Guidelines for the Policy Analysis Paper

**Purpose:** To investigate & integrate knowledge of advanced nursing practice, scholarly inquiry, & leadership by examining a policy at the level of clinical practice, health care systems, or public/social health policy.

| **Introduction** | - Generally define & describe the policy issue to be addressed.  
- Identify the purpose of analysis, the targeted level of policy (i.e., clinical practice, health care systems, or public/social health) & significance of topic.  
- Identify questions the policy analysis is intended to address. |
| **Background** | - Provide details of the issue or problem, including its nature/scope, relevant literature & history, & the context within which the issue exists.  
- Describe existing policy addressing the issue, if any.  
- Discuss strengths & shortcomings in existing policy.  
- Identify & describe key stakeholders (individuals & groups) that are or will be affected by the policy & why. |
| **Methods & Analysis** | - Describe policy analysis plan.  
- Establish/identify evaluation criteria that will be used to guide analysis & selection of “best” policy.  
- Identify alternative policies to achieve objectives.  
- Evaluate each alternative & its potential impact relative to criteria.  
- Assess the trade-offs between alternatives. |
| **Recommendations** | - Based on the analysis, identify the “best” alternative to address the current issue & policy situation.  
- Provide rationale for selection.  
- Describe possible strategies to implement selected alternative.  
- Identify barriers to implementation of selected alternative.  
- Describe methods to evaluate policy implementation. |
| **Discussion** | - Discuss analysis & recommendations relative to the original questions identified, & the level of policy it is intended to address (i.e., clinical practice, health care systems, or public).  
- Identify limitations of analysis.  
- Discuss implications for practice, education, research, & policy-making. |
| **Conclusion** | - Summarize findings & recommendations of analysis  
- Identify questions to be addressed in future studies or policy analyses. |
| **References** | - List all references cited in paper. |
| **Appendices** | - Table displaying results of analysis, including, for example, a list of alternatives, an enumeration of criteria, & the degree to which criteria are met by each alternative. Other tables & appendices as needed to support analysis. |

**References**
