

Customer Guidance For Requesting Changes to SNOMED CT

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Future Review Timetable

Review date	Responsible owner	Comments
As required	Maria Braithwaite	Update when change necessitates.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance for customers during the preparation of a request submission for the International release of SNOMED CT.

1.2 Scope

The scope of this document is restricted to the creation of requests for new content and content changes for the International release of SNOMED CT. It is not intended to provide technical guidance on how to use the SNOMED CT Content Request Service (CRS) system.

Guidance on how to use the SNOMED CT Content Request Service (CRS) system can be found here <https://confluence.ihtsdotools.org/display/SCTCR/CRS%2BUser%2BGuide>

1.3 Audience

The intended audience for this document includes any stakeholder who has been authorized to submit a request for content changes for the International release of SNOMED CT. This includes, but is not restricted to the SNOMED International Content Team, other SNOMED International staff, National Release Centers, SNOMED CT extension managers, member countries and Consultant Terminologists.

2 Who Can Request a Change

2.1 National Release Centers

SNOMED International coordinates requests for additions or changes to SNOMED CT through its Members' National Release Centers (NRCs). For more information about the processes in each country, please access the relevant member page <https://www.snomed.org/our-customers/members>

2.2 Other Authorized Submitters

Authorized users may submit requests for additions or changes via the SNOMED CT Content Request Service (CRS) system.

An authorized submitter is usually a named individual from a National Release Center, a user from a member country who does not have access to a National Release Center or individuals from international groups who have been identified as providing specialist content.

Affiliate license holders may in the first instance submit requests for content changes by sending an email to info@snomed.org

To request access to the SNOMED CT Content Request Service (CRS) system please contact: info@snomed.org

3 Where to Submit a Request

The SNOMED CT Content Request Service (CRS) system can be accessed here

<https://confluence.ihtsdotools.org/display/SCTCR/CRS+User+Guide>

4 Service Level Agreement

4.1 Request Commitment

Open and close dates for submission of requests to the CRS for each release are published on the website <http://www.snomed.org/snomed-ct/software-tools/change-or-add>

Please submit requests as early in the release cycle as possible.

A minimum total of 1500 separate requests submitted on or before the published request closure date for submissions shall be edited to the next release or have an identified content tracker assigned, unless they are marked for clarification, appeal or are rejected or withdrawn - any request not added to the next release will automatically be assigned a high priority for the following release. Do note that this is a minimum number and not a maximum in order to assist in understanding our resource allocations for other work.

4.2 Request Balance

In order to create balance of submissions and fairness in equal resolution of requests, SNOMED International reserves the right to assess the number of submissions per country, per release to create balance of submissions and fairness in equal resolution of requests.

Any one request/batch of requests may not exceed 150 concept additions or changes. No further request batches of the “same type” may be submitted in a single editing cycle in order to circumvent the Bulk submission process. The 150 total may be submitted as a large submission (for example 100 requests) followed by smaller or single submissions, however once the total of 150 has been reached no further requests of the same type will be accepted during that release cycle. Further requests above the 150 total will be marked as rejected. Examples of same type of requests would be: 150+ requests for new concepts all in the same hierarchy (i.e. procedure, body structure, substance etc.), 150+ requests for changes to existing content such as new descriptions, modeling changes such as to stated relationships or attributes, concept or description inactivation, changes to descriptions or questions about existing content. Slight quantities over 150 will be considered on a case-by-case basis for submission and must be approved prior to submission by contacting Maria Braithwaite (mbr@snomed.org).

Any request exceeding 150 “of the same” must be referred to your Customer and Stakeholder Relationship Management Lead prior to entering the request into the CRS system

5 Types of Request

5.1 New concept

A request for a new concept must take into account existing content and align with the existing Editorial Guidance. The Editorial Guidance can be accessed here <http://snomed.org/eg>

Please note a Confluence account is required, if you need a new account please contact info@snomed.org

5.2 Changes to Existing Content

A change can be made to existing content if the request aligns with existing Editorial Guidance. Please ensure a clear justification for requesting a modification is supplied with the request.

Examples of the type of changes to existing content that may be considered are:

- Inactivate a released concept
- Add a new description
- Inactivate a description
- Add a new relationship
- Inactivate a relationship
- Make a change to metadata such as case sensitivity
- Making an existing concept fully defined or primitive

5.3 Promotion of Content to the International Release from Approved SNOMED CT Extension

1. SNOMED International may promote any concept from a National Release Center (NRC) approved extension into the International release.
2. When a request for a new concept is submitted to the CRS, there is no requirement for the SNOMED International terminologist to check any National extension for potential duplication with National content.
3. Submitters may request the promotion of content from a different National extension if it meets their own use case. National extension content may be viewed here <https://browser.ihtsdotools.org/>
4. Prior to making a promotion submission to the CRS, the submitter must **first** seek approval from the manager of the National extension from which they wish to promote concept(s).
5. Once approval has been received, the approval should be noted as part of the CRS request to SNOMED International. The CRS submission must include the concept ID for the concept that is required for promotion along with the usual information required when making a submission such as definition and use case, for further details please see Section 6 'Submission Checklist' below.

6. 'Non-owning' requestors may create the concept in their own extension whilst awaiting the release of a concept promoted to the International release from another extension, however the non-owning extension concept would require future inactivation with its associated impact to implementation.
7. The SNOMED International terminologist must ensure that the requested use case is consistent with the meaning of the concept in the National extension and if necessary clarify this with the originating extension.
8. Requests received via the CRS will be progressed consistent with established service level agreements. Where two or more requests are received for promotion of the same concept that exists in different National extensions, the request with the earliest submission date will have precedence.
9. When a request is received for promotion of a National extension concept, if it includes all of the required supporting information, the CRS manager will assign the request to the Technical Team (in batches if possible) who will arrange for the concept(s) to be promoted in a task in the authoring platform.
10. The Technical team will ensure the imported concept includes the full model for the National extension concept retaining all existing identifiers, concept ID, description ID, relationships and language refset members. Descriptions not in en_US or en_GB will NOT be imported. Any data that is in RF2 format will be imported with identifiers including axioms, active stated relationships will NOT be accepted. Any content in the RF2 submission must be updated to the most recent International release.
11. Once the task is created in the authoring platform, the CRS request will be reassigned to a member of the Content Team who will ensure that the new concept is modeled in accordance with International Editorial Guidance. After this step, the task will follow usual promotion and release validation processes.
12. The CRS request submitter will be notified that the concept has been added via the established method of a comment in the CRS request.
13. The concept, associated descriptions and relationships will be part of the International release of SNOMED CT after this time and subject to future changes and remodel, the scope of which is defined in the Editorial Guidance.

5.4 Batch Requests for Member Country Specific Projects

5.4.1 Batch Submission

A batch submission to support SNOMED International agreed projects; content development from SNOMED International Clinical Reference Groups, Project Groups and collaborative agreements may be submitted via the SNOMED CT Content Request Service (CRS) system using the batch submission functionality.

5.4.2 Batch Submission for Member Country Specific Projects

A batch submission for large numbers of new content to support member country specific projects must not be made without prior consultation with SNOMED International. Consultation can be carried out using existing mechanisms for member content prioritization such as the annual member prioritization process, or contact made via the regional Customer Relation Manager (CRM) in the first instance.

Contact details are:

Europe - Ian Green: igr@snomed.org

Middle East and Africa - Nick Egarhos: neg@snomed.org

Asia Pacific - Liara Tutina: ltu@snomed.org

Americas - Suzy Roy: sro@snomed.org

The Customer Relation Manager will coordinate the best path for inclusion, either a batch submission or a Member Priority project, including feedback timeline within available resources and priorities. It is also necessary that the full impact of a batch change be understood in order to ensure a quality solution is achieved. Prior to implementing any batch change(s), a thorough analysis of the change(s) requested include testing to observe impact, including impact to the terminology and clinical implications, may be required. Batch Submission requests, i.e. requests totaling more than 150, affecting one or more domains of the hierarchy, must follow the guidelines below:

- I. Support a work plan initiative, or editorial mandate to directly progress or provide a value benefit at an international or quality level.
- II. Include a desired implementation date if known or estimated if not known.
- III. Demonstrate an international use case and provide an explanation of the clinical application.
- IV. In all cases, clearly demonstrate that SNOMED International Editorial Guidelines are adhered to.

6 Submission Checklist

It is in the best interest of both the submitter and the SNOMED International Content Team that a request for change incorporates as much information as possible to support the requirement.

Where a request is submitted with all of the desired information in support, the Content Team is more likely to accept the request without the need for further clarification. This is necessary for the customer to receive the desired change in a reasonable timescale. It will also reduce the risk of misunderstanding that may result in the original requirement not being met.

Prior to making a submission for a change to the International release of SNOMED CT, the following steps should be followed:

6.1 Check the Most Recent Version of SNOMED CT

The submitter should check the most recent version of SNOMED CT to ensure that the desired change is not already present in the terminology. It is recommended that the submitter check the SNOMED International browser, which can be accessed here <http://browser.ihtsdotools.org>

Please remember that the desired concept may be available as a slightly different phrase. The words or word order of the description may not entirely match, but the released concept may be conceptually the same as the new request. Where this is the case a request for a new synonym

may be considered. A new concept request must not be submitted, as it will not be accepted due to the presence of an existing concept.

6.2 Review the Editorial Guide

The Editorial Guidance can be accessed here <http://snomed.org/eg>

Please note a Confluence account is required, if you need a new account please contact info@snomed.org

The Editorial Guide document provides information about requests that may or may not be suitable for inclusion into the International release of SNOMED CT.

The Editorial Guide should be consulted prior to submission of a request in order to establish if there is policy around the type of request that is being considered for submission.

For example, requests for new content that include classification type terms such as other, NOS (not otherwise specified), NEC (not elsewhere classified) will not be considered for inclusion (Classification-derived phrases see <https://confluence.ihtsdotools.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71172163>).

Similarly requests for disjunction (disjunctive aggregates) 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.

6.3 Provide Clear Justification for Requesting a Change or New Concept

It is very important to incorporate a clear justification for any change request for the International release of SNOMED CT. For example “Used as a member of a value set in support of the provider occupation field.”

This level of detail will assist the 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 making the change. Please remember that change requests that are country specific are not suitable for the International release. This type of change request will not be accepted.

6.3.1 Mandatory Fields

Please note that the fields including ‘Summary,’ ‘Topic,’ ‘Proposed Use Case’ and ‘Reference’ are mandatory fields when making a submission. Copy and paste of generic text such as “gap in terminology” or “self evident” does not supply adequate justification for a change and may result in further clarification (which will delay the inclusion of the request) or a status change to ‘Rejected.’

6.4 Identify the Semantic Tag

It is important to consider where the requested new concept will sit within the SNOMED CT hierarchy. The submitter must take into account the nature of their requirement along with how it will be implemented in clinical systems.

When making a request for a new concept the desired semantic tag for the new addition is required as part of the submission. This will assist the Content Team in understanding the nature of the requirement and also help in ensuring that the original requirements 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 Editorial Guide.

6.5 Provide a Reference

Submissions for a change to the International release of SNOMED CT must be supported by **at least one reference that is of international relevance**. Please remember that requests for change need to be of international application and not confined to one member country. We may require more than one reference to assess the validity and international applicability for some areas of content.

Literature intended for patient education purposes should not be used in support of a request; it frequently includes generalizations that are not always true but may be true in the context of the topic being addressed.

The supporting information submitted with the request is required to be recent and from an authoritative source such as a scientific or professional journal 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 Content Team. For example, references from books and journal articles that are not publicly available are not acceptable. Please see Appendix A for a list of suggested resources that may be used to provide information in support of a request.

6.6 Provide a Definition

Where a new concept is being requested, a text definition that identifies the exact nature of the request must be included. This is especially important where the request is for an obscure disease or a new procedure or is unusual in its nature. Please note that restating the requested descriptions is not considered to be sufficient as a definition. A request for the inclusion of a text definition for a new or existing concept must demonstrate international applicability. Text that is protected by copyright will not be accepted for inclusion unless accompanied by a release from the copyright holder.

6.7 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. Even though a particular procedure or disease may commonly be referred to by an acronym in one country, this may not be the same at the international level.

Please refer to the Editorial Guide for further information

- Acronyms

- Abbreviations
- Eponyms

6.8 Request for Concept with a Namespace Identifier

Please use the field 'Local SNOMED CT Code' in the CRS to record an extension concept ID that should be retained with the addition of the new concept. When submitted with a request, the extension concept ID will be retained when the concept is added to the International release of SNOMED CT. Where retention of the extension concept ID is not required the concept ID must NOT be submitted with the request. Where the local concept ID is not recorded in the correct field the concept ID will not be retained.

6.9 Concept Modeling

Submission of the requested descriptions along with the desired attributes and values required to fully define the concept is encouraged and may be of utility to the Content Team, however this requires a high level of familiarity with the Editorial Guide. Note that the final decision about the modeling of a concept rightly belongs to SNOMED International.

7 Request Status

7.1 New

All submissions are initially assigned a status of New. A preliminary check will be carried out to ensure that the new request falls within the inclusion criteria and scope for the International release of SNOMED CT. Further information regarding scope can be found in the SNOMED CT Editorial Guide.

7.2 Draft

A request that has been started and saved but is not yet submitted. The submitter can choose to submit this request once the desired information has been added or can delete the request. The SNOMED International Content Team cannot see or access a request that is in 'draft'. The service level agreement timelines begin from the time that the request is submitted to the CRS and do not take into account any time that the request has been in 'draft'.

7.3 Accepted

Following initial review, each request is assigned a manager who is a member of the SNOMED International Content Team. A change to a status of 'Accepted' does not mean that the request will be approved for inclusion in SNOMED CT.

All requests are treated as normal priority with the exception of data errors. Where a request points towards a possible error in SNOMED CT, the request will be prioritized for investigation.

7.4 Under Authoring

This status indicates that the Content Team is actively evaluating the request.

7.5 Ready for Release

A request status will be changed to 'Ready For Release' once the requested change has been made and approved, however please note this does not assure that the requested change will be included in the final release data. There are a considerable number of technical processes undertaken after editing for a particular release has been completed. This can on occasion result in a change that has been made being reverted or a concept removed from the release.

7.6 In Inception

This status was formerly used for requests awaiting resolution of a Content Tracker. From March 2020 onwards where a CRS request falls into the scope for an existing Content Tracker, the request will be marked as 'rejected' with a note to ask the submitters to add themselves as a 'watcher' to the appropriate Content Tracker. The manager for the request will link it to the Content Tracker to ensure that the CRS request is progressed along with the Content Tracker once editing on that specific content area commences.

Content Trackers are intended to investigate issues or enhancements to both existing and future content for SNOMED CT. A process for understanding the problem and elaboration of a solution is undertaken in order to make improvements to existing content and clarify how content of a similar nature will be incorporated into SNOMED CT in the future. Depending upon the nature of the Content Tracker, this may be a long-term large-scale content project or a smaller project with a shorter timescale.

7.7 Awaiting Agreement Compliance

This status is used for requests that cannot be resolved at the time of submission due to contractual obligations or intellectual property issues that are awaiting resolution or permission from a copyright owner.

7.7.1 Requests that fall into the scope of the LOINC Agreement

According to section 5.2.1 Addition of new SNOMED CT "Observable Entity" and "Evaluation Procedure" Concepts of Schedule 2 of the Cooperative Agreement between SNOMED International and Regenstrief, two member countries must endorse addition of the following classes of requests:

- I. Laboratory, including discrete orders and observations and panel names for orders (excluding panel structure);
- II. Anthropomorphic measurements and evaluations; and
- III. Vital signs and physiological measurements.

There is no cut-off date for submission of these requests and it applies to requests submitted prior to the agreement.

7.8 Clarification Needed

Where insufficient information is provided to proceed with a request, a member of the Content Team will incorporate questions to be resolved and change the status of the request to 'Clarification Needed.' This will generate an email to the original submitter.

Where a request for clarification to a customer is not answered within 60 days from the date the clarification is generated, the request will be rejected along with a note that the request was rejected due to a lack of response by the submitter. After this **no further action** will be taken with the request even if a response to the clarification is received. Once the 60 days have passed if the change is still required a new request must be submitted. The resubmitted request must include additional information related to the request for clarification. Failure to provide additional information will lead to a second and final rejection of the request.

7.9 Pending Internal Input

This status is for use by the Content Team to identify requests that require further input from a different member of the Content Team.

7.10 On Hold

This status is for use by the Content Team as part of workload management. Requests may be placed on hold whilst awaiting assignment to a member of the Content Team throughout the editing cycle. This status is also used for requests submitted after the final submission date for a particular release cycle and that will be progressed in the next release cycle.

7.11 Forwarded

Where a request is received that is not in scope for the International release of SNOMED CT, it may be suitable for a specific extension. The request may be forwarded to another extension manager or National Release Center.

7.12 Withdrawn

A submitter may choose to withdraw their request at any time up to the point the status is assigned as 'Ready for Release.' However, a submitter may not unilaterally prevent the addition of content to SNOMED CT, or cause it to be inactivated through this mechanism if it is believed to be a valid request and of value to stakeholders.

7.13 Resolved Without Content Changes

This status is used where a request can be resolved in discussion with the submitter but without making any content changes. Examples of this include where a request contains a question that can be answered without making any changes to the content or where a potential duplicate concept is identified but subsequently is verified as a valid concept.

7.14 Rejected

Where a request has had a full review and is not considered to be in scope for SNOMED CT, or does not meet the criteria outlined in the Editorial Guide, or clarification about the request has not been received within 60 days, the request will be rejected. This status is also used for requests that are linked to a Content Tracker.

7.15 Completed

A request status will be changed to “Completed” once the edit has been made and approved and the data files are ready for release. Prior to this time, inclusion in the release cannot be guaranteed.

7.16 Appeal

Where a request has been ‘Rejected’, the submitter may provide additional information or references and request a further review of the decision. The submitter can then place the request in ‘Appeal’ status. In these circumstances the decision will be reviewed and if necessary referred to the Head of Terminology for final disposition.

Where an appeal is submitted for a request that was rejected due to lack of response to a request for clarification, the appeal will not be accepted for consideration and the request will be marked as ‘Appeal Rejected’

7.17 Appeal Rejected

After conclusion of the appropriate appeal process, where the outcome remains unchanged, this status will be applied.

7.18 In Appeal Clarification

Where an appeal is received but there is insufficient information to support a full review of the request, the original rejection and/or the reason for the appeal, the request will move to this status. Where a response to ‘In Appeal Clarification’ is not received, the request will be moved to ‘Appeal Rejected’ once 60 days have elapsed. At this point, no further action will be taken with the request.

8 Questions or Comments

Please submit comments or questions about this document to info@snomed.org

Appendix A

Web addresses for suggested reference sources (copy and paste into a browser).

Please note this section is intended for guidance only and is not intended to be exhaustive. Other references sources that meet the criteria set out in Section 6.5 are also acceptable.

NCBI - National Center for Biotechnology Information

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

PubMed - Biomedical literature

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

UniProt - Protein knowledgebase

<http://www.uniprot.org/>

OMIM - An Online Catalog of Human Genes and Genetic Disorders

<https://www.omim.org/>

Orphanet

<http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/index.php>

ChEBI - Ontology of Chemical Entities of Biologic Interest

<https://www.ebi.ac.uk/chebi/>

PubChem - Biologic activities of small molecules

<https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

NLM Drug Info - Drug information Portal

<https://druginfo.nlm.nih.gov/drugportal/>

ChemSpider - Royal Society of Chemistry, free chemical structure database

http://www.chemspider.com/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlvfXI9qnt1gIVQxYbCh2nAQHPEAAAYASAAEglla_D_BwE

Nomenclature Committee of the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (NC-IUBMB)

<http://www.sbcs.qmul.ac.uk/iubmb/enzyme/>

EDQM standard Terms

<https://standardterms.edqm.eu/#>

WHO Mednet

[https://mednet-communities.net/\\$root/](https://mednet-communities.net/$root/)

World Checklist of Selected Plant Families

http://wcsp.science.kew.org/prepareChecklist.do;jsessionid=1E55C6CFA86F1AED55BD34B9F8D8CF4C.kppapp06-wcsp?checklist=selected_families%40%40299261020171421052

For information on UK or European products, Summary of Product Characteristics as published here

<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/spc-pil/>

International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Enzyme Nomenclature

<http://www.sbcs.qmul.ac.uk/iubmb/enzyme/>

FMA Browser Explorer for Foundational Model of Anatomy

<http://fma.si.washington.edu/browser/#/>

WHOCC - ATC/DDD Index - Index and search for the Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification system and the Defined Daily Dose (DDD)

https://www.whocc.no/atc_ddd_index/

Resources for Organism Naming

SNOMED International utilizes various resources when reviewing changes to the organism hierarchy. They include:

Bacteria

List of Prokaryotic names with Standing in Nomenclature (LPSN)

<https://lpsn.dsmz.de/>

International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP)

<http://www.the-icsp.org/>

International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology

<http://ijs.microbiologyresearch.org/content/journal/ijsem>

DSMZ-Prokaryotic Nomenclature Up-to-date

<https://www.dsmz.de/bacterial-diversity/prokaryotic-nomenclature-up-to-date>

Fungi

Mycobank Database

<http://www.mycobank.org/>

Index Fungorum

<http://www.indexfungorum.org/>

Viruses

International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV)

<https://talk.ictvonline.org/>

Parasites

Although not an authoritative source, NCBI taxonomy provides useful links to other sources

National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) Taxonomy

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/taxonomy>

General

Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS)

<https://www.itis.gov/>