

# **National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK)**

## **Syllabus, Framework, Bibliography 2021-22**

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# Contents

<b>National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Entry criteria</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Benefits of the qualification</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Accessing clinical coding training</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Examination Syllabus</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ICD-10</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>OPCS-4.9</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SNOMED CT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Clinical coding audit and other issues related to clinical coding</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Medical terminology, anatomy and physiology</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Special instructions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Examination Framework</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Paper 1 - Practical coding (3 hours)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Paper 2 - Theory (3 hours)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Resources for National Clinical Coding Examinations - Paper One and Two</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Resources and publications for Examination Paper Two</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Additional resources</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service Product Support Helpdesk</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>How do I register?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Who develops, delivers and awards the qualification?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Examination Quality Assurance Board</b>	<b>10</b>

# 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, broader issues and data quality, 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

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

This may also be useful for a Coding Manager 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=14461552#14461552](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=14461552#14461552)

## Entry criteria

To achieve the high level of attainment required for the qualification a novice NHS clinical coder should 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. This will be dependent on the individual, the individual trust and their inhouse development plan.

## Benefits of the qualification

Accreditation of NHS clinical coders aims to:

- Increase the competence of NHS clinical coding staff
- Provide recognition of the clinical coding profession
- 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.

## Accessing clinical coding training

A clinical coder should typically have undertaken a 2-3-year development plan with their employer and either an in-house or external Approved Clinical Coding Trainer.

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

## 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 an understanding of broader issues and data quality.

### 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.

### OPCS-4.9

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate the necessary skills to accurately code using OPCS-4.9
- Describe the contents and structure of OPCS-4.9 Alphabetical Index and Tabular List
- Indicate in-depth understanding of the features of OPCS-4.9 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 benefits of SNOMED CT in an Electronic Patient Record (EPR)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the structure and content of SNOMED CT and how this differs from a classification
- Demonstrate an understanding of how a terminology and classification fulfil different purposes
- Demonstrate an understanding of the link between SNOMED CT and the ICD-10 and OPCS-4 classification maps.

## Clinical coding 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 Support Process
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of clinical coding audit and quality assurance
- Outline methods to improve data quality
- Describe the three components of Terming, Coding and Grouping 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 with correct application of spelling.

## Special instructions

Candidates must be aware:

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 notes 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)

<b>Sections A1&amp; A2</b>	Quick-fire coding questions	<b>Answer all thirty (30) questions (15 questions in each section)</b>	<b>30% of marks</b>
<b>Section B</b>	Case Studies	<b>Seven (7) compulsory case studies</b>	<b>70% of marks</b>

## Paper 2 - Theory (3 hours)

<b>Section C</b>	General short theory questions on: ICD-10 OPCS-4.9 SNOMED CT Other issues related to clinical coding	<b>Answer all twenty (20) questions</b>	<b>20% of marks</b>
<b>Section D1</b>	Longer general questions on: ICD-10	<b>Answer either D1 Part A <u>or</u> D1 Part B</b>	<b>15% of marks</b>
<b>Section D2</b>	Longer general questions on: OPCS-4.9	<b>Answer either D2 Part A <u>or</u> D2 Part B</b>	<b>15% of marks</b>
<b>Section D3</b>	SNOMED CT	<b>Answer either: D3 Part A <u>or</u> D3 Part B</b>	<b>10% of marks</b>
<b>Section D4</b>	Miscellaneous general questions on Data Quality, Clinical Audit, HRGs etc	<b>Answer either: D4 Part A <u>or</u> D4 Part B</b>	<b>5% of marks</b>
<b>Section E1</b>	Anatomy & Physiology	<b>Answer all questions</b>	<b>35% of marks</b>
<b>Section E2</b>	Medical Terminology		
<b>Section E3</b>	Anatomy diagrams		

## Bibliography

The bibliography provides links to web-based resources where available.

### Resources for National Clinical Coding Examinations - Paper One and Two

#### **World Health Organization 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](http://www.tso.co.uk)

#### **OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures, Version 4.9 (April 2020) Volume I - Tabular List and Volume II - Alphabetical Index**

Examination questions will only be based on this version.

Available to purchase from The Stationery Office [www.tso.co.uk](http://www.tso.co.uk)

#### **The National Clinical Coding Standards ICD-10 5th Edition Reference Book 2021 (for implementation on 01 April 2021)**

#### **The National Clinical Coding Standards OPCS-4.9 Reference Book 2021 (for implementation on 01 April 2021)**

#### **Chemotherapy Regimens Clinical Coding Standards and Guidance OPCS-4 April 2020**

Products are available as free PDF downloads from the Delen website below:

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectId=16878800](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800)

#### **National Tariff Chemotherapy Regimens List 2017-18 (Excel spreadsheet)**

Available as a free excel download from the Delen website:

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectId=16878800](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800)

## Resources and publications for Examination Paper Two

### SNOMED CT

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectID=17140528](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectID=17140528)

**SNOMED CT awareness for clinical coders:**

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/gf2.ti/f/762498/32410181.2/PPTX/-/SNOMED\\_CT\\_awareness\\_for\\_clinical\\_coders\\_v1.0\\_PASSWORD\\_PROTECTED.pptx](https://hscic.kahootz.com/gf2.ti/f/762498/32410181.2/PPTX/-/SNOMED_CT_awareness_for_clinical_coders_v1.0_PASSWORD_PROTECTED.pptx)  
(Please be aware this is a read only document)

### Anatomy & Physiology Manual (2020)

Available as a free PDF download from the Delen website:

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectId=16878800](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800)

### The Coding Clinic

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

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectId=16878800](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800)

### Clinical Coding Audit

**A guide to Clinical Coding Audit Best Practice**

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectId=16878800](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800)

### Healthcare Resource Groups

<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-casemix-office/our-definitions-remit-and-deliverables#stakeholder-engagement>

**The science of Casemix**

[https://nhs-prod.global.ssl.fastly.net/binaries/content/assets/legacy/pdf/d/a/the\\_science\\_of\\_casemix\\_v1\\_1\\_april\\_2015.pdf](https://nhs-prod.global.ssl.fastly.net/binaries/content/assets/legacy/pdf/d/a/the_science_of_casemix_v1_1_april_2015.pdf)

### Hospital Episode Statistics

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/hospital-episode-statistics>

## Additional resources

### ICD-10 & OPCS-4 Exercise and Answer Books Version 15

Available on request to the NHS Digital Clinical Classifications Service Product Support team.

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

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectID=16825616](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectID=16825616)

**Note:** For further information and guidance on how to register and access this course please refer to our [user guide](#).

### Anatomy & Physiology e-learning

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectID=16825616](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectID=16825616)

### A Basic Introduction to Clinical Coding

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

[https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t\\_c\\_home/view?objectID=16825616](https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectID=16825616)

## NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service Product Support Helpdesk

Tel: 0300 30 34 777

Fax: 01392 206945

Email: [information.standards@nhs.net](mailto:information.standards@nhs.net)

## How do I register?

A Clinical Coder will need to be a 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](http://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 (Wales) 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 Delivery Service and IHRIM is a voluntary arrangement with oversight for the design, development, delivery and quality of the National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK).