

EDUCATION SERVICES AUSTRALIA

TEMPORAL COVERAGE guidelines

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Temporal coverage guidelines

1.0 Temporal coverage

The purpose of Temporal coverage metadata is to enrich discoverability by specifying time periods that are spanned by the intellectual subject matter of a resource. Where the dates are significant to key concepts in the intellectual subject matter, Temporal coverage is recommended. It is particularly important for history resources.

The Metadata Exchange (MEX) and the Sharing Exchange (SHEX) both use two systems for specifying the time element:

- the **standard date-time format** (Known as W3C-DTF) of a four-digit year and two-digit month and day
- the **BCE scheme** for Before Common Era dates (W3C-DTF cannot specify negative values).

Examples are provided to demonstrate how to populate the temporal coverage field in the two systems.

1.1 Tips

- Use the standard date-time format (W3C-DTF) wherever possible.
- If the intellectual subject matter of the item is related to a particular time period only, then record this information in the Temporal coverage field. Do not use this field if the intellectual content is not related to a particular date or period.
- Strike a balance with the level of specificity. It is okay to be detailed, but always consider if a larger time period is more appropriate.
- Include 'start' *and* 'end' dates for all items, unless they are ongoing.
- Temporal coverage is *not* used to specify the dates related to:
 - the date of publication of the resource
 - the date the resource was sourced from a collection or shared by content provider.
- Where a range of dates is covered, try to apply a period that best fits the dates. If the dates are sparse over a long period, entering multiple dates may be preferable.
- Where the resource is a graphical, textual or some other representation of a date or period, use the date or period represented and not the date the representation was created.
- Enter a standard 'name' for the time period, if relevant. In many cases, no 'name' is needed and that field should be left blank.

2.0 Entering Temporal coverage in MEX

Two examples are detailed: a Date-time format (W3C-DTF) example and a BCE example. The BCE scheme is used because the W3C-DTF scheme does not allow 'negative' dates.

2.1 Date-time format example

The example used here is a 1993 interview about the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor government in 1975: R7093 *The Life and Times of Margaret Whitlam, 1993: 'They've sacked the boss'*. Note that the interview discusses events that occurred on a single day.

- 1 Select Edit record in your MEX record. Under the Idea section, select Temporal coverage, and then Add date and time.
- 2 Enter a year in both the Start and End fields. Note that even if they are the same year, both Start and End should be populated.



The screenshot shows a 'Temporal coverage' section with a 'Date and time' sub-section. The 'Start' and 'End' fields are both set to '1975'. The 'Start' field has dropdown menus for 'Months', 'Days', 'Hours', and 'Minute:'. The 'End' field has similar dropdown menus. A 'Save' button is visible at the bottom. Two red arrows point to the 'Start' and 'End' year input boxes.

Figure 1 Start and End years

- 3 If more details are known and required, enter Month and Day also. Again, include both Start and End.



The screenshot shows the 'Date and time' section with 'Start' and 'End' fields. Both are set to '1975', '11', and '11'. The 'Start' field has dropdown menus for 'Months', 'Days', 'Hours', and 'Minutes:'. The 'End' field has similar dropdown menus. A 'Save' button is visible at the bottom. Two red arrows point to the 'Months' and 'Days' dropdown menus for both 'Start' and 'End'.

Figure 2 Add Month and Day

- 4 Select Save and then OK.

2.2 BCE example

The example resource is a photograph of a theropod dinosaur skeleton from the Cretaceous period, 118–110 million years ago: M2728 '*Deinonychus antirrhopus*'. The Start and End dates are 118 000 000 and 110 000 000 BCE.

- 1 Select Edit record in your MEX record. Under the Idea section, select Temporal coverage, and then Other scheme.

Idea

ScOT terms Cretaceous period; Dinosaurs; Fossils

Keywords Deinonychus antirrhopus; Cretaceous period; Dinosaurs;

Other idea [Add more](#)

Spatial coverage

Spatial coverage (other)

Temporal coverage

Time period		Delete
Name		
Scheme		
Start		
End		

[Add date and time \(W3C-DTF\)](#) [Other scheme](#)

Figure 3 Add BCE time period

- 2 Enter 'BCE' under Scheme and the Start and End dates. Do not include spaces in the numbers.

In this particular case we also know the name of the time period, so we can enter 'Cretaceous' in the Name field. If the name of the time period is unknown, leave the field blank.

Temporal coverage

Time period		Delete
Name	Cretaceous	
Scheme	BCE	
Start	118000000	
End	110000000	

[Add date and time \(W3C-DTF\)](#) [Other scheme](#)

Figure 4 Enter Scheme and BCE Start and End dates

- 3 Select Save and then OK.

3.0 Entering Temporal coverage in SHEX

The process for entering Temporal coverage metadata in SHEX is basically the same as for MEX, but the system uses slightly different terminology. Again, two examples are detailed: a Date-time format (W3C-DTF) example and a BCE example.

3.1 Date-time format example

The example is for a resource about the history of the trepang industry in northern Australian waters, covering the period from 1800 to 1950: S4343 *The trepang industry*.

- 1 Select the Edit tab in your SHEX record. Under the Idea section, select the Edit link at Temporal coverage, and then Add time period.
- 2 Enter a year in both the Start and End fields. Note that even if they are the same year, both Start and End should be populated:

The screenshot shows a web interface for editing metadata. At the top, there are two tabs: 'View' and 'Edit'. Below the tabs is a heading 'Add date and time' followed by the resource identifier 'S4343 The trepang industry'. There is a 'Name' label followed by an empty text input field. Below this, there are two rows of date-time input fields. The first row is labeled 'Start' and contains a text input with '1800', followed by dropdown menus for 'Months', 'Days', 'Hours', and 'Minutes'. The second row is labeled 'End' and contains a text input with '1950', followed by similar dropdown menus. Red arrows point to the 'Start' and 'End' text inputs.

Figure 5 Enter Start and End years

- 3 If more details are known and required, enter Month and Day also, including both Start and End values.
- 4 Select Save and then Return to Edit metadata

3.2 BCE example

The example used here is a teacher resource about the pre-BCE cultures of ancient Egypt and ancient Greece, examining features of the societies dating back to 60 000 BCE: S4453 *The Mediterranean world*.

- 1 Select the Edit tab in your SHEX record. Under the Idea section, select the Edit link at Temporal coverage, and then Other scheme.



Figure 6 Add Other scheme for BCE dates

- 2 Enter 'BCE' under Scheme and the Start and End dates. In this case the start date is 60 000 BCE and the end date is 0 BCE. Do not use spaces in values larger than three digits.

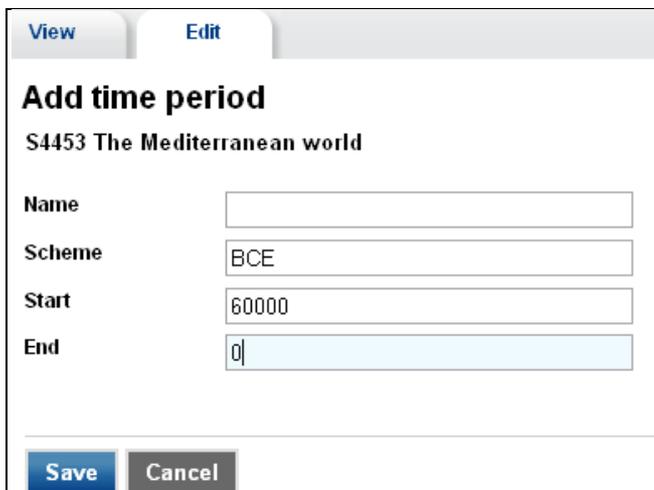
A screenshot of the 'Add time period' form. At the top, there are two tabs: 'View' and 'Edit'. Below the tabs, the title 'Add time period' is displayed, followed by the identifier 'S4453 The Mediterranean world'. The form has four input fields: 'Name' (empty), 'Scheme' (containing 'BCE'), 'Start' (containing '60000'), and 'End' (containing '0'). At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'Save' and 'Cancel'.

Figure 7 Enter Scheme and BCE Start and End dates

- 3 Select Save and then Return to Edit metadata.