

2.2 Intensional Reference Set Definitions

Reference sets are a flexible, extensible SNOMED CT file structure used to support a variety of requirements for the customization and enhancement of SNOMED CT content. These include the representation of subsets, language preferences, or maps to/from other code systems.

Some reference sets (using the Query Specification type) allow a serialised query to represent the membership of a subset of SNOMED CT components. A query contained in this reference set is executed against the content of SNOMED CT to produce a subset of concepts, descriptions or relationships. This query is referred to as an intensional definition of the subset. It can be run against future releases of SNOMED CT to generate a potentially different set of subset members. The members of the resulting subset may also be represented in an enumerated form as a Simple Reference Set. An enumerated representation of a subset is referred to as an extensional definition.

The [SNOMED CT Expression Constraint Language](#) can be used in this way to represent the intensional definition of a subset of SNOMED CT concepts that can be enumerated as a Simple Reference Set.