

Glossary:Reference period

Statistics Explained

A **reference period** is the time period for which statistical results are collected or calculated and to which, as a result, these values refer. The time period may be either a calendar year (**reference year**), a fiscal year, a semester, a quarter, a month and even a day.

Some data, like population variables, relate to one specific time, a **reference time point** (e.g. a specific day, population on the 1st of January).

The reference period should be distinguished from the **publication time** , the period or point in time at which the statistical [data](#) are published. The **publication year** of statistical results may be significantly later than the reference year for which they were collected.

Further information

- [Handbook on Data Quality - Assessment Methods and Tools](#)

Related concepts

- [Time coverage](#)