Flinders University

INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENT

OPENSPECIMEN
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Tips from Labs who are working in OpenSpecimen

These insights come from researchers across various disciplines — from clinical labs to field-based teams — who've successfully integrated OpenSpecimen into their workflows.

Start small – and build from there

"We didn't wait until everything was perfect. We picked one collection — a freezer at Tonsley — and started there. It gave us confidence and helped us understand how to use the system."

Use real examples during setup

"When setting up our Collection Protocols, we copied details straight from our ethics applications and grant submissions. It saved time because we already had the info ready."

Don't stress about messy storage

"Some of our older samples were stored in whatever boxes we had on hand. We used 'dimensionless' containers in OpenSpecimen to reflect this — it worked really well."

Choose your 'champions' early

"We nominated one or two people in each lab to become OpenSpecimen champions. They helped train others and answered quick questions. It made rollout smoother."

Barcodes help – but aren’t essential

“We didn’t use barcodes at first. Later, we added them to improve tracking. OpenSpecimen works either way, so don’t let that hold you back.”

Understand roles and permissions

“We set up different access levels for students, lab staff, and supervisors. It gave us peace of mind knowing the data was secure and well-managed.”

Use containers that match your real-world setup

“We mirrored our actual storage — like cryo boxes, compactus drawers, and field crates — in OpenSpecimen. It made it easier to find things later.”

Write things down as you go

“We kept a shared document with notes on how we set things up. It was a lifesaver when new people joined or when we created another protocol.”