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Automated Coding

# Major Field of Study 

## Procedures Manual

Prepared by: Census Operations Division Social, Institutions and Labour Statistics Field

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## I. Introduction to the Major Field of Study Variable

The Major Field of Study (MFS) question was first introduced during the 1986 Census. It is found on the long (2B) questionnaire, along with five other questions concerning education. All levels of government have emphasized the need for data concerning the educational characteristics and attainment of Canadians. These data are needed to assess the effectiveness of the education system; examine relationships between education and employment, and occupation, industry and income; forecast occupational imbalances; and guide immigration policies.

The 1996 Major Field of Study question (Question 29) asks respondents what was their major field of study or training of their highest degree, certificate or diploma. Secondary or high school graduation certificates are excluded. One write-in box is provided. A check box follows the write-in box for those respondents whose highest qualification is a secondary school graduation certificate.

The 1996 Major Field of Study question is shown below. The instructions provided to assist respondents in answering Question 29 are shown on the next page.
29. What was the major field of study or training of this person's highest degree, certificate or diploma (excluding secondary or high school graduation certificates)?

For example, accounting, carpentry, civil, engineering, history, legal secretary, welding.


The following instructions are found in the "Guide and Reasons Why the Questions Are Asked" which accompanies the census questionnaire:

For persons who earned more than one highest degree (for example, two bachelor's degrees or two master's degrees), report the field of study for the degree most recently earned.

For persons who specialized in more than one field of study while earning their degrees, report the area in which the greatest number of credits or courses were earned.

Wherever possible, report the subcategory of specialization within a broad area of training - especially for graduate studies or other advanced training.

The introduction of new technologies is creating new jobs and changing the way we perform old ones. Information about the educational attainment of Canadians is more important than ever to evaluate our adjustment to these changes. The design of cost-effective programs for upgrading the skills of Canadians to facilitate their transition to new industries and new technologies requires detailed knowledge of present educational attributes and their geographic distribution.

Field of specialization data (Question 29) introduce a new dimension into labour market models and improve the analysis and forecasting of occupational distributions. This analysis is necessary to develop and implement appropriate immigration and labour policies and programs. It also enables policy makers to anticipate and respond to the economically-motivated migration of Canadians from one part of the country to another or outside Canada.

In particular, the development of high technology industries and the rate of technological change require more detailed information on qualifications than can be obtained from the other education questions alone (Questions 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28). The emergence of these new technologies and the decline of old ones creates a need for retraining people from one occupational category, or set of skills, in the use of another. Census data can assess the magnitude of the need for retraining and guide the delivery of such programs.

Questions 24 to 26 , the first three education questions, serve to determine the level of schooling of the Canadian population. Question 27 identifies those respondents who are currently attending school either full or part time.

## EDUCATION

24. What is the highest grade (or year) of secondary
(high school) or elementary school this person ever attended?

Enter highest number (1 to 13) of grades or years, excluding kindergarden.
25. How many years of education has this person

- completed at univesity?

26. How many years of schooling has this person
ever completed at an institution other than a university, a secondary (high) school or an elementary school?

Include years of schooling at community colleges, technical institutes, CEGEPs (general and professional), private trade schools or private business colleges, diploma schools of nursing, etc.

27. In the past eight months (that is, since last September),
was this person attending a school, college or university?

Include attendance at elementary or secondary schools, business or trade schools, community colleges, technical institutes, CEGEPs etc., for courses which can be used as credits towards a certificate, diploma or degree.

Mark one circle only.
$09 \bigcirc$ No, did not attend in past eight months
$10 \bigcirc$ Yes, full time
$11 \bigcirc$ Yes, part time, day or night

These questions may be used in conjunction with Question 28 to determine a respondent's Major Field of Study if the response given to Question 29 is ambiguous.

You can find the education responses to Questions 24 to 28 on an additional screen, which is provided for each respondent (MFS screen).
28. What certificates, diplomas or degrees has this
person ever obtained?
include all qualifications obtained from secondary
(high) schools, or trade schools and other
postsecondary educational institutions.
Mark as many circles as applicable.


The Major Field of Study variable is hierarchical in nature. It contains ten major (general) categories which are divided into over one hundred minor categories (subgroups), which in turn are broken down into over 480 unit (detailed) groups. The major categories are as follows:

## Code Field of Study

001-046 Educational, recreational and counselling services
047-079 Fine and applied arts
080-124 Humanities and related fields
125-187 Social sciences and related fields
188-220 Commerce, management and business adminstration
221-266 Agricultural and biological sciences/technologies
302-369 Engineering and applied science technologies and trades
370-441 Health professions, sciences and technologies
442-480 Mathematics and physical sciences
There are five basic types of write-in responses which will not be coded by the Batch Coding System and will require manual resolution:
(1) single responses;
(2) misspelled responses;
(3) abbreviated responses;
(4) multiple responses; and
(5) other categories of responses.

When assigning a code to the Major Field of Study variable, try to make the respondent's major field of study consistent with the response for university education, other postsecondary education, and diploma, certificate or degree.

- For example, if a respondent has a bachelor's degree, four years of university and no years of other postsecondary education, assign a major field of study which is represented by courses offered by a university and not one offered by a trade school or college.

The occupation field can also be used to identify an appropriate major field of study.

- For example, if the respondent is a family doctor, and the response is G.P. MED, then assign the code 375, General Practice Medicine.

Also, when assigning a code to the MFS variable, try to be as specific as possible. If the respondent specified a detailed field a study which is not listed in the Code Book, code under "other" if available and not under "general".

- For example, if the respondent answered "Sociology of Education" code 177- "Sociology other".

Three possible actions can be taken when following the procedures to code a write-in response. You can assign a code, skip a write-in, or refer the case to the next level of coding. Coding the Major Field of Study variable is done with the help of the Automated Coding by Text Recognition (ACTR) system. ACTR is an automated computer system which uses a list of standard reference phrases and codes to match against write-in responses. If no direct match is found, ACTR will return a number of possible matches in an effort to help you resolve the case.

In this manual, a response is defined as exactly word by word what the respondent wrote on the questionnaire. A response can be made up of one or more fields which make up a multiple response. A field of study is each line in the MFS Code Book that has a code.

## II. Standard Process Flow - Single Responses

Shown below is an example of how a response will appear on your screen.

## Coding screen



The following Major Field of Study screen provides the respondent's answers to other questions which will assist you in resolving this case.

Appendix A lists all the abbreviations found in the Major Field of Study screen.

Major Field of Study screen


## Standard Process Flow

The following process diagram summarizes the standard process flow expected to occur under normal processing conditions.


Single responses can be represented by more than one word, for example: "Civil Engineering", "Clinical Psychology", "Financial Management" and "International Economics".

For any single response, follow these instructions.

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTION |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Step 1 <br> Examine the response to be <br> coded. | (a) IF it is a single response <br> THEN | go to Step 2. |
|  | (b) IF the response is a <br> multiple response, <br> THEN | go to chapter V - Multiple <br> Responses. |
| Step 2 <br> Verify if there are any <br> phrases returned by ACTR <br> at the top of the screen. | (a) IF a phrase is returned <br> by ACTR THEN | go to ACTR Process Table <br> on page 10. |
| (b) IF no phrase is returned |  |  |
| by ACTR THEN |  |  |$\quad$| go to Auxiliary Process |
| :--- |
| Table on page 11. |

## ACTR Process Table

(Automated Coding by Text Recognition)
When ACTR returns a phrase, follow these instructions.

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTION |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Compare the phrase with the <br> response to be coded, <br> starting with the first phrase, <br> to determine if it is as <br> suitable match. | (a) IF a match is found, <br> THEN | (i) select the valid code; <br> (ii) validate the code; <br> (iii) verify that the code <br> description at the <br> bottom of the screen <br> matches the response; <br> and <br> (iv) commit the code. |
|  | (b) IF no match is found in <br> the list ACTR has <br> returned, THEN | go to the Auxiliary <br> Information Process Table <br> on page 11. |

## Auxiliary Information Process Table

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTiON |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Step 1 <br> Browse through the responses provided by this person to the following questions: <br> - secondary, elementary education; <br> - university education; <br> - other postsecondary education; <br> - school attendance during the past eight months; <br> - diploma; <br> - industry; and <br> - occupation. | (a) IF a code is found, THEN | (i) study the relationship between the results and the response to the Major Field of Study question; and <br> (ii) look up response in MFS Code Book. |
|  | (b) IF a valid code is found, THEN | (i) type the code; <br> (ii) validate the code; and <br> (iii) commit the code. |
|  | (c) IF no other code can be found, THEN | REFER TO NEXT <br> LEVEL OF CODING. |

If you are in doubt about the correct code to assign, REFER THE RESPONSE TO THE NEXT CODING LEVEL.

## III. Misspelled Responses

Shown below is an example of how a misspelled response will appear on your screen.

Coding screen


The following Major Field of Study screen provides the respondent's answers to other questions which will assist you in coding a response.

## Major Field of Study screen



For misspelled responses, consult the MFS Code Book to find the correct spelling and corresponding code.

You should be cautious in interpreting a misspelled major field of study. Certain write-ins will appear as misspellings but actually refer to totally different major fields of study with almost identical spellings. For example, the write-in "phycology" is not a misspelling of "psychology". Phycology is an authentic major field of study. It is the study of algae. You have to code this write-in as botany, code 247.

The following process diagram summarizes the process flow expected to occur when a misspelled response is being resolved.


For any misspelled response to be coded, follow these instructions.

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTION |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Step 1 <br> Examine the response to be <br> coded. <br> Review spelling in the MFS <br> Code Book. | (a) IF the correct spelling <br> and code are found, <br> THEN | (i) type in the code; <br> (ii) validate the code; and <br> (iii) commit the code. |
| (b) IF the correct spelling is <br> not found, THEN | go to Step 2. |  |
| Step 2 <br> Verify if there are any <br> phrases returned by ACTR <br> at the top of the screen. | (a) IF a phrase is returned <br> by ACTR, THEN | go to the ACTR Process <br> Table on page 10. |
|  | (b) IF no phrase is <br> returned by ACTR, <br> THEN | go to Auxiliary Information <br> Process Table on page 11. |

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## IV. Abbreviated Responses

You should attempt to logically expand the abbreviation to its fullest form and then refer to the MFS Code Book for the appropriate code.

Shown below is an example of how an abbreviated response will appear on your screen.

Coding screen


The following Major Field of Study screen provides the respondent's answers to other questions which will assist you in coding a response.

Major Field of Study screen


The following process diagram summarizes the process flow expected to occur when abbreviated responses are being resolved.


For any abbreviated response to be coded. follow these instructions.

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTION |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Step 1 <br> Examine the response to be <br> coded. <br> Expand the abbreviated <br> write-in to its fullest form. | (a) IF the unabbreviated <br> form of the write-in, <br> and the code, are found <br> in the MFS Code Book, <br> THEN | (i) type in the valid code; <br> (ii) validate the code; and <br> (iii) commit the code. |
|  | (b) IF the correct spelling is <br> not found, THEN | go to Step 2. |
| Step 2 <br> Verify if there are any <br> ACTR phrases at the top of <br> the screen. | (a) IF a phrase is returned <br> by ACTR, THEN | go to ACTR Process Table <br> on page 10. |
|  | (b) IF no phrase is returned |  |
| by ACTR, THEN |  |  |$\quad$| go to Auxiliary Information |
| :--- |
| Process Table on page 11. |

## V. Multiple Responses

Shown below is an example of how a multiple response, will appear on your screen.

Coding screen


The following Major Field of Study screen provides the respondent's answers to other questions which will assist you in coding a response.

Major Field of Study screen


The following process diagram summarizes the process flow expected to occur when multiple responses are being resolved.


A multiple response represents two completely different major fields of study, for example: "History and Computer Science", "Law and Medicine", "Geography and English" and "Mathematics and Physics". You must determine with the help of the MFS Code Book if the write-in represents more than a single response.

For any multiple response to be coded, follow these instructions.

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTION |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Step 1 <br> Examine the response to be coded. <br> Determine the type of multiple response. | (a) IF the write-in represents two specific fields within the same group, THEN | go to Step 2. |
|  | (b) IF the write-in represents two completely different fields of study, THEN | go to Step 2. |
|  | (c) IF the write-in is not found in (a) or (b), THEN | REFER TO NEXT LEVEL OF CODING. |
| Step 2 <br> Determine if the fields are at the same level. | (a) IF the fields are at the same level, THEN | (i) look up the first field in the MFS Code Book; <br> (ii) go to Step 2(c). |
|  | (b) IF the fields are not at the same level, THEN | (i) determine field at the lowest level of the MFS coding structure; <br> (ii) look up this field in the MFS Code Book; <br> (iii) go to Step 2(c). |
|  | (c) IF a match is found, THEN | (i) type the code; <br> (ii) validate the code; and <br> (iii) commit the code. |
|  | (d) IF a match is not found, THEN | (i) look up the field in the MFS Code Book; <br> (ii) go to Step 3. |
| Step 3 <br> Verify if there are any ACTR phrases at the top of the screen. | (a) IF a phrase is returned by ACTR, THEN | go to the ACTR Process table on page 10. |
|  | (b) IF no phrase is returned by ACTR, THEN | go to the Auxiliary Information Process Table on page 11 . |

## VI. Other Categories of Responses

Other categories of responses can be represented by any response which does not fit into those described previously in this manual. For example: "Same", "Same as" or "See Person 1". In these cases, since you cannot browse the answers of the person being referred to, refer the write-in to the next coding level.

Shown below is an example of how an other category of response will appear on your screen.

Coding screen


The following process diagram summarizes the process flow expected to occur when other categories of responses are being resolved.
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For any "other categories of write-in" responses to be coded, follow these instructions.

| SITUATION | CONDITION | ACTION |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Step 1 <br> Examine the response to be <br> coded. | IF the type of response is <br> not a misspelled response, <br> abbreviated response, or <br> multiple response, THEN | REFER THE RESPONSE <br> TO THE NEXT LEVEL <br> OF CODING. |

## Appendix A

## English and French Abbreviations for Major Field of Study Screen

Below is a list of all the abbreviations appearing in the Major Field of Study screen.

English Abbreviations for MFS Screen

| Variable | Meaning |
| :--- | :--- |
| Never | Never attended school or attended kindergarten |
| None | None |
| ltoneyr | Less than 1 year of completed courses |
| yesfull | Full-time attendance |
| yespart | Part-time attendance, day or evening |
| secscce | Secondary (high) school graduation certification or equivalent |
| nunivce | Other non-university certificate or diploma (community college, CEGEP, <br> technical institute.) |
| bachdeg | Bachelor's degree |
| unabvba | University certificate or diploma above bachelor level |
| masters | Master's degree |
| degrmed | Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary, optometry |
| doctora | Earned doctorate |


| Variable | Meaning |
| :--- | :--- |
| aucune | Never attended school or attended kindergarten |
| mdunean | Less than 1 year of schooling completed |
| non | No, didn't attend any of those establishments in the last eight months |
| ouiplei | Yes, full time |
| ouipart | Part time, day or evening |
| aucun | No certificate or diploma from university (obtained from a college, CEGEP <br> or technical institute) |
| ceetsec | Secondary (high) school graduation certification or equivalent |
| cemetie | Certificate from a technical school |
| cenuniv | Other non-university certificate or diploma (community college, CEGEP, <br> technical institute) |
| ceuniv | University certificate or diploma below bachelor level |
| baccala | Bachelor's degree |
| unsupba | University certificate or diploma above bachelor level |
| maitris | Master's degree |
| diplmed | Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science or optometry |
| doctora | Earned doctorate |

