



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

- 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

- 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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