



the  
**reflective  
practitioner**

Guidance for doctors  
and medical students

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# Summary

## **For medical students, doctors in training and doctors engaging in revalidation.**

Developed by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the UK Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans, the General Medical Council, and the Medical Schools Council.

### **Being a reflective practitioner**

- Having time to reflect on both positive and negative experiences – and being supported to reflect – is important for individual wellbeing and development.
- Teams and groups exploring and reflecting on their work together often have ideas or actions that improve patient care and service delivery across organisations.
- Tutors, supervisors, appraisers and employers should support time and space for individual and group reflection.
- The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges/COPMeD publication ***Reflective practice toolkit*** describes the principles for effective reflective practice and includes a number of templates and examples.

## Demonstrating reflection

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- Sometimes medical students and doctors may want to discuss or write down their reflections, or may be required to as part of their education, training and development.
- A reflective note does not need to capture full details of an experience. It should capture learning outcomes and future plans.
- Engagement in reflection can be demonstrated in different ways, depending on career stage.
- *Anonymising details in reflections:* When keeping a reflective note, the information should be anonymised as far as possible.
- *Reporting on serious incidents:* Reflecting on the learning resulting from a significant event or serious incident is important. Reflective notes should focus on the learning rather than a full discussion of the case or situation. Factual details should be recorded elsewhere.
- *Being open and honest with patients:* All members of the healthcare team should have opportunities to reflect on and discuss what has happened openly and honestly when things go wrong, in a supportive and confidential setting.

## Disclosure of reflective notes

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- Reflective notes can currently be required by a court if they are considered relevant.
- The GMC does not ask a doctor to provide their reflective notes in order to investigate a concern about them. They can choose to offer them as evidence of insight into their practice.

Read the full guidance online

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