

# Dates: collections

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The Dates element can be used to describe a number of dates relevant to a data collection such as when it was created or published. As such, it is broader in scope than the other date-related elements which include:

- [Date \(TemporalCoverage\)](#): used to record the time periods over which data were collected, or time periods referred to by the data.
- [Date \(CitationMetadata\)](#): a date attribute with values taken from the Citation Date Type Vocabulary to be used in the citation metadata element to record date.
- [ExistenceDates](#): used to record the start and end dates of the existence of the entity being described (for service, party and activity objects only).

While the RIF-CS schema also includes administrative metadata attributes such as [DateAccessioned](#) and [DateModified](#), the Dates element is only used to describe dates in the lifecycle of a data collection, not a metadata record. See: [Collection](#).

## Meaning & purpose

A data collection may pass through various stages in its lifecycle from collection through its many transformations to the publication and preservation stages. The Dates element is a wrapper element for the Date child element that can be used to describe [dates associated with an event in the lifecycle of the data collection](#) as provided for in DataCite, Dublin Core and other metadata standards. It is only for use with collection records and is not applicable to party, activity or service records. Use the Dates element where additional information describing data curation and management events will facilitate identification, discovery, access and reuse of the collection.

## Dates attributes

### Dates Type (collection)

A Dates Type is required. Preferably specify a type from the Dates Type vocabulary (which is taken from [DCMI Metadata Terms Vocabulary](#) and semantically aligned with the Date element in other schemas including [DataCite](#)):

Type	Explanation
<a href="#">dc.available</a>	Date (often a range) that the collection became, or will become available
<a href="#">dc.created</a>	Date of creation of the collection
<a href="#">dc.dateAccepted</a>	Date of acceptance of the collection
<a href="#">dc.dateSubmitted</a>	Date of submission of the collection
<a href="#">dc.issued</a>	Date of formal issuance (e.g. publication) of the collection
<a href="#">dc.valid</a>	Date (often a range) of validity of the collection

## Date Type

A Date Type must be specified for the Date element. There are two Date Types:

Type	Explanation
<a href="#">dateFrom</a>	the start date for a time period
<a href="#">dateTo</a>	the end date for a time period

## Date Format attribute

The [DateFormat](#) attribute is required for each instance of Date Type. A single date or a range of dates can be provided and may include both start and end dates or an open ended date. The [W3C Date Time Format \(W3CDTF\)](#) is the only format specified in the vocabulary.

# Use in Research Data Australia

In Research Data Australia, dates are displayed with the following type labels:

- Available: 2012-10-11
- Created: 2012-10-19
- Valid: 2012-10-17 to 2012-11-03
- Date accepted: 2012-10-05
- Date submitted: 2012-10-23
- Issued: 2012-10-23

## Best practice

The Dates element can be used to describe [various dates associated with a data collection](#). Only use the Dates element where additional information describing data curation and management events will facilitate identification, discovery, access and reuse of the collection.

In some instances, the dates described in the Dates element may be the same as [temporal coverage](#) dates of the data collection. For example, in the case of an instrument such as a sensor where data may be collected on a single date or series of dates, the collection dates and coverage dates may be the same.

A single date or a range of dates can be provided and may include both start and end dates or an open ended date. When entering a date range use two Date elements with Date Type attributes of 'dateFrom' and 'dateTo', otherwise Research Data Australia will not be able to display the date pairs correctly. Both dates should be entered using the same format where possible. Open ended dates are common for cultural collections such as those held by museums, where, for example, a collection is still be added to on an ongoing basis. In these cases, use only dateTo or dateFrom as appropriate.

Where multiple attribute types are used, a separate wrapper element should be used for each grouping by type and date range. See XML encoding example 4 below.

## XML encoding examples

### Example 1: A single year date describing an open ended collection

```
<dates type="dc.available">
  <date type="dateFrom" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2011</date>
</dates>
```

### Example 2: A date range

```
<dates type="dc.created">
  <date type="dateFrom" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2009-09-20</date>
  <date type="dateTo" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2010-10-15</date>
</dates>
```

### Example 3: A date range including time

```
<dates type="dc.created">
  <date type="dateFrom" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2009-09-20T09:15:00Z<
/ date>
  <date type="dateTo" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2010-01-01T09:45:00Z</date>
</dates>
```

#### Example 4: Multiple instances of Dates Type

```
<dates type="dc.created">
  <date type="dateFrom" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2009-09-20T00:00:00Z<
/ date>
  <date type="dateTo" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2010-01-01T00:00:00Z</date>
</dates>
<dates type="dc.available">
  <date type="dateFrom" dateFormat="W3CDTF">2011</date>
</dates>
```

## Change history

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Date	Change history
20 Nov 2012	Page created
12 Jul 2017	Page reviewed and updated
30 Oct 2018	Page reviewed and links updated
28 Nov 2018	Examples updated to fix errors with Dates Type vocabulary