

Section A

Introduction to PEN[®] Authors and Reviewers Guide

SECTION A - AT A GLANCE

1. Purpose of the Guide
2. What is a Knowledge Pathway
 - 2.1. Definition and Scope
 - 2.2. Criteria for Inclusion of Materials
 - 2.3. Selecting Topics for Development
3. PEN Tour and Video Tutorials

Purpose of the Guide

The PEN[®] Authors and Reviewers Guide has been developed to provide guidance to authors and reviewers of content for the PEN[®] system. It provides information on process, examples of the various components of knowledge objects found in a Knowledge Pathway (Practice Questions, Evidence Summary, Background, Practice Guidance Toolkit, Related Tools and Resources) and forms and templates to use. In addition it show the forms authors need to sign before beginning the writing process and when submitting content for review and the forms reviewers need to sign when submitting their review. These forms are signed online in the PEN Content Monitoring System (PCMS) and thus are kept on file by DC.

What is a Knowledge Pathway? - Definition and Scope

The PEN[®] System was designed using a knowledge pathway (KP) approach. Each KP is related to a topic from the broad scope of the dietetics field (clinical, contact centres, consulting, education, food service management, community nutrition, professional issues, etc.). Experts are appointed to develop or update each KP according to an annual Content Plan composed of a prioritized list of topics and a time line.

A KP consists of succinct guidance statements and practice recommendations synthesized from the literature, supported by more detailed levels of carefully selected references, practice guidelines, position papers, tables and links to websites, electronic publications, databases and discussion groups as well as client education tools when applicable. Each KP grows in breadth and depth over time as evidence that informs practice changes. In addition, new KPs can be easily added as the need and interest for new topics arises.

A KP provides the flexibility to enable the busy practitioner, working in an institution, private practice or a call centre, to quickly find the short answer to a specific question, as well as to “drill down” to review the evidence in more detail, when time permits. The breadth and depth of a KP will vary depending on the topic.

If you are developing a new KP the template, next page, has been developed to provide a framework from which to begin. If you are updating a KP then you will be doing so using a WORD document of the existing content that already follows the template. In addition, guiding principles regarding evidence-based decision making and training modules such as the Evidence-based Process Module will also assist you in selecting and synthesizing the information for the KP. [See Section C - Getting Started Writing for more information]

Criteria for Inclusion of Materials in a Knowledge Pathway

To be included in a knowledge path, materials must meet the following criteria:

- Accuracy - Information contained in the knowledge path selections must be accurate, verifiable and peer reviewed.
- Authority - selections must be from an authoritative source. Where recommendations rely on expert opinion this too must be clearly stated so that practitioners understand the strength of the evidence supporting a particular guidance statement.
- Objectivity - selections must be science-based, evaluated and graded according to recognized standards of evidence. See [PEN Evidence Grading Checklist](#) and [PEN GRADE Recommendations](#).
- Currency - the most recent evidence from peer reviewed articles or websites where content is reviewed at least annually should be used. An older item may be considered if no newer information or newer research exists or it sets the foundation for future research (e.g., a Surgeon General's report) or stands the test of time. Knowledge pathways will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis updated ensuring the PEN[®] System is dynamic and up-to-date.
- Scope - selections must specifically address the knowledge path topic and, where appropriate should encompass the continuum of health promotion/protection; disease prevention; treatment/intervention; rehabilitation prevention; and support. Resources that describe and/or evaluate programs and/or discuss "lessons learned" are particularly helpful to the professional community of practice and should be included in each knowledge path. Succinct practice statements will have embedded links to more detailed information allowing users to dig into the information for more detail.
- Access - websites and other electronic resource selections must be easily accessible (i.e. no charge) and navigable. If not and the selection is essential to the path, we'll add navigational tips for the user. Any instance where a web site or reference requires a fee to access it, it must be discussed with the PEN Responsible Administrator and every effort will be made to identify an alternate resource.
- Language - while the content of PEN[®] is available only in English, if there are resources available in other languages that meet the above criteria and are in accordance with the evidence then they should also be included as a link or a PDF file.

Selecting Topics for Knowledge Pathway Development

The number of KPs continues to grow over time. The PEN[®] team uses member input from the "[Submit a Content Idea](#)" feature on the PEN[®] site, feedback from the dietitian call centers which utilize PEN[®] as their database (HealthLinkBC in British Columbia and Eat Right Ontario), and the criteria adapted from a practice guideline scorecard developed by P Splett¹ to help establish which pathways or questions will receive immediate priority.

To what degree would the KP:

- Improve client outcomes
- Affect a large patient/client population
- Affect high incidence condition or problem
- Affect vulnerable population groups
- Reduce costs
- Build scientific bases linking nutrition to positive outcomes
- Improve performance or enhance confidence of practitioners
- Affect policy decisions.

¹ Splett, PL. Developing and Validating Evidence-Based Guides for Practice. Chicago, IL: American Dietetic Association 2000.

An Evidence-based Process

The concept of knowledge pathways is relatively new and strives to broaden our thinking about information; how we obtain it, evaluate it and use it. We know there is NO shortage of information! PEN[®] is designed to distill the mountains of information into digestible bottom line practice guidance statements or key practice points that have been developed based on a critical appraisal of relevant studies, or evidence. Users can click on links to obtain more information on the evidence supporting the key practice points. [See **Section B** for more on the Evidence-based Process}

PEN[®] Tours and Video Tutorials

Are you new to PEN[®]? Need to better understand how to use it? These quick [tours and videos tutorials](#) provide an overview and demonstrate the Power of PEN[®]