

Activity

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Activities in the RDA Registry

In the RDA Registry and [Research Data Australia](#), activity records may describe a project or program that creates research data; or a research grant that has been awarded to undertake a research activity.

Activity records are included in Research Data Australia to provide context for collections. This helps collection discovery in three main ways:

- By linking the research question in the activity description to the collection, users can understand why the collection was gathered, and what issues it addresses
- If multiple collections are connected to the outputs of the same research activity, then this connection can be used to improve discovery of related collections
- Any linked publications that are outputs from this research activity will have further information about the data that will assist in reuse.

Do I need to create an Activity record?

Grants

Research Data Australia publishes activity records for research grants from funders such as ARC, NHMRC and the Department of the Environment, which contributors can link to from their collection, service and party records, rather than creating their own records for these grants. Each of the grant records has a globally unique persistent identifier (a PURL) that can be used to link to associated registry objects in either [RelatedObject](#) or [RelatedInfo](#).

Search the Research Data Australia [Research Grants and Projects](#) service, or use the [Research Activity API](#), to see if your activity is already described before adding a new activity record.

Aside from records provided by funding bodies, activity records should not be created for grants that are not intended to be linked to a collection or service.

Projects and programs

If you have your own records about the research projects which contain fuller or more up to date information than the grant description provided in funder records, you can create activity records for the project with the grant identifier (preferably a PURL) in the [Identifier](#) element; the common identifier will ensure the records [display together](#) in Research Data Australia. This is an important link in the research discovery context as publication outputs are also linked to the grant identifier. If the corresponding grant has not been provided to Research Data Australia by the funder, and thus has no PURL grant identifier, then supplying the funder name and grant identifier as part of the research project description is still encouraged.

Projects and programs can provide meaningful context to collection records as activity records: they are well-documented (because of funder requirements), with named investigators, a budget, and abstracts. However, not all collections are gathered through easily-described activities. In the following cases, the activities are so hard to describe, or provide so little benefit for discovery, that there is no point in creating records:

- Collecting agencies (museums, archives, libraries) gather collections through their ongoing "business as usual" activities.
- Australian government and state government agencies also gather data as part of their "business as usual" activities, and these activities may be difficult to define in relation to specific collections.
- Very old research collections may not have documentation available on the activities that produced them.

Metadata for Activity Records in the RDA Registry

The table below specifies the mandatory and optional elements for creating an activity record for the RDA registry. Click on the label name to see how the element should be encoded.

Provide as many optional elements as you can, and follow the guidelines in the best practice sections to maximise discovery of your activity record and associated collection(s).

Label in the RDA Registry	Schema element or attribute name	Obligation	Repeatable	Definition
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registry object	<registryObject>	Mandatory		A wrapper element for metadata records (registry objects). It has no relationship to objects being described, but exists solely as part of the interchange infrastructure.
originating source	<originatingSource>	Mandatory	N	The entity holding the managed version of the registry object metadata, as represented by a URI. The primary source of truth for the metadata record.
group	@group	Mandatory	N	The organisation that is contributing the metadata record (registryObject), that is, the metadata publisher.
key	<key>	Mandatory	N	A unique string that persistently identifies a metadata record within the RDA Registry.
activity	<activity>	Mandatory	N	“Activity” is one of four classes of things that may be described in a metadata record.
activity type	<activity type>	Mandatory	N	The type of activity selected from a predefined list .
name/title	<name>	Mandatory	Y	The name or title given to an activity.
description	<description>	Optional	Y	A plain text description of an activity.
location/address	<location>	Optional	Y	For an activity, relevant locations may include a physical address or an electronic address (e.g. a web page URL).
related object (party) OR related info (party)	<relatedObject> OR <relatedInfo>	Optional	Y	A related party linked to the activity using an object key or an identifier.
related object (collection) OR related info (collection)	<relatedObject> OR <relatedInfo>	Optional	Y	A related collection linked to the activity using an object key or an identifier.
related object (activity) OR related info (activity)	<relatedObject> OR <relatedInfo>	Optional	Y	A related activity linked to the activity using an object key or an identifier.
related info	<relatedInfo>	Optional	Y	Additional information related to the activity, including publications and websites.
existence dates	<existenceDates>	Optional	Y	The start and end dates of the existence of the activity being described. For projects and programs, the dates refer to start and completion dates, for grants, this refers to commencement and cessation of funding.
identifier	<identifier>	Optional	Y	A sequence of characters or words that uniquely identify an activity within a particular context or the domain of a specified authority (e.g. PURL).
subject	<subject>	Optional	Y	A term, keyword, classification code or phrase representing the primary topic or topics covered by an activity.

spatial coverage	<coverage>	Optional	Y	Spatial characteristics of a location which is the focus of an activity described using coordinates or text.
temporal coverage	<coverage>	Optional	Y	Temporal characteristics of the intellectual content of an activity described using dates or text (Not project start and end dates, use existence dates).
date modified	@dateModified	Optional	N	The date the activity record metadata was last changed in the source system.

<element>; @ = attribute

Activity attributes

Activity Type

An Activity Type must be specified, preferably from the Activity Type vocabulary below:

Type	Explanation
project	A piece of work that is undertaken or attempted, with a start and end date and defined objectives.
program	A system of activities intended to meet a public need. A program is an ongoing body of work on a research topic, set up as an organisation with designated infrastructure. Programs address much broader research questions than projects, which are more narrowly focussed. Programs should be used instead of projects when the collection does not naturally fall under a project, or as a way to group a number of related projects. In such cases, the hierarchical relationship "isPartOf"/"hasPart" should be used.
grant	A funding grant awarded for research purposes.

Date Modified (metadata) attribute

A date that indicates the currency of a metadata record may be provided as an activity attribute in a RIF-CS record, but is not displayed or searchable in Research Data Australia. The DateModified attribute indicates the date when metadata describing an activity was last changed in the source system (not the RDA Registry). DateModified has no relation to the date of the last harvest of metadata from a data source. This date will usually be system-generated by the source system and should be UTC and of one of the forms described in section 3.2.7 of the [W3C Schema Data Types document](#).

Activity relationships

Activities can be linked to collection, service, party, and other activities using either [RelatedObject](#) or [RelatedInfo](#) - Research Data Australia treats activities linked via [RelatedInfo](#) in the same way as those linked via [RelatedObject](#) (the indexing and display of linked activities are equivalent), provided the activity is linked using a unique identifier such as the PURL or Grant ID that can be matched to an activity record in the RDA registry.

The RDA Registry infers and displays bi-directional links between [related objects](#) in Research Data Australia. If a collection (or service or party) links to an activity within the same data source, the activity record does not need to link back to the collection; the RDA Registry will display the inferred reverse link in Research Data Australia. If the activity and collection are from different data sources, the inferred reverse link will only be displayed if the receiving partner has opted in to allow bi-directional links. All activity records from the ARC and NHMRC have reverse links enabled. See [relationships between registry objects](#) for information on how the RDA Registry can automatically create relationships between objects, and bi-directional links between related objects.

Expand the links below to view an explanation of the relationships:

▼ [Related Collections...](#)

Activities must be linked to a collection (except for funder-provided grant records), with the relationship "hasOutput".

▼ [Related Parties...](#)

Activities (except for funder-provided grant records) must be linked to a party, through either the "hasParticipant", "hasPrincipalInvestigator", "isOwnedBy" or "isManagedBy" relationships.

Activity records should link to any funder(s) of the activity via the "isFundedBy" relationship. It is preferred that the [FundRef DOI](#) identifier is used when linking to the funder. The FundRef DOI is both the identifier and the key for a funder's party record. FundRef DOIs are available for lookup via the [Research Activities API](#).

Related Activities...

Relations between activities are only relevant if they improve collections discovery. Relationships between activities can be expressed through the "isFundedBy" (a related program) or "hasPart"/"isPartOf" (for program/project hierarchies) relations, or the generic "hasAssociationWith" (include a description of the details or nature of the association).

What makes a good Activity record?

Ideally, activity records will include accurate, concise and authoritative descriptive content that facilitates discovery, access and reuse of the collections associated with the activities. They will also connect to information about related people, projects, and publications that give context to the associated data.

While there is no 'one size fits all' for activity descriptions, a 'good' activity record should:

- include a globally unique persistent [identifier](#) such as a PURL if one exists
- have a descriptive [name](#) that is distinct from related groups or collections
- be related to a [collection](#) or [service](#)
- be related to a [party](#), to allow networks of researchers and collections to be clustered around research activities, and to provide a contact point for the activity
- include a [description](#) of the activity to provide users with context for collections
- include [subject](#) terms to allow Research Data Australia to associate an activity with a research field, and indirectly with other collections in the same field
- include an [electronic address](#) for an activity such as a URL to a project webpage.

See the individual elements and attributes for best practice information, and find out how to create RIF-CS [metadata for impact](#).

Exemplar

Example activity record of type "project"

```
<registryObject group="Queensland University of Technology">
  <key>10378.3/8085/1018.13426</key>
  <originatingSource type="authoritative">http://www.qut.edu.au<
/originatingSource>
  <activity type="project" dateModified="2012-10-11T21:49:43Z">
    <identifier type="local">PRJ-000255</identifier>
    <name type="primary">
      <namePart type="primary">Determining reliable excretion times for
therapeutic drugs in horses</namePart>
    </name>
    <relatedObject>
      <key>Contributor:Queensland University of Technology</key>
      <relation type="isManagedBy"/>
    </relatedObject>
    <relatedObject>
      <key>10378.3/8085/1018.13423</key>
      <relation type="hasOutput"/>
    </relatedObject>
    <relatedObject>
      <key>10378.3/8085/1018.13424</key>
      <relation type="hasParticipant"/>
    </relatedObject>
    <relatedObject>
      <key>10378.3/8085/1018.13425</key>
```

```

    <relation type="hasParticipant"/>
  </relatedObject>
  <subject type="local">Equine</subject>
  <subject type="local">Dope-testing</subject>
  <subject type="anzsrc-for">0702</subject>
  <subject type="anzsrc-for">070710</subject>
    <description type="fundingScheme">Australian Competitive Grant
(RIRDC)</description>
    <description type="brief">To determine the excretion times for 18
therapeutic substances, with each substance tested in 10 to 12 horses. To
make this information accessible to equine veterinarians, scientists and
the horse industry at large through the publication of fact sheets and
journal papers.</description>
    <existenceDates>
      <date type="dateFrom" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2007</date>
      <date type="dateTo" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2012</date>
    </existenceDates>
    <relatedInfo type="party">
      <identifier type="doi">http://dx.doi.org/10.13039/501100000982<
/identifier>
      <title>Rural Industries Research Development Corporation (RIRDC)
</title>
      <relation type="isFundedBy"/>
    </relatedInfo>
    <relatedInfo type="website">
      <identifier type="uri">http://www.rirdc.gov.au/programs
/established-rural-industries/horses/rirdc-projects-and-results/project-
details.cfm?project_id=PRJ-000255</identifier>
      <title>Rural Industries Research Development Corporation (RIRDC)
Projects and Results</title>
    </relatedInfo>
  </activity>
</registryObject>

```

Change history

▼ [Click here to view...](#)

Date	Change history
7 July 2012	First web publication
12 April 2013	Added more extensive information about existenceDates and the differences between grant dates and project dates
28 March 2014	Updated Identifiers with information about the display of multiple activity records for Release 12
31 July 2015	Content updated to reflect changes implemented in Release 15

17 May 2017	<p>New Activity page created replacing the "Best practice for creating activity records" and "RIF-CS in Practice: Describing an Activity" pages. Content completely revised and updated.</p> <p>New table providing an overview of schema requirements for activities added to replace the Metadata Content Requirements page on the ANDS website. Providing a title now mandatory in the RDA Registry.</p>
16 Jan 2020	Added information about FundRef IDs to Related Parties