



Module 18: How to use Excel - the Basics

- How to understand the basics of Excel
- How to easily navigate Excel
- Why Excel is a useful tool for making spreadsheets
- Simple ideas for troubleshooting

In this module you will learn:

- What Microsoft Excel is
- How to understand the basics of Excel
- How to navigate worksheets efficiently
- How to work with cells, rows and columns
- Simple techniques to organise and manage data
- Useful tools to improve productivity in Excel

18.1 Introduction



Microsoft Excel is one of the most widely used tools for organising, analysing and managing data.

Excel is used in homes, offices and businesses for budgeting, planning, reporting and tracking information. While many users associate Excel with calculations, it is also highly effective for organising and presenting data clearly.

Excel is part of Microsoft 365, meaning it can be used across devices and allows users to collaborate and share files easily.

Each worksheet is made up of a grid:

- Rows are numbered (1, 2, 3...)
- Columns are labelled (A, B, C...)
- A cell is the intersection of a row and column (e.g. A1)

The **Name Box** shows the selected cell, and the **Formula Bar** displays its contents.

A **workbook** is an Excel file containing one or more worksheets. Modern versions typically start with one worksheet by default.

18.2 Moving Around a Worksheet



Efficient navigation helps you work faster.

- Arrow keys - move in any direction
- Enter - move down

- Tab - move right
- Ctrl + Arrow keys - jump across large data ranges

Tip: Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce reliance on the mouse.

18.3 Opening and Switching Between Files



You can open and switch between multiple Excel files easily.

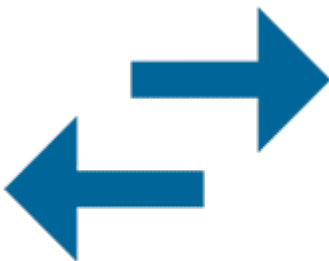
To open multiple files:

- Select multiple Excel files and press Enter

To switch between files:

- Use **Ctrl + Tab** or **Alt + Tab**
- Use the **View → Switch Windows** option

18.4 Selecting Cells



Selecting cells allows you to work efficiently with data.

- Click a cell to select it
- Click row numbers or column letters
- Click and drag to select a range
- Hold Ctrl to select non-adjacent cells
- Select the top-left corner to highlight all cells

18.5 Entering and Editing Data

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Entering and editing data is one of the core functions of Excel.

- Click a cell and start typing
- Press Enter to confirm
- Double-click or press F2 to edit

Tip: Format cells as Text to preserve leading zeros.

18.6 Copying and Filling Data



Excel provides shortcuts to quickly copy or extend data.

- Ctrl + D - fill down
- Ctrl + R - fill right
- Copy and Paste for duplication

The **Fill Handle** allows you to extend sequences such as numbers, dates or text patterns.

18.7 Working with Rows and Columns



Rows and columns help organise your data.

- Right-click to insert or delete rows/columns
- Drag to adjust column width

18.8 Formatting Cells



Formatting improves readability and presentation.

- Use borders to highlight data
- Add diagonal lines via Borders → More Borders
- Adjust font, alignment and styles

18.9 Deleting Blank Cells



Blank cells can affect calculations.

Safer method:

- Use **Find & Select** → **Go To Special** → **Blanks**
- Delete selected blank cells carefully

18.10 Using Wildcards for Search



Wildcards help search for partial matches.

- * = multiple characters
- ? = single character

Use ~ before these symbols to search for them literally.

18.11 Extracting Unique Values



You can extract unique values from a dataset.

- Use **Data** → **Remove Duplicates**
- Or use Advanced Filter if needed

18.12 Transposing Data



Transpose changes rows into columns and vice versa.

- Copy the data
- Use **Paste** → **Transpose**

18.13 Managing Worksheets



- Rename by double-clicking
- Move by dragging tabs
- Copy using Move/Copy

18.14 Protecting and Hiding Data



Protecting data helps prevent unwanted changes.

- Use Review → Protect Sheet
- Hide rows or columns if needed

Important: ##### means the column is too narrow or data cannot display properly.

Activity 1 - Practise Using Excel

Estimated time: 10-15 minutes

Create a simple spreadsheet and practise navigation, data entry and formatting.

Module Summary

You have learned how to use the core features of Excel, including navigation, data entry, formatting and organising worksheets. These skills provide a strong foundation for using Excel effectively in the workplace.
