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## Appendix A Supplementary Materials

## A.1 Notations

All notaions used in this paper are listed in Table A1.

## A.2 ScafVAE architecture

330 ScafVAE consists of three parts: the encoder, the decoder, and the sur-331rogate model. Different from conventional atom-based or fragment-based 332 methods [1, 2, 3, 4], ScafVAE offers an efficient framework for novel molecule generation based on the concept of "bond scaffold" (explained below) with a 333 334VAE-style design (Fig.1a). The encoder converts each molecule into a latent 335 vector with an isotropic Gaussian distribution, and the decoder reconstructs 336the molecule from the latent vector. Instead of generating molecules with a 337 specific fragment set, the decoder first generates a set of fragments containing only bond types (named as "bond scaffold", i.e., fragments without specifying 338 339atom types). Then, the decoder assembles these bond scaffolds and decorates 340their atom types to produce the valid molecules (Fig.1e). Surrogate models 341are employed for molecule optimization for downstream tasks, which are augmented by contrastive learning and fingerprint reconstruction. Specifically, we 342343 used the perplexity-inspired fragmentation to obtain the bond scaffolds.

### A.2.1 Perplexity-inspired fragmentation

346Inspired by the widely used perplexity metric in AI language models [5], we 347 used perplexity to break molecular bonds to obtain the fragments. In this 348 paper, the bond perplexity is defined as the exponential of the entropy of each 349bond under a pre-trained masked graph model (i.e. perplexity estimator). The 350masked graph model is a neural network that learns to predict the actual bond 351type of a masked bond based on the observable atoms and bonds (Fig.1c). 352For a given molecular graph, we predict the perplexity of one bond at a time, 353 meaning that we only mask a single bond while keeping the rest of the graph 354visible. Given a predicted distribution of a masked bond, its bond perplexity 355(PPL) can be written as: 356

$$PPL = e^{-\sum_{i}^{N_b} t_i log(p_i)} \tag{A1}$$

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where  $N_b$  is the number of bond types,  $t_i$  is the true label and the  $p_i$  is the 360 predicted probability for  $i^{th}$  bond type. All bonds with a perplexity greater 361than  $c_{ppl}$  were broken ( $c_{ppl}$  is a hyperparameter, and  $c_{ppl} = 1.5$  in this study). 362To simplify the molecule reconstruction, we only break non-ring single bonds, 363 i.e., no rings formed between fragments. Moreover, the non-ring single bond 364with the highest perplexity within each fragment is broken until its number of 365atoms is less or equal to 6. The detailed architecture and training procedure 366of the perplexity estimator were described in Sec.A.2.7. 367

## 369 A.2.2 Encoder

370Given a molecule graph, the encoder converts the molecule into a 64-D vector 371(Fig.1c). The all-atom molecule graph is first fed into two GNN blocks. Subse-372 quently, the all-atom graph is converted to a coarse-grained graph by applying 373 a local average pool according to its fragmentation (i.e., all nodes belonging 374 to the same fragment are pooled into a single node). Then, the coarse-grained 375graph is fed into two RGNN blocks iteratively. After each iteration, a node 376 is removed until no node exists. Finally, the output of RGNN blocks is used 377 to predict the mean  $(\mu)$  and variance  $(\sigma^2)$  of the variational distribution 378 over the latent space. The latent vector (z) is sampled as  $\mathbf{z} = \boldsymbol{\mu} + \boldsymbol{\sigma} \odot \boldsymbol{\epsilon}$ . 379 where  $\boldsymbol{\epsilon} \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$ . In particular, node removal follows the breadth-first search 380(BFS) ordering, which gives a sub-optimal solution that ensures the node being 381 removed connects to at least one of the remaining nodes, and such a strat-382 egy was wildly adopted in previous studies [1, 6, 4]. The hidden size of the 383node/edge feature is 128/64 for all-atom graphs and 1024/64 for coarse-grained 384graphs, respectively. The hidden size of the memory vector in RGNN is 2048. 385

# <sup>386</sup><sub>387</sub> A.2.3 Decoder

388The decoder reconstructs the molecule from the latent vector  $\mathbf{z}$  using a net-389work structure similar to the encoder (Fig.1e). Two RGNN blocks are first 390applied to iteratively generate bond scaffolds. Each iteration generates a new 391bond scaffold based on the existing ones. The generated bond scaffolds are 392then processed by an assembler, which consists of two MLPs. One of them is 393used to predict which two bond scaffolds can be connected (i.e., bond forma-394tion), while the other is used to predict which two atoms can form a bond 395between two bond scaffolds. Finally, an atom decorator, which comprises two 396GNN blocks, generates the atoms iteratively, with each iteration generating 397 one atom. The hidden size of all blocks in the decoder is the same as in the 398encoder. The decoded molecules are post-processed by the Rectifier module in 399Fragmenstein<sup>[7]</sup> to fix minor invalid parts.

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## 401 A.2.4 GNN block

402 403 The GNN block used in this study is a variant of graph attention network[8], 404 which performs massage passing with the multi-head attention mechanism. 405 For a central node  $\mathbf{x}_i$  (hidden size of  $h_x$ ), the GNN block updates its feature 406 with neighbor node  $\mathbf{x}_j$  (all neighbor nodes are denoted as Neighbor(i)) and 407 their edge  $\mathbf{e}_{ij}$ (hidden size of  $h_e$ ). The GNN block can be described as follows: 408

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Al	gorithm 1: Graph neural network (GNN) block	- 4
Ι	<b>nput:</b> Central node $\mathbf{x}_i \in \mathbb{R}^{h_x}$ , neighbor node	- 4 1
	$\mathbf{x}_j \in \mathbb{R}^{h_x}, j \in Neighbor(i)$ , and their edge $\mathbf{e}_{ij} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_e}$ .	
(	<b>Dutput:</b> Updated central node $\mathbf{x}_i^u$ and edge $\mathbf{e}_{ij}^u \in \mathbb{R}^{h_e^s}$ .	4
1 I	Def GNN $(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}_j, \mathbf{e}_{ij}, N_h = 8)$ :	4
	// Attention-based message aggregation.	4
2	$\mathbf{q}_{i}^{h} \leftarrow \text{LinearNoBias}(\text{LayerNorm}(\mathbf{x}_{i}))$ $\mathbf{q}_{i}^{h} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_{x}^{a}}, h \in \{1,, N_{h}\}$	4
3	$\mathbf{k}_{i}^{h}, \mathbf{v}_{i}^{h} \leftarrow \text{LinearNoBias}(\text{LayerNorm}(\mathbf{x}_{j}))$	4
	$\mathbf{k}_i^h \in \mathbb{R}^{h_x^a}, \mathbf{v}_i^h \in \mathbb{R}^{h_x^a}, h \in \{1,, N_h\}$	4
4	$\mathbf{b}_{ij}^{h} \leftarrow \text{LinearNoBias}(\text{LayerNorm}(\mathbf{e}_{ij})) \qquad \mathbf{b}_{ij}^{h} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_x^a}, h \in \{1,, N_h\}$	4
5	$\mathbf{a}_{ij}^h \leftarrow \mathbf{q}_i^h \odot \mathbf{k}_i^h + \mathbf{b}_{ij}^h \qquad \mathbf{a}_{ij}^h \in \mathbb{R}^{h_x^a}$	4
6	$\hat{a}_{ij}^h \leftarrow \operatorname{softmax}_j \frac{1}{\sqrt{h^a}} \mathbf{a}_{ij}^h 1$ $\hat{a}_{ij}^h \in \mathbb{R}^1$	4
7	$\mathbf{x}_{i}^{a} \leftarrow \mathbf{x}_{i} + \text{Linear}(\text{concat}_{h}(\sum_{i} \hat{a}_{i,i}^{h} \mathbf{v}_{i}^{h}) \qquad \mathbf{x}_{i}^{a} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_{x}}$	4
8	$\mathbf{e}_{ij}^{a} \leftarrow \mathbf{x}_{i} + \text{Linear}(\text{concat}_{h}(\mathbf{a}_{ij}^{h})) \qquad \qquad \mathbf{e}_{ij}^{a} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_{e}}$	4
	// Feedforward.	4
9	$ \mathbf{x}_{i}^{u} \leftarrow \mathbf{x}_{i}^{a} + \text{Linear}(\text{leaky\_relu}(\text{Linear}(\text{LayerNorm}(\mathbf{x}_{i}^{a})))  \mathbf{x}_{i}^{u} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_{x}} $	4
10	$\mathbf{e}_{ij}^{u} \leftarrow \mathbf{e}_{ij}^{a} + \text{Linear}(\text{leaky\_relu}(\text{Linear}(\text{LayerNorm}(\mathbf{e}_{ij}^{a}))))  \mathbf{e}_{ij}^{u} \in \mathbb{R}^{h_{e}}$	4
11	$\textbf{return}~(\mathbf{x}_i^u,\mathbf{e}_{ij}^u)$	4

#### A.2.5 **RGNN** block

The RGNN block is designed to learn the encoding and decoding process of 440a molecular graph in a sequential manner (i.e. node removal or generation). 441 The block consists of a GNN and a GRU module[9]. The hidden state of the 442GRU is first transformed into a super node using a layer norm operation and a 443 linear layer. The super node is then added to the graph, with edges connecting 444 it to all other nodes. The features of these new edges are also derived from 445the GRU's hidden state, with a layer norm operation and a linear layer. Then, 446the graph updates its feature by applying a GNN block. The global average 447 pooling of the graph is then used to update the GRU's hidden state, while the 448GRU uses the gate mechanism to remember input information selectively. 449

#### A.2.6 Surrogate model

The surrogate model is employed for molecule generation and optimization of 453downstream tasks, which tasks the latent vector as input and predicts various 454properties (Fig.1d). It consists of two parts: two shallow pre-trained MLPs and 455a task-specific ML module. Two MLPs were augmented by pre-training with 456contrastive learning and fingerprint reconstruction. 457

**Pre-trained MLP.** Two pre-trained MLPs decode the latent vector into 458two meaningful representations (i.e., two vectors), one for contrastive learning 459and another for molecular fingerprint reconstruction (Fig.1d), respectively. 460

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461 Task-specific ML module. The ML module takes the two vectors as input 462 and predicts specific molecular properties. In this study, we applied a range 463 of ML algorithms, including Adaboost, SVM, KNN, RF, and MLP. All these 464 ML modules were implemented with the Scikit-Learn library.

## 466 A.2.7 Perplexity estimator

The perplexity estimator is a masked graph model, consisting of two GNN blocks with hidden sizes of 128 and 64 for features of nodes and edges, respec-tively. We trained the perplexity estimator using the ChEMBL dataset. For each training batch, we randomly masked one bond in each molecular graph. The loss was calculated as a classification task using cross-entropy loss. The model was initially trained for 1650 iterations, with a maximum number of nodes set at 64 (learning rate of  $5 \times 10^{-3}$ , batch size of 384). Subsequently, it underwent additional training of 490 iterations, with a maximum number of nodes increased to 128 (learning rate of  $5 \times 10^{-4}$ , batch size of 256). 

A.3 Supplementary Results	507					
A.3.1 Single-objective molecule generation	508 500					
We conducted two experiments to generate single-objective molecules aimed	509 510					
at achieving a high QED score or a low SA score. As shown in Fig.A22a and						
rig.A22D, the generated molecules outperformed those in the training set,	512					
molecules based on predicted properties, which align with the desired actual	514					
properties observed. This suggests that sampling using predicted properties is	515					
effective.	516					
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A.3.2 Tri-objective molecule generation	518					
We conducted four experiments to generate tri-objective molecules aimed at	519					
achieving a stronger Vina score, a high QED score, and a low SA score, tar-	520 591					
geting EGFR (Fig.A23a-c), HER2 (Fig.A23d-f), P-gp (Fig.A23g-i) and BCRP	$521 \\ 522$					
(Fig.A23j-l). We presented the actual values of these three properties rather	$522 \\ 523$					
than the predicted properties since the actual values can be easily obtained.	524					
These results demonstrate that molecules with multiple desired properties can	525					
be sampled based on the predicted properties.	526					
<b>A 2.2</b> Downsizing versely laws set with bond scaffeld	527					
A.5.5 Downsizing vocabulary set with bond scallold	528					
We evaluated the ability of bond scaffold strategy to reduce the vocabulary size	529 520					
of JT-VAE[1], as shown in Fig.A21. With its default fragmentation settings,	530 531					
J1-VAE contains 7736 fragments for the ChEMBL dataset and 780 fragments for the ZINC dataset. However, when we explicit the head coefficient structure the	532					
size was reduced to 2980 and 89 respectively. These indicate that the majority	533					
of the fragments share the same bond scaffold, and the bond scaffold strategy	534					
can efficiently control the vocabulary size during molecular generation.	535					
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## 553 A.4 Supplementary Tables

 $\begin{array}{c} 555\\ 556\end{array}$  Table A1 Notations.

Notation	Description	
Nh	Number of bond types	
$N_{aa}^{e}$	Number of GNN blocks in the en	coder
$N_{ca}^{aa}$	Number of RGNN blocks in the e	encoder
$N_{aa}^{d}$	Number of GNN blocks in the de	ecoder
$N_{aa}^{da}$	Number of RGNN blocks in the	decoder
Cnnl	Cutoff for perplexity-inspired frag	gmentation
$N_h^{ppi}$	Number of attention heads	5
$h_x$	Hidden size of node features	
$h_e$	Hidden size of edge features	
$h_x^a$	Hidden size of node features of ea	ach attention head
$h_e^{\overline{a}}$	Hidden size of node features of ea	ach attention head
Linear	Linear transformation with bias	
LinearNoBias	Linear transformation without bi	as
MLP	Multi-layer perceptron	
LayerNorm	Layer normalization	
$\odot$	Hadamard product	
$\oslash$	Hadamard division	
concat	Tensor concatenating	
sigmoid	Sigmoid function	
leaky_relu	Leaky ReLU activation function	
softmax	Softmax function	
Table A2 Rec	onstruction performance of ra	ndomly sampled
on the ChEMI	3L test set.	
	Metrics	Success rate (%)
	Bond scaffold reconstruction	93.21%
	Molecular reconstruction	68.28%

Type	Model	Validity	Uniqueness	Novelty	KL divergence	Fréchet ChemNet Distance
SMILES	LSTM[10]	0.959	1.000	0.912	0.991	0.913
	AAE[11]	0.822	1.000	0.998	0.886	0.529
	ORGAN[12]	0.379	0.841	0.687	0.267	0.000
	VAE[13]	0.870	0.999	0.974	0.982	0.863
Graph	VGAE[14]	0.830	0.944	1.000	0.554	0.016
	Graph MCTS[15]	1.000	1.000	0.994	0.522	0.015
	VGAE-MCTS[16]	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.659	0.009
	ScafVAE	0.987	1.000	1.000	0.959	0.338

## Table A3 Results of GuacaMol distribution-learning benchmarks on the ChEMBL dataset.

\*Performance data for LSTM, AAE, ORGAN, and VAE was obtained from Ref.[17]. Performance data for VGAE, Graph MCTS, VGAE-MCTS was obtained from Ref.[17].

Table A4 Results of GuacaMol distribution-learning benchmarks on the ZINC dataset.

Type	Model	Validity	Uniqueness	Novelty	KL divergence	Fréchet ChemNet Distance
SMILES	LSTM[2]	0.968	0.999	1.000	-	-
	CVAE[13]	0.007	0.675	1.000	-	-
	GVAE[18]	0.072	0.009	1.000	-	-
Graph	JT-VAE[1]	-	0.988	0.988	0.882	0.263
	CGVAE[2]	1.000	0.998	1.000	-	-
	GCPN[19]	-	0.982	0.982	0.456	0.003
	GA[20]	-	0.008	0.008	0.705	0.001
	MARS[21]	-	0.737	0.737	0.798	0.271
	HierVAE[22]	-	0.131	0.131	0.602	0.001
	PS-VAE[4]	-	0.997	0.997	0.850	0.318
	GraphAF[23]	-	0.288	0.287	0.508	0.023
	GraphDF[24]	-	0.998	0.998	0.459	0.001
	MoFlow[25]	1.000	0.999	1.000	-	-
	GF-VAE[26]	1.000	1.000	1.000	-	-
	ScafVAE	0.997	1.000	1.000	0.857	0.622

\*Performance data for LSTM and CGVAE was obtained from Ref.[2]. Performance data for CVAE, GVAE and GF-VAE was obtained from Ref.[26]. Performance data for JT-VAE, GCPN, GA, MARS, HierVAE, PS-VAE, GraphAF and GraphDF was obtained from Ref.[4]. Performance data for MoFlow was obtained from Ref.[25].

Table A5	Results	of the	shredding	procedure	$\mathbf{for}$	$\mathbf{the}$	ZINC	dataset.
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	ScafVAE	BRICS[27]
Cleaved compounds	218651 (100.00%)	216563 (99.04%)
Uncleaved compounds	0 (0.00%)	2088 (0.96%)
Unique fragments	95688 (100.00%)	34063 (100.00%)
1-connection fragments	16494 (17.24%)	19329 (56.74%)
2-connection fragments	39783 (41.58%)	10436 (30.64%)
3-connection fragments	30272 (31.64%)	1988 (5.84%)
4-connection fragments	7642 (7.99%)	213 (0.63%)
5-connection fragments	1242 (1.30%)	8 (0.02%)
6-connection fragments	236 (0.25%)	1 (< 0.01%)
7-connection fragments	11 (0.01%)	-
8-connection fragments	6(0.01%)	-
9-connection fragments	1 (< 0.01%)	-
10-connection fragments	1 (< 0.01%)	-
Unique fragments (w/o attachment points)	6010	23116

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649	Table A6 ADMET da	taset sizes.		
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652		HIA_Hou		404 695
653		Caco2_wang Lipophilicity Astra	Zeneca	020 3340
654		Solubility AaSolDI	3	7472
655		HydrationFreeEnerg	y FreeSolv	490
656		BBB_Martins		1430
657	1	PPBR_AZ	1	1260
658		VDss_Lombardo		738
650		Half_Life_Obach		425
009		Clearance_Hepatoc	yte_AZ	918
660		CVP2D6 Veith	1	0033
661		CYP3A4 Veith		2750
662		CYP1A2 Veith	, (	9947
663		CYP2C9 Veith	9	9952
664	]	hERG –		490
665	-	AMES	4	1418
666		DILI		343
667		Skin reaction		332
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677	Table A7 Protein-liga	nd binding datas	et sizes.	
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670		Protein target	Number of binde	ers
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680		EGFR	24403	
681		HER2 P-gp	6150 9417	
682		r -gp BCBP	2417 1609	
683		PARP	1551	
684		PI3K	12024	
685		HDAC	3357	
686		BRD4	10842	
607				
081				
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ML algorithm	Task type	Hyperparameter	Search space
Adaboost	Classification	n_estimators	{50, 100, 200}
		learning_rate	$\{0.01, 0.1, 1\}$
		algorithm	{SAMME, SAMME.R}
	Regression	n_estimators	$\{50, 100, 200\}$
		learning_rate	$\{0.01, 0.1, 1\}$
		loss	{linear, square}
SVM	Classification	penalty	{11, 12}
		loss	{squared_hinge, hinge}
		С	$\{0.1, 1, 10, 100\}$
		max_iter	{1000, 10000}
	Regression	epsilon	$\{0, 0.5, 1, 5, 10\}$
		loss	{epsilon_insensitive, squared_epsilon_insensitive}
		С	$\{0.1, 1, 10, 100\}$
		max_iter	$\{1000, 10000\}$
KNN	Classification	n_neighbors	$\{1, 5, 9\}$
		weights	{uniform, distance}
		leaf_size	$\{10, 30, 50\}$
	Regression	n_neighbors	$\{1, 5, 9\}$
		weights	{uniform, distance}
		eaf_size	$\{10, 30, 50\}$
MLP	Classification	hidden_layer_sizes	$\{(100, 100), (300, 300)\}$
		activation	{tanh, relu}
		solver	{adam}
		max_iter	$\{100, 300\}$
	Regression	hidden_layer_sizes	$\{(100, 100), (300, 300)\}$
		activation	{tanh, relu}
		solver	{adam}
		max_iter	{100, 300}
RF	Classification	n_estimators	$\{50, 100, 200\}$
		max_depth	$\{5, 40\}$
		max_features	{auto, sqrt}
		criterion	{gini, entropy}
	Regression	n_estimators	$\{50, 100, 200\}$
		max_depth	$\{5, 40\}$
		max_features	$\{auto, sqrt\}$
		criterion	{squared_error, friedman_mse, poisson, absolute_error

# Table A8 Hyperparameter search space of task-specific ML module considered691for ADMET tasks.692

## Table A9 Weights used for selecting molecules from the Pareto front of the generated multi-objective compounds with the pseudo-weight vector approach.

Objective	Weight
HDAC docking score	0.05
BRD4 docking score	0.05
QED score	0.08
SA score	0.05
hERG inhibition	0.07
CYP2C19 inhibition	0.07
CYP2D6 inhibition	0.07
CYP3A4 inhibition	0.07
CYP1A2 inhibition	0.07
AMES mutagonicity	0.07
Drug-induced liver injury	0.07
Skin reaction	0.07
LD50	0.07
solubility	0.07

]	.0 $ScafVAE$	
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~	Table A10 Time cost of ScafVAE	
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	ScafVAE	Time cost (training)
	$Encoder^{ChEMBL} + Decoder^{ChEMBL}$	$\approx 3d23h$
	Decoder <sup>ChEMBL</sup>	-
	$Encoder^{ZINC} + Decoder^{ZINC}$	$\approx 2d14h$
	Decoder <sup>21NC</sup>	-
	Surrogate model (SVM)	11 34min
,	Surregate model (KNN)	0.22min

0.32min  $2.89 \times 10^{-3} s$ Surrogate model (KNN) 759 $2.53 \times 10^{-4} s$ Surrogate model (RF) 12.62min 760  $9.71 \times 10^{-3} s$ Surrogate model (MLP) 6.69min 761\*The labels <sup>ChEMBL</sup> and <sup>ZINC</sup> indicate that the model was trained on the corresponding dataset. 762 \*The model for the ChEMBL dataset was trained with 8 NVIDIA RTX A40 GPU devices (memory usage  $\approx 40$ GB per GPU), and the model for the ZINC dataset was trained with 4 NVIDIA RTX 763 A4000 GPU devices (memory usage  $\approx 13$ GB per GPU).

Time cost (inference)  $1.58 \times 10^{-1} s$ 

 $4.18 \times 10^{-2} s$ 

 $1.32 \times 10^{-1} s$ 

 $3.48 \times 10^{-2} s$  $3.18 \times 10^{-2} s$ 

 $9.17 \times 10^{-5} s$ 

764 \*The inference time for the encoder and decoder was tested on an NVIDIA RTX A6000 GPU device with 50000 randomly selected molecules with a batch size of 1. The average time cost was 765 then reported.

766 \*The training time for surrogate models was evaluated using 16 Intel(R) Xeon(R) Silver 4210R CPU cores on the CYP2D6\_Veith task, which has the largest number of molecules (N = 10390) among all the ADMET tasks. Five conventional ML algorithms were tested with the latent space 767 768trained with the ChEMBL dataset. The inference time cost was reported as the average time taken 769 for a batch size of 1 on a single CPU core.

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#### h f g е MAE: 0.47 kcal/mol

-10 -5 0 True HER2 Vina score (kcali

а

-10 -5 True EGFR Vina sc



Fig. A2 Performance of ScafVAE in predicting docking score of eight target proteins on the test set. MAE and Spearman's  $\rho$  values were shown for each protein.



838 Fig. A4 Performance of ScafVAE in predicting QED and SA score on the test 839 set. MAE and Spearman's  $\rho$  values of each protein were shown.



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Fig. A3 Performance of ScafVAE in classifying inhibitors of eight target proteins
on the test set. ROC-AUC values were shown for each protein.





ScafVAE



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Fig. A7 Molecules generated against EGFR and HER2 with docking score-based generation.



Fig. A8 Molecules generated against P-gp and BCRP with docking score-based generation.



Fig. A9 Molecule generated against PARP1 and PI3K with docking score-based 1011 generation. 1012



probability-based generation.







Fig. A19 Visualization of the local neighborhood of a molecule in the center. Molecules highlighted in the dashed box share the same (b) or different (c) bond scaffolds.

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- $1194 \\ 1195$
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1330 Fig. A23 Comparison of actual properties between the training set and gener-1331 ated tri-objective (QED, SA, and Vina score) molecules targeting EGFR (a-c), HER2 (d-f), P-gp (d-f) and BCRP (d-f).

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- $1379 \\ 1380$

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