

PEN (Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition®) GUIDELINES FOR KNOWLEDGE PATHWAY REVIEWERS

Note: First time reviewers of PEN® content are encouraged to review these guidelines and the [Guide to Being a PEN® Reviewer](#) before doing a review. The review should provide feedback to the author and make a judgment regarding the relevance, currency and acceptability of the content for review. If you do not have regular access to PEN® a guest pass can be arranged for you by contacting the PEN® Responsible Administrator who sent you the assignment invite to be a PEN® reviewer from the [PEN Content Management System \(PCMS\)](#).

Reviewers are required to read the Declaration of Affiliations and Interests (page 5) and declare any conflicts of interest by completing an online form in the PCMS at the time they are submitting their reviews.

The content for the PEN® system is developed using validated and refined filtered information sources including synopses, well conducted systematic reviews (such as Cochrane Reviews) and reputable practice guidelines forming the basis for the evidence synthesis. Where filtered sources fail to address practice questions, relevant and scientifically valid articles are used for analysis, and synthesis. Extensive web searches for grey literature and unpublished resources are also used to find relevant materials referenced in the PEN® system.

Process

You will be sent an email invite to complete the review. Follow the instructions in the email to accept the review assignment. Once you accept the assignment, you will be sent another email with a link to the assignment in the PCMS. In the Comment section will be a replica of the email you received and the WORD document of the content to be reviewed will show a blue link below the assignment's Responsible Administrator's name. You can click on the link and download the WORD document. Once your review is completed you will upload the WORD document with your Comments / Track Changes by adding a Comment to the assignment in the PCMS. You will see a statement in green font indicating you are submitting a review, lower left hand corner of the Comment box, check the box at the beginning of the statement and the Reviewer's Feedback form will pop-up to be completed. Once completed, you click on Submit and your review is complete.

Role of the Reviewer

1. Your primary task is to determine the acceptability of specific knowledge objects (components) in a PEN® Knowledge Pathway (KP), all knowledge objects in a KP or the answer to a specific practice question. You are providing feedback to the author(s) for the purpose of improving the quality of PEN® Knowledge Pathway content and its usefulness to practitioners. Points to consider: scientific soundness, practice merit, need for country specifics, interest, value, clarity of meaning and readability. See checklist (pages 3 and 4). **Spelling** - it is difficult to have an international database, which respects all spellings of certain words e.g. celiac, coeliac. All variations of spellings will be used in titles / headings but in the text, the Canadian spelling will be used. References will include the spelling variation as cited.
2. The reviewer may not be anonymous to the author(s). The Reviewer's Feedback form has a section for confidential notes and any general comments on the PEN® content. This form may or may not be shared with the author if there is confidential information or feedback. The PEN® Responsible Administrator for the topic will make that decision. We encourage reviewers to use Track Changes in the WORD document of the PEN® content to provide your constructive feedback, questions, comments, suggested resource etc. directed to the author(s). This document goes directly to the author without editing. Please be as clear and concise as possible since these comments form the basis for their revision of the answer to the practice question / knowledge object / knowledge pathway. **Track Changes** – if you are not familiar with how to use Track Changes please refer to the document: [Using Track Changes in WORD](#). It can be accessed on the PEN® website from the Menu – About PEN – PEN Training Materials – [PEN Authors and Reviewers Resources](#).
3. If you are providing feedback only on the Reviewer's Feedback form then please number the points in the "Comments for Authors" section to facilitate, if needed, checking the author's rebuttals or explanation of revisions.

4. It is particularly helpful to the PEN[®] Responsible Administrator and the author if your comments clearly differentiate between:
 - a. the need for clarification or improvement of a key practice point or evidence statement
 - b. required additions to a Knowledge Pathway (i.e. additional resources, web links, client educations tools)
 - c. scientific criticisms, including completeness of literature review or grading of the evidence
5. Reviewers must respect DC's ownership of PEN[®] content and authors' rights by not making copies of the PEN[®] documentation or sharing it with others, except with the permission of the PEN[®] Responsible Administrator.
6. On the Reviewer's Feedback form reviewers are obliged to read the Declaration of Affiliations and Interests, declare any conflicts of interest and sign / type their name to acknowledge that you have read it. As mentioned earlier, please read the Declarations and Affiliations checklist page 5 of this document.
7. On the Reviewer's Feedback form reviewers are asked their permission to provide personal contact information in the PEN[®] system. By checking the box provided, you agree to having your email address in the PEN[®] system.

Students as reviewers are acceptable where an "expert" oversees and discusses the review with them rather than them doing the review "solo". The exception would be Master and PhD level students if the topic is their area of research. A new graduate can look at content from a "does it answer all of the questions I have" perspective, which is important but we still want an "experienced" reviewer - academic or practice-based. Each partner country is asked to have at least one reviewer so that a partner country's perspective is being fully addressed.

DC PEN (Practice-based Evidence in Nutrition®) CHECK LIST FOR REVIEWERS

Note: The principles relating to format, clarity, precision of language and logic apply to all answers to PEN® practice questions and all knowledge objects in the Knowledge Pathways.

Practice Question

Is the practice question written in a clear, concise manner? Is it suitable as a foreground practice question or should it be in Background information?

Key Practice Point

Are the Key Practice Points (Recommendations and Evidence Summary) relevant to the question? Are they clearly written? Is the evidence complete and graded appropriately? Are there other practice points, which should be made to answer this question? Are the practice points according to VIA?

Validity – Can you trust the information? Are the source and level of evidence stated?

Importance – Will the information make an important difference to practice? Are the outcomes are ones practitioners or clients would care about?

Applicability – Can you use this information in practice settings? (consider access, practicality or cost issues etc)

Rationale and Remarks

If these sections are included, are the remarks appropriate and do they add to the clarity of the knowledge pathway? If there is no rationale or any remarks provided, should there be?

Evidence

Are there key / important articles / studies / guidelines which haven't been included as part of the evidence? Are the references cited current and appropriate in scope?

Are references:

- Accurate, verifiable, and peer reviewed?
- Authority - from an authoritative source - e.g. peer reviewed journal, RCT, systematic review or national guideline or policy? Where the recommendations rely on expert opinion this too must be clearly stated so that practitioners understand the strength of the evidence supporting a particular key practice point.
- Objective – evidence-based and evaluated according to recognized standards of evidence (peer reviewed) etc. See: [Evidence Grading Checklist](#).
- Current - very recent (publications written in the last 2 years or websites where content is reviewed at least annually. An older item may be considered if no newer information or research exists or it sets the foundation for future research (e.g. NICE guidance, a Surgeon General's report) or stands the test of time e.g. a key document such as DRI's.

Key Words

Are suitable key words provided for each knowledge object / question / knowledge pathway? Do you disagree with any of the existing ones? Can you identify any additional ones? Have all UK / European / Australian spellings of the words been included? Note that the key words are included to support searching in the PEN® system and do not necessarily reflect search terms used in the literature search to create the PEN® content.

Search Strategy

Were all key concepts searched, all appropriate information sources used?

Background

Is it complete and accurate? Is there other content / topics that should be included in the Background document, including other links to background information?

Resources /Tools

The goal of PEN[®] is to provide a selection of the very best tools available that are consistent with the evidence. These may include tools from other countries that have been identified by our international partners.

Has the author included the best tools to support this knowledge pathway? Are there any missing? Are there any that should be eliminated? Of those that are recommended for inclusion, are they:

- Accurate, verifiable, and peer reviewed?
- Authority - 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 key practice point.
- Objective – evidence-based and evaluated according to recognized standards of evidence.
- Current - very recent (publications written in the last 2 years or Web sites where content is reviewed at least annually. An older item may be considered if no newer information or research exists or it sets the foundation for future research (e.g. NICE guidance, a Surgeon General's report) or stands the test of time e.g. a key document such as DRI's.
- Scope – they must address the KP topic and, where appropriate, should encompass the continuum of health promotion/protection; disease prevention; diagnosis, treatment/intervention; rehabilitation 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.
- Access – are websites and other electronic resource selections easily accessible (i.e. no charge) navigable. If electronic access is not provided, does the information provided allow the user to easily locate the tool?
- PEN[®] content is free from commercial bias and all linked tools and resources should be as well. If there is a particular commercial tool, which you think, is critical to have in the KP please discuss it with your assignment PEN[®] Responsible Administrator.
- Are suitable key words provided for each tool?
- When reviewing or recommending a 3rd party consumer or professional resource using the [PEN[®] Guidelines for 3rd Party Tools and Resources Approval](#), if any of the following points are found:
 - inconsistency with PEN[®] evidence;
 - language that is not suitable for the target audience (e.g. level of language too high, not plain, clear)
 - inappropriate content or linking of information; OR
 - industry sponsorship

then the resource is not usually added to PEN[®], unless there is some special circumstance. If in doubt, best not to include the resource, especially if a similar resource already exists on PEN[®].

Declaration of Affiliations and Interests

It is critical to the integrity of PEN® that our content authors and reviewers are impartial and have no conflict of interest related to the content that they are writing or reviewing. You will be asked to certify that you are not in a position of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

If before the PEN® content you are developing or reviewing has been completed there are any changes in circumstances that may place you in a position of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest you will inform the PEN® Director.

Affiliations and Interests Checklist

In reviewing your activities (and those of your spouse and immediate family members) to determine whether they affect your impartiality or create a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, consider the following:

- Investments in a business enterprise (Other than mutual funds or Registered Savings Plans)
- Retirement Savings Plans that are not self-directed);
- Participation as investigator in clinical trials of relevance to the knowledge pathway;
- Previous, present and potential Contracts, Grants and/or Contributions;
- Pending negotiations regarding potential contracts;
- Honoraria and other sources of personal income;
- Gifts and hospitality of significant value;
- Travel sponsorship;
- Promotion of a product(s) of relevance to the knowledge pathway;
- Publications;
- Public statements;
- Lobbying activities;
- Membership in special interest groups;
- Expert testimonies in court;
- Any interest or activity, which may create a reasonable apprehension of bias.

Adapted from the Office of the Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care