



Guidelines for Preparing Submissions - (2002)

When and how?

One of the major advantages of belonging to a major organisation such as the College of Nurses is that almost all documents of importance in the health and nursing sector are sent to the College for comment and submission.

Alternatively individuals need to maintain a watch on the newspaper (especially for announcement of parliamentary select committees) and the web sites of relevant organisations to see when documents are posted and submissions requested.

The Process

1. Receipt of the report

Receipt of the report of a task force or project group or Government special interest group.
Description of intended policy or procedural change.

2. Select members

Select member (or members) of the group with expertise or interest in subject area to prepare submission. Decide process of internal consultation to inform submission.

3. Read and Ask

The group should read critically - Ask:

- * Who wrote the report
- * Whose interests are being served by any intended change
- * Was the working group appropriately representative of interests or able to network effectively to access that information.
- * Are there vested interests
- * What's missing from the report?

4. Prepare reply

- answer specific questions but remember the questions can be very controlling and potentially limiting - always add comment which you believe to be important - whether it is asked for or not.

Give credit where credit is due. It is very important to acknowledge the strengths of the work and all the good points present in the work.

Sometimes - you may be making a submission in agreement and support, this is just as important as criticism, maybe more important.

Be careful to provide references wherever appropriate ensuring that major assertions are based in evidence.

5. Forward submission by due date.

Major organisations can often secure an extension but individuals need to adhere to the due date.

Consider making a press release. The view of the organisation or regional group may well be of interest to the media. Unfortunately the media will be much more likely to be interested if the view is contentious or critical.

In some circumstances, consider giving copies to the opposition party (This of course depends on what relationship you wish to cultivate with government)



6. Follow up

If there is to be a select committee hearing, e.g. the Health Professional Competency Assurance Bill, twenty copies are required and the organisation may wish to speak to their submission in Parliament.

Check that a report was sent out of collated submissions? If not, why not?

Try to follow up by checking in what way the group responsible have taken note of submissions and actually responded to their content.

General

Consider the value of sharing your research and draft submission with other nursing groups or individuals. This enables wider input and may increase the learning or provide stimulus to other groups. Always share the final submission with other organisations. This helps nursing to know where consensus views lie and also to recognise the source and substance of difference.

File submissions made on a record for later referral.

Remember that as an individual member of the College you can make a valuable contribution by taking the time to supply your professional perspective based on your particular location, practice experience and relevant education.

You may not wish to write submissions but can make helpful contributions which increase the value and relevance of organisational submissions. Do this simply by e-mailing the College office and alerting the Board to matters of concern or any contribution you may wish to make.