

Best Practice: Granularity, version 1.0

Granularity is an important aspect when registering research data. Granularity describes the degree of aggregation of the resource to be registered. Different levels of granularity can be useful depending on discipline or resource.

According to **da|ra Policy** this is first to note with granularity¹:

The publication agent receives a fixed prefix from da|ra which must be used for all their objects to be registered. The identification of an object can be executed to any desired level of granularity (element of a file, a file, a file collection, etc.) as the purpose dictates. Recommendations of the IDF (<http://www.doi.org/hb.html>) should be taken into consideration. The basic granularity will be adhered to when allocating a DOI name in accordance with the SLA.

The **Service Level Agreement** provides for DOI name allocation and granularity the following²:

The publication agent registers objects at the [study-level. i.e. one DOI name can be linked with several data sets of a certain study.] [...] Changes in level of granularity are possible by prior agreement with da|ra.

The **International DOI Foundation (IDF)** comments on granularity as follows³:

A DOI name can be assigned to any object, regardless of the extent to which that object might be a component part of some larger entity. DOI names can be assigned at any desired degree of precision and granularity that a registrant deems to be appropriate.

When deciding which level of granularity is used to register a resource, two aspects are crucial: 1. which unit is to be published and 2. at which level is a citation desired?

As an illustration some examples follow.

Examples for granularity

Resource type	Possible levels of granularity	Examples (fiktiv)
Dataset	A study	Panel study "Test"
	A particular survey year/wave of this study	Survey year 2005 of the panel study "Test"
	A specific sample (subsample) within a survey year/wave of a study	Cohort 4 in survey year 2005 of the panel study "Test"
	Data type (SUF, PUF, online etc.), file format (EXCEL, SPSS, STATA, R) or the language version of a data file	The STATA-file (.dta) of cohort 4 in survey year 2005 of the panel study "Test"
Text	A journal	The journal "Testing"
	A specific issue of this magazine (e. g. language version)	The journal "Testing" in German
	An article within this journal	The article "The panel study „Test“" in the German version of the journal "Testing"
Video	A video (of an interview, participant observation etc.)	Video of interviews for panel study "Test" in survey year 2005
	A video sequence in the video	Video of interviews from cohort 4

¹ Cf. da|ra Policy (version 2.2)

² Cf. Service Level Agreement (version from March 4th, 2013)

³ Cf. IDF Handbook Chapter 2.3.2 „Granularity“ <http://dx.doi.org/10.1000/182>