Guidelines for SNOMED CT Content Requests
New Zealand SNOMED CT National Release Centre

Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance for customers in preparing content requests for updates to the SNOMED CT International Edition.

How and where to submit a request

Affiliates should complete a Content Request Submission Form and forward it to the New Zealand National Release Centre at SNOMED_CT@health.govt.nz

Submitter details

Please provide your details in the information page
Name   :
Organisation   :
Email address   :
Contact number:

General guidelines

These criteria support the understanding of acceptable content and guidelines outlined in SNOMED International's customer guidance documentation

- *Understandable*: The meaning must be able to be communicated to and understood by an average health care provider without reference to inaccessible, hidden or private meanings.
- *Reproducible*: It is not enough for one individual to say they think they understand the meaning. It must be shown that multiple people understand and use the meaning in the same way.
- *Useful*: The meaning must have some demonstrable use or applicability to health or health care.
- *Terms* should be names that are human-understandable representations of the codes
- *Concepts* must follow the most recently published **SNOMED CT Editorial Guide**
- *Concepts* must be defined with a definition and a literature reference, useful for multiple domains and be commonly understood with international applicability
- All reference material must be publicly available.

Types of request

New concept request
A request for a new concept to be added to SNOMED International Release.

New description/synonym request
A request for a new synonym to be added to an existing content can be made if the request aligns with the existing SNOMED CT Editorial Guide. Please ensure a clear justification is provided in the request.

Guidance for requesting changes to SNOMED CT

Requirement to support a request

New concept request

A request for a new concept must take into account existing content and align with the existing **SNOMED CT Editorial Guide**

- **Fully specified name** must be in accordance with naming guidelines
- **Semantic tag** of the requested concept must align with the requested parent term.
- **Proposed use case** must describe where or how it is to be used; e.g. "Concept used as value for X field", Concept supports data recording for X purpose", "Concept fills gap in X hierarchy", etc.
- **Reference** must refer to an authoritative source such as a book, journal article or provide a definition that can be referenced back to an authoritative source.

New description/synonym request

A request for a new synonym to be added to existing content can be made if the request aligns with the existing SNOMED CT Editorial Guide. Please ensure a clear justification the request is provided.

- Description must be semantically equivalent to concept (not narrower than or broader than)
- Word order variants are not accepted
- Abbreviations are not accepted
- Acronyms are accepted if the meaning is included
- Eponyms are acceptable if an appropriate reference is included
- Lexical variants are acceptable

Submission checklist

Before submitting your request to the National Release Centre please ensure you complete all the following steps.

1. *Check the most recent version of SNOMED CT International Edition*
   The submitter should check the most recent version of SNOMED CT International Edition to ensure that the desired change is not already present in the terminology. It is recommended that the submitter check the **SNOMED International Browser**

2. *Review the SNOMED CT Editorial Guide*
   The **SNOMED CT Editorial Guide** provides information about requests that may or may not be suitable for inclusion in the SNOMED CT International Edition.
   The Editorial Guide should be reviewed prior to submitting a request to establish if there is a policy on the type of request being raised for consideration. For example, requests for new content that include classification type terms such as NOS (not otherwise specified) or NEC (not elsewhere classified) will not be considered for inclusion.
   Similarly, requests for disjunction will not usually be accepted. Where an editorial principle exists that precludes the inclusion of a particular type of concept then a request for content of this nature will not be accepted.

3. *Provide clear justification*

It is important to provide a clear justification for requests submitted for the SNOMED CT International Edition.

This level of detail will assist the SNOMED International Content Team in understanding the nature and context of the requirement. The justification will also aid in assessing the risks and benefits that are associated with approving the request.

4. *Identify the semantic tag*

It is important to consider where the requested concept will sit within the SNOMED CT hierarchy. When submitting a request for a new concept the desired semantic tag is required as part of the submission. This will assist the SNOMED International Content Team in understanding the nature of the requirement and ensure that the original requirements (as stated in the proposed use case) are met. The submitter should verify that the requested semantic tag aligns with the requested parent term.

For example, a request for a new concept in the finding hierarchy must be a descendant of the concept 404684003|Clinical finding (finding).

Further information about the semantic tag can be found in the **SNOMED CT Editorial Guide**

5. *Provide a reference*

Submissions should be supported by at least one reference.

The supporting information submitted with the request is required to be recent (within the last five years) and from an authoritative source such as a scientific or professional journal, OMIM, PubMed, Orphanet or a professional society. References to Wikipedia are not sufficient. Reference material that is provided in support of a request must be accessible to the SNOMED International Content Team. For example, references from books and journal articles that are not publicly available are not acceptable.

6. *Provide a definition*

Where a new synonym is being requested, a text definition that specifies that exact nature of the synonym must be included. This is especially important where the request is for a new procedure or for an obscure or rare disease. Please note that restating the requested term is not considered to be sufficient as a definition.

7. *Explain Acronyms, Abbreviations, Eponyms*

When making a submission, fully expand all abbreviations. Abbreviations are not allowed in the Fully Specified Name (FSN) as the use of acronyms and abbreviations can cause confusion and will cause delay in processing the request.

Timeframes to consider

The international release of SNOMED CT is distributed at the end of January and July each year, with content submissions reviewed between 1 September and 28 February for the July release and between 1 March and 31 August for the January release. The time taken before the requests appear in the international release is dependent upon the SNOMED International process.