

## Criteria for Roles in the PiCO Roles thesaurus

This document describes the criteria that terms in [PiCo's Roles thesaurus](#) must meet. These criteria are defined by the PiCo maintenance group in 2025.

This document is intended primarily for the PiCo maintenance group to use when introducing new roles. It may also be useful for other PiCo users, as it provides some context on the use of roles in (PiCo) datasets.

### Functions of Roles

Capturing a role in a Person Entry can have several functions:

- A role can help track a person through various stages of life.
- Roles can say something about social status, property, tax liability or other obligations.
- A role can help chart social relationships. In PiCo, (family) relationships are recorded in specific relationship properties, such as sdo:spouse or sdo:sibling. Roles can also provide insight into a person's social network. For example, because they provide insight into who were the witnesses at a wedding or who reported someone's death.

### Criteria for roles

Roles within the PiCo thesaurus must meet the following criteria:

#### 1.Relevance to Research on Historical Persons

- The role should help make historical persons searchable and contextualized.

#### 2.Definability

- The role must have a clear, unambiguous definition.

#### 3.Uniqueness and Consistency

- The role must be unique within the thesaurus and must not overlap with other roles.
- A role describes a person's role on a resource. Relationships between person entries, such as “father of the bride,” are recorded in PiCo as relationships (in this case, a parent/child relationship between the bride and her father) and not as a role on the resource.

#### 4.Historical and Source Specific Context

- The role must appear in historical records.

#### 5.Multilingual

- The role should be translated into other languages. For now, at least in Dutch and English.