

canonical form

A serialized representation of a [SNOMED CT expression](#) produced by applying a set of rules that ensure a single unique representation for any expression.

Notes

- Expressions that contain exactly the same [concept identifiers](#) and [refinements](#), may differ from one another in the following ways:
 - Inclusion of whitespace between elements
 - Inclusion of specific [terms](#) associated with identified [concepts](#).
 - The order in which [focus concepts](#), [refinements](#), [attributes](#), and [attribute groups](#) appear.
- The *canonical form* is generated by removing whitespace and [terms](#) from an expression and arranging the [focus concepts](#), [refinements](#), [attributes](#), and [attribute groups](#) in a standard order.
- If *canonical form* rules are applied to a [normal form](#) expression, the result is a single unique rendering of the meaning represented by that expression.

Alternatives

- **Canonical representation**

Related Links

- [Normal form](#)
- [Compositional Grammar - Specification and Guide](#)
- Terminology Services Guide
 - [12.4.29 Canonical Representation](#)
- Wikipedia
 - [Canonical form](#)