



5 Top Tips *On Equipping a Science Lab*

The decision to develop a new science laboratory, either for a new build or a refurbishment can carry substantial monetary and time investment. The initial planning stages are essential to ensure outcomes are met throughout the process, and that you get it right, first time round - saving time and money!

These tips have been written for education professionals including technicians, teachers, heads of departments and facility managers, who are looking to plan and implement a new build or refurbished science laboratory.



Consider your space - and who'll be using it!

Your science laboratory should be designed to optimise teaching and learning and create an environment within which student and teacher interaction is easily facilitated.

It is important to consider a practical space which allows everyone to get hands-on which can be accomplished effectively and safely. Important things to take into consideration include the overall size of your class and the size of groups for practical work.

It is common that teachers adjust their teaching style to suit their learning space, so the opportunity to work in a science laboratory built or refurbished to meet specific needs can be an amazing experience for both student and teacher!



Future proof your space

Space is often at premium in schools, colleges and universities, so it is important to make the best use possible of what you have available.

A cluttered laboratory can restrict movement and concentration; therefore, it is important that you consider how loose furniture will be arranged in order to provide students with the space required, and the safety to carry out their lessons.

Ensure that students can easily switch from practical to theory, provide good circulation areas and incorporate a teacher wall which provides the students with a focus.



Source the right products... and supplier!

On the face of it, suppliers may appear to have similar attributes, and cover everything on your checklist, but it's up to you to ensure that you're getting the best service from your supplier.

It is important beforehand that you discuss which exam board you are following so that your product requirements can be mapped to the relevant curriculum.

When looking for a supplier consider consolidating your order for the best possible price, their stock availability, delivery times range of products, support with un-pack and disposal of packaging. Some suppliers also provide advice, useful content, videos and downloads for their customers.



Consider the full package

Most will recognise that cost is not the only factor when considering building or refurbishing a science laboratory and it is important to consider paying attention to the other factors that fall into the mix. does your supplier provide design, fit-out and a range of resources?

Would you get discounts on future orders if you were to consolidate your order? Does the supplier offer ongoing service, technical support and training?

It is important that you discuss all options beforehand and formalise your requirements in your proposals.



Consider your pre-fitted structures

All science laboratories require gas, water and electricity – however each of these comes with health and safety requirements and it is vital that shut-off valves are easily accessible.

It is important to consider the number of labs within the science department and your furniture considerations, to ensure a safe working environment.

Ensure you carry out comprehensive research in regards to fume cabinets to ensure they stand the test of time and consider ongoing maintenance costs, as having these maintained regularly is important to stop them becoming ineffective. As a legal requirement, fume cabinets need to be tested on a yearly basis.