

Excel - Introduction to Formulas

You use Excel **formulas** to perform calculations, from basic arithmetic (e.g. addition) to statistics (e.g. standard deviation).



Type your formula in the cell where you would like the result to appear.
All Excel formulas start with an **equals sign (=)**.

Write an Excel formula

1. Click in the cell where you would like the result of your formula to appear e.g. **C2**

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	
3			
4			
5			

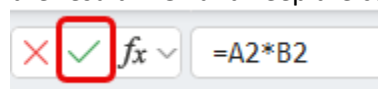
2. Type your formula, starting with the equals sign e.g. **=A2*B2** and clicking/typing the cell references for where the numbers are located

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	=A2*B2
3			
4			
5			

3. EITHER press the **Enter** key to display the result in **C2** and move the cursor to the cell below

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	£1,937.50
3			
4			
5			

OR click the tick in the **Formula Bar** to display the result in **C2** and keep the cursor in cell **C2**



You can type numbers into the formulas rather than cell references, but this is often less efficient than using cell references.

Arithmetical Operators

The common operators used in Excel are conveniently located in the number pad area of your keyboard.



Add	+
Subtract	-
Divide	/
Multiply	*

Order of Operations

If you use more than one operator in a formula, Excel will calculate the result using the order of operations known as **BODMAS**:



Brackets	()
Orders	^
Division	/
Multiplication	*
Addition	+
Subtraction	-

You can change the order of operations by adding brackets. Any part of a formula that is contained in brackets will be calculated first. For example, using BODMAS, $=3+2/2$ would equal **4**. By using brackets $=(3+2)/2$ would equal **2.5**.

Edit an Excel formula

1. Double-click on the cell containing your formula e.g. **C2**

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	£1,937.50
3			
4			
5			

2. Your cursor will flash at the insertion point at the end of the formula and the corresponding cells will appear in colour

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	=A2*B2
3			
4			

3. Type the change to your formula e.g. **=(A2*B2)*1.2**

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	=(A2*B2)*1.2
3			

4. Press **Enter** or click the tick on the **Formula Bar** to display the new result

	A	B	C
1	Cost	No. Items	Total cost
2	£15.50	125	£2,325.00
3			



You can also edit the formula in the **Formula Bar**, but you must first click on the cell containing the formula, then click inside the formula bar to activate Edit mode.

You can press the **Esc** key whilst editing a formula to cancel the changes.

Excel also contains a comprehensive library of functions to perform more complex calculations. See our guide [Excel – introduction to functions](#) for more information.

Further information and help

- Use MyIT to log calls with the IT Service Desk: myit.abdn.ac.uk
- If you want to learn about any Microsoft product in more detail you can use [Microsoft 365 help and learning](#) for tutorials, videos and helpful hints