Sexual orientation

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# Sexual orientation

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| Identifying and definitional attributes |
| Metadata item type: | Glossary Item |
| METEOR identifier: | 755634 |
| Registration status: | [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022 |
| Definition: | Sexual orientation encapsulates how a person thinks of their own sexuality and the terms they identify with. Their sexual orientation reflects their romantic and sexual attraction to others, to persons of the same [**sex**](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/750030), or to persons of a different sex. Some of the main ways of identification are: heterosexual (straight), gay, lesbian, or bisexual.  |

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| Collection and usage attributes |
| Comments: | The following definitions are based on the ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables (ABS 2021):**Nominal definition**Sexual orientation is an umbrella concept that encapsulates:* sexual identity (how a person thinks of their sexuality and the terms they identify with)
* attraction (romantic or sexual interest in another person)
* behaviour (sexual behaviour).

Responses to a sexual orientation question are a subjective view of oneself and can change over the course of a person's lifetime and in different contexts. An individual could respond differently to questions on either sexual identity, attraction or behaviour.**Operational definition**Questions about a person's sexual orientation would usually relate to their sexual identity and attraction, i.e. how a person thinks of their own sexuality, the terms they identify with and their romantic or sexual attraction to others. To gather data on sexual behaviour, a series of more detailed questions and answer categories may be more appropriate. |
| Source and reference attributes |
| Submitting organisation: | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| Origin: | ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021. Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables. Canberra: ABS. Viewed 23 Feb 2022,<<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release>>  |
| Reference documents: | ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021. Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables. Canberra: ABS. Viewed 23 Feb 2022,<<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release>> APSC (Australian Public Service Commission) 2021.  Australian Government Style Manual 2021. Gender and Sexual Diversity. Canberra: APSC. Viewed 23 Feb 2022, <<https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/inclusive-language/gender-and-sexual-diversity>>AIFS (Australian Institute of Family Studies) 2022. Canberra: AIFS. LGBTIQA+ glossary of common terms. Viewed 24 Feb 2022, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release>> |
| Relational attributes |
| Related metadata references: | See also [Gender](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/750032)       [Aged Care](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/19), Standard 30/06/2023       [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/24), Qualified 17/01/2024       [Australian Teacher Workforce Data Oversight Board](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/23), Standard 30/08/2022       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Standard 15/02/2022       [Indigenous](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/6), Standard 27/08/2023       [Tasmanian Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/15), Standard 22/03/2023       [Youth Justice](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/4), Standard 15/02/2022See also [Sex](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/750030)       [Aged Care](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/19), Standard 30/06/2023       [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/24), Qualified 17/01/2024       [Australian Teacher Workforce Data Oversight Board](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/23), Standard 30/08/2022       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Standard 15/02/2022       [Indigenous](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/6), Standard 18/12/2023       [Tasmanian Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/15), Standard 22/03/2023       [Youth Justice](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/4), Standard 15/02/2022See also [Variations of sex characteristics](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/757670)       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022 |
| Metadata items which use this glossary item: | [Person—sexual orientation](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/755718)        [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022[Person—sexual orientation, code N[N]](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/755755)       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022[Person—sexual orientation, text X[X(99)]](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/756847)       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022[Sexual orientation](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/755709)       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022[Sexual orientation code N[N]](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/755744)       [Health](https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/RegistrationAuthority/12), Qualified 03/06/2022 |