Formatting Cells/Columns in Excel

This quick guide shows how to format cells and columns of cells in Microsoft Excel. Use these steps if you are manually creating a data file for upload into data pipeline or are recovering from the loss of leading zeros. As a reminder, opening .csv files in excel can cause them to lose leading zeros if you directly open them rather than using the data import steps.

Reading File layouts to determine formatting

The field length and examples on data file layouts help indicate the needed formatting for columns of data on your data file. CDE data file layouts include these elements to show the expected values for data fields.

When a file layout lists a set number of zeros as the example, this is usually an indication of formatting needed to ensure leading zeros are present. *This is usually considered <u>custom</u> formatting in excel.*

Name of Field	Field Length	Text Start Position	Text End Position	CSV order	Excel Column	Examples	Remarks
School District/BOCES Code* 🔑	4	1	4	1	A2	0000	
Student's State ID (SASID)* 🔑	10	5	14	2	B2	0000000000	
Local ID (LASID)	10	15	24	3	C2	0000000000	

In this example, the School District/BOCES field must be 4 characters long. This means all district codes must have leading zeros if they are shorter than 4-digit numbers. For example, district 130 must be entered as district 0130 for this data field.

Date fields should be formatted as a 2-digit month, 2-digit day, 4-digit year format. *This is usually considered <u>date</u> formatting in excel but can also be accomplished through <u>custom</u> formatting.*

Name of Field	Field Length	Text Start Position	Text End Position	CSV order	Excel Column	Examples	Remarks
Student's Date of Birth*	8	91	98	7	G2	09142007	Format is MMDDYYYY
Entry Date* 🔑	8	99	106	8	H2	09092012	Format is MMDDYYYY

In excel, format these cells may be formatted as '00000000' if you lost the leading zero on the month but did not lose the leading zero on the day.

Some file layouts include numeric fields that require a decimal. These fields may not require a leading zero, but absolutely require the decimal and place values after the decimal. The student school association file is one example of a file layout that includes these types of data fields. *This is usually considered <u>number</u> formatting in excel.*

Name of Field	Field Length	Text Start Position	Text End Position	CSV order	Excel Column	Examples	Remark
Total Days Attended	5	166	172	40	AN2	252.5	Include Decimal
Total Days Excused	5	173	179	41	AO2	10.0	Include Decimal
Total Days Unexcused	5	180	186	42	AP2	3.0	Include Decimal
Total Possible Attendance Days				43	AQ2	265.0	Include Decimal

maximum field length of 5 characters where a decimal counts as one character

decimal and tenths place are absolutely required, but leading zeros are not needed

Alpha based fields (letters) may be codes or name fields. These fields may be formatted as text. Name fields are restricted to 30 character (letter) long names. Alpha code fields will reference specific codes. These may be case sensitive, so please refer to details on the file layout regarding specific alpha codes. *This is usually <u>text</u> formatting in excel, but can also be left as <u>general</u> formatting. Most of the time these fields do not need formatting updated in excel and can be left alone.*

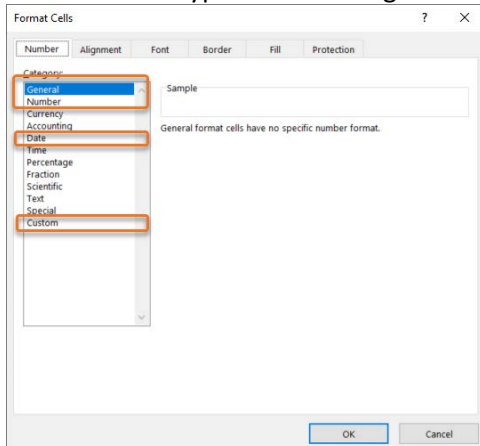| Name of Field	Field Length	Text Start Position	Text End Position	CSV Order	Excel Column	Examples	Remarks
Student's First Name *	30	19	48	4	D2	Valid name	
Student's Last Name *	30	49	78	5	E2	Valid name	
Guideline Name *	3	90	92	9	I2	ACT	

Formatting a Column of Data

1. Right click on the name of the column in excel to highlight the entire column and bring up an options menu.
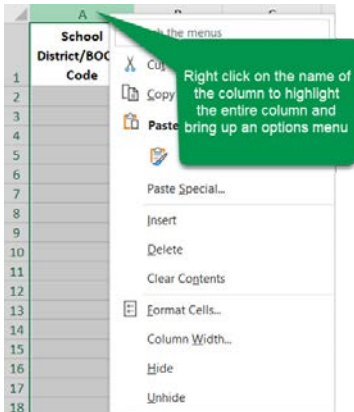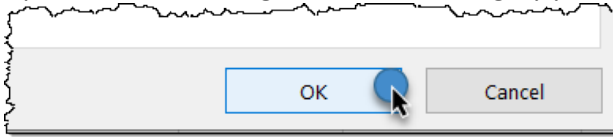

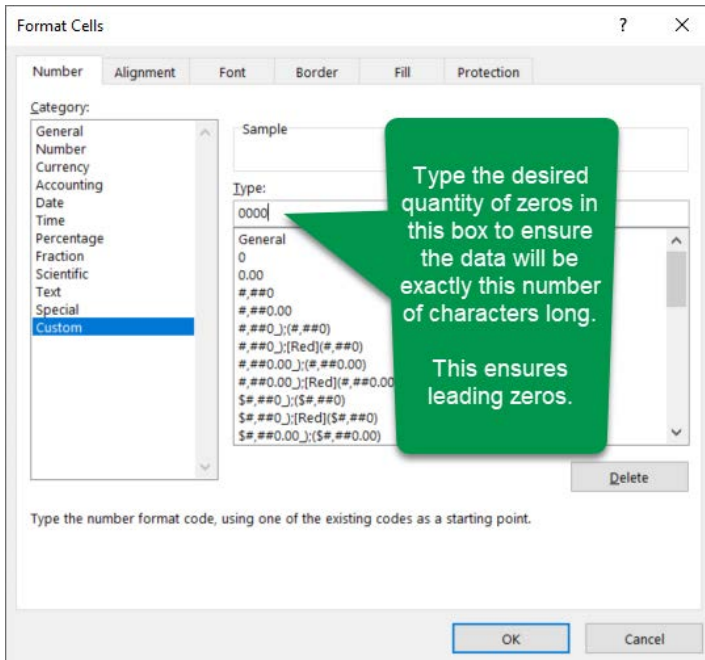2. Select *Format Cells* from the options menu
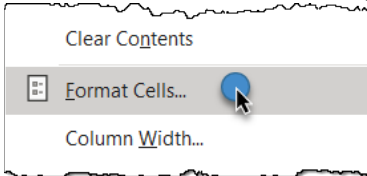
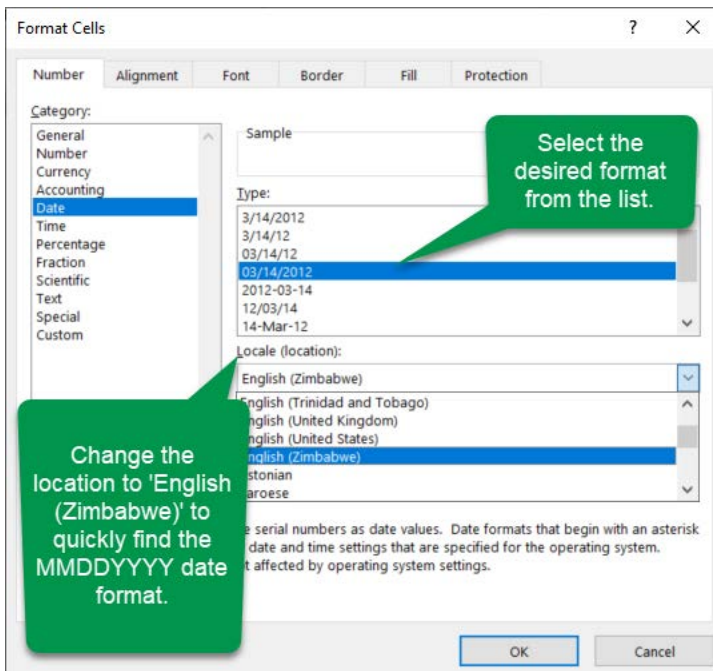3. Select the type of formatting needed from the category list.

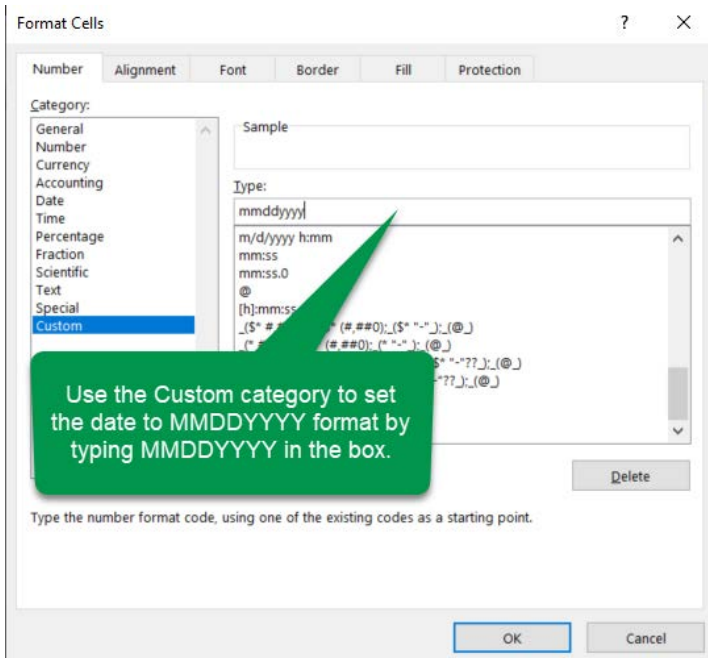4. Update the formatting based on the category you selected and select 'OK'.

Custom

> Type the desired quantity of zeros in this box to ensure the data will be exactly this number of characters long.
>
> This ensures leading zeros.

Date (option 1)

> Select the desired format from the list.

> Change the location to 'English (Zimbabwe)' to quickly find the MMDDYYYY date format.

Date (option 2)

Use the Custom category to set the date to MMDDYYYY format by typing MMDDYYYY in the box.

Number

Select the desired places after the decimal point in your number

Important Note: Number format will **not** have leading zeros.

Text

Select 'Text' [Text] as the category to ensure any new data you type in a cell will not be altered in any way. This will ensure leading zeros but will not add leading zeros to an existing data cell if they've been lost.

Text format cells are treated as text even when a number is in the cell.
The cell is displayed exactly as entered.