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Martin's Tech Guide on

Setting Up a New School Lab with a Small Budget

Setting up a school lab with a small budget can be a challenge, but it is possible to do so with careful planning and resourcefulness.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- **Determine your needs**

  Make a list of the equipment and supplies that you will need for your lab, prioritising items that are essential for safety or required for specific, and compulsory required practical experiments.

- **Look for used or refurbished equipment**

  Sometimes lab equipment suppliers offer used or refurbished equipment at a lower cost than new equipment. You may also be able to find used equipment through classified ads, online marketplaces or even from other local schools, colleges and universities. Join a technician Facebook forum and look out for 'free to good home', 'surplus to requirements' posts that are in your area.

- **Consider alternative sources for supplies**

  In addition to purchasing supplies from a lab supply company, you may be able to find what you need through alternative sources such as surplus stores or online marketplaces.

- **Seek donations or grants**

  Reach out to local businesses or organisations that may be willing to donate equipment or supplies to your school. You may also be able to find grants or funding opportunities to help cover the cost of setting up your lab.

  Did you know many larger science and technology companies have budget allocated specifically for this reason – as part of their outreach and corporate social responsibility work?

- **Use resources wisely**

  Once you have your lab set up, make sure to use resources wisely to stretch your budget as far as possible. This might include conserving supplies, sharing equipment among classrooms, or finding ways to reuse or recycle materials. Ensure you are asking teaching staff for class sizes – smaller groups will need less equipment!

I hope these tips are helpful!

