# 1. Statement

Overarching governance for the National Clinical Terminology Service (NCTS) within Queensland Health rests with eHealth Queensland. The NCTS participation policy (this policy) outlines eHealth Queensland's management and administration related to the use of NCTS products and services within Queensland Health.

# 2. Scope

Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

This policy applies to all staff within Queensland Health. Staff is defined as employees, contractors, consultants and managed service providers working for Queensland Health. Queensland Health consists of:

- The Department of Health, and

- Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).

This policy shall be reviewed at least annually.

This policy does not include clinical governance or clinical validation of terminology content requests.

# 3. Requirements

The Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) is a corporate Commonwealth entity, supported by all Australian governments, that has responsibility for being the National Release Centre (NRC) for the SNOMED CT® clinical terminology product and produces the Australian edition of SNOMED CT® (known as SNOMED CT-AU).

The NCTS is delivered by the ADHA in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's (CSIRO) Australian e-Health Research Centre (AEHRC) and is responsible for:

- distributing nationally-relevant international clinical terminologies and terminology-related content products

- managing, developing and distributing national clinical terminologies and terminology-related content products

- providing terminology-related tools and services to support the digital health requirements of the Australian healthcare community.

Queensland Government

Access to terminology products (including clinical terminologies developed by the NCTS, as well as any third-party products) available from the NCTS is subject to licencing arrangements. Terminology products are available to download for free by NCTS participants who hold the required licence(s). Queensland Health is a registered organisational participant in the NCTS.

The use of LOINC terminology from the Regenstrief Institute and SNOMED CT-AU including the Australian Medicines Terminology (AMT) is mandated for use in Queensland Health:

- by Health and Hospital Services (HHSs) in the Enterprise Architecture Health Service Directive[1] (QH-HSD-015)
- by the Department of Health in the Enterprise Architecture Policy[2] (QH-POL-402).

To assist in the standardised and meaningful use of terminology products the use of the Queensland Clinical Terminology Service (QCTS) is mandated for use across the Department of Health. Refer to the Department of Health Enterprise Architecture Policy for additional information.

This policy document outlines:

- which parties are authorised to enter into statewide NCTS licencing agreements on behalf of Queensland Health
- how Queensland Health participates in the NCTS
- how content requests for changes to national and international clinical terminology products from Queensland Health to the NCTS are managed
- how the Queensland Health SNOMED CT Namespace Identifier is used and managed.

## 3.1 Authority to Act

3.1.1 The Deputy Director-General eHealth Queensland is the individual authorised to enter into contractual licencing agreements for the use of NCTS terminology products and services on behalf of Queensland Health (thereby ensuring all use in the state is licenced). These licencing agreements include but are not limited to:

- the Australian National Terminology Licence Agreement[3] ; and
- the SNOMED International Affiliate License Agreement[4].

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[1] https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/policies-standards/health-service-directives/enterprise-architecture

[2] https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/396055/qh-pol-402.pdf

[3] https://www.healthterminologies.gov.au/library/DH_2400_2016_AustralianNationalTerminologyLicenceAgreement_v20160809.pdf?_filename=DH_2400_2016_AustralianNationalTerminologyLicenceAgreement_v20160809.pdf

[4] https://www.snomed.org/_files/ugd/900274_689013e9e0c74d23892abe9caee02612.pdf

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## 3.2 Queensland Health participation in the NCTS

3.2.1 Queensland Health shall participate as an organisational participant in the NCTS.

3.2.2 The Deputy Director General (DDG) eHealth Queensland is authorised to ensure that Queensland Health is registered as an organisational participant in the NCTS. This registration allows Queensland Health to enter into licencing agreements for terminology content products for use and facilitates the use of NCTS products and services.

3.2.3 Only the DDG eHealth Queensland can authorise individuals to act in the NCTS role of Responsible Person associated with the Queensland Health organisation registration in the NCTS as per the Registration Terms.

3.2.4 There is always at least one and at most three individuals acting in the role of Responsible Person.

3.2.5 The individuals from Strategy, Architecture and Information Services Branch, eHealth Queensland approved as Responsible Persons for the organisation are:

- QCTS Application Manager;
- Manager Health Standards and Capability, Health Informatics Services; and
- Principal Information Management Officer, Health Informatics Services.

3.2.6 The individual/s in the role of NCTS Responsible Person for the Queensland Health registration are authorised to act in the following capacity:

- management of the Queensland Health SNOMED CT Namespace Identifier
- facilitate requests to create new SNOMED CT content using the Queensland Health SNOMED CT Namespace Identifier
- facilitate submissions of new content requests to the NCTS for inclusion in national and international terminology products e.g. SNOMED CT-AU
- management of NCTS licencing agreements
- management of the Queensland Health SNOMED CT module
- management of Queensland Health's third-party reference sets in SNOMED CT-AU and their corresponding value sets
- reporting of issues to the Deputy Director-General, eHealth Queensland.

## 3.3 Queensland Health requests for change to the national and international terminology products

3.3.1 Requests for changes to national and international terminology products (e.g. SNOMED CT-AU and LOINC) including notification of issues or requests for content additions can be made by any party across Queensland Health.

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3.3.2    Health Informatics Services[5] facilitates request submissions to the ADHA via the NCTS team.

3.3.3    Requests for change shall be made via the QCTS's Terminology Request Management System (TRMS)[6].

3.3.4    Requests for changes to terminology products can be directed to the Clinical Terminology Working Group (CTWG)[7], a clinical terminology specialist group for consultation and input. Updates on terminology activity will also be reported to the Information Management Strategic Governance Committee (IMSGC)[8].

## 3.4    Queensland Health SNOMED CT Namespace Identifier

3.4.1    Queensland Health shall only have a single SNOMED CT Namespace Identifier for use across Queensland Health.

3.4.2    Any party across Queensland Health can create and propose new SNOMED CT content using the Queensland Health SNOMED CT namespace.

3.4.3    Health Informatics Services shall be consulted (using the QCTS TRMS) regarding proposals for new content or changes to existing content which use the Queensland Health namespace identifier e.g. to confirm an identifier number range, correct and appropriate use of the namespace and, where necessary, notifying the ADHA of newly allocated concepts and identifiers.

3.4.4    New content or changes to existing content which use the Queensland Health namespace identifier shall only be used following formal approval from Health Informatics Services.

## 3.5    Queensland Health SNOMED CT Module and SNOMED CT-AU third-party reference sets

3.5.1    Queensland Health shall only have a single SNOMED CT module which may be used as the module associated with Queensland Health SNOMED CT content including SNOMED CT-AU third-party reference sets and content created using the Queensland Health SNOMED CT namespace.

3.5.2    Creation of new Queensland Health SNOMED CT-AU third-party reference sets can be made by any party in the Department of Health divisions, business units and HHSs. All requests for third-party reference sets to the ADHA shall be submitted through Health Informatics Services[9].

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[5] Terminology@health.qld.gov.au

[6] https://www.terminology.health.qld.gov.au/TRMS

[7] https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/health-informatics-services/clinical-terminology/clinical-terminology-working-group-ctwg

[8] https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/health-informatics-services/governance/information-management-strategic-governance-committee-imsgc

[9] Terminology@health.qld.gov.au

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# 4.  Human rights

Human rights are not engaged by this standard.

# 5.  Legislation

- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Public Records Act 2002*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*

# 6.  Supporting documents

- [Enterprise Architecture Health Service Directive](#)
- [Enterprise Architecture Policy](#)
- [Enterprise Information Architecture Standard](#)
- [Intergovernmental Agreement on National Digital Health 2023-2027 (August 2023)](#)
- [SNOMED International Namespace Registry](#)
- [SNOMED CT module reference](#)
- [Australian National Terminology Licence Agreement](#)
- [SNOMED CT Affiliate License Agreement](#)

# 7.  Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) | A corporate Commonwealth entity responsible for national digital health services, systems and infrastructure with a focus on engagement, innovation and clinical quality and safety. |
| Australian e-Health Research Centre (AEHRC) | CSIRO's AEHRC is Australia's national digital health research program. It includes a joint venture between CSIRO and the Queensland Government. The AEHRC works with state and federal health agencies, clinical research groups and health businesses around Australia and internationally. |
| Australian Medicines Terminology (AMT) | The AMT is a national, standards-based approach to the identification and naming of medicines in clinical systems for Australia. The AMT is a systematically organised computer readable collection of medicinal terms modelled according to the SNOMED CT terminology |

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| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| | standard. The AMT content forms part of the Australian edition of SNOMED CT (SNOMED CT-AU). |
| Clinical Terminology | Clinical terminologies are structured vocabularies covering complex concepts such as diseases, operations, treatments and medicines. Clinical terminologies can be used in clinical practice to aid health professionals with more easily accessible and complete information regarding medical history, illnesses, treatments, laboratory results, and similar facts. |
| Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial research Organisation (CSIRO) | CSIRO is an Australian Government agency responsible for scientific research. |
| International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) | The IHTSDO is a not-for-profit organisation that owns, administers and develops SNOMED CT. |
| Namespace Identifier | A technical identifier issued to users by SNOMED International which facilitates creation of new SNOMED CT content and to have that content associated with them. Further, it minimizes the risk of new content technically conflicting with content from other parties. |
| National Clinical Terminology Service (NCTS) | The NCTS is both a business unit and a national infrastructure service provided by the ADHA. It is responsible for managing, developing and distributing national clinical terminologies and related tools and services to support the digital health requirements of the Australian healthcare community. |
| National Release Centre (NRC) | An NRC is an official point of contact within a SNOMED International national member's jurisdiction that has the responsibility to serve as the interface between SNOMED International, the national users and affiliates, and other members. The ADHA is the Australian NRC. |
| Organisation User | An NCTS role which may be held by an individual associated with an organisational NCTS participant. Organisation Users are able to access terminology content products and tools in the NCTS but are unable to perform administrative functions. |
| Queensland Clinical Terminology Service (QCTS) | The Queensland Clinical Terminology Service (QCTS) is managed and supported by Health Informatics Services, Strategy, Architecture and Information Services Branch, eHealth Queensland. The QCTS is a state-wide business service providing access to up-to-date terminology content and enabling Queensland Health staff and applications to meaningfully use this content. |
| Responsible Person | An NCTS role which may be held by an individual associated with an organisational NCTS participant. Individuals who hold this role manage the organisation's |

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| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
|  | participation in the NCTS. In addition to the access provided to Organisation Users, they may also add and remove users, enter into licencing agreements, and provision application access to the NCTS national infrastructure services on behalf of the organisation. Each organisation participating in the NCTS shall have at least one and at most three individuals acting in the role of Responsible Person. |
| SNOMED CT-AU | The Australian Edition of the SNOMED CT terminology. SNOMED CT-AU provides local variations and customisation of terms relevant to the Australian healthcare community. It includes the international resources along with all Australian developed terminology, including the AMT for implementation in Australian clinical and administrative IT systems. SNOMED CT-AU has been identified as the preferred national terminology for Australia and has been endorsed by all Australian state and territory governments. SNOMED CT-AU has been available for use in Australia since 1 July 2006 and is updated monthly and is available to download for free by registered licence holders. |
| SNOMED International | Trading name for the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) |
| Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT®) | A clinical terminology maintained and distributed by the SNOMED International. SNOMED CT includes more than 350,000 active concepts with unique meanings and formal logic-based definitions, organised in hierarchies with multiple levels of granularity. These hierarchies include clinical findings, procedures, observables, body structures, organisms, substances, and pharmaceutical/biologic products. |

# 8.  Approval and implementation

| Policy Custodian | Policy Contact Details | Approval Date | Approver |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Director General Queensland Health* | *eHealth-IMStrategy@health.qld.gov.au* | *19/11/2024* | *Director General Queensland Health* |

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# Version control

| Version | Date | Comments |
|---------|------|----------|
| V1.0 | 19/11/2024 | Approved by Director General |

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