

# Person—marital status, code N

## Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	Marital status
Synonymous names:	Marital status
METEOR identifier:	270060
Registration status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Community Services (retired)</a>, Superseded 25/08/2005</li><li>• <a href="#">Health</a>, Superseded 04/05/2005</li></ul>

## Data element concept attributes

### Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element concept:	<a href="#">Person—marital status</a>
METEOR identifier:	269533
Registration status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">ACT Health (retired)</a>, Candidate 09/08/2018</li><li>• <a href="#">Commonwealth Department of Social Services (retired)</a>, Standard 20/06/2018</li><li>• <a href="#">Community Services (retired)</a>, Standard 01/03/2005</li><li>• <a href="#">Disability</a>, Standard 13/08/2015</li><li>• <a href="#">Health</a>, Standard 01/03/2005</li><li>• <a href="#">Housing assistance</a>, Standard 10/02/2006</li><li>• <a href="#">Independent Hospital Pricing Authority</a>, Qualified 23/11/2015</li><li>• <a href="#">Tasmanian Health</a>, Standard 01/09/2016</li><li>• <a href="#">WA Health</a>, Standard 19/03/2015</li></ul>

**Definition:** A person's current relationship status in terms of a couple relationship or, for those not in a couple relationship, the existence of a current or previous registered marriage.

**Context:** Marital status is a core metadata item in a wide range of social, labour and demographic statistics. Its main purpose is analysis of the association of marital status with the need for and use of services, and for epidemiological analysis.

Marital status also acts as an indicator for the level of support adult recipients of the welfare system have at home. The item is also used in comparisons of administrative data and population censuses and surveys.

**Object class:** [Person](#)

**Property:** [Marital status](#)

## Value domain attributes

### Identifying and definitional attributes

Value domain:	<a href="#">Marital status code N</a>
METEOR identifier:	270666

- Registration status:**
- [ACT Health \(retired\)](#), Candidate 09/08/2018
  - [Community Services \(retired\)](#), Standard 01/03/2005
  - [Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015
  - [Health](#), Standard 01/03/2005
  - [Housing assistance](#), Standard 10/02/2006
  - [Independent Hospital Pricing Authority](#), Qualified 23/11/2015

**Definition:** A code set representing the marital status of a person.

## Representational attributes

**Representation class:** Code

**Data type:** Number

**Format:** N

**Maximum character length:** 1

**Permissible values:**

Value	Meaning
-------	---------

1	Never married
2	Widowed
3	Divorced
4	Separated
5	Married (registered and de facto)

**Supplementary values:**

Value	Meaning
-------	---------

6	Not stated/inadequately described
---	-----------------------------------

## Collection and usage attributes

**Guide for use:** Refers to the current marital status of a person.

CODE 2 Widowed

This code usually refers to registered marriages but when self-reported may also refer to de facto marriages.

CODE 4 Separated

This code refers to registered marriages but when self-reported may also refer to de facto marriages.

CODE 5 Married (registered and de facto)

Includes people who have been divorced or widowed but have since re-married, and should be generally accepted as applicable to all de facto couples, including of the same sex.

CODE 6 Not stated/inadequately described

This code is not for use on primary collection forms. It is primarily for use in administrative collections when transferring data from data sets where the item has not been collected.

## Source and reference attributes

**Origin:** The ABS standards for the collection of Social and Registered marital status appear on the ABS Website. Australian Bureau of Statistics. [Family, household and income unit variables. Cat. no. 1286.0.](#) Canberra: ABS.

# Data element attributes

## Collection and usage attributes

**Collection methods:** This metadata item collects information on social marital status. The recommended question module is:

Do you/Does the person usually live with a partner in a registered or de facto marriage?

Yes, in a registered marriage

Yes, in a defacto marriage

No, never married

No, separated

No, divorced

No, widowed

It should be noted that information on marital status is collected differently by the ABS, using a set of questions. However, the question outlined above is suitable and mostly sufficient for use within the health and community services fields. See below (Source document) for information on how to access the ABS standards.

While agencies are encouraged to use the recommended question described above, it is acknowledged that this is not always possible in practice. For example, where the data collection is a by-product of the provision of a health or community service, the information may be ascertained using different means. However, the recommended question should be used wherever practically possible.

**Comments:** The ABS standards identify two concepts of marital status:

- Registered marital status - defined as whether a person has, or has had, a registered marriage;
- Social marital status - based on a person's living arrangement (including de facto marriages), as reported by the person.

It is recommended that the social marital status concept be collected when information on social support/home arrangements is sought, whereas the registered marital status concept need only be collected where it is specifically required for the purposes of the collection.


While marital status is an important factor in assessing the type and extent of support needs, such as for the elderly living in the home environment, marital status does not adequately address the need for information about social support and living arrangement and other data elements need to be formulated to capture this information.

## Source and reference attributes

**Submitting organisation:** National Health Data Standards Committee  
National Community Services Data Committee

## Relational attributes

**Related metadata references:**

Supersedes  [Marital status, version 4, DE, Int. NCSDD & NHDD, NCSIMG & NHMG, Superseded 01/03/2005.pdf](#) (19.8 KB) *No registration status*  
Has been superseded by [Person—marital status, code N](#)

- [ACT Health \(retired\)](#), Candidate 09/08/2018
- [Community Services \(retired\)](#), Standard 25/08/2005
- [Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015
- [Health](#), Standard 04/05/2005
- [Housing assistance](#), Standard 10/02/2006
- [Independent Hospital Pricing Authority](#), Qualified 23/11/2015

© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015–2022

This product, excluding the AIHW logo, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and any material owned by a third party or protected by a trademark, has been released under a Creative Commons BY 3.0 (CC BY 3.0) licence. Excluded material owned by third parties may include, for example, design and layout, images obtained under licence from third parties and signatures. We have made all reasonable efforts to identify and label material owned by third parties.

You may distribute, remix and build upon this work. However, you must attribute the AIHW as the copyright holder of the work in compliance with our attribution policy available at [www.aihw.gov.au/copyright](http://www.aihw.gov.au/copyright). The full terms and conditions of this licence are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by3.0/au/>.

Enquiries relating to copyright should be addressed to the Head of the Communications, Media and Marketing Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601.