

In a nutshell

The following resource can be photocopied and used as a revision tool or a prompt for discussion with your peers. It is designed to get you to think about the many sources of feedback you can use to improve your practice.

Reflective journals

Reflective practice is the process of learning and developing through objective examination. In effect we are 'witnessing' our own experiences so that we can consider them in more detail. The key to this is learning how to take an objective perspective as if we are on the outside looking in. For anyone working in a professional context this is an important activity as the very nature of professionalism is embodied by a number of characteristics such as honesty, integrity and self-regulation.

One way to formalise the process of reflection is by keeping a reflective journal but *where do you start?* Key considerations for any reflective journal include honesty while recognising that the journal may be an assessed task; it is also a tool for personal and professional development and as such must be based on your own, honest evaluations. Ethical considerations should also be considered, particularly issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Finally, you need to think about the format for the journal.

Do you want to handwrite it? Would you prefer a free-flowing approach with limited structure? Would you like to share your journal through a particular medium?

Putting it into practice

Create space in your week for journal writing. Set a date and time and make this a habit.

Think about how and when you will use your journal to help you select an appropriate format.

Adopt a 'healthy' approach to your journal by recognising the scope for development.

Experiment with different approaches to find one that really works for you.

Think about ways in which you can involve others such as your mentor or peers.

Source: Moon (2006).