



Glossary of Key Terms

Understand essential OpenSpecimen terms commonly used at Flinders University.

Collection Protocol (CP)

A structured plan that outlines how specimens are collected, processed, and managed for a specific research project at Flinders. It includes details such as responsible researchers, ethics approvals through the Flinders Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), and the types of specimens involved.

- **Participant Centric CPs** follow individuals through their clinical journey, collecting specimens at defined events (e.g., Recruitment, Diagnosis, Birth).
- **Specimen Centric CPs** manage specimens without linking to participant data.

Site

A physical or organisational location associated with specimen activity. This could be a Flinders lab (e.g. Tonsley, Bedford Park), a research group, a museum collection, or a collaborating institute. Sites help manage access and visibility of specimen data across the university.

Storage Container

Any physical unit used to store specimens — such as a -80°C freezer, liquid nitrogen tank, shelf, drawer, field box, or archival cabinet. OpenSpecimen allows you to map these containers to reflect real-world storage at Flinders.

User Roles

Access levels assigned to users within OpenSpecimen. Roles determine what data and functions a user can view or edit. Common Flinders roles include:

- **Administrator:** can perform all operations within the assigned Sites and has access to all Collection Protocols for the Site.

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- **Principal Investigator:** has read only access to all data within the assigned protocols and can see personal health information data. Can also create and update Queries.
 - **Researcher:** has read only access to Collection Protocols and can create and update Participants and Visits, can see personal health information data within the assigned protocol, and can create, edit, update and delete specimens.

Specimen

An individual item collected for research purposes. At Flinders, this may include biological samples (e.g. blood, tissue), environmental samples (e.g. soil, water), cultural artefacts, fossils, or archival materials.

Barcoded Labels

Unique identifiers (barcodes or QR codes) used to label and track specimens accurately. These are especially useful for managing large collections across multiple Flinders sites.

Data Entry

The process of inputting specimen information into OpenSpecimen. This can be done manually or via bulk upload using spreadsheets.

Dimensionless Container

A flexible storage option used when specimens are stored without a fixed layout — for example, a box of mixed items or a field kit. Useful for irregular or temporary storage setups.

Ethics Approval

Formal clearance from the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) or relevant body, ensuring that specimen collection and use complies with ethical standards and regulations.

Consent Information

Documentation of participant consent for specimen collection and use. This information is linked to specimens in OpenSpecimen and managed in accordance with Flinders' research ethics policies.

Collection Site

A location where specimens are gathered but not necessarily stored long-term. This could be a field site (e.g. Flinders coastal research station), a hospital, or a partner organisation.