This type of questionnaire is one where students write their answers to a small number of ‘open’ questions using their own words. In larger classes, it is not often practical to collect such qualitative data from every student. Using group responses is one strategy for overcoming this difficulty. Instead of individual students completing the questionnaire, the students are asked to form small groups (5-10 students) and discuss their individual responses to each question. The students then formulate a group response to each question. The group’s response is recorded by the person nominated as the group recorder or the ‘scribe’. In this way, each group only completes one questionnaire. This process is especially appropriate if students have worked in groups during semester.

The Distance Education questionnaire has three independent sections which can be used separately or in any combination. The use of all three sections will ensure comprehensive feedback.

- The first section asks students questions about the **unit of study**.
- The second section asks questions specifically about **student learning**.
- The third part of the questionnaire asks for feedback on a range of other **learning activities** which are common elements of distance education units of study.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Staff should explain to students why they are seeking student feedback. This explanation can be included in the unit of study materials or as a covering letter with the questionnaire if it is to be posted to students.

The explanation should cover the following points:

- Explain why you are requesting student feedback at this time and why student feedback is important to you as a teacher.
- Explain how you plan to communicate to the students, your response to the feedback they offer, (e.g. web site, letter, discussion in a subsequent session etc).
- Explain that you are going to be using an open response questionnaire for gathering feedback and your reasons for choosing this technique over the more common numerical questionnaires.
- Explain that the survey is voluntary and that their responses are confidential. Remind students not to write their name on the questionnaires. The anonymity of responses sent through the mail is further assured as the questionnaires are initially sent to the Institute for Teaching and Learning, not the staff member.

**RETURN PROCEDURES**

- A pre-addressed envelope is provided for this purpose. It is up to the staff member’s department to arrange for stamps or prepaid postage if this is required. It is recommend that students are not asked to pay for postage.
- Please complete the “Staff Hold and Return” request slip and post this to the ITL or email the ITL (stufeed@itl.usyd.edu.au) with these details. The ITL will use this information to ensure safe storage and return of your questionnaires.
- Unless you request otherwise, the completed forms will be mailed to the address you have provided once the exam results have been posted. The ITL does not type up, collate or analyse open response comments.
- Once you have read the students’ comments you are welcome to make an appointment with a staff member from the ITL to discuss the issues raised in the feedback and strategies which might address these issues. It is often useful to supplement student feedback with data gathered from other sources such as peer review.
- It is strongly recommended you reply to the students and inform them of how you will, or will not, be addressing the issues they have raised in their feedback. A variety of strategies can be used to communicate your intended response including; sending a form letter, by posting your response on the web or a department notice board or by discussing your response in a subsequent session if students will be visiting the campus.

**QUESTIONS?** If you have any queries regarding the survey please do not hesitate to contact the staff at ITL on 9351 3725.

Carlslaw Building F07, NSW 2006 Australia