USE Personal Reflection Exercise

You can undertake this two-part activity prior to your engagement with results from the University of Sydney Unit of Study Evaluation (USE). The purpose of this activity is to provide a record of your own impressions of key aspects of the Unit of Study and to help you identify the scope of the USE (for example, what aspects of the unit the USE addresses, how students engage with the USE). When used in conjunction with student feedback, your own impressions of the Unit of Study can reveal whether there are aspects of the student experience that you perceive well and/or whether you need to pay closer attention to certain aspects of the student experience.

PART ONE
Answer the following 12 questions. You should only allow 15-20 minutes to complete the questions (i.e. less than 2 minutes per question). Reflecting on the time/space provided for these questions can help you understand how students complete the USE.

1. How were learning outcomes and expected standards for the unit of study communicated to students?

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2. What is your definition of effective learning? How does the design of the unit facilitate effective learning?

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3. How were graduate attributes included in the unit [e.g. 1) Research and inquiry skills; 2) Communication skills; 3) Personal and intellectual autonomy; 4) Ethical, social and professional understandings; 5) Information literacy]?

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4. How was the unit designed to inspire students? To what extent did the unit design and/or course materials motivate students?

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5. In what ways did assessment tasks allow students to demonstrate their understanding of course material?

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6. What degrees do you think this unit is relevant to and why?

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7. How were opportunities to provide feedback to students incorporated into the unit?

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8. In what ways did group work/discussions build student understanding of course topics?

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9. Why is timely feedback important? How do you define constructive feedback? Was feedback to students timely and constructive?

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10. Were learning materials relevant and helpful? How were learning materials used in the unit?

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11. In what ways did the unit encourage a diversity of ideas, attitudes and approaches to and beyond the subject matter?

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12. Overall, do you feel that students were satisfied with the unit? Why or why not?

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Prepared by Ben Miller for the Faculty of Arts Teaching and Learning Committee, The University of Sydney, March 2010
PART TWO:

Why have you asked your students to complete a USE? Your answer should identify the extent to which USE results will contribute to a broader plan to improve your unit design and/or delivery.

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List some key aspects of the Unit of Study that you expect students will respond to or that students may overlook. When you are actually engaging with the responses, the items on this list as well as items you may have overlooked are important. For example, you and your students may both recognise a strong aspect of your teaching design, and/or you may have overlooked an aspect of the unit that strongly influenced the students’ experience, and/or students may have overlooked an aspect of the unit that you thought was significant. Reflecting on the reasons for these alignments and differing perceptions can provide deep insight into your teaching design and practice.

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