

4.2.1 Concept File Specification

The [Concept File](#) holds the clinical [concepts](#) that make up [SNOMED CT](#). A [concept](#) is given meaning by its [Fully Specified Name](#), which is held in the [Description](#). A [concept](#) may be distinguished from or refined by association with other [concepts](#) using [relationships](#), which are held in the [Relationship](#).

Table 4.2.1-1: Concept file - Detailed Specification

| Field | Data type | Purpose | Mutable | Part of Primary Key |
|--------------------|-----------|--|---------|--------------------------------|
| id | SCTID | Uniquely identifies the concept . | NO | YES (Full /Snapshot) |
| effectiveTime | Time | Specifies the inclusive date at which the component version's state became the then current valid state of the component. Note: In distribution files the effectiveTime should follow the short ISO date format (YYYYMMDD) and should not include the hours, minutes, seconds or timezone indicator. | YES | YES (Full) Optional (Snapshot) |
| active | Boolean | Specifies whether the concept was active or inactive from the nominal release date specified by the effectiveTime . | YES | NO |
| moduleId | SCTID | Identifies the concept version's module. Set to a descendant of 900000000000443000 Module within the metadata hierarchy. | YES | NO |
| definitionStatusId | SCTID | Specifies if the concept version is primitive or defined . Set to a descendant of 900000000000444006 Definition status in the metadata hierarchy. | YES | NO |

Only one [concept](#) record with the same id field is current at any point in time. The current record will be the one with the most recent [effectiveTime](#) before or equal to the date under consideration. If the [active](#) field of this record is false ('0'), then the [concept](#) is [inactive](#) at that point in time.

When a [concept](#) is made [inactive](#), the following operations take place:

- A new row is added to the [Concepts](#) file for the [concept](#), with the [active](#) flag set to [inactive](#) and the [definitionStatusId](#) set to [primitive](#);
- All [relationships](#) that have as source the [concept](#) to be inactivated will themselves be inactivated by adding a new row to the [Relationship](#) for each [relationship](#), with the [active](#) flag set to [inactive](#);
- All [active descriptions](#) associated with the [concept](#) will remain unchanged unless incorrect for the [concept](#);
- Rows will be added as needed to the [Historical Association Reference Sets](#), to model associations from the [inactive concept](#) to other [concepts](#);
- [Active descriptions](#) that are still associated with the [inactive concept](#) will be added to the 900000000000490003 | Description inactivation indicator reference set| , with an associated value of 900000000000495008 | Concept non-current|

Related Links

- [3.1.1. Concepts](#)
- [Appendix C. Unicode UTF-8 encoding](#)
- [Concept](#)
- [2.1 High Level Logical Model of SNOMED CT](#)