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**Information technology — Top-level  
ontologies (TLO) —**

**Part 4:  
TUpper**

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives) or [www.iec.ch/members\\_experts/refdocs](http://www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs)).

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This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 32, *Data management and interchange*.

A list of all parts in the ISO/IEC 21838 series can be found on the ISO and IEC websites.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html) and [www.iec.ch/national-committees](http://www.iec.ch/national-committees).

## Introduction

TUpper is a top-level ontology (TLO) conforming to ISO/IEC 21838-1. It contains definitions of its terms and relational expressions and formal representations in OWL 2 and in Common Logic (CL).

Top-level ontologies have traditionally arisen from the approach in which concepts that are common across a set of domains can be axiomatized at a general level. The rationale is that reuse across domains is to be supported through specialization of the general concepts from a top-level ontology. Similarly, semantic integration between ontologies is to be achieved through the general concepts they specialize. The TUpper ontology follows an alternative approach (referred to as the sideways approach) to the conventional top-level ontology paradigm. Rather than think of a top-level ontology as a monolithic axiomatization centred on a taxonomy, the sideways approach considers a top-level ontology to be a modular ontology composed of ontologies that cover concepts including those related to time, process, and space, from which any underlying taxonomy can be inferred. Each module within TUpper is a set of axioms from an existing ISO standard. The central claim is that a top-level ontology is an ontology that has a reduction whose modules are all ontologies that satisfy a subset of the requirements for a top-level ontology in ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021. New top-level ontologies can be designed by the union of different ontologies that already exist rather than harmonizing different ontologies.

The TUpper ontology is designed as a top-level ontology that contains modules from the ontologies within existing international standards, and that extends these modules so as to satisfy the criteria for top level ontologies in ISO/IEC 21838-1. The modules of PSL appear in ISO 18629. The modules for mereotopology and location arise from ISO 19107 and ISO 19150-1. Modules related to units of measure arise from ISO 80000.

TUpper-terms, the natural language specification of TUpper, supports human maintenance and use of the ontology, including use in development of conformant domain ontologies.

TUpper-OWL, the OWL 2 formalization of TUpper, enables TUpper to be integrated with other ontologies expressed in OWL and in related languages, and supports the use of OWL automated reasoners.

TUpper-CL, the CL formalization of TUpper, provides the axiomatization of the intended semantics of TUpper.

This document conforms to ISO/IEC 21838-1.

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# Information technology — Top-level ontologies (TLO) —

## Part 4: TUpper

### 1 Scope

This document describes TUpper as an ontology that is conformant to the requirements specified for top-level ontologies in ISO/IEC 21838-1.

This document describes TUpper as a resource designed to support ontology design, ontology integration, automated reasoning, and semantic integration of heterogeneous information systems.

The following are within the scope of this document:

- definitions of classes and relations in the signature of TUpper;
- axiomatizations of TUpper in OWL 2 and CL;
- documentation of the conformity of TUpper to the requirements specified for top-level ontologies in ISO/IEC 21838-1;
- documentation of the methodology for specifying domain ontologies that conform to TUpper.

The following are outside the scope of this document:

- specification of ontology languages, including the languages RDF, OWL and CL standardly used in ontology development;
- specification of methods for reasoning with ontologies;
- specification of translators between the notations of ontologies developed in different ontology languages.

### 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, *Information technology — Top-level ontologies (TLO) — Part 1: Requirements*

ISO/IEC 24707, *Information technology — Common Logic (CL) — A framework for a family of logic-based languages*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions in ISO/IEC 21838-1 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

- 3.1 conservative extension**  
superset of axioms from which no new theorems in the signature of the original logical theory are provable
- 3.2 consistent extension**  
superset of axioms which is a consistent logical theory
- 3.3 logically synonymous, adj**  
theories whose sets of models are in a one-to-one correspondence
- 3.4 module**  
subset of the axioms in a formal theory that is a *conservative extension* (3.1) of the subset
- 3.5 reduction**  
set of logical theories whose union is *logically synonymous* (3.3) to the ontology

## 4 Conformance of TUpper to ISO 21838-1

### 4.1 Overview

TUpper has three elements the documentation of which is provided in the file TUpper-Terms at <https://standards.iso.org/iso-iec/21838/-4/ed-1/en/>:

- natural language representation of its terms, relational expressions and definitions;
- formalization in OWL 2 (Web Ontology Language);
- formalization in CL (Common Logic).

### 4.2 Natural language representation of TUpper

The natural language representation of TUpper, provided in the file TUpper-Terms at <https://standards.iso.org/iso-iec/21838/-4/ed-1/en/>, establishes conformance of TUpper to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.1.

### 4.3 OWL 2 formalization of TUpper

The OWL 2 [15], [16], [17] formalization of TUpper, provided in the file TUpper-OWL at <https://standards.iso.org/iso-iec/21838/-4/ed-1/en/>, establishes conformance of ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.2.

### 4.4 Common Logic axiomatization of TUpper

#### 4.4.1 General

The CL formalization of TUpper (provided at <https://standards.iso.org/iso-iec/21838/-4/ed-1/en/>) to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021.

TUpper is available in the following formats:

- axiomatization in Common Logic Interchange Format (CLIF) as specified in ISO/IEC 24707 provided in the **common-logic** directory;
- axiomatization in standard first-order predicate logic notation is provided in the **pdf** directory.

#### 4.4.2 Modularity

The axioms in TUpper-CL are divided into the following modules in accordance with the requirement of explicit modularization in ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.1.

|                          |                                              |          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------|
| PSL-Core                 | Duration of Objects and Activity Occurrences | Length   |
| PSL Subactivity          | Duration Ontology                            | Area     |
| PSL Occurrence Trees     | Timedurations                                | Volume   |
| PSL Discrete States      | Physical Mass                                | Density  |
| PSL Atomic Activities    | Constitution                                 | Velocity |
| PSL Complex Activities   | Mass                                         |          |
| PSL Activity Occurrences | Chunks of Matter                             |          |
| PSL Interval Time        | Amounts of Matter                            |          |
| PSL Actors               | Multidimensional Mereotopology               |          |
| Location Ontology        | Shape                                        |          |
| Mereology for Location   | Multidimensional Location Ontology           |          |
| Topology for Location    | Length of Physical Objects                   |          |
| Physical Mereology       | Area of Physical Objects                     |          |
| Physical Topology        | Volume of Physical Objects                   |          |
| Spatial Topology         |                                              |          |

#### 4.5 Specification of the purpose of TUpper (in conformance to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.4.2)

The TUpper ontology is designed as a top-level ontology that consistently combines the ontologies within existing international standards [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14]. Such an ontology enables applications that require the use of the multiple standards that are conformant with TUpper.

- ISO 18629-11: PSL-Core
- ISO 18629-12: PSL-Subactivity, PSL Occurrence Trees, PSL Discrete States, PSL Atomic, PSL Complex Activities, PSL Activity Occurrences, PSL Interval Time
- ISO 18629-13: PSL Duration
- ISO 19107: Multidimensional Mereotopology
- ISO/TS 19150-1: Occupy Root, Physical Mereotopology, Spatial Mereotopology
- ISO/IEC 80000: PSL Duration, Physical Mass, Spatial Units of Measure

#### 4.6 Conformance of a domain ontology to TUpper (in conformance to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.4.3)

A domain ontology conforms to TUpper if and only if the axioms are specified in a CL dialect and the set of axioms is a consistent extension of the axiomatization of TUpper as specified in the same CL dialect.

#### 4.7 Consistency of the CL axiomatization of TUpper (in conformity to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.4.4)

The logical consistency of TUpper follows from the verification of the ontology, in which TUpper is shown to be logically synonymous with the union of a set of mathematical theories. The verification is

done on the set of modules in TUpper and is provided at <https://standards.iso.org/iso-iec/21838/-4/ed-1/en/verification/>.

#### **4.8 Interpretability of the OWL 2 axiomatization of TUpper in the CL axiomatization (in conformity to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.4.5)**

Interpretability of the OWL 2 axiomatization described in TUpper-OWL in the CL axiomatization (provided at <https://standards.iso.org/iso-iec/21838/-4/ed-1/en/owl-interpret/>) was established by incorporating a CL counterpart of the OWL axiomatization into the CL axiomatization

#### **4.9 Demonstration of breadth of coverage of TUpper (in conformance to ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.4.6)**

##### **4.9.1 General**

This subclause provides a set of answers to the questions listed in ISO/IEC 21838-1:2021, 4.4.6 demonstrating the breadth of coverage of TUpper.

##### **4.9.2 Space and time**

TUpper posits two classes of temporal entities – timepoints (over which an ordering relation is axiomatized) and time intervals (which extend in time and over which an ordering and a mereology are defined).

TUpper recognizes entities that persist in time – an object exists at timepoints between the timepoint at which it starts to exist and the timepoint at which it ceases to exist.

TUpper recognizes entities that occur in time – each activity occurrence occurs at timepoints between the timepoint at which it starts to occur and the timepoint at which it ceases to occur.

TUpper axiomatizes a mereotopology over the set of spatial regions.

##### **4.9.3 Actuality and possibility**

Models of `psl_occtree.clif` are occurrence trees, which consist of all possible sequences of atomic activity occurrences. The set of activities that actually occur in a model are elements of one branch of the occurrence tree. Models consist of subtrees of the occurrence tree that correspond to possible occurrences of complex activities. A legal occurrence tree is the subtree of an occurrence tree in which all activity occurrences satisfy precondition axioms that specify the conditions under which an activity can possibly occur. Dispositions are treated via such precondition axioms.

##### **4.9.4 Classes and types**

Classes of activities are definable within TUpper. Classes of classes do not appear within the ontology, although they are allowed within the language of Common Logic.

##### **4.9.5 Change over time**

Within TUpper, changeable properties are represented by states. States are achieved and falsified by activity occurrences.

Modules of TUpper that axiomatize domain process ontologies classify the activities that change states that are associated with different domains. The module `motion.clif` within TUpper classifies all activities that can possibly change the location of an object. It is consistent with TUpper for more than one material object to occupy exactly the same spatial region at the same time. The module `matter.clif` within TUpper all activities that can change the mereology of matter and that can change a material object by changing the matter that constitutes the object.

#### 4.9.6 Parts, wholes, unity and boundaries

TUpper adopts multiple distinct parthood and connection relations for different classes of entities. The mereologies on matter and spatial regions are complete extensional mereologies with complementation, as is the mereology of atomic (concurrent) activities. On the other hand, the mereology of complex activities is logically synonymous with the weakest mereology, and does not require the existence of sums or complements. The mereology on components and time intervals entails Strong Supplementation, but does not require the existence of sums for all elements.

#### 4.9.7 Space and place

TUpper axiomatizes distinct mereotopologies for material objects and spatial regions, with the occupy relation specifying the relationship between the object and the region that it occupies. The module `occupy_root.clif` contains the axiomatization of the location ontology within TUpper.

Shape is represented topologically in the `boxworld.clif` module of TUpper. Holes are specified as physical objects which have shape but which are not constituted by matter.

#### 4.9.8 Scale and granularity

TUpper does not explicitly represent scale and granularity, although granularity can be specified for entities which have a parthood relation (e.g. material objects, activities, activity occurrences, and spatial regions).

#### 4.9.9 Qualities and other attributes

TUpper does not reify qualities, that is, there is no class of qualities within the ontology. Instead, the intended semantics of attributes and properties appear as relations in the signatures of the modules of TUpper. For example, attributes and properties for shape are represented by classes and relations within the signature of the Shape module, and duration is represented by classes and relations in the signature of the modules for the Duration of Objects and Activity Occurrences.

#### 4.9.10 Quantities and mathematical entities

TUpper axiomatizes the units of measure, constraints on how units can be algebraically manipulated, and the relationship between physical objects and processes and the units of measure.

#### 4.9.11 Processes and events

Processes appear as the class of complex activities which have nontrivial subactivities. Fluents (states) are achieved or falsified by activity occurrences, and only activity occurrences can change fluents. Processes are therefore distinct from change, but are associated with the ways in a fluent can change.

There are no constraints on the kinds of processes that exist. Classes of processes are defined in extensions of the ontology.

Each activity occurrence has a duration, which can be zero in the case of an instantaneous activity occurrence (i.e. one in which the `beginof` timepoint is equal to the `endof` timepoint).

#### 4.9.12 Constitution

The module `constitution.clif` axiomatizes the constitutes relation between an object and its matter. Constitution only holds between objects and matter, and there is no analogue of constitution that holds between processes or nonmaterial entities.