

Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources

GSS Harmonised Principle

National Identity and Religion

About this Document and Update History

GSS Harmonised Principle

About this document

This document forms part of a series of GSS Harmonised Principles, designed to provide approved harmonised questions, definitions and outputs for a variety of social and business related topics. The use of harmonised questions, definitions and outputs will provide greater consistency for survey producers and comparability when using data.

Harmonised principles on ethnic group are covered in a separate document and can found at:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/P3-Ethnic-Group-June-16.pdf>

It is important to note that when collecting data about national identities, a national identity question should be asked along with but separately to an ethnic group question.

For more information, please see the Introductory Document, available on the GSS website:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/methodology-2/harmonisation/>

In addition to these principles, there is also the Ethnicity and Identity Guidance: '*Ethnic group statistics: A guide for the collection and classification of ethnicity data*' which offers assistance for anyone involved in collecting and presenting ethnicity, national identity and religion data. The new guide will be published shortly.

This is Version 4.4 published in June 2017

This document has been updated to Version 4.4 to reflect the change away from 'Primary Principles' and 'Secondary Principles' to 'GSS Harmonised Principles'. There has been no change to the harmonised questions.

Previous versions:

Version 4.3 published in February 2017

This document was updated to Version 4.3 to add the word 'previous' to the heading for Box B1 at Annex B. This removes the ambiguity about which is the current harmonised question.

Version 4.2 published in May 2015

This document was updated to Version 4.2 to correct minor formatting errors and to change the term '*Harmonised Standards*' to '*Harmonised Principles*' as agreed by the National Statistics Harmonisation Group.

Version 4.1 published in August 2011

This document presents the new recommended principles for the National Identity and Religion questions. These harmonised principles have been approved by the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee and ratified by the Heads of Profession. They were developed through consultation with the Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion sub-group following a two year programme of work.

Version 4.0 published in December 2008.

This document was updated to Version 4.0, to reflect changes in the format of the document placing 'Inputs' before 'Outputs'

Version 3.0 published in April 2008.

Contact details for the Harmonisation Team have also been updated.

Version 2.0 published in October 2005.

This version now includes the standard question to collect data on National Identity.

Version 1.0 published in November 2004.

Version 1.0 was part of a series that replaced the Harmonised Concepts and Questions document. We had worked to make our guidance easier to find and clearer to use. Other than the formatting and layout changes, there were no new changes to questions or outputs in this version.

Contents

GSS Harmonised Principle

Introduction	4
National Identity	
Inputs	5
Outputs	8
Religion	
Inputs	9
Outputs	11
Annex A	
<i>Previous Harmonised National Identity Question</i>	13
Annex B	
<i>Previous Harmonised Religion Question</i>	14

Introduction

GSS Harmonised Principle

With the new devolved administrations, there has been an increasing interest in 'national' consciousness with many people wanting their 'national' identity to be acknowledged. As a result a 'national identity' question has been developed to take this into consideration. The question should be used in addition to the ethnic group question whenever there is a need to collect data about national identities; for instance, when respondents classify themselves as English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, British, or another national identity.

National identity should be asked as a separate question in addition to ethnic group. This is because our research has led to the conclusion that classifying ethnic group is best achieved separately from national identity. There is an order effect that is best managed by asking national identity before ethnic group, as this allows respondents to describe themselves as English, Welsh, Scottish, etc. Research suggests that people were happier when asked about their national identity first.

The questions on Ethnic Group can be accessed at:




<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/P3-Ethnic-Group-June-16.pdf>

Contact us

For more information about Harmonisation or to join our mailing list, please visit our website at:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/methodology-2/harmonisation/>

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National Identity

Inputs

The national identity question should be asked as a separate question in addition to the ethnic group question. Research has shown that classifying ethnic group is best achieved separately from national identity. It is recommended that the national identity question is asked immediately before the ethnic group question in surveys. The previous national identity question is provided in Annex A (Box A.1)

The order of response categories should be changed depending on where the question is being asked. The recommended orders of categories are given in Box 1.

Box 1. National identity question (a)

	<p><i>Applies to All</i></p> <p><i>Interviewer to read:</i></p> <p>How would you describe your national identity? Please choose all that apply.</p>
In England	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>English Welsh Scottish Northern Irish British Other, <i>please describe</i></p>
In Wales	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>Welsh English Scottish Northern Irish British Other, <i>please describe</i></p>
In Scotland	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>Scottish English Welsh Northern Irish British Other, <i>please describe</i></p>
In Northern Ireland	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>British Irish Northern Irish English Scottish Welsh Other, <i>please describe</i></p>

National Identity

Inputs

It is recommended that a show card is used in interviewer-led surveys. Where this is not possible (e.g. telephone interviews), the response categories should be read out by the interviewer in the same order as they appear on the show card.

Where cross-country comparability is a priority above comparability with respective census questions, categories for a single UK question have been recommended in Box 2. It is still recommended however that the category orders follow those presented in Box 1. Although there is a slight variation of response categories for Northern Ireland, an Irish category should be located between the 'British' and 'Other' categories. To comply with the Good Friday Agreement, the National identity question should be asked in a way that no-one from Northern Ireland should be forced to choose between being British, Irish and Northern Irish.

The show card should include the instruction 'Please choose all that apply' in addition to being read out by the interviewer. The instruction 'please describe' should also be included on the show card following the 'other' response option (see sample show card in the Annex). This should be in non-bold font. These instructions should also be included on paper-based surveys.

Box 2. National identity question (b): Single UK presentation

	<p><i>Applies to All</i></p> <p><i>Interviewer to read:</i></p> <p>How would you describe your national identity? Please choose all that apply.</p> <p>Category order dependant on where question is asked</p>
In England	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>English Welsh Scottish Northern Irish British Irish Other, <i>please describe</i></p>
In Wales	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>Welsh English Scottish Northern Irish British Irish Other, <i>please describe</i></p>
In Scotland	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <p>Scottish Welsh English Northern Irish British Irish Other, <i>please describe</i></p>

Table continued overleaf

National Identity

Inputs

In Northern Ireland	<i>Interviewer to read options</i> British Irish Northern Irish English Scottish Welsh Other, <i>please describe</i>
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National Identity

Outputs

Data presentation for National Identity question

GB, UK and Northern Ireland

The following data presentations should be used for the national identity question.

When presenting data separately for England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, presentation should follow order of response categories as per Box 1.

Note: XXX indicates where data will be in the presentation table.

Use this data presentation for national identity in GB and the UK (using questions in Box 1):

Box 3 Presentation for national identity data in GB and UK

British	XXX
English	XXX
Scottish	XXX
Welsh	XXX
Northern Irish	XXX
Other	XXX*

*Irish' combined with 'Other'. An explanatory note should be provided regarding use of the 'Irish' category in Northern Ireland. Figures should be provided as appropriate.

Use this data presentation for national identity in Northern Ireland (or the UK if using the single UK question):

Box 4 Presentation for national identity data in Northern Ireland (or the UK using the single UK question)

British	XXX
English	XXX
Scottish	XXX
Welsh	XXX
Northern Irish	XXX
Irish	XXX
Other	XXX

Religion

Inputs

Where a single question on religion is required for data collection in the UK, religious affiliation is the recommended concept to measure. The previous harmonised religion question is provided in Annex B (Box B.1)

It is not recommended that a single Christian category is used across GB or the UK. Breakdown for the Christian denominations that should be used in Scotland and Northern Ireland are provided in Box 5.

It is recommended that a show card is used in interviewer-led surveys in GB. Where this is not possible (e.g. telephone interviews), the response categories should be read out by the interviewer in the same order as the appropriate show card.

The instruction 'please describe' should be included on the show card following the 'any other religion' response option. This should be in non-bold font. This instruction should also be included on paper-based surveys

Use of a show card is not recommended in Northern Ireland. The interviewer should read the question and wait for a spontaneous response. If a response is not forthcoming, the interviewer may prompt using the categories provided in Box 5 for Northern Ireland. Please note that the religion question on the Labour Force Survey for Northern Ireland asks about religious denomination, with the main difference being nine categories, where 'other protestant' and 'other religion' are combined compared to sixteen on the harmonised principle question.

Religion

Inputs

Box 5. Religion question for GB, UK and Northern Ireland

	<p><i>Applies to All</i></p> <p><i>Interviewer to read:</i></p> <p>What is your religion?</p>
In England	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No religion 2. Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations) 3. Buddhist 4. Hindu 5. Jewish 6. Muslim 7. Sikh 8. Any other religion, <i>please describe</i>
In Wales	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No religion 2. Christian (all denominations) 3. Buddhist 4. Hindu 5. Jewish 6. Muslim 7. Sikh 8. Any other religion, <i>please describe</i>
In Scotland	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No religion 2. Church of Scotland 3. Roman Catholic 4. Other Christian 5. Buddhist 6. Hindu 7. Jewish 8. Muslim 9. Sikh 10. Any other religion, <i>please describe</i>
In Northern Ireland	<p><i>Interviewer to read options</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No religion 2. Catholic 3. Presbyterian 4. Church of Ireland 5. Methodist 6. Baptist 7. Free Presbyterian 8. Brethren 9. Protestant – Other, including not specified 10. Christian – Other, including not specified 11. Buddhist 12. Hindu 13. Jewish 14. Muslim 15. Sikh <p><i>Any other religion, please describe</i></p>

Religion

Outputs

Data presentation for Religion question

GB, UK and Northern Ireland

The following data presentations should be used for the religion question.

Note: XXX indicates where data will be in the presentation table.

Use this data presentation for the harmonised religion question in England and Wales (also GB and UK):

Box 6 Data presentation for harmonised religion question for England, Wales and GB

No religion	XXX
Christian	XXX
Buddhist	XXX
Hindu	XXX
Jewish	XXX
Muslim	XXX
Sikh	XXX
Any other religion	XXX

Use this data presentation for the harmonised religion question in Scotland

Box 7 Data presentation for harmonised question in Scotland

No religion	XXX
Church of Scotland	XXX
Roman Catholic	XXX
Other Christian	XXX
Buddhist	XXX
Hindu	XXX
Jewish	XXX
Muslim	XXX
Sikh	XXX
Any other religion	XXX

Religion

Outputs

Use this data presentation for the harmonised religion question in Northern Ireland

Box 8 Data presentation for the harmonised question in Northern Ireland

No religion	XXX
Catholic	XXX
Presbyterian	XXX
Church of Ireland	XXX
Methodist	XXX
Baptist	XXX
Free Presbyterian	XXX
Brethren	XXX
Protestant – Other, including not specified	XXX
Christian – Other, including not specified	XXX
Buddhist	XXX
Hindu	XXX
Jewish	XXX
Muslim	XXX
Sikh	XXX
Any other religion	XXX

It is recommended that UK comparisons are not made using census data as the questions used in the censuses differ. Scotland and Northern Ireland censuses ask a question on 'belonging', whilst England and Wales ask about affiliation.

National Identity

Annex A

Box A.1 Previous harmonised national identity question

NatIdE

England

What do you consider your national identity to be, you may choose as many as apply, is it...

Running prompt - Code all that apply

English

Scottish

Welsh

Irish

British

Other?

Asked if: Country = England

NatIdO

GB

How would you describe your national identity?

Enter description of national identity

Asked if: NatIdE = idoth OR NatIdS = idoth OR NatIdW = idoth

Religion

Annex B

Box B.1 Previous harmonised religion question

(Spontaneous response for both questions)

Relig	UK *
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What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?
Prompt as necessary
Major Christian religions include:
Anglican
Baptist
Calvinist
Christian Scientist
Church of England
Church of Scotland
Church of Wales
Congregational
Evangelical
Free Church
Greek Orthodox
Jehovah Witness
Methodist
Mormons
Plymouth Brethren
Presbyterian
Protestant
Quakers (Society of friends)
Roman Catholic
Seventh Day Adventist
United Reformed Church

Xian "Christian"
Buddh "Buddhist"
Hindu "Hindu"
Jewish "Jewish"
Muslim "Muslim"
Sikh "Sikh"
Other "Any other religion"
None "No religion at all"

Applies to all

* Whilst the harmonised religion question is also used on Northern Ireland surveys, on ONS surveys, it is only asked in England, Wales and Scotland. The Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey uses the following question on denomination instead:

IREND2 (religious denomination)	Northern Ireland
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What is your religious denomination?

1. Catholic
2. Presbyterian
3. Church of Ireland
4. Methodist
5. other protestant
6. other religion
7. no denomination
8. under 16 years
9. unwilling to answer

Applies to all in Northern Ireland

Other Protestant includes:

- Baptist
- Free Presbyterian
- Unitarian
- Congregational
- Plymouth Brethren
- Church of Nazarene
- Church of England
- Pentecostal
- Mormon, etc.

Other religions include:

- Jewish
- Hindu
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Muslim

This is a voluntary question. Respondents who refuse to answer are coded as unwilling.