



IHTSDO Quality Assurance Committee

Terms of Reference



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Approved 3rd November 2009

From the Articles of Association June 2007, Section 9.8.2:

With a view towards managing and lowering risks of the Association, the Quality Assurance Committee shall have responsibility for the development and quality assurance of SNOMED CT and its related standards and the association's other Terminology Partners in harmony with proper respect to external standards.

Purpose

The Quality Assurance Committee supports the mission of the IHTSDO by creating awareness, providing tools and advising on issues related to the quality of SNOMED CT, the quality of related standards for which the IHTSDO has responsibility, and the quality of services provided by the IHTSDO.

Scope

The Quality Assurance Committee supports the principles of the Association and the Work Plan of the IHTSDO. Therefore its activities will reflect the current priorities and objectives identified in that plan. The scope of work of the Committee includes:

- A quality focus on the SNOMED CT product (including educational material, translation products, etc.) as well as on IHTSDO as an organization.
- Content and operational quality processes
- A risk management-based approach, tying the quality issues to the risk of the Association that we are attempting to lower and manage. These risks are related to the vision and purpose of IHTSDO.
- Ensuring that the quality processes, governance, etc. are clearly communicated and that all stakeholders understand their responsibility toward creating a quality culture within IHTSDO.
- Providing tools and mechanisms that will allow for the demonstration and measurement of improvement.

Responsibilities

The Quality Assurance Committee would work to satisfy the following mandate:

- The Quality Assurance Committee will be responsible for the design and monitoring of a Quality Assurance Framework, consistent of the following components:
 - Content quality improvement activities
 - Quality components of content development planning
 - Quality components for content development lifecycle
 - Change request and requirements gathering mechanisms
 - Error prevention/detection mechanisms and infrastructure
 - Content quality metrics for terminology development
 - Testing mechanisms
 - Incident response strategy
 - Quality systems development
 - Terminology quality definitions



- Quality aspects of organisational structure and process, including risk management perspective
 - Project quality for management decision-making
 - Content quality metrics for management decision-making
 - Quality standards certification plan
- In consultation and collaboration the Committees and operations of the IHTSDO and in accordance with the Principles of the Association:
 1. Provide advice to the IHTSDO in the areas of policy, strategy, tools and direction to the development and implementation of SNOMED CT from a quality perspective
 2. Provide governance and oversight of Quality Projects
 3. Recommend to the Board on priorities for Quality Assurance in order to assess and improve the overall quality of SNOMED CT so that the Association can manage and lower the risks of the Association by:
 - a. identifying risks and their relationship to quality metrics as part of the Quality Assurance Framework
 - b. developing and maintaining a strategy and risk based Quality Assurance Framework that includes relevant metrics
 - c. translating the Framework into guidelines, policies and tools.
 - d. undertaking and/or advising the Board on implementation, monitoring and enforcement of those policies.
 - e. Enhancing awareness through education, training, communication and outreach.
- Provide advice to the Management Board to inform its decisions, specifically those related to the quality aspects of IHTSDO work plan and priorities
- Advise other committees, project groups and special interest groups on quality issues
 - Advise IHTSDO Standing Committees regarding fitness for purpose of the terminology itself
- Establish and maintain effective communications with internal (IHTSDO) and external stakeholders relevant to the Quality Committee scope
- Contribute to the aspects of the IHTSDO's mission and work plan as appropriate

Principles

From the Articles of Association June 2007, Section 1.3.1:

The Association will seek to govern itself and conduct all of its activities in accordance with principles of openness, fairness, transparency and accountability to its Members.

The IHTSDO is based on openness. Openness implies transparency, communication and accountability. Transparency cannot exist with a purely one-way communication – and it requires dialogue and participation to be involved in a democratic process.

The intention should basically be to be open in both the planning process and the execution of the meetings. The experts around the world are only few, and all the persons with knowledge are needed and should be invited to flow into the committees and working groups.

Participation in Meetings



According to the principles mentioned above, the standing committees should operate as follows:

1. Committees should be open to non-members who should be known as observers.
2. Approval to attend or invitation of observers should be brought through the Chair of Committee, so that suitable logistical arrangements can be made – if at all possible.
3. Observer contributions are at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.
4. Observers cannot vote and should respect the need for the Committee to reach conclusion in the discussions.
5. Seating arrangements at physical meetings are at the discretion of the Chair of Committee. The Chair will ensure that all the Committee members will have full access to facilities to undertake their duties.
6. Attendance policies will be established by the Management Board.¹

Membership

From the Articles of Association June 2007, Section 9.8.3:

The Quality Assurance Committee will comprise the following members selected as follows:

- (a) the Management Board shall appoint one of its members to be member of the Quality Assurance Committee as its Chair, and if reasonably possible such Director will possess an appropriate and relevant background to the functions of the Quality Assurance Committee;
- (b) the Management Board may appoint one member, who can be any individual regardless of their prior association with the Association, of the Quality Assurance Committee as its Vice Chair, and if reasonably possible such member will possess an appropriate and relevant background to the functions of the Quality Assurance Committee;
- (c) the Chief Quality Assurance Officer;
- (d) a representative of Affiliates in accordance with clause 9.11;
- (e) up to twelve members of which at least one member is elected for and on behalf of, but not necessarily resident in, each of the Geographical Constituencies. These members will be nominated and elected as follows:
 - i. Each Member will be entitled to nominate up to three candidates on behalf of such Member's Geographical Constituency.
 - ii. Each Member will be entitled to vote for up to twelve nominees, provided that in no event will a Member be entitled to cast more than one vote for any nominee.

¹ The General Assembly has agreed as follows: beginning in 2009, if a member has been absent from at least 50% of meetings held during the year, the Implementation and Innovation Committee Chair would typically contact the member to discuss the situation. Except in extenuating circumstances, he/she would then recommend to the Management Board that the member in question be deemed to have resigned and would notify the member of this recommendation. In such cases of persistent non-attendance, the General Assembly has the option at the next Committee elections to elect an individual to fill the vacancy caused by this resignation.



- iii. The nominees elected will be the nominees who receive the highest number of votes among all the nominees. The nominee from each Geographical Constituency which receives the highest number of votes of the nominees from that Geographical Constituency, however, shall always be elected.
- iv. In the event that any member resigns from the Committee or otherwise ceases to be a member before the end of her term as a member, the vacancy resulting there from may be filled by an appointment of a successor member by the Management Board, with such successor member being a person representing the same Geographical Constituency as the person who resigned or ceased to be a member.

NOTE: Members do not represent Geographical Constituencies; they bring their individual expertise to the work of the Committee.

A full list of current members of the Quality Assurance Committee can be found on the IHTSDO Website

<http://www.ihtsdo.org/about-us/standing-committees/>

Ways of working

Face to face meetings will be held at least two times a year. Interim conference calls will be scheduled so that business may be addressed more rapidly if required.

Members will respond in a timely manner to requests from the Chair for input to decisions that are required between meetings.

The IHTSDO principles of openness and collaboration will underpin the Committee's working methods, with the support of technical / communications infrastructure for the sharing and management of documents and for consultation with others.

In keeping with IHTSDO policy, members will declare potential or actual conflicts of interests with Committee agenda items and these will be managed by the Chair.

The Committee will uphold the Articles of Association and conform to the IHTSDO Regulations, Policies and Procedures where they apply to the Committee activities.

The Meeting Minutes from each Committee will be published on the IHTSDO web site and notified to and/or posted on the Collaborative Space.

The Committee will periodically review these Terms of Reference and will revise them as necessary and appropriate. This will ensure that Committee responsibilities accurately reflect the IHTSDO work plan, and the activities, interests and contributions from Members and the community of interest.

The Chair will take responsibility for taking the Committee's recommendations to the Management Board and providing members with feedback on the outcomes of their contribution.

The Chair will work with Chairs of the other Committees to ensure co-ordination across Committees, Project and Interest Groups and effective joint working when appropriate.



During face to face meetings, parallel sessions cannot be avoided. The Committee is keen to promote joint meetings with other Committees, particularly on areas of joint interest.

Skills Matrix

A desirable skills matrix has been developed for each of the IHTSDO Committees. Each skills matrix indicates the approximate minimum percentage of Committee members who will have a certain skill set. These are intended to provide guidelines to the General Assembly and Affiliate Forum when nominating or voting, but are not strict requirements. The General Assembly has approved the following skills matrix for the Quality Assurance Committee:

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| Professional experience in clinical data production, organisational or software risk management or quality management | 100% | Experience and understanding of SNOMED CT – technical knowledge, and development tooling knowledge and/or Recognised higher qualification in information-management/computer science/linguistic-related subject | 17% |
| Professional clinical experience | 50% | Experience and understanding of SNOMED CT – content representation knowledge - practical, working knowledge | 50% |
| Professional experience of running national/large enterprise information systems/data quality programmes/risk management programmes | 33% | Experience in International health information standards development Experience and understanding of SNOMED CT – content development Evidence of participation in peer-reviewed research in information and knowledge representation quality | 25% |
| Professional experience in information data processing (entry, encoding, cleansing, analysis, validation, aggregation) | 33% | Professional experience in education/training | 83% |
| Professional experience in clinical information systems development and installation and in clinical information systems use | 33% | Experience and understanding of interactions and interrelations between SNOMED CT and other health data standards (e.g. mapping and harmonization) - Standard National and International Classifications/terminologies - National and International Information model/Messaging model Standards | 33% |