

Set Word, Excel and PowerPoint to open in the desktop app by default ^[1]

July 28, 2026 by [ES](#) and [UIS Communications](#) ^[2]

When you open a Microsoft 365 file from OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams or an email attachment, it opens in the browser version of the app by default. If you do most of your work in the desktop apps, you can change your preferences to open files in the desktop app every time.

Change your file open preference

1. Open a Microsoft 365 app like **Word, Excel or PowerPoint** on your desktop.
2. Click the **File** tab in the top left.

The Word ribbon, with File highlighted

3. Select **Options** near the bottom of the left-hand menu.

The Word file menu, with Options highlighted

4. In the Word/Excel/PowerPoint Options window, select **Advanced** from the left-hand list.

The Word advanced menu

5. Scroll down to the **File Open Preference** section.

The Word advanced menu, with the file open preference section highlighted

6. Use the dropdown to select **Desktop application**, then click **OK**.

The Word advanced menu showing the file open preference options

Once you set this in one app, the preference carries over to Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. From now on, files you open from OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams or Outlook will launch directly in the desktop app.

Tip: Need to open a specific file in the browser? Right-click the file and choose **Open > Open in browser** to override your default for that one file only.

[Microsoft](#) ^[3], [computer help](#) ^[4]

Send email when Published:

No

Source URL: <https://www.cu.edu/blog/tech-tips/set-word-excel-and-powerpoint-open-desktop-app-default>

Links

[1] <https://www.cu.edu/blog/tech-tips/set-word-excel-and-powerpoint-open-desktop-app-default>

[2] <https://www.cu.edu/blog/tech-tips/author/249473> [3] <https://www.cu.edu/blog/tech-tips/tag/microsoft>
[4] <https://www.cu.edu/blog/tech-tips/tag/computer-help>