



## More about the field calculator

- You can also use the field calculator from fields tab of the layer properties dialog.
- Some formats (e.g. shapefile) place limits on the number of columns you can have and on the length of the field names you can use – in particular shapefiles limit you to 10 characters
- You need to ensure you have the needed permissions to add and remove columns – especially if the data source is a relational database.
- Think carefully before you update a column – once the data is gone there is no 'undo' option to get it back!

The field calculator uses the QGIS expression system for the formulas used to update fields. Expressions are used in many places in QGIS, so it is worth getting familiar with the system. The expression editor provides a detailed list of available functions, and each function has help with explanations and examples. The result from your expression should be suitable for the column you are calculating – for example if you have a date column, be sure that your expression calculates a date.

You can also combine columns in your expression for example: "column\_a" \* "column\_b" would calculate the product of columns a and b.



## Check your knowledge

1. True or false: The field calculator only works with relational database layers?
  - a) true
  - b) false
2. Indicate which statements are correct:
  - a) when calculating fields you can either create a new field or update an existing one.
  - b) The field calculator will automatically work only on the selected fields.
  - c) Field calculator expressions must be in SQL



## Further reading:

[https://docs.qgis.org/2.18/en/docs/user\\_manual/working\\_with\\_vector/attribute\\_table.html](https://docs.qgis.org/2.18/en/docs/user_manual/working_with_vector/attribute_table.html)