

National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK)

2017-18 Syllabus, Framework, Bibliography

Published 01 January 2017

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Contents

National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK)	3
Background	3
Purpose	3
Entry criteria	3
Benefits of the qualification	3
Accessing clinical coding training	4
Examination Syllabus	4
ICD-10	4
OPCS-4	4
SNOMED CT	5
Clinical coding data quality, audit and other issues related to clinical coding	5
Medical terminology, anatomy and physiology	5
Special instructions	5
Examination Framework	7
Paper 1 - Practical coding (3 hours)	7
Paper 2 - Theory (3 hours)	7
Bibliography	9
Paper 1 - Practical coding	9
Paper 2 - Theory	11
Contact details	11
How do I register?	12
Who develops, delivers and awards the qualification?	12

National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK)

This qualification is the minimum level of competency required for clinical coders working in the NHS. The examinations assess a clinical coder's knowledge, skills and understanding of current clinical coding standards used in the NHS, data quality, audit and broader issues connected to clinical coding, as well as knowledge of medical terminology, anatomy and physiology.

Background

The accuracy of coding is essential to Health Care Providers and forms part of hospital data for national reporting for statistical analysis; provides insight on trends, informs public health investments, service planning and reimbursement to hospitals for the care they have provided. Consequently the qualification requires a high level of attainment to demonstrate clinical coding competency in a practitioner.

This qualification is a crucial first step in a clinical coding career and ongoing continued professional development.

Purpose

This document brings the syllabus, examination framework and bibliography information into one document instead of the previous three for ease of use.

It aims to give a prospective candidate an overview to prepare for the National Clinical Coding Examinations (UK).

This will also be useful for Coding Managers to support their staff development plan, revision and preparation for the examination.

It should be read in conjunction with the '*Self-directed learning framework for the National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK)*' available for download at:

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=298707

Entry criteria

In order to achieve the high level of attainment required for the qualification a novice NHS clinical coder must typically have undertaken a 2-3 year development plan with their employer to complete the required national standard clinical coding training, acquire the breadth of skills, knowledge and practical work experience to become competent in clinical coding and be ready to sit the examinations.

Benefits of the qualification

Accreditation of NHS clinical coders aims to:

- Increase the competence of NHS clinical coding staff
- Give confidence in an individual's professional knowledge and coding proficiency
- Promote the ongoing enhancement of knowledge and skills
- Give organisations confidence in data quality
- Provide a recognised benchmark
- Provide recognition of the clinical coding profession

Accessing clinical coding training

A clinical coder must typically have undertaken a 2-3 year development plan with your employer either in-house Approved Clinical Coding Trainer or external provider or via the Clinical Coding Academies.

As part of this development plan a clinical coder will need to complete the National Clinical Coding Standards Course. We also recommend the National Clinical Coding Refresher Course and NCCQ (UK) Revision Workshop.

Examination Syllabus

Clinical coding knowledge is assessed through demonstration of up-to-date practical coding skills and theoretical knowledge of the ICD-10 and OPCS-4 clinical classifications and associated standards as well as understanding of data quality, audit and broader issues connected to clinical coding, as well as knowledge of medical terminology, anatomy and physiology.

ICD-10

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate the necessary skills to accurately code using ICD-10
- Describe the contents and structure of ICD-10, WHO Volumes 1, 2 and 3
- Indicate in-depth understanding of the rules and conventions in ICD-10
- Demonstrate the ability to analyse examples of clinical records by accurately abstracting and assigning the Primary Diagnosis and any relevant co-morbidities.

Candidates sitting the national Clinical Coding Qualification (UK) from September 2016 need to be aware of the Section: Special Instructions.

OPCS-4

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate the necessary skills to accurately code using OPCS-4
- Describe the contents and structure of OPCS-4 Alphabetical Index and Tabular List
- Indicate in-depth understanding of the features of OPCS-4 which are NHS fundamental information standards
- Demonstrate the ability to analyse examples of clinical records by accurately extracting and assigning the main Intervention/Procedure performed and any other relevant procedures.

SNOMED CT

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the terminology of SNOMED CT use (current and proposed)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relevance of using SNOMED CT to under-pin the NHS Care Record
- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic structure of SNOMED CT
- Demonstrate an understanding of the link between SNOMED CT, the reasons for the link between the ICD-10 and OPCS-4 Classifications and the benefits of SNOMED CT in an electronic patient record.

Clinical coding data quality, audit and other issues related to clinical coding

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the uses of coded clinical data
- Demonstrate the ability to define what constitutes a classification and a nomenclature
- Provide examples of supplementary ICD-10 classifications in use within the NHS (specialty adaptations e.g. Mental Health, Oncology)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the National Clinical Coding Query Mechanism
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of clinical coding quality assurance and audit
- Outline methods to improve data quality
- Describe the three components of Terming, Coding and Grouping, define each stage and demonstrate an understanding of how each stage inter-relates with the others

Medical terminology, anatomy and physiology

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate an understanding of medical terminology and knowledge of basic anatomy and physiology knowledge with correct application of spelling.

Special instructions

Candidates must be aware:

The World Health Organisation (WHO) International Classification of Diseases for Oncology (ICD-O), a domain specific extension of the ICD for tumour diseases, has removed Morphology of Neoplasm codes from the ICD-10 10th Revision 5th Edition Alphabetical Index

and Tabular List. For Admitted Patient Care Commissioning Data Sets in England the ICD-10 5th Edition topography code (from Chapter II Neoplasms (**C00-D48**)) must be coded and not the ICD-O topography codes as there are inconsistencies between the two classifications for the same neoplasm.

With the removal of the morphology codes, coding instructions will be removed from the core standards training materials to align with the ICD-10 5th Edition. Training materials will instruct on how histological types should be used by the coder to be directed to the appropriate column in the Neoplasm Table. Additionally this aspect of the classification will no longer be required for assessment, examination and accreditation, from September 2016 examination. All training materials and assessments will be updated in readiness for and to support implementation on 1 April 2016. The national clinical coding standards for ICD-10 will continue to contain standards on the use of the ICD-10 site (topography) codes in Chapter II Neoplasms.

When assigning a code from ICD-10 Chapter **XIII Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue** in cases where the fourth character code is already site specific and the addition of a fifth character will not add further specific information about the site, the fifth character is **not** required.

However for candidates sitting the National Clinical Coding Examination assignment of the 5th character '9' is a mandatory requirement. Adding the '9' confirms that the examination candidate has read the ICD-10 relevant site of involvement instruction note and that the additional information about the site has not been specified by the clinician.

Examination Framework

The Examination comprises of two written papers. The level of attainment for each paper is:

Paper	Pass mark	Distinction
Paper 1 (Practical)	90%	95%
Paper 2 (Theory)	60%	80%

Candidates will be awarded a 'Certificate with Distinction' providing a distinction is obtained in both papers at the first attempt.

Paper 1 - Practical coding (3 hours)

Sections A1 & A2	Quick-fire coding questions	Answer all thirty (30) questions (15 questions in each section)	30% of marks
Section B	Case Studies	Seven (7) compulsory case studies (Full Index trails required for the first case study only)	70% of marks

Paper 2 - Theory (3 hours)

Section C	General short theory questions on: ICD-10 OPCS-4. SNOMED CT Other issues related to clinical coding standards	Answer all twenty (20) questions	20% of marks
Section D1	Longer general questions on: ICD-10	Answer either D1 Part A <u>or</u> D1 Part B	15% of marks
Section D2	Longer general questions on: OPCS-4.	Answer either D2 Part A <u>or</u> D2 Part B	15% of marks
Section D3	General questions on: SNOMED CT	Answer either: D3 Part A <u>or</u> D3 Part B	10% of marks
Section D4	Miscellaneous general questions on Data Quality, Clinical Audit, etc.	Answer either: D4 Part A <u>or</u> D4 Part B	5% of marks
Section E1	Anatomy & Physiology	Answer all questions Spelling is taken into account	35% of marks
Section E2	Medical Terminology		

Section E3	Anatomy diagrams		
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Bibliography

The bibliography provides links to web based resources where available on the internet.

All NHS Trusts have an on-line facility to link up with the National Electronic Library for Health which is to be found in the hospital library and which students may find useful. Available at link below;

http://www.guidelinesinpractice.co.uk/feb_01_watson_nelh_feb01

Paper 1 - Practical coding

Basic Anatomy & Physiology Instruction Manual

HSCIC Clinical Classifications Service Ref: 3811 (former ref: F2139).

Available as a free PDF download from the TRUD website below subject to registration:

<https://isd.hscic.gov.uk/trud3/user/guest/group/0/home>

Coding Clinic

This is published by NHS Digital and provides updates and guidance to current national clinical coding standards.

Available from NHS Digital-Clinical Classifications Service [website](#) below;

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=298579#298579

World Health Organisation International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Related Problems (Tenth Revision) 5th Edition 2016 Volumes 1, 2 & 3

Examination questions will only be based on this version.

Available to purchase from The Stationery Office book shops website below;

www.tso.co.uk

The National Clinical Coding Standards ICD-10 5th Edition (2017) reference book

Available as a free PDF download from the TRUD website below subject to registration:

<https://isd.hscic.gov.uk/trud3/user/guest/group/0/home>

The National Clinical Coding Standards OPCS-4.8 reference book (2017)

Available as a free PDF download from the TRUD website below subject to registration:

<https://isd.hscic.gov.uk/trud3/user/guest/group/0/home>

ICD-10 & OPCS-4 Exercise and Answer books Version 11.0

Available from the NHS Digital – Terminology and Classifications Development Service on request – see contact details below

OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures, Version 4.8 (April 2017) Volume I - Tabular List and Volume II - Alphabetical Index

Available to purchase from The Stationery Office www.tso.co.uk

Four Step Coding Process for ICD-10 e-learning version

Anatomy & Physiology e-learning

A Basic Introduction to Clinical Coding

Self-teach modules, which you can use in your own time available below:

<https://isd.hscic.gov.uk/trud3/user/guest/group/61/pack/28/subpack/85/releases>

Chemotherapy Regimens & Chemotherapy Regimens Clinical Coding Guidance OPCS-4.8 (April 2017)

High Cost Drugs List & High Cost Drugs Clinical Coding Guidance OPCS-4.8 (April 2017)

Available for download via the Terminology Reference Update-data Distribution (TRUD) service website subject to registration:

<https://isd.hscic.gov.uk/trud3/user/guest/group/0/pack/10>

Paper 2 - Theory

National clinical classifications standards

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=298579#298579

Clinical Coding Audit

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=297779#297779

Healthcare Resource Groups

<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/hrg>

NHS Hospital Episode Statistics

https://data.gov.uk/dataset/hospital_episode_statistics-admitted_patient_care

National Tariff

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/resources/pay-syst/>

NHS Data Model & Dictionary

<http://systems.digital.nhs.uk/data/nhsdmds/dmd>

SNOMED CT

<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/data/uktc/snomed>

<http://systems.digital.nhs.uk/data/uktc/training>

National Information Board Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/introducing-personalised-health-and-care-2020-a-framework-for-action>

Contact details

NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Development Service

Classifications and Coding Support:

0300 303 5678

information.standards@nhs.net

How do I register?

A Clinical Coder will need to be member of the institute and register to sit the examinations. Information about IHRIM membership, registration requirements and costs can be found at www.ihrim.co.uk

Who develops, delivers and awards the qualification?

The Institute of Health Records and Information Management (IHRIM)

A candidate that successfully completes the examinations to the specified level of attainment is awarded an IHRIM certificate and Accredited Clinical Coder (ACC) status.

A candidate is awarded a 'Certificate with Distinction' providing a distinction is obtained in both papers at the first attempt.

Examination Quality Assurance Board

IHRIM convene an Examination Quality Assurance Board, including representation from NHS Digital, England, NHS Scotland, NHS Cymru and the Health and Social Services Executive (Northern Ireland), to ensure the assessment is compliant with the examination framework and syllabus and is a robust and rigorous assessment of clinical coders' knowledge and skills to demonstrate the specified level of competency.

The Partnership between NHS Digital – Terminology and Classifications Development Service and IHRIM is a voluntary arrangement with oversight for the design, development, delivery and quality of the National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK).