

National Clinical Coding Qualification (UK) Syllabus, Framework, Bibliography 2022-23

Published May 2022

A horizontal bar at the top of the page, divided into four colored segments: a large dark blue segment on the left, followed by a smaller medium blue segment, a yellow segment, and a light yellow segment on the right.

**Improving lives with
data and technology**

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-4.9	4
SNOMED CT	4
Clinical coding audit and other issues related to clinical coding	5
Medical terminology, anatomy and physiology	5
Special instructions	5
Examination Framework	6
Paper 1 - Practical coding (3 hours)	6
Paper 2 - Theory (3 hours)	6
Bibliography	7
Resources for National Clinical Coding Examinations - Paper One and Two	7
Resources and publications for Examination Paper Two	9
Additional resources	10
NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service Product Support Helpdesk	10
How do I register?	10
Who develops, delivers and awards the qualification?	10
Examination Quality Assurance Board	10

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 related to clinical coding and data quality, as well as knowledge of medical terminology, anatomy and physiology.

Background

The accuracy of the coded medical record 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.

The NCCQ (UK) is a basic level qualification to demonstrate competence as a clinical coding professional.

Purpose

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

The document may also be useful for a Clinical Coding Manager to support their staff development plan, revision and preparation for the examination.

It should be read in conjunction with the '*NCCQ(UK) Self-directed learning*' available for download at:

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 in-house 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 as 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.

Data quality, clinical coding audit and other issues related to clinical coding

Candidates must:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the uses and users of coded clinical data
- Demonstrate the ability to define what constitutes a classification and a terminology (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 Terminology, Classification and Casemix 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)	70%	85%

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)

Section A1	ICD-10 short coding questions	Answer all fifteen (15) questions	15% of marks
Section A2	OPCS-4 short coding questions	Answer all fifteen (15) questions	15% of marks
Section B	Case studies	Seven (7) compulsory case studies	70% of marks

Paper 2 - Theory (3 hours)

Section C	General short theory questions on: ICD-10 OPCS-4.9	Answer all twenty (20) questions	20% of marks
Section D1	Longer general questions on: ICD-10	Answer all questions	15% of marks
Section D2	Longer general questions on: OPCS-4.9	Answer all questions	15% of marks
Section D3	SNOMED CT	Answer all questions	15% of marks
Section D4	Miscellaneous general questions on Data Quality, Clinical Coding Audit, HRGs etc	Answer all questions	10% of marks
Section E1	Anatomy & Physiology	Answer all questions	25% of marks
Section E2	Medical Terminology		
Section E3	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 & 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

World Health Organization International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Related Problems (Tenth Revision) 5th Edition 2016 Volume 2 Instruction manual

Examination questions will only be based on the following sections from Volume 2:

- Section 1 Introduction
- Section 2 Description of the International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems
- Section 3 How to use the ICD
- Section 4.5 Morbidity

Available to download from:

https://icd.who.int/browse10/Content/statichtml/ICD10Volume2_en_2016.pdf

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

The National Clinical Coding Standards ICD-10 5th Edition Reference Book 2022 (for implementation on 01 April 2022)

Available to download from the Delen website:

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800

The National Clinical Coding Standards OPCS-4.9 Reference Book 2022 (for implementation on 01 April 2022)

Available to download from the Delen website:

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

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

Anatomy & Physiology e-learning

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectID=16825616

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

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](#).

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

ICD-10 and OPCS-4 Classifications Content Changes [2022]

Available to download from the Delen website:

https://hscic.kahootz.com/t_c_home/view?objectId=16878800

Resources and publications for Examination Paper Two

SNOMED CT

SNOMED CT awareness for clinical coders v3.0

<https://hscic.kahootz.com/gf2.ti/f/762498/97804901.4/PPTX/-/SNOMED%20CT%20awareness%20for%20clinical%20coders%20v3.0%20PASSWORD%20PROTECTED.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

Anatomy & Physiology e-learning

https://hscic.kahootz.com/connect.ti/t_c_home/view?objectID=16825616

Clinical Coding Audit

A guide to Clinical Coding Audit Best Practice

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

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 Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service Product Support helpdesk.

NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service Product Support Helpdesk

Tel: 0300 30 34 777

Fax: 01392 206945

Email: 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.

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).