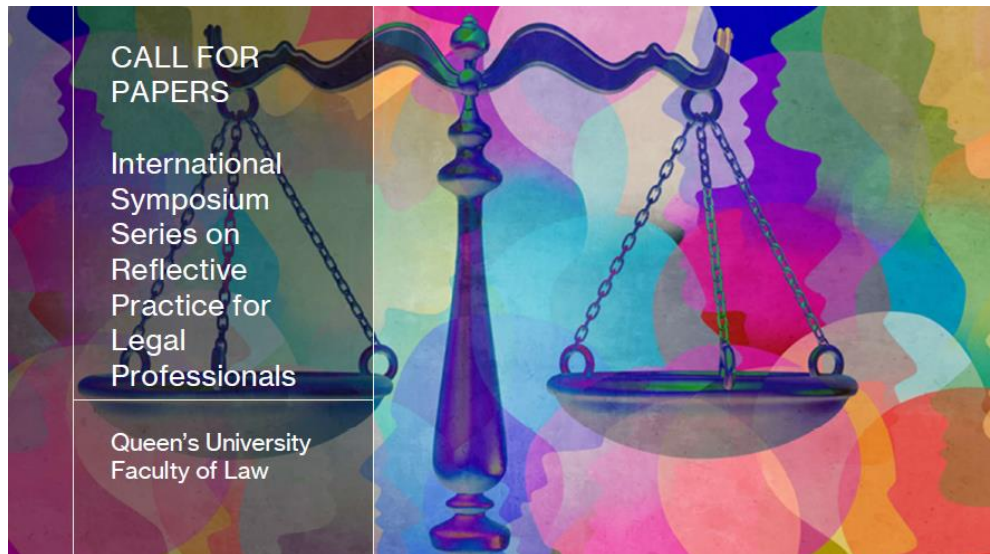**Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals**
International Symposium Series

Virtual Symposium
22–24 June 2026 | Queen's University Faculty of Law, Ontario, Canada

Deadline for Proposals: 31 January 2026

Queen's Law is convening its first International Symposium Series on Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals. We are in a critical historical moment marked by a growing "polycrisis" including persistent justice gaps, eroding international legal orders, democratic backsliding, disregard for human rights, and the disruptive impacts of climate change. In the face of these challenges and growing imperatives to develop people-centred and more-than-human justice, legal education must foster an enhanced capacity for reflective inquiry and practice as a core professional competency and commitment that supports mutual flourishing.

The concept of *reflective practice* is defined in multiple ways across the scholarly literature. For law, it encompasses:

1. learning from experience, integrating theory with practice, and enhancing competence
2. developing critically reflective perspectives on law, justice, and institutional function
3. engaging in self-reflection to clarify values, support professional identity formation, and promote wellbeing and resilience
4. participating in collective reflection to enhance communication, dispute resolution, and collaborative problem-solving; and
5. living integrative reflection as *praxis*—ensuring reflective insights result in action, ethical conduct, integrity, and holistic perspectives that advance positive change in legal education, law, institutions, and systems.

Building on these five interrelated dimensions of reflective practice, the following foundational concerns shape the Symposium's scope and purpose:

- **Responding to systemic challenges**: Strengthen the capacity of legal professionals and the profession to respond to historic, current, and evolving disorienting and disruptive challenges facing democratic societies and the legal profession—captured by the term "polycrisis" and the United Nations 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 16.3 on equal access to justice and the rule of law. Reflective inquiry and practice can deepen understanding of these systemic challenges and enhance the ability to respond authentically and effectively.

- **Developing critically reflective praxis**: Strengthen the capacity of emerging legal professionals to engage in disciplined and systematic reflection that produces critically reflective praxis—enabling them to examine how legal and societal institutions function, how law is experienced by those subject to it, and how their own practice influences justice outcomes. This dimension of reflection is essential to professional identity formation and ethical decision-making.

- **Learning across disciplines and cultures**: Recognize that the legal profession has much to learn from other professional disciplines—particularly healthcare and other fields with established reflective traditions—and from diverse cultural approaches, especially Indigenous epistemologies and practices of reflection. Cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural learning enriches understanding of how to foster reflective competencies.

- **Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)**: Advance SoTL in law by examining how the reflective practice of legal educators contributes to innovation in legal pedagogy and supports institutional goals of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Symposium Series will bring together scholars, educators, and practitioners to explore how disciplined reflection can strengthen our profession's response to contemporary challenges and advance reflective practice across the legal educational spectrum and beyond. Virtual panels over three days hosted by Queen's will cross-pollinate ideas, insights, and pedagogy across jurisdictions, strengthening our collective working relationships and deepening our understanding of effective reflective practice. The Symposium Series also includes in-person events at other conferences organized by collaborating law teacher associations in Australia, Canada, and the UK. Details to follow soon.

Relevant topics include but are not limited to:

• How can emerging legal professionals and educators develop the capacity for self-reflection, critical reflection, collective reflection, and integrative reflection in law schools? How can we align the teaching of critical theories with practice to produce a critically reflective praxis that influences legal practice, justice-seeking behaviour, legal reforms, and people-centred justice systems?

• What pedagogical methods are effective for developing reflective capacity? How do supervision, feedback, and assessment practices build reflection? How do we measure the effectiveness of reflective pedagogical strategies?

• How can pedagogical innovation in law—including active learning, problem-based learning, clinical legal education, experiential learning —develop students' reflective capacity? What opportunities and challenges do generative AI present for reflective inquiry in the classroom and workplace?

• How can traditional substantive law courses, legal skills, legal ethics, and professionalism courses be restructured to more effectively build reflective capacity?

• How can deeper reflective capacities support truth, reconciliation, and reparation with respect to injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples? What reflective methods cultivate transformative learning and nurture professional authenticity and commitment to act?

• How can "pedagogies of reflection" develop new professional competencies needed for 21st-century legal practice—including emotional intelligence, cultural competence and humility, trauma-informed lawyering, lawyering for reconciliation, evaluative and future-forming thinking, and complex problem-solving—especially for serving historically marginalized populations?

• How can reflective practice promote resilience and courage within a profession facing significant mental health challenges and growing incursions on the rule of law, human rights, and peaceful conflict resolution in an increasingly autocratic global context?

• How can whole-of-law school approaches and learning opportunities across the entire spectrum of professional legal education support reflective competence?

• What can we learn from other professional disciplines—particularly healthcare—and from other cultures about fostering and sustaining reflective practice?

• How does the reflective practice of legal educators contribute to teaching and learning? How can their reflective practice support justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion while ensuring equitable access to legal education and impactful student learning?

Who Should Apply
We encourage submissions from scholars at all stages of their careers, legal practitioners, and professionals with practical experience advancing reflective practice in classroom pedagogy, professional training, or the workplace. We welcome normative, empirical, doctrinal, critical, and interdisciplinary approaches.

Submission and Timeline
Prospective contributors are invited to submit an abstract of up to 200 words by **31 January 2026** by completing this **form.**

1 March 2026: Abstracts will be reviewed and invitations sent to selected contributors. Accepted abstracts and bios will be posted to the Symposium Series' website.

1 June 2026: Detailed presentation outlines, presentation slides, or full papers due. Full papers will be shared with symposium participants.

Following the Symposium Series, contributors will be invited to submit their papers for consideration in one of two special issues of *The Law Teacher* and *Legal Education Review* with selection subject to the journals' standard peer-review processes.

Contact: For queries related to the Symposium Series, please contact: rpsymposium@queensu.ca

Symposium Organizers: Prof. Sharry Aiken & Visiting Scholar Dr. Michele Leering, Queen's Law.

Advisory Committee:
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