

DASSH Submission to the ANZSRC Review

ANZSRC Principles

1. **Are the principles of the Review outlined in Section 2 of the Discussion Paper appropriate and sufficient? Do any further overarching principles need to be considered in developing the revised ANZSRC?**

While DASSH supports the principles outlined in the Discussion Paper in general, members suggested that the task of research classification could be more effectively achieved and efficiently undertaken were it to draw on techniques arising from advances in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science. There would appear to be some scope for achieving this, as demonstrated by the ARC's incorporation of such methods in the exercise of classifying and assigning research proposals to experts in cognisant fields.

DASSH would welcome the consideration of automated classification methods in the scope of this Review but recognises that the design of a fully automated system (with no human intervention) is perhaps overly ambitious at this stage. DASSH recommends that the ARC, ABS, Stats NZ and MBIE refine and improve the classification system through the current exercise with a view to developing an automated classification system in future.

ANZSRC Classifications

Type of Activity

2. **What suggestions do you have to improve the ToA component of the classification?**
3. **Are there any other categories that should be added to the ToA? If so, how would they be defined?**
4. **Is there ambiguity in the existing ToA categories? How could this be improved?**

DASSH members have elected not to comment directly on questions 2, 3 and 4.

5. **Should ANZSRC adopt the Frascati Manual 2015 ToA definitions?**

It is unclear what, if any, benefits would arise from adopting the Frascati Manual definitions. If current ANZSRC definitions are sufficiently aligned as to enable comparative analysis with data collected under the Frascati Manual definitions, this question would appear to be of little significance to researchers and institutions.

Fields of Research

6. **Is the current overall structure appropriate?**
 - a. **Should there be more or fewer levels to the hierarchy?**

DASSH recommends that Field of Research (FoR) codes be classified in a two-level hierarchy, that is, two-digit Divisions and four-digit Groups only. The consensus among members is that broader classifications are more practical. Classification at the six-digit Fields can at times be arbitrary (e.g. where no six-digit Field suitably describes the activity, researchers or administrators are forced to select from a range of equally unsuitable codes), or unnecessarily complex (e.g. where multiple six-digit Fields are appropriate within the same four-digit Group).

DASSH members specified a series of 'niche codes' beneath 1903 – Journalism and 2001 – Media and Communications. During ERA 2015 and 2018, submissions from near identical disciplines were divided across

these Groups, resulting in inconsistent classifications between and within institutions. DASSH considers this to be evidence in support of fewer and broader classifications.

Furthermore, the distribution, at six-digit Fields, of interdisciplinary areas (e.g. Indigenous studies, Environmental Arts and Humanities, or Gender, Sexuality and Queer Studies) would be better identified in codes at a higher level.

b. Would it be useful to have broad themes or ‘one digit’ classifications such as Sciences, Medicine, Social Sciences and Humanities, similar to the ‘Sector’ level of SEO?

DASSH members were open to considering this proposal but had concerns about the collation of ‘Social Sciences and Humanities’ into a single category in the example. As counterparts in the ‘Sciences’ and ‘Medicine’ may share similar concerns, one-digit classifications may not be feasible. Although this would be a useful classification for ERA, the task of categorising all disciplines sensibly into ten categories may be a fraught exercise.

7. What criteria, in your view, should be applied to determine the classification of research?

a. What criteria should be applied to determine the boundaries between Division, Group and Field classifications?

There was strong agreement among members that the division of disciplines beneath 2005 and 2103 into geopolitical zones in the six-digit Fields was archaic, counter-productive, and in no way reflective of the current state or directions of Literary or Historical studies. This methodology furthermore submerges strong streams within these disciplines, including ‘Postcolonial’ and ‘Transnational’ research. This type of coding produces non-sensical sets of codes such as 200501 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Literature) and 200502 (Australian Literature excluding ATSI Literature); and 210301 (ATSI History), and 210303 (Australian History excluding ATSI). This pattern is repeated across some, but not all, four-digit codes, and so is inconsistent as well as anomalous. DASSH advocates for the removal of six-digit Fields altogether as a solution to this and other problems identified in the current classification system.

b. Should research methodologies, publication practices, or any other factors be considered as key criteria for classifying research?

Members noted that at both two- and four-digit Divisions and Groups, Fields of Research are an inconsistent mix of disciplinary approaches (e.g. Geography, Sociology) in some instances, and thematic foci in others (e.g. Education, Business).

Two-digit Divisions should be agnostic in relation to methodology (for example, whether data is generated through traditional or practice methods) and should be defined instead by their underpinning methods of constructing knowledge (i.e. ‘disciplines’). Four-digit Groups may be defined by their methodologies and disciplinary approaches.

Some members recommended consideration of the removal of four-digit Groups entirely, moving those that represent distinct disciplines (e.g. Geography or Sociology) to the two-digit Division. DASSH notes that this could only be achieved after extensive surveying of the impact on small areas of research excellence which may not meet minimum thresholds for inclusion as a two-digit Division.

- c. **Apart from the Principles described in Section 2, are there any other specific criteria that should be applied?**

DASSH members have elected not to respond to this question.

8. **Where should the classifications change (at the Division, Group or Field level)? Please identify specific codes, where appropriate. In particular:**

- a. **What new or emerging areas of research should be allocated FoR codes (and at which level)?**

DASSH supports the recommendation being made by the Development Studies Association of Australia (DSAA) for the creation of a specific four-digit Development Studies Group to be added to the two-digit 'Studies in Human Society' Division (16).

Development Studies is the study of international and community development in all its forms. Development Studies is also a well-established discipline taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in more than half of Australian Universities. The first courses in Australia were offered in the mid-1970s at the Australian National University. It is predominately located within the Social Sciences.

Development Studies is recognised in other jurisdictions as a distinct academic discipline. There are scholarly associations across the globe, including Australia. Journals for Development Studies can be found in various journal ranking lists. As an academic discipline, it is intimately connected to the development and humanitarian sectors which encompasses aid organisations, United Nations agencies and commercial for-profit firms implementing and managing development and humanitarian responses.

Currently there is no dedicated code (at any level) for Development Studies. This results in Development Studies research being assigned to a range of codes with detrimental impacts on the attribution and assessment of scholars and outputs in this field.

Members also suggested moving some of what are currently four- or six-digit Groups or Fields up to the two-digit Divisions:

- Indigenous Studies
- Gender, Sexuality and Queer Studies

A substantial number of 'missing' fields were identified, but this raises issues of exhaustiveness and redundancy, and ultimately it was determined that it would be preferable to remove six-digit Fields entirely. Doing so would make the classification system simpler and better able to adapt to emerging fields of inquiry. In many two-digit Divisions (e.g. 20 and 21, and possibly 12 and 18) the four-digit Groups require complete revision, ideally using a combination of data science/artificial intelligence and researcher consultation, rather than the addition of new Fields.

- b. **Should any of the existing FoR codes be split, deleted or merged?**

DASSH members are of the opinion that the following codes are candidates for deletion.

- 1903 – Journalism and Professional Writing (recommend merge with 2001 – Communication and Media Studies)
- 2202 – History and Philosophy of Specific Fields (Delete, sufficient overlap with other four-digit codes under 21 – History and Archaeology and 22 – Philosophy and Religious Studies)

- 1302 – Curriculum and Pedagogy (DASSH members recommend deletion as a result of “chronic misuse”)

Several of the 19 – Studies in Creative Arts and Writing four-digit Groups should be merged/rationalised. In some instances, this may be within the 19 Division (e.g. 1901 and 1905 should be combined), but in others it is possible to merge four-digit 19 Groups with their cognate 20 Groups, acknowledging the alignment of creative practice with critical practice in these areas. For example, 1902 and 2001 should be merged, and Creative Writing should be removed from 1904 and included in 2005, etc.

c. Should any of the existing Group or Field codes be moved to other places in the classification?

The two-digit Division, 12 – Built Environment and Design was identified as a thematic code encompassing design, textiles, architecture, garden studies, planning and construction disciplines. DASSH considers this inappropriate and would ideally define each discipline based on their underpinning theories and methods. For example, ‘Architecture’ and ‘Design practice’ may be reclassified under the 19 or 20 two-digit Divisions, although specific advice from practitioners of these disciplines would be necessary before implementing such changes.

d. Is there ambiguity or redundancy in the existing FoR codes? (e.g. areas where research could reasonably be classified in two or more different codes)

- Note earlier recommendations on Indigenous studies, Gender, Sexuality and Queer Studies, and Development Studies.
- 1605 – Policy and Administration was identified by some members as an area which may be better represented within its individual disciplinary areas, but there was no consensus on this matter.
- 22 – ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Religious Studies’ should not necessarily be considered related fields.

e. Where changes are proposed, please explain why the changes are necessary and what criteria you have used to determine the need for change.

Explanations have been provided above where relevant.

9. How can the FoR codes better capture Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Māori Studies, and Pacific Peoples Studies research, and at what level (e.g. Field, Group, Division)?

Several DASSH members recommend that research in these areas be captured under a single new two-digit Division. Another possibility is the creation of more precise two-digit codes for each type of research listed.

DASSH members acknowledge that research incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Māori and/or Pacific Peoples knowledges, histories, interests etc. can be accommodated under any of the existing Divisions. In order to accurately capture the breadth of research relating to the Indigenous peoples of Australasia, some members proposed the introduction of new reporting methods alongside the current Field of Research codes. This could take the form of an optional tick-box or supplementary code level to indicate that the research activity relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Māori, and/or Pacific Peoples.

10. How can the FoR codes better capture interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research, and at what level (e.g. Field, Group, Division)?

Codes could be introduced as a two-digit Division to capture inter/multidisciplinary research, however some members considered revising entirely the basis for the taxonomy and working with data scientists to design new classification methods to be a better option.

Socio-economic Objectives

11. Is the current overall structure appropriate?
 - a. Should there be more or fewer levels to the hierarchy?
 - b. Would it be desirable to change the Sector codes to numerical, rather than alphabetic, identifiers?

DASSH members have elected not respond to question 11.

12. Are the Sector level categories well defined enough to capture all types of socio-economic objectives?
 - a. Do you have specific feedback on the usability and interpretability of the current Sector categories?

Many members consider SEO codes to be poorly constructed for Humanities and Social Sciences. More categories in the social sciences and humanities are required to fully capture the range of objectives addressed in these fields. Overall it was agreed that the wording of SEOs requires review with special attention paid to social, economic and cultural benefits. At present, most humanities and social science research predominantly falls under “Education”, or else is unclassifiable. For example, 970116 “Expanding knowledge through studies of human society” is the only code in the social sciences.

Members also recommended SEO codes be revisited with consideration to the results of the ARC Engagement and Impact exercise.

13. Do the Division level categories appropriately capture all types of research objectives?
 - a. Do you have specific feedback on the usability and interpretability of the current Division categories?
 - b. Are there emerging areas of economic development that should be better defined?
14. Should any of the existing SEO codes be split, deleted or merged?
 - a. Where changes are proposed, please explain why the changes are necessary and what criteria you have used to determine the need for change.
15. Is it easy or difficult to categorise large or complex research projects or programs under SEO? How could categorisation be simplified?

DASSH members have elected not respond to questions 13-15.

Implementation

16. How do you (or your organisation) currently use ANZSRC?
17. How would you (or your organisation) be affected if ANZSRC changes?
18. What support do you need to implement ANZSRC (e.g. concordances for time-series mapping, coding tools etc.)?
19. How frequently should the ANZSRC be updated in the future? What advantages or disadvantages would there be if, in future, ANZSRC was updated dynamically and on an ongoing basis in response to stakeholder feedback?



DASSH members have elected not respond to questions 16-19. These questions are more appropriately answered by institutions and/or their representative bodies.