Note: For the above VRs, the multiple bytes are presented in increasing order of significance when in Little Endian format. For example, an 8-byte Data Element with VR of FD, might be written in hexadecimal as 68AF4B2CH, but encoded in Little Endian would be 2C4BAF68H.

7.4 DATA ELEMENT TYPE

An attribute, encoded as a Data Element, may or may not be required in a Data Set, depending on that Attribute's Data Element Type.

The Data Element Type of an Attribute of an Information Object Definition or an Attribute of a SOP Class Definition is used to specify whether that Attribute is mandatory or optional. The Data Element Type also indicates if an Attribute is conditional (only mandatory under certain conditions). The Data Element Types of Attributes of Composite IODs are specified in PS 3.3. The Data Element Types of Attributes of Normalized IODs are specified as Attributes of SOP Classes in PS 3.4.

7.4.1 TYPE 1 REQUIRED DATA ELEMENTS

IODs and SOP Classes define Type 1 Data Elements that shall be included and are mandatory elements. The Value Field shall contain valid data as defined by the elements VR and VM as specified in PS 3.6. The Length of the Value Field shall not be zero. Absence of a valid Value in a Type 1 Data Element is a protocol violation.

Note: For data elements with a string (CS, SH, LO) rather than binary, text or sequence Value Representation, and for which multiple Values are allowed, the presence of a single Value is sufficient to satisfy the Type 1 requirement, unless specified otherwise in the Attribute description, and other Values may be empty, unless otherwise specified by the IOD. The presence of one or more delimiter (BACKSLASH) characters alone, without any Values, is not sufficient to satisfy the Type 1 requirement, since even though the Value Length is greater than zero, there is no valid Value present.

7.4.2 TYPE 1C CONDITIONAL DATA ELEMENTS

IODs and SOP Classes define Data Elements that shall be included under certain specified conditions. Type 1C elements have the same requirements as Type 1 elements under these conditions. It is a protocol violation if the specified conditions are met and the Data Element is not included.

When the specified conditions are not met, Type 1C elements shall not be included in the Data Set.

7.4.3 TYPE 2 REQUIRED DATA ELEMENTS

IODs and SOP Classes define Type 2 Data Elements that shall be included and are mandatory Data Elements. However, it is permissible that if a Value for a Type 2 element is unknown it can be encoded with zero Value Length and no Value. If the Value is known the Value Field shall contain that value as defined by the elements VR and VM as specified in PS 3.6. These Data Elements shall be included in the Data Set and their absence is a protocol violation.

Note: The intent of Type 2 Data Elements is to allow a zero length to be conveyed when the operator or application does not know its value or has a specific reason for not specifying its value. It is the intent that the device should support these Data Elements.

7.4.4 TYPE 2C CONDITIONAL DATA ELEMENTS

IODs and SOP Classes define Type 2C elements that have the same requirements as Type 2 elements under certain specified conditions. It is a protocol violation if the specified conditions are met and the Data Element is not included.

When the specified conditions are not met, Type 2C elements shall not be included in the Data Set.

Note: An example of a Type 2C Data Element is Inversion Time (0018,0082). For several SOP Class Definitions, this Data Element is required only if the Scanning Sequence (0018,0020) has the Value “IR.” It is not required otherwise. See PS 3.3.

7.4.5 TYPE 3 OPTIONAL DATA ELEMENTS

IODs and SOP Classes define Type 3 Data Elements that are optional Data Elements. Absence of a Type 3 element from a Data Set does not convey any significance and is not a protocol violation. Type 3 elements may also be encoded with zero length and no Value. The meaning of a zero length Type 3 Data Element shall be precisely the same as that element being absent from the Data Set.

7.4.6 DATA ELEMENT TYPES WITHIN A SEQUENCE

When an IOD defines a Sequence Data Element (see Section 7.5), the Type of the Sequence attribute defines whether the Sequence attribute itself must be present, and the Attribute Description of the Sequence attribute may define whether and how many Items shall be present in the Sequence. The Types of the attributes of the Data Set included in the Sequence, including any conditionality, are specified within the scope of each Data Set, i.e., for each Item present in the Sequence.

Notes: 1. The Type and Attribute Description of the Sequence determines whether Items are present; conditionality constraints on Data Elements of the Items cannot force an Item to be present.

2. Historically, many IODs declared Type 1 and Type 2 Data Elements of the Sequence to be Type 1C and Type 2C, respectively, with the condition that an Item is present. This is exactly the same as simply defining them as Type 1 and Type 2.

3. In particular, the conditionality constraint “Required if Sequence is sent” on the Type 1C or Type 2C Data Elements subsidiary to a Type 2 or 3 Sequence attribute does not imply that an Item must be present in the Sequence. These conditions are meant to be equivalent to “Required if a Sequence Item is present”, and the conditionality is not strictly necessary. Any Type 2 or Type 3 Sequence attribute may be sent with zero length.

4. In particular, the conditionality constraint “Required if <name-of-parent-sequence-attribute> is sent” on the Type 1C or Type 2C Data Elements subsidiary to a Type 2 or 3 Sequence attribute does not imply that an Item must be present in the Sequence. These conditions are meant to be equivalent to “Required if a Sequence Item is present”, and the conditionality is not strictly necessary. Any Type 2 or Type 3 Sequence attribute may be sent with zero length.

7.5 NESTING OF DATA SETS

The VR identified "SQ" shall be used for Data Elements with a Value consisting of a Sequence of zero or more Items, where each Item contains a set of Data Elements. SQ provides a flexible encoding scheme that may be used for simple structures of repeating sets of Data Elements, or the encoding of more complex Information Object Definitions often called folders. SQ Data Elements can also be used recursively to contain multi-level nested structures.

Items present in an SQ Data Element shall be an ordered set where each Item may be referenced by its ordinal position. Each Item shall be implicitly assigned an ordinal position starting with the value 1 for the first Item in the Sequence, and incremented by 1 with each subsequent Item. The last Item in the Sequence shall have an ordinal position equal to the number of Items in the Sequence.

Notes: 1. This clause implies that item ordering is preserved during transfer and storage.

2. An IOD or Module Definition may choose to not use this ordering property of a Data Element with VR of SQ. This is simply done by not specifying any specific semantics to the ordering of Items, or by not specifying usage of the referencing of Items by ordering position.

The definition of the Data Elements encapsulated in each Item is provided by the specification of the Data Element (or associated Attribute) of Value Representation SQ. Items in a sequence of Items may or may not contain the same set of Data Elements. Data Elements with a VR of SQ may contain multiple Items but shall always have a Value Multiplicity of one (ie. a single Sequence).

There are three special SQ related Data Elements that are not ruled by the VR encoding rules conveyed by the Transfer Syntax. They shall be encoded as Implicit VR. These special Data Elements are Item (FFFE,E000), Item Delimitation Item (FFFE,E00D), and Sequence Delimitation Item (FFFE,E0DD).