Reflective writing is different to other types of academic writing that you are required to do in your university studies. It is used to illustrate your personal growth and development in your field of study by showing how you have linked your new experiences and learning to existing knowledge. Reflective writing may also focus on the strategies you used to deal with issues in your learning. Assignments which include reflective writing may in the form of journals, diaries, email, blogs, wikis, portfolios or combinations of these.

**Features of reflective writing**
- The writing is about you. Your thoughts, your feelings, knowledge and your learning journey in a course or professional setting.
- It will also include references to readings that you have done which have informed your learning.
- The language used in reflective writing which describes your own experiences and learning can include words like ‘I’; ‘my’; ‘I felt’; ‘I think’.
- The language which discusses theories or ideas from readings in relation to your learning is usually more formal and academic in style.
- It can start with a description of the learning before moving into reflection of the learning.

**Portfolios and reflective writing**
- Portfolios are used in many professions to show evidence of learning and professional development. A portfolio in some professions may include your reflection on learning.
- Portfolios may be in paper form or electronic form.
- e-Portfolios can be easily edited and structured into specific pages, sections or collections of materials for different audiences.
- Pages or collections from e-Portfolios can be shared with colleagues, tutors and potential employers.
- Assignments from your courses may be used as portfolio items which can be uploaded to e-Portfolios.
- e-Portfolios can also include video, sound, images and links.
- Portfolio items will be assessed as single items or pages which make up the assignment. These may include learning activities and reflections on these.
Blogs and reflective writing

- Blogs are like online diaries, each piece of writing is called a ‘post’.
- The organising structure is the date.
- Blogs can be interactive and colourful and besides text can include videos, sound, photographs and links.
- They provide an archive of posts, all of which can be easily edited whenever an author chooses.
- Your teacher can see when you write and can provide you with feedback via comments linked to your post.
- Blogs can be assessed by looking at the quality of reflection the student demonstrates and secondly, how the student optimises the functionality of the blogging tool.
- Blogging tools include Google blogger; LiveJournal; Edublogger; WordPress.

Wikis and reflective writing

- Wikis are easy-to-edit web pages and file sharing space for individuals and groups.
- The organising structures in wikis are the pages in the wiki.
- Wikis are interactive and colourful and besides text can include video, sound, photographs and links. You can also upload files (e.g. documents) to wikis.
- Some wikis provide a record of each edit and previous versions can be recovered.
- Your teacher can see when you write and can provide you with feedback via comments linked to your wiki page.
- They are assessed by looking at firstly how the student reflects on their given task or collection of tasks and secondly how the user makes use of the functionality of the Wiki tool.

References

University of South Australia 2006, Writing a Journal, viewed 22 May, 2008.