



## **2021 Researcher Information Packet**



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## Section I: Introduction

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas contains a wide range of environments, fascinating culture, and unique history. The University of the Bahamas welcomes researchers from around the world who are interested in exploring these diverse areas and subjects. The following information packet outlines the requirements for external researchers seeking to obtain new permits for work in the Bahamas as well as for keeping current research projects and permits up-to-date and active. This packet provides detailed procedures for research conducted by external visitors to any of the University of the Bahamas' Campuses and Institutions.

As we work to improve and streamline the permit application process, procedural changes from year to year will be provided in this document. **Please read the following information carefully!** Any errors or oversights in your application may result in delays or rejection of your application. For any questions regarding research conducted in the Bahamas, please contact the University of the Bahamas Research Committee ([ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs](mailto:ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs)).

### **Important Information Regarding Specimen Export for 2021!!**

As of May 2019, the Office of the Prime Minister of the Bahamas initiated an 18 month moratorium on the export of any specimens while the Bahamas developed an ABS (Access and Benefit-sharing) protocol. Any permit application with an export request will be **deferred** during the moratorium. **We are still awaiting news of the moratorium being lifted.** It is possible that the moratorium will continue into part of 2021. For the time being, any permit requesting export will require an exemption. Requests for exemption must pose an immediate benefit to the Bahamas; one that outweighs the risk of exporting those materials during this moratorium. If you wish to apply for an exemption, please contact the UB research committee for more information.

## Section II: General Research Regulations and Procedures

All scientific studies and collecting require a research permit issued by the Bahamas Environment, Science & Technology (BEST) Commission or the Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Corporation (AMMC). In order to keep the Bahamas Government, the University of the Bahamas, and other scientists informed about the work being conducted in the Bahamas, and to prevent any possible conflicts of interest, external researchers must complete a research permit application. Specific procedures for this application are outlined in Sections IV, V and VI of this document for new and renewed permits.

Any research conducted by visitors from foreign academic institutions at or in association with the University of the Bahamas must first go through internal review by the UB's Research Committee. This includes research conducted at UB's Oakes Field Campus, UB North, the UB's Gerace Research Institute, and other UB Institutions. Please submit your application packets **first** to [ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs](mailto:ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs) for initial review. **The University of the Bahamas will not allow any foreign researcher to work at any UB**

**campus or institution without first having their research reviewed by the UB Research Committee.**

The UB Research Committee will review **all applications** (including renewal applications). The applicant will be informed of any comments or concerns raised by the UB Research Committee. Upon the committee's consent, the applicant's paperwork will be forwarded to the proper permitting agency (the BEST Commission or the AMMC) for official government approval. For projects requiring additional export permission, once the research permit has been issued, the Research Committee will request the Export Permit from the Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture (note that an 18 month moratorium on export of specimens is in place for this year).

As dictated by the Bahamas Government, the UB's external research permits follow the calendar year. You may not apply for research dates beyond calendar year 2020. Permits for on-going projects must be renewed yearly.

Research topics should be succinctly defined so they do not overlap with projects already being undertaken by others. Include enough detail to give a clear picture of your research objectives and methods. Indicate why your research is important and how your work will further knowledge in this area. You must show **familiarity with the literature on the subject** and provide related work, if any, that has been done or is currently being conducted in the Bahamas which may have a bearing on your proposed research.

In the event one scientist feels another's research is incorrect due to approach, assumptions, etc., or if he/she has a new approach to an existing project, the two scientists should discuss the matter in an attempt to collaborate in joint research or resolve the problem. However, if such discussions develop into a controversial exchange, the UB Research Committee will consider a separate proposal from the challenging scientist.

The UB's policy is that any publication resulting from any research done while in residence or in association with the University of the Bahamas must acknowledge the University. The accepted form of citation is:

“I (We) am (are) indebted to the University of the Bahamas and its faculty and staff for the logistical (and financial) support of this research.”

The UB's philosophy includes preservation of specimens and conservation of the environment of the Bahamas. To prevent the useless killing of our species, the collecting of **live specimens is prohibited** unless express permission has been sought and obtained through your permit application. Live specimens may be collected and placed in wet labs or aquaria for study, but they must be returned to their natural habitat upon completion of your visit.

### **Timeline for applications:**

New research applications can be submitted at any time before or during the current calendar year (2021). However, it is **imperative** that you submit the necessary paperwork to the UB Research Committee ([ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs](mailto:ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs)) at least 4 months in advance of your planned arrival to provide enough time for the review and processing of your permit.

Renewal applications for on-going research for the 2021 calendar year will be collected **throughout the year**. This is a change from previous years. Due to the global pandemic, we realize that travel will be uncertain for some time. As such, we are not requiring a deadline for applications this year. Please try to get your applications in two months or earlier before your planned travel.

**Progress Reports for 2020 will be due November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

All permits, including renewals permits, will be reviewed by the UB Research Committee. Please submit your application materials to the UB Research Committee ([ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs](mailto:ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs)) and copy the Gerace Research Centre ([grcsansal@gmail.com](mailto:grcsansal@gmail.com)) so we can keep track of your application process.

## **Section III: Special Information Regarding Import and Export**

Like every country, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has strict regulations in place regarding materials that enter and leave its borders. There are two circumstances under which our visiting researchers find themselves dealing with these regulations: equipment import and specimen export.

### **Equipment Import**

Under Bahamian law, any and all research equipment and materials brought into the country are subject to import/duty taxes, unless a duty-free exemption has been sought and approved. Via the BEST Permit Application, under equipment listed on page two, it is possible to obtain the appropriate duty-free exemption. Equipment not declared on your application will not receive an exemption and will be subject to **import taxes by Bahamian Customs** upon your arrival in the country.

**Shipping of Equipment:** Under certain circumstances, a researcher may find it necessary to ship research equipment directly to the Bahamas that would not otherwise fit or be allowed on an airplane. In order to do this, you must set up your own account with the shipping company (i.e. Seacor Island Lines; [www.seacorislandlines.com](http://www.seacorislandlines.com)). Please be aware that there are customs duties on anything brought to the island. When shipping, use **your name** as the **receiver/consignee** in the Bahamas. Do not ship anything directly to the University or its campuses or institutions. The University of the Bahamas is **not responsible** for anything you choose to ship.

VAT and Brokerage Fees: When shipping items to the Bahamas, note that VAT (Value Added Tax) and brokerage fees are placed on items **even if you receive a duty exemption** with your BEST permit. You are responsible for paying any fees to customs agents.

### **Specimen Export**

The Bahamas Government requires an Export Permit issued by the Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture for any and all scientific specimens being removed from the country. This Export Permit is **in addition to** the BEST Research Permit and is required for any and all natural materials you intended to transport out of The Bahamas in connection with your research **including, but not limited to, live organisms, plant/animal tissue, extracted DNA, sediment, sand, soil, shell material, microbes, rocks and water.**

Please consider carefully whether export is an absolute necessity for your research. If so, you **must** provide description and numerical estimate of your intended specimens (see Sections V for specific export instructions when filling out new and renewal permits, respectively). Export Permits will NOT be issued by the Ministry of Agriculture without this information.

The BEST Permit and Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture Export Permit apply to entry/exit and export from The Bahamas **ONLY**. Some specimens may require additional permitting for importation into the United States or other countries. Such permits are beyond the scope and jurisdiction of the University of the Bahamas. It is **the researcher's sole responsibility** to determine whether their specimens require import permits to their home nations and to obtain the necessary documentation themselves.

**Note that an 18 month moratorium on export of specimens was in place and may extend into this year** (see information in the introduction).

## **Section IV: Obtaining Research Permits**

### **A. New and Renewed Research Permit Information**

If you intend to apply for a new research permit or renew a current research project, please read the following information carefully and pay close attention to the “Special Instructions” provided for filling out the BEST application (Section V.) Applications for new research should be submitted at least 2 months in advance of your planned visit to the Bahamas to provide enough time for the review and processing of your permit. If you have multiple active research projects that you wish to renew, a separate set of forms must be submitted for each project renewal. Do NOT combine projects on one set of forms. If adequate time is not allowed, the UB Research Committee will not initiate the permitting process, and your research project will not be approved for that calendar year. All forms must be submitted electronically to the UB Research Committee ([ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs](mailto:ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs)) and copied to the Gerace Research Centre ([grcsansal@gmail.com](mailto:grcsansal@gmail.com)). **DO NOT** send any materials directly to the BEST Commission or AMMC and **DO NOT** send any printed materials to University of the Bahamas via the

postal service or fax. All application material must come through the UB Research Committee **first** if you intend on working with or staying at the campuses and institutions of the University of the Bahamas.

Visiting students: Students may conduct small research projects as part of a class without a research permit so long as it is for educational purposes and the work is not intended to be published or presented. **No export** is allowed for such projects and anything collected live must be returned to the wild upon completion. Collection from national parks and protected locations is **forbidden** with such projects. Students hold **no “ownership”** over these projects if another researcher chooses to submit a permit application for the same project. Faculty members who believe their students’ projects may lead to publishable or presentable work should apply for a research permit before the beginning of their course (See Sections IV and V).

Faculty researchers who are bringing a class and whose students will take part in that faculty member’s permitted research must provide a **list of all students taking that course** before they arrive in the Bahamas. Faculty members are responsible for all their students; any violation of the rules or work taking place outside of the permitted research by a students will result in the forfeiture of that faculty member’s permit.

Applications must be filled out and submitted by a faculty member of an accredited academic institution. Applications will not be accepted from students including, graduate students. Students and graduate students are allowed to be co-PI’s and work on permitted projects with their faculty members (they must be listed in the PI section of the applications). Students, including graduate students, will not be allowed to visit or conduct research without a faculty member from their home institution present during their visit.

Additional permits from the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) are required for any work taking place within a Bahamian National Park (see Section VI: National Parks of the Bahamas). In order to apply for the BNT permit, you must already have in your possession the approved BEST Permit. Once the BEST Permit has been received, the researcher is responsible for applying to the BNT for the additional permit. The researcher must forward their approved BNT Permit to the UB Research Committee. **No work will be allowed to take place within the National Parks without BNT Permit approval.**

## B. Checklist for Applications

### **For Biological, Geological, or Technological Projects:**

- 1. Completed BEST Application  
Must include:
  - a. **Specific** travel dates for your intended work
  - b. List of specimens requested for export
  - c. List of all PI's who will be visiting and working on this project
  - d. List of any equipment you intend to bring into the Bahamas for you project
  - e. A **signed** signature page (Digital signatures are not currently accepted)
- 2. C.V.'s/Resumes for **all visiting PI's**
- 3. Annual Progress Report for all work conducted during last season (for renewal applications)

### **For Archaeological or Historical Projects:**

- 1. Completed AMMC Form 2 (new) or AMMC Form 9 (renewal)  
Must include:
  - a. List of all PI's who will be visiting and working on this project
  - b. List of material you intend to export from the Bahamas
  - c. List of all sites that will be examined during the trip
  - c. Consent/Authorization from your home institution approving the proposed work (for representatives of organizations)
  - d. Copy of your previous permit (for renewal applications)
- 2. C.V.'s/Resumes for **all visiting PI's**
- 3. Progress/Site Report for all conducted during last season (for renewal applications)

**Note that an 18 month moratorium on export of specimens was in place and may remain in place for this permitting year**

**Note that researchers must apply separately for a BNT Permit for any work taking place within national parks (see Section VI: National Parks of the Bahamas)**

## Section V: Detailed Instructions for Applications

### A. Biological, Geological, or Technological Projects

#### 1. 2021 BEST Permit Application

- Page 1
- Please list the specific dates you plan to visit the Bahamas for your research. Blanket date ranges will no longer be accepted. Permits will only be provided for the specific dates of your visit.
  - You must list your current affiliated institution. If you change institutions during the permitting year, please contact the UB Research Committee so that we may update our records.
  - Please provide your current institutional address and contact information. Your institutional work email address is preferred to any personal email addresses.
  - **Export** – In the text box at the bottom of page 1, provide description and numerical estimate of the specimens you intend to remove from The Bahamas. This includes any and all live/dead organisms, plant/animal tissue, extracted DNA, sediment, sand, soil, shell material, microbes, rocks, and/or water.
- Page 2
- Your project description should provide background information as to the problem you wish to address, a concise methodology for testing this problem, and what novel value this project will provide. Please see Section C: Writing a Successful Proposal for more information.
  - If your project includes research locations on multiple Bahamian islands, please include them all and provide the locations on each island you plan to collect data. You **do not** need to fill out an additional application for each island.
  - **Import** - Be sure to list any and all research equipment you will be bringing to and from The Bahamas in the appropriate table. If no equipment is listed, no duty-free exemption will be granted.
- Page 3
- List any collaborators who will be traveling to The Bahamas in conjunction with your project. Additional collaborators **cannot** be added once a permit has been issued for a given year. Students, including graduate students, are not allowed to conduct research without faculty supervision. Any students listed as collaborators on the BEST application must have a faculty member present at all times during their stay.
  - All investigators listed on this page must submit their CV's/Resumes with the application. **Any missing CV/Resume from a person listed on this page will result in the delay or rejection of the permit application.**
- Page 4
- Submit a signed copy of the Signature Page. Electronic signatures are not yet accepted. Please print, sign, and scan page 4. The signature page can

be submitted as an additional email attachment.

Please note the “submit form” button on the BEST Application does not work. Save the document electronically or print and scan the document as a pdf, then email it to the UB Research Committee.

2. *Curriculum Vitae (CVs)*

- Provide an updated CV or resume for yourself and **ALL** collaborators. Every investigator listed on Page 3 of the BEST Application must submit a CV, including any students or graduate students. Any missing CV’s may result in a delay in your permit’s processing or a rejection of your application.

3. *Annual Progress Report (when renewing active permits)*

- See Section VI

**B. Archaeological or Historical Projects:**

1. *2021 AMMC Form 2 (new) or AMMC Form 9 (renewal)*

- List the names, addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, nationalities, passport numbers, and occupations of all persons who are Primary Investigators on this project. Students, staff and field assistants do **not** need to be listed here.,
- If you are applying in a personal capacity (individual researchers), you must be affiliated with an accredited institution and provide information about that institution. If you are representing an organization (including departments within academic institutions) you must provide a letter of authorization from that organization approving your application request.
- Please list the site names, site numbers (check with the AMMC as site number changes may have occurred), and specific locations of the areas you wish to work. You will only be allowed to work at the sites listed on your permit application.
- Describe the sites, if they have been worked previously, and what operation you plan to conduct or the type of material you plan to collect at each of those locations.
- Describe the purpose of your new research project or any changes to previously permitted research. Please provide background information as to the problem you wish to address, a concise methodology for this operation, and what novel value this project will provide. Please see Section C: Writing a Successful Proposal for more information.
- Provide the dates for which you will be traveling to and working in the Bahamas. If coming with students, staff or research assistants, please provide their names, nationalities, and addresses. The PI’s are

responsible for any students, staff, or research assistants brought in to work on the project.

- Insert a copy of the last approved permit you received (for renewals only)

## 2. *Curriculum Vitaes (CVs)*

- Provide an updated CV for yourself and the collaborators listed on your application.

## 3. *Progress Report/Site Report (when renewing active permits)*

- See Section VI

### **C. Writing a Successful Proposal**

Your proposal for new research (as included in the ‘Project Description’ section of the BEST application or “Description of the operations” section of the AMMC Form 9.) should broadly cover three main points:

- 1) Explanation of proposed research (**what** will be done).
- 2) Methods and techniques to be employed (**how** it will be done).
- 3) Novelty/importance of the study (**why** it should be done).

Further, in order to ensure timely approval by the UB Research Committee, be sure your proposal also addresses the following specific questions:

- How does your proposed research relate to prior or pre-existing research projects? Is there any potential for overlap or conflict with other ongoing projects? Check the literature to examine previous work conducted in your field. Have you included a few critical citations that relate to the research?
- What is your level of familiarity with the Bahamas and the locations of your proposed research? Have you visited before, and if so in what capacity? Where do you plan on staying while in the Bahamas and what special logistical requirements do you anticipate needing while working in remote island settings?
- Will you be exporting specimens as part of your project? If so, why is this a necessary component of your work? Can the work be conducted without export of specimens? How will you transport these specimens? What Bahamian export and American (or other) import requirements will you need to meet?
- Where will your field sites be on the islands of the Bahamas? Feel free to attach a map with your proposed research locations.
- What analyses will be performed for this project? Are there facilities in the Bahamas that you could use to analyze specimens within the country? What analyses will take place back at your home institution or elsewhere if exporting materials?
- Will your project involve any field assistants (students, colleagues, advisors, etc.)? If so, what will be their role?

## Section VI: Progress Reports and Data

It is vital that all research conducted here be reported and shared with The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and the University of the Bahamas. Therefore, in addition to the application materials outlined in Section V, an Annual Progress Report is required for every permit issued in a given year (regardless of whether or not the permit is intended to be renewed for the subsequent year). Progress Reports will be forwarded to the BEST Commission and AMMC and recorded at the University of the Bahamas.

Progress Reports must be submitted at the close of each research season (November 30<sup>th</sup> of the year of your permit) or with your renewal application material. In addition to this form, please submit any **published research articles** based off any data collected in The Bahamas.

**Researchers who fail to submit their annual progress report will not be provided permits for future research and will not be allowed to stay or work at University of the Bahamas' campuses and institutions.**

## Section VII: National Parks of the Bahamas

The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) has designated numerous areas on the islands of the Bahamas as national park land. Collecting of any kind within these national parks is **forbidden without a separate permit from the BNT**. This permit is **in addition** to the any permits you have already requested as listed above. Even if you already have an approved permit, the University of the Bahamas will not allow anyone to collect from National Parks without first obtaining this separate BNT Permit.

If you plan on collecting specimens on National Park Land, follow these steps:

1. Acquire your permit through the UB as explained above (follow sections IV through VI).
2. Email your approved BEST or AMMC permit (**not** your application!) to the BNT at: [science@bnt.bs](mailto:science@bnt.bs)
3. Fill out the application form on the BNT website: <http://bnt.bs/science/research-permits/>
4. Pay the BNT research permit processing fee of \$75.

The BNT permit will be sent directly to you. You must email a copy of your BNT permit to the [ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs](mailto:ResearchBahamas@ub.edu.bs) as proof that you are allowed to conduct research in the National Parks. Even if you have acquired your BNT permit, a copy must be provided to the UB Research Committee or you will not be allowed to stay or work with the University's campuses and institutions. BNT permits must be renewed every year.

**No external research may be conducted in The Bahamas without a permit. The University of the Bahamas and its campuses and institutions will not provide accommodations to anyone conducting research without proper permits and will inform the authorities of such transgressions. Anyone who does not comply with the requirements set forth in this document will not be allowed to conduct or continue their research at the University or in The Bahamas until such time as ALL requirements are met.**