
Main occupation of person

Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>

Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: Int. NCSDD & NHDD
Knowledgebase ID: 002013 Version number: 3
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT
Registration Authority: NCSIMG & NHIMG Admin status: SUPERSEDED
Effective date: 01-MAR-05

Definition: The occupation of a person describes the job in which the person is principally engaged. A job in any given establishment is a set of tasks designed to be performed by one individual in return for a wage or salary. An occupation is a set of jobs with similar sets of tasks. For persons with more than one job, the main job is the one in which the person works the most hours.

Context: This data element may be useful in gaining an understanding of a clients situation and needs. For example, the occupation of a person with a disability may be directly relevant to the type of aids that they require.
NHDD specific
NMDS - Injury surveillance:
There is considerable user demand for data on occupation-related injury and illness, including from Worksafe Australia and from industry, where unnecessary production costs are known in some areas and suspected to be related to others in work-related illness, injury and disability.

Relational and Representational Attributes

Datatype: Numeric
Representational form: CODE
Representation layout: NN(NN-NN)
Minimum Size: 2
Maximum Size: 7
Data Domain: NOVAL Valid codes from the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations, Second edition (ABS Cat. No. 1220.0)

Reference through:
<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/StatsLibrary>
Select ABS Classifications

Guide For Use: This data element can be used to code the main occupation of persons involved in an event. Caution is advised in its use with regard to service providers as their activity as a service provider may not be their main occupation.

Collection Methods: This data element should only be collected from people whose Labour force status is employed.

Occupation is too complex and diverse an issue to fit neatly into any useable small group of categories. Therefore the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recommend that this data element be collected by using the following two open-ended questions:

Q1. In the main job held last week (or other recent reference period), what was your/the person's occupation?

Q2. What are the main tasks that you/the person usually perform(s) in that occupation? The information gained from these two questions can then be used to select an appropriate code from the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations at any of the available levels (see Comments field below). Accurate data are best achieved using computer assisted coding. A Computer Assisted Coding system is available from the ABS to assist in coding occupational data to Australian Standard Classification of Occupations codes.

Data coded at the 4 and 6 digit level will provide more detailed information than that collected at the higher levels and may be more useful. However, the level at which data are coded and reported will depend on the purpose of collecting this information. If only one question is asked, question one should be used. The use of question one only, however, sometimes elicits responses which do not provide a clear occupation title and specification of tasks performed. As a result accurate coding at unit group or occupation level may not be possible.

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, due to the complexities of the data element 'Main occupation of person', this will result in inaccurate information. The recommended question should be used wherever possible.

Related metadata: supersedes the NHDD data element Occupation of person version 2

