

1 REDEVELOPED QUESTIONS/TOPICS

Individual Form

Usual residence

2001 Census question

5 Where do you usually live? Print the full address including, if possible, all of these:

- flat number (if it is a flat)
- street number and name
- suburb or rural locality
- city, town or district
- country

country

Background

The wording used in the 'usual residence' question produced some data quality concerns in 2001. In particular, the phrase 'usually live' was difficult for some groups of people, such as those who had English as a second language and those who were reasonably new to New Zealand and did not yet consider New Zealand as their 'usual' country of residence.

The use of the word 'usual' was also confusing for some tertiary students. Because the census is held at the beginning of the year when many students had only recently moved into an area, they often wrote in their former home address. It was also confusing for respondents who genuinely had more than one address, for example children in shared care and people working overseas.

Development objectives/plan

The objectives identified for the 2006 development were to:

- improve data quality by encouraging respondents to write in a correct address
- understand the impact of the word 'usual' on data quality.

To meet these objectives a comprehensive programme of testing was conducted including cognitive testing, analysis of data from field tests, and consultation with key stakeholders.

Cognitive testing

The cognitive testing programme was conducted between April 2003 and May 2005 with respondents of varied age, gender and ethnicity. Interviewers observed respondent form-filling behaviour and asked a series of follow-up questions. Some targeted testing of students and overseas residents was undertaken for the 'usual

residence' question, and this question was redeveloped and tested during all rounds of the cognitive testing programme.

Cognitive testing results

Rounds one and two: April and May 2003 and June to December 2003

The 'usual residence' question was tested with the word 'usual' removed in these rounds. The majority of respondents had one main address, and therefore experienced few problems with the question. However, results from some targeted testing with overseas students living in New Zealand showed that these respondents generally struggled to understand which address they should give. These problems were further compounded by language issues, as many of these respondents were not fluent in English.

Rounds three and four: March to July 2004 and November 2004 to May 2005

For these final rounds of testing the word 'usual' was reinstated in the question, and an instruction was included for overseas residents and students to refer to the Guide Notes. Guide Notes instructions were developed so that hierarchical rules applied for respondents who were included in both of these groups.

In testing most respondents appeared to see and understand the instruction, noting that they should refer to the Guide Notes for further information. Although many respondents looked up these notes when answering the question, others only did this when prompted later in the interview. Some respondents also stated that they were aware that they should refer to the Guide Notes, but admitted that they probably would not do so.

One or two respondents found the information difficult to locate within the Guide Notes. However, most respondents who found and read the instructions were able to understand which address they should supply and thought the instructions were clear. Occasionally respondents misinterpreted the information. A few commented on the apparent inconsistencies in the rules, where secondary school children were expected to write in their home address, while tertiary students were expected to write in the address where they lived during term-time.

Field test results

Dress rehearsal: 8 March 2005

The question wording on the dress rehearsal form was the same as in 2001.

Other testing

To further test the effect of the word 'usual' on the answers that respondents would provide, a small test was conducted with 20 overseas students. Respondents were asked to complete two forms. On one version of the form (version A) the 'usual residence' question included the word 'usual', and in version B the word 'usual' was removed. Some respondents completed version A first, while others completed version B first. Respondents were required to fill out each form on different days.

The results of this test showed that 15 respondents gave consistent answers on both forms and wrote in their New Zealand address. However, the other respondents provided inconsistent answers. Three respondents gave an overseas address when answering version A of the questionnaire, and two respondents gave an overseas address when answering version B.

Changes made for the 2006 Census

5 Where do you usually live?

Students and overseas residents: see the Guide Notes for more information.

Print the full address of that dwelling. Give all of these, if possible:

- street number • flat number
- street name
- suburb or rural locality
- city, town or district
- country

The word 'usual' has been retained for 2006, and an instruction box directing overseas residents and students to see the Guide Notes for more information has been added.

Future development

Analysis of the 2006 data will determine whether data quality has improved for this question and will establish if any redevelopment work may be required for 2011.