



Faculty of Public Health Position Statement: The Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Reflective Practice.

Introduction

Purpose

This statement provides guidance on the responsible and ethical use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI^[1]) tools to support the critical professional skill of reflective practice.

Scope

This position statement applies to Specialty Registrars fulfilling training curriculum requirements and all members (e.g. Practitioners, Fellows) undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Given this dual remit, the guidance is subject to oversight and approval from the Education Committee and the Workforce Committee to ensure alignment across professional standards and training.

High-Quality Reflective Practice in Public Health

Reflective practice is the cornerstone of professional development in public health and other medical disciplines. The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) considers reflective notes written by professionals to be the most discriminating form of evidence of effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The goal is not simply to document an activity, but to consciously think about and analyse what you have done and learned^[2]. This process is central to embedding learning into clarifying understanding, subsequent practice, making connections, and ultimately becoming a more effective learner and public health practitioner. It's important to recognise that high-quality reflection is not pure description, a summary of notes, a straightforward judgement, or simple problem-solving. The emergence of generative artificial intelligence tools presents both opportunities and challenges to the process of reflection.

Whilst acknowledging that there are many approaches to reflection, the GMC identified three questions which doctors should consider when reflecting on a single event, or a period of time. This is known as the What? So what? Now what?

framework. From these, the FPH identified four questions for members to consider when reflecting upon their CPD activities^[3]:

- **Why did I choose this activity for my CPD?**
(Focuses on how the activity relates to your learning needs as identified through reflection on your practice and described in your PDP)
- **What new learning did I get from this activity or event?**
(Focuses on your thoughts at the time of the activity and critically analyses any new learning that took place)
- **How am I going to apply this new learning in my work?**
(Focuses on the significance of what happened and why this may influence future learning or practice)
- **What personal development needs have I identified (if any) and how do I take them forward?**
(Focuses on future actions and plans for further development, if necessary)

The FPH Position on GenAI in Reflection

Opportunities for GenAI in Reflection

The FPH acknowledges that banning the use of GenAI tools is neither feasible nor desirable. When used responsibly, GenAI can be a powerful tool to help practitioners move beyond simple description towards the deeper levels of analysis and synthesis that constitute high-quality reflection. It can act as a "critical friend," helping a practitioner to challenge their own assumptions, consider alternative perspectives, and articulate their learning more effectively. Developing digital literacy, including the critical use of GenAI, is an emerging professional competency. The key is to use GenAI to enhance personal thinking, not to replace it.

Our position focuses on supporting members who choose to use GenAI tools to support reflective practice to do so ethically and effectively. The choice to use GenAI or not remains at the discretion of individual members; those who engage with these tools are encouraged to consider the environmental impact of high-compute processing as part of their commitment to sustainable and responsible professional practice.

Unacceptable Uses of GenAI

Practitioners **must not** use GenAI to:

- **Fabricate Experiences:** Create reflections on public health scenarios, data sets, or events that did not occur.

- **Generate Core Content:** Submit GenAI-generated text as their own personal reflection without substantive personal authorship, analysis, and critical input as a starting point.
- **Outsource the Reflective Process:** Use GenAI as a substitute for the personal cognitive and emotional work of reflection.
- **Breach Confidentiality:** Input any patient-identifiable data, commercially sensitive information, or other confidential material into any GenAI models in order to generate reflective content. This is a serious breach of professional conduct.
- **Perform Superficial Tasks:** Use GenAI for tasks that constitute poor reflective practice in the first place, such as generating simple descriptions or summaries of events without personal analysis. This undermines the purpose of the reflection.

Acceptable Uses of GenAI

The central principle is authenticity. The reflection, learning, and insights must belong to the individual practitioner. GenAI should be viewed as a tool to aid expression, not to generate the core reflective content itself.

Practitioners **should** use prompts designed to impose strict parameters on the GenAI's function, explicitly prohibiting the fabrication of content and limiting the tool's role to the restructuring, questioning, challenging, or polishing of the practitioner's own authentic draft.

Five suggested use cases are provided below, with example prompt excerpts for use within the CO-STAR prompt framework (see tables).

Prompt example: Applying the CO-STAR framework to initiate a GenAI supported reflection.

CONTEXT: I am a Public Health (Registrar/Fellow) writing a reflective entry for my professional portfolio (CPD). I have drafted initial thoughts/notes on a recent work event, labelled DRAFT.

OBJECTIVE: *Dependent on use case - see example prompt snippets in the table below.*

SPECIFICATION:

- **Language:** Use British English.
- **Professional Standards:** Adhere to the FPH professional standards for CPD (document attached).
- **Authenticity (No Fabrication):** Stick strictly to the facts and events in my notes. Do not invent scenarios, data, or outcomes that are not present in the input.

- **Ownership (No Core Generation):** Do not generate the reflection for me. Your role is to refine, structure, or question my existing thoughts, not to substitute your own analysis for my cognitive work.
- **Privacy (No Breaches):** I have removed all Patient Identifiable Information (PII). Ensure your output remains fully anonymised and generic regarding specific locations or people.
- **Depth (No Superficiality):** Avoid generating simple descriptive summaries. Focus on facilitating critical analysis (the "So what?" and "Now what?").

TONE: Professional and challenging to help me probe my learning.

AUDIENCE: A senior colleague (FPH assessors).

RESPONSE: *Dependent on use case - see example prompt snippets in the table below.*

DRAFT: [*..insert your first draft of the reflection here..*]

Example use cases for GenAI tools aiding reflection:	Example prompt snippets to be used with the CO-STAR Framework (see section 2.2) for GenAI assisted CPD reflection.
<p>Structural Organisation</p> <p>To map a "brain dump" into a recognised reflective framework.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: I have pasted my unstructured notes below. Please organise these specific points into the "What? So What? Now What?" framework. Do not add any new narrative, assume details I haven't written, or generate personal insights for me.</p> <p>RESPONSE; Present the output in three clearly labeled sections. Use bullet points for my raw notes within each section.</p>
<p>Linguistic Refinement</p> <p>To improve readability, grammar, and transition from descriptive to analytical phrasing.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: : Below is my drafted reflection where I attempt to explain a complex ethical dilemma I faced.. The phrasing is clumsy, and the language is too descriptive. Please rewrite this text to improve grammar, flow, and analytical precision. Do not alter my ethical stance or change the meaning or nuance of the text.</p>

	<p>RESPONSE: Provide the revised text in a single cohesive response, followed by a brief bulleted list of the specific analytical vocabulary changes you made so I can review them.</p>
<p>Cognitive Challenge</p> <p>To act as a "critical friend" that challenges assumptions and deepens the "So What?" phase without doing the cognitive work for the user.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: I am reflecting on a project that went well, but I want to avoid complacency. Read my draft below and identify any cognitive blind spots. Generate 3 challenging questions that force me to consider alternative perspectives, ethical dimensions, or what might have gone wrong.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Output the 3 questions only. CRITICAL: Do not answer the questions for me. Your role is purely to prompt my own further reflection.</p>
<p>Synthesis & Consolidation</p> <p>To condense lengthy reflections into portfolio-ready submissions or identify macro-themes across multiple entries.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE: I have written a 3,000-word personal debrief to process a recent placement. Please condense this into a concise summary suitable for my portfolio. Focus exclusively on the learning outcomes and future actions I have explicitly identified in the text.</p> <p>RESPONSE: Provide a summary under 1,000 words. Do not introduce any "lessons learned" that are not explicitly present in my source text.</p>

Expectations for Responsible Use

The FPH expects transparency and accountability from any practitioner using GenAI. The practitioner remains fully accountable for the final content, its authenticity, and associated probity issues. Professionals are expected to demonstrate responsible, competent use, which requires:

- **Critical Appraisal:** Ability to evaluate generated outputs for accuracy, bias, and relevance.
- **Ethical Judgement:** A clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable use versus academic or professional misconduct.
- **Information Governance:** An unwavering commitment to confidentiality, ensuring no sensitive data is ever entered into non-secure GenAI platforms.
- **Rigorous Oversight:** Strategies to mitigate common risks associated with generative AI, including the risk of hallucinations / fabrication of content. Practitioners should feel confident in implementing processes to reduce the frequency of, detect, and correct false, fabricated content such as:

- **Prompt Engineering:** The skill of writing effective prompts that guide the GenAI to assist with a specific, acceptable task rather than generating generic content.
- **Human-in-the-loop:** Recognising that AI-assisted drafts are merely a starting point; practitioners must thoroughly check, edit, and validate all outputs to ensure they accurately represent their own unique voice, genuine experiences, and the nuance of their professional judgment.
- **Declaration:** If a GenAI tool has been used to assist in drafting a reflective entry, this must be declared. When citing the use of GenAI, we encourage members to state the specific GenAI model and version (e.g., Gemini 3 Pro or GPT-5.2) and to share examples of the prompts they employed. This practice adds meaningful transparency and demonstrates the practitioner's active engagement in guiding the tool.

Declaration Example

GenAI Declaration: I used Gemini 3 Pro to help structure my initial thoughts. I provided the tool with my own anonymised, unstructured notes and used the following prompt to help categorise my learning: *“Using only the notes provided below, please organise my reflections into the “What? So What? Now What?” framework. Do not add any external information or interpretations.”* I have reviewed the resulting structure for accuracy, edited the content to ensure it reflects my experience and personal professional judgment, and verified that no patient-identifiable data was used.”

Training Needs for Assessors and Supervisors

To facilitate meaningful conversations about the use of GenAI, Educational Supervisors and assessors require support and training to:

- **Develop GenAI Literacy:** Understand the capabilities and limitations of common GenAI tools to differentiate between plausible support and likely fabrication.
- **Facilitate Conversations about Process:** Shift the focus from simply "detecting" GenAI use to discussing *how* the practitioner is using these tools as part of their reflective process.
- **Assess Reflective Depth:** Hone skills in probing the learning and personal impact described in a reflection, regardless of how well-written it is. Key questions might include: "What was the most challenging aspect of this for you personally?" or "How has this experience changed how you will approach a similar situation in the future?" or "What did you learn from your reflection which you were not expecting?"

- **Uphold Professional Standards:** Be confident in the methods of addressing concerns about authenticity and **probity** when a reflection appears generic, lacks personal insight, or is inconsistent with the practitioner's other work.

Monitoring and Compliance

While the ethical principles outlined in this statement apply universally to all Faculty members, the mechanisms for monitoring compliance and addressing concerns differ according to professional status:

- **Specialty Registrars:** For those in training, the Educational Supervisor (ES) acts as the primary reviewer of reflective practice. Supervisors are expected to review portfolio entries for authenticity and depth. Where concerns arise regarding the potential misuse of GenAI (e.g., generic content or lack of personal insight), these should initially be addressed through developmental conversations during supervision. Significant or repeated concerns regarding probity or fabrication may be escalated to the Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) panel.
- **Fellows (CPD):** For qualified professionals, oversight is maintained through the annual CPD process. As part of the random sampling of CPD profiles (currently 7.5%), CPD advisers provide supportive reviews of reflective notes included as part of a CPD submission. Rather than 'scoring' CPD submissions, advisers provide feedback to support effective reflection and development. If a submission appears to lack authenticity or suggests unacknowledged GenAI generation, the adviser will offer constructive feedback to help the member align their practice with FPH standards. This approach ensures that the integrity of reflection required for revalidation is supported and maintained across the Faculty.

Development and Review of this Guidance

This position statement has been developed in consultation with emerging best practices across the medical professions. It is intentionally aligned with the principles established by other medical Royal Colleges, such as the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)^[4] and the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM)^[5] to ensure a consistent approach to upholding shared professional standards.

- **Agreement with RCGP and RCEM:** The FPH concurs that GenAI is a tool to support, not replace, the individual's reflective process. We echo the RCGP's position that an outright ban is impractical and that the critical use of GenAI is a necessary future skill.
- **Authenticity is Paramount:** Our stance mirrors both the RCGP's and RCEM's emphasis that reflections must be based on real experiences and that the learning must be genuinely personal.

- **Supervisor's Role:** We support the RCGP's view that Educational Supervisors should be prepared to explore reflective entries with the practitioner to verify authenticity and the depth of learning.

Future Directions and Areas for Review

The FPH is committed to an evidence-based approach. Further evidence is needed, particularly on:

- **Impact on Reflective Practice:** Research is required to understand whether GenAI use enhances the depth and quality of reflection or encourages a superficial, formulaic approach.
- **Differential Attainment and Equity:** We share the concerns raised by the RCGP. We must investigate whether access to premium GenAI tools, or variations in digital literacy, could create or exacerbate inequalities in training. Does GenAI disproportionately benefit native English speakers, or could it act as a valuable GenAId for those for whom English is an additional language?
- **Curriculum Implications:** The FPH will consider what specific GenAI-related skills need to be formally incorporated into the public health curriculum, focusing on the critical appraisal of GenAI tools and their ethical application in public health practice.

We therefore propose to review this statement on a bi-annual basis so that we can consider the implications of developments in this rapidly changing field.

^[1] Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that creates new content (including text, images, code, audio, and video) by learning patterns from existing data.

^[2] <https://www.fph.org.uk/media/1283/fph-tips-on-writing-effective-reflective-notes.pdf>

^[3] <https://www.fph.org.uk/media/rbkfkxzl/faculty-of-public-health-cpd-policy-revised-2024.pdf>

^[4] <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/wpba/generative-artificial-intelligence>

^[5] <https://rcem.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/RCEM-AI-statement.pdf>