Flexible Learning Gains in Popularity

Flexible learning has gained in popularity because of the social changes, technological advancement and economic fluctuations in the world. Flexible learning is not confined to specific times and spaces. Carefully designed flexible learning opportunities can expose students to more information and content than many face-to-face classes, significant interaction with faculty and peers, contact with other students from diverse backgrounds and locations, and access to renowned experts in the field regardless of location.

Advantages of Flexible Learning

- Students learn in a more convenient location and often at a more convenient time. The working population has much to gain from flexible learning as it can be undertaken outside normal business hours.
- Besides sustaining their career opportunities and updating their knowledge, employees are required to pursue higher education studies that will make them eligible for quick promotions or challenging positions and greater responsibilities or senior levels of decision making. Flexible learning allows these employees to continue their current employment while undertaking higher education.

Flexible Learning at the Centre for International Health

The Centre’s flexible programs are developed and delivered to students from diverse backgrounds that are located in metropolitan settings, remote settings, interstate and overseas. Students may combine their studies with a variety of domestic and/or work related responsibilities. The teaching and support staff of the Centre demonstrate great commitment to the students. Pastoral care is a prime objective. The Centre has a number of strategies to assist their scattered population of students to feel connected to the Centre and to build and sustain the sense of ‘belonging’. Strategies such as regular international health forums, newsletters and facilitation of student-to-student contact via WebCT are hallmarks of the Centre’s efforts. Other general support services available include library services for off-campus students, study skills training, counselling and the Student Guild.

All units are self-contained, delivered via WebCT and include access to comprehensive readings negating additional textbook purchases. Students are allowed a degree of flexibility in their choice of topics for assessment. With self-paced units and integrated learning activities, students are able to evaluate learning as they proceed.

The Centre has been the recipient of a number of awards including the prestigious National Carrick Australian Awards for University Teaching - Programmes that Enhance Learning in 2007, with particular commendation in the criteria of distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose; influence on student learning and student engagement; breadth of impact and concern for equity and diversity. Earlier University Awards have commended CIH for, among other qualities, its multidisciplinary approach with flexible curriculum, creative methods to enhance the students’ sense of belonging to the Centre while studying via flexible learning and linking coursework with research and field placements in international settings.