

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

**Note:** First time reviewers of PEN® content are encouraged to review these guidelines before doing a review and review the [Guide to Being a PEN® Reviewer](#). 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 team member who sent you the request to be a PEN® reviewer.

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

You will be sent a WORD document of the content to be reviewed and a link to the Reviewer's Feedback form to be completed in the PEN Content Monitoring System.

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 Extensive web searches for grey literature and unpublished resources are also used to find relevant materials referenced in the PEN® system.

### **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 it's 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 nor 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® Topic 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® Topic 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 to acknowledge that you have read it. Please read the Declarations and Affiliations checklist page 4 of this document.
7. On the Reviewer's Feedback form reviewers are asked their permission to provide personal contact information in the PEN<sup>®</sup> system. By checking the box provided, you agree to having your email address in the PEN<sup>®</sup> 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's 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 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 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 Comments

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 comments 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.

### Background

Is it complete and accurate? Is there other content 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<sup>®</sup> 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 PEN<sup>®</sup> Topic Administrator.
- Are suitable key words provided for each tool?
- When reviewing a 3rd party consumer or professional resource using the PEN<sup>®</sup> Tools/Resources Approval Checklist (page 5), if any of the following points are found:
  - inconsistency with PEN<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup>, unless there is some special circumstance. If in doubt, best not to include the resource, especially if a similar resource already exists on PEN<sup>®</sup>.

## **Declaration of Affiliations and Interests**

It is critical to the integrity of PEN<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> 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

## PEN Tool/Resource (T/R) Approval Guidelines (modified for Reviewer's)

**Purpose:** To ensure that third party T/R are valuable additions to PEN, the following criteria should be considered when reviewing proposed T/Rs.

Criteria	Meets Criteria
Is the information in the T/R current and congruent with the evidence in PEN? Is there evidence missing in PEN related to the content of this tool i.e. is there a question PEN needs to answer? If yes, please specify:	
If the T/R is housed on a website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the website appropriate (information is unbiased); credible (author's qualifications are sound and preferably peer reviewed); and directly related to KP content and is current (last 3 -5 years)?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The website does not contain sponsorship; or advertizing and other links are appropriate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Is the T/R specific to one geographic area within Canada? Is it appropriate just for Canada? Is it appropriate for Global PEN? Please specify:	
Is it clear who the intended audience is for the T/R?	
Does it provide useful / relevant information for the intended audience?	
Is the layout clear, good flow of information, grammatically correct, no typos?	
For T/Rs for professionals - is the information source referenced?	
For T/Rs for clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the language/reading level match the audience? (Aim for reading levels of about grade 5 to 9)</li> <li>• Is there an advisory to the effect that health information should not be taken as health advice and does not substitute consultation with a health professional?</li> </ul>	
T/R that have been developed by the corporate sector or other organizations/agencies external to PEN may be eligible for inclusion in PEN if they are reviewed through an independent peer review process and deemed congruent with the evidence in PEN when assessed by the PEN/CC-PEN Resource Managers and/or Knowledge Pathway author. Preference will always be given to T/R that have not been developed by corporate interests, should similar tools exist. If these T/R contain names/logos of products or services the following considerations should be used for their assessment in PEN: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the T/R is a database listing of products or services, its goal should be to assist the consumer and/or health provider in making healthy food choices;</li> <li>• should be inclusive and as national in scope as possible, or at least be broader than one region; product or company; and</li> <li>• if there is no other resource that is available and there is a high user need for the information</li> </ul>	