. This must be done at least one week before the intended drop off day.

All biological samples must be fixed prior to drop off to the Electron Microscopy core. **Unfixed biological samples will be not be accepted under any circumstances.** If you require fixative, this can be provided by the facility and a date and time for you to collect the fixative will be arranged by an STO.

Prior to sample drop off, the user must place their samples into a cleanable plastic container or Ziploc bag and clean the outside of the container with 70% ethanol before taking the sample to the drop-off point.

On arrival to drop off sample

You must arrive at the Human Biology Building at the pre-arranged time slot. If you arrive late without notifying the facility in advance, you will miss your time slot and your samples will not be taken into the facility for processing.

Disinfect hands using touch-less automatic hand sanitiser station inside the main entrance to the Human Biology Building.

Upon arriving at the Human Biology Building main entrance, you will be met by a STO. You must comply with social distancing guidelines and maintain a 2m distance from the STO.

If your lab is located within the Human Biology Building, you must handover your sample at the pre-determined drop off point in the foyer. Samples will not be accepted anywhere else in the building.

Sample drop off

Place your samples into the open polystyrene box marked 'EM Sample Drop'. The STO will then put the top on the box and take it to the basement to the core facility. The samples will be kept in this box (or refrigerated if necessary) for 72 hours before it is handled by core facility staff to ensure inactivation of any potential viral contamination.

Following sample drop off

After dropping your sample in the box, you must immediately leave the Human Biology Building via the marked exit signs.

You will not be permitted to access any other part of the Human Biology Building unless it has been pre-arranged and approved by the HBB's Covid-19 officer and your PI.

You will be contacted by an STO when your sample is processed to arrange microscope booking.