



University Information
Technology Services

Microsoft Office

Excel 2016 for Windows

Intro to Formulas & Basic Functions

University Information Technology Services

Learning Technologies, Training & Audiovisual Outreach

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Microsoft Office: Excel 2016 for Windows Intro to Formulas and Basic Functions

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Introduction

This booklet is the companion document to the Excel 2016: Intro to Formulas and Basic Functions workshop. It includes and definitions for formulas and functions, and covers the various aspects of creating formulas and the basic functions used in Excel.

Learning Objectives

After completing the instructions in this booklet, you will be able to:

- Understand formulas
- Create formulas
- Understand functions
- Use basic functions
- Know the difference between formulas and functions

Functions and Formulas

A formula performs calculations or other actions on the data in your worksheet. A function is a preset formula in Excel. It is important to understand the following information about functions and formulas.

Basic Information

A formula and a function always begins with an equal sign (=). The data Excel will use to calculate a function is enclosed in parentheses (). Formulas do not include parentheses.

	Formula	
	=A1+A2+A3	
	Function	
	=SUM(A1:A3)	

Figure 1 - Formulas & Functions

How to Specify Individual Cells

When there is a comma (,) between cell references in a function, Excel uses each cell to perform the calculation. For example, the function =SUM (A1, A2, A3) is the same as the formula =A1+A2+A3.

	Function	
	=SUM(A1,A2,A3)	

Figure 2 - Using Commas to Separate Cell References

How to Specify a Group of Cells

When there is a colon (:) between cell references in a function, Excel uses the specified cells and all cells between them to perform the calculation. For example, the function =SUM (A1:A3) is the same as the formula =A1+A2+A3 (See Figure 1).

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