The Anthropology Department of the Museum is divided into three divisions: Ethnology Division, Archaeology Division, and Physical Anthropology Division. Based on the concept of culture and methodology shared, the three fields together comprise museum anthropology by integrating the nature of humanities, biology, and social science.

The Anthropology Department of the Museum aims to collect and research systematically without ruining the regional integrity; be in sync with the trend and effects of the cultural studies of its time; display the diversity of cultures and interaction among them; introduce unique patterns to fit in different ecological environments; protect the social heritage that has been endangered, and promote and develop a better place for culture preservation and evolution. Museum anthropology in Taiwan is to be equipped with the ability to bring the far-reaching world culture back to life to Taiwan's aborigines whose past has long been forgotten.

A museum is the product of civilization. It reflects subtle socio-cultural phenomena. Each part of a museum is closely related. In addition to collection and research, the scope of studying museum anthropology covers exhibition and educational communication. In fact, the themes for the permanent exhibitions at both the Life Science Hall and the Anthropology Hall (Austronesians and Chinese spiritual life) determine the Anthropology Department’s personnel recruitment and collection policies.

The collection made by the Anthropology Department includes three categories: (1) ethnographic specimens of Austronesians (Taiwan and New Guinea) and the ethnic minorities in southwest of China; (2) house and temple construction elements, religious artifacts, scripts, pictures, tapes, and videotapes of religious rituals of the Chinese living in Taiwan, Fujian, and Guangdong Provinces; (3) archaeological specimens found in the Mainland China, Southeast Asia, and Taiwan.

Based on the above-mentioned efforts, the recent research projects that center on Southeast Asia, Mainland China, and insular Southeast Asia include the themes as follows:

1. Salvaging studies on archaeology, ethnoarchaeology, and archaeology of aboriginal sites;
2. Studies of paleoanthropology in China;
3. Central Taiwan’s archeological studies of topics including regional ethnography of aborigines and interdisciplinary integration;
4. Collection and research of the artifacts of Han Chinese in Taiwan;
5. Collection of ethnographic specimens of the ethnic minority groups in Southwestern China;
6. Establishment of ethnographic database regarding Austronesian peoples in Taiwan and ethnic groups in Southeast Asia;
7. Studies on anthropology of museum.
The key mission of museum anthropology is to properly manage and utilize natural and artificial objects, and even more, carry the ability to introspect. Based on ecology, society, and morals, museums attempt to explore the general principles of “how” they exist and operate. They need to think about the reasons they exist. Pragmatism in anthropology enables the professionals of anthropology to serve in museums and bear in mind the political praxis of knowledge.

At present, the Anthropology Department of NMNS puts its focus on collection and research of indigenous specimens in Taiwan. Even though the Department has already had a conceptual plan to construct comprehensive museum anthropology (for instance, establish divisions responsible for regions divided by geology and culture of different continents and set up a laboratory for material culture studies), the plan itself has been limited by the Museum’s existing organization and budget. Therefore, the Department has to seek support and resources from both public and private sectors in every possible way; continuously proceed exchanges and collaboration with domestic and international universities, art colleges, museums, and other research institutions.

In addition to dedication to the digital archives program and research, the two divisions of the Anthropology Department are actively involved in tour guide training programs before the launch of special exhibitions hosted by the Science Education Department, on-site demonstrations for the Naturalist Center, submitting essays for NMNS Newsletter publications, and speeches for tour exhibitions. The researchers of this Department dedicate themselves not only to providing precious exhibits and their background information for the permanent exhibitions, but also participating in renewed projects and composition of introductory statements. In recent years, the research teams in the two divisions under the Department have actively devoted extreme efforts in exhibitions planning, specimens collecting, and exhibiting digital value-added animation for annually large and small special exhibitions.