

Quick Start Guide - Windows PC

Get Started in 30 Minutes

This quick guide gets you from zero to running your first financial model in Python on Windows.

Step 1: Install VS Code (5 minutes)

1. Go to <https://code.visualstudio.com/>
 2. Click **Download for Windows**
 3. Run the installer
 4. Check "Add to PATH"
 5. Check "Create a desktop icon"
 6. Click **Install**
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Step 2: Install Python (5 minutes)

1. Go to <https://www.python.org/downloads/>
2. Click **Download Python 3.11** (or latest version)
3. Run the installer
4. **CRITICAL:** Check "Add Python to PATH"
5. Check "Install pip"
6. Click **Install Now**

Test it:

- Open VS Code
 - Press `Ctrl+`` (control + backtick) to open terminal
 - Type: `python --version`
 - You should see: `Python 3.11.x`
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Step 3: Install Extensions (3 minutes)

In VS Code:

1. Click Extensions icon (or press `Ctrl+Shift+X`)
 2. Search and install these:
 - **Python** (by Microsoft)
 - **Jupyter** (by Microsoft)
 - **Pylance** (by Microsoft)
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Step 4: Create Your Project (5 minutes)

In VS Code terminal (`Ctrl+``):

```
# Create and navigate to project folder
mkdir financial-modeling
cd financial-modeling

# Create virtual environment
python -m venv venv

# Activate it
venv\Scripts\activate

# You should see (venv) at the start of your line
```

PowerShell users: If you get an error, run:

```
Set-ExecutionPolicy -ExecutionPolicy RemoteSigned -Scope CurrentUser
```

Step 5: Install Libraries (5 minutes)

With your virtual environment activated:

```
pip install numpy pandas matplotlib yfinance jupyter openpyxl
```

This installs everything you need for financial modeling.

Step 6: Test Everything (5 minutes)

Create a new file: **test.py**

Copy and paste this code:

```
import numpy as np
import pandas as pd

# Simple investment calculator
def future_value(present_value, rate, years):
    return present_value * (1 + rate) ** years

# Example: $10,000 at 8% for 5 years
initial = 10000
rate = 0.08
years = 5

result = future_value(initial, rate, years)
```

```
print(f"Investment: ${initial:,.2f}")
print(f"Annual Return: {rate:.1%}")
print(f"Years: {years}")
print(f"Future Value: ${result:,.2f}")
print(f"Profit: ${result - initial:,.2f}")
```

Run it:

- Click the ► play button (top right)
- Or press **Ctrl+F5**

You should see:

```
Investment: $10,000.00
Annual Return: 8.0%
Years: 5
Future Value: $14,693.28
Profit: $4,693.28
```

You're Ready!

If you see the output above, you're all set! You just:

- Installed a professional development environment
- Set up Python for financial analysis
- Ran your first financial calculation

Next Steps

1. **Start the course:** Open [Module_01_Setup/01_Getting_Started.md](#)
2. **Learn Python basics:** Continue to [Module_02_Python_Fundamentals/](#)
3. **Build real models:** Module 4 (DCF) and Module 5 (LBO)

Common Issues

"python is not recognized"

- Python not in PATH
- Reinstall Python and check "Add to PATH"
- Restart VS Code

Virtual environment won't activate

- Make sure you're in the right folder
- Use: `venv\Scripts\activate` (Command Prompt)
- Or: `.\venv\Scripts\Activate.ps1` (PowerShell)

- PowerShell: May need to change execution policy

Import errors

- Make sure virtual environment is activated (you see `(venv)`)
- Reinstall packages: `pip install numpy pandas matplotlib`

Extension not working

- Reload VS Code: `Ctrl+Shift+P` → "Reload Window"
 - Restart VS Code completely
 - Check for updates
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Keyboard Shortcuts to Remember

| Shortcut | Action |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <code>'Ctrl+``</code> | Open terminal |
| <code>Ctrl+P</code> | Quick file open |
| <code>Ctrl+Shift+P</code> | Command palette |
| <code>Ctrl+ /</code> | Comment code |
| <code>F5</code> | Run with debugger |
| <code>Ctrl+F5</code> | Run without debugger |

Tips for Success

1. **Type code, don't copy-paste** - builds muscle memory
 2. **Run code frequently** - see results immediately
 3. **Experiment** - change numbers, see what happens
 4. **Use comments** - explain your code with `#`
 5. **Save often** - `Ctrl+S`
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Getting Help

- **Within course:** Check `solutions.py` files in each module
 - **Python errors:** Read the error message carefully
 - **Google:** "Python [your question]" - Stack Overflow is your friend
 - **VS Code:** `Ctrl+Shift+P` → search for commands
-

Estimated Total Time: 30 minutes **Difficulty:** Beginner-friendly

Ready to become a Python-powered financial modeler? Let's go! 

→ Start with: `Module_01_Setup/01_Getting_Started.md`