

Well being, work rights, and TEU meetings COVID-19 checkin #4

6 April 2020

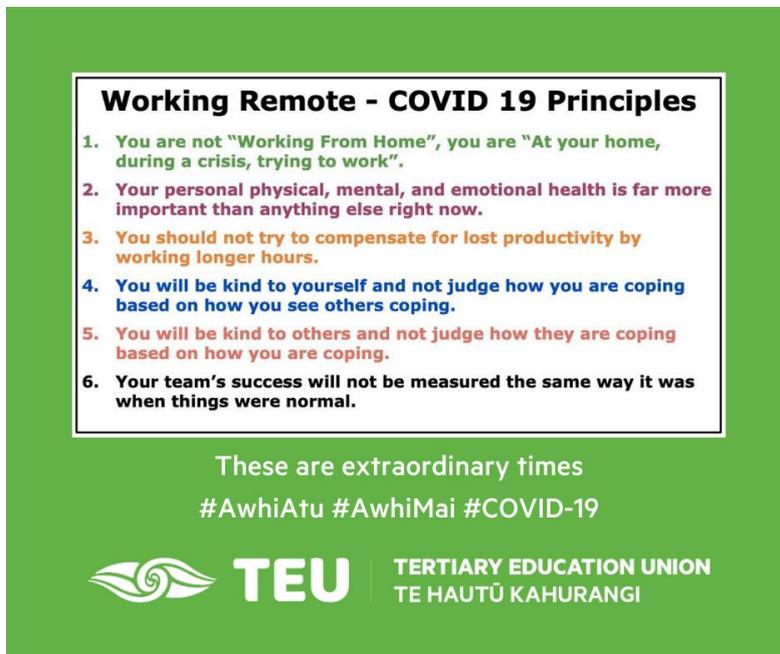
It's hard to believe that we are heading towards the end of week two. We just want to congratulate all those who have been working tirelessly to ensure learning is disrupted as little as possible.

In particular, we know that IT and learning support staff across Aotearoa have been pulling out all the stops to support their colleagues. If you like us want to thank them, you can grab our little social media card and post, or send it in an email to the general/allied/professional staff in your institution.

It is important to recognise that in these extraordinary times, every one of us will be affected in some way by the stress created by the epidemic response. We will do our bit and #StayHome #SaveLives and unite. We also want to ensure that well-being is our collective focus and that of our employers.

Well-being needs to be our focus

The health and wellbeing of staff, students, and whānau is of immediate concern. This includes both physical and mental health. We believe that the principles of [Te Whare Tapa Whā](#) – the four dimensions of health - must be recognised. Good health is mental, physical, spiritual, and whānau based.



Working Remote - COVID 19 Principles

1. You are not "Working From Home", you are "At your home, during a crisis, trying to work".
2. Your personal physical, mental, and emotional health is far more important than anything else right now.
3. You should not try to compensate for lost productivity by working longer hours.
4. You will be kind to yourself and not judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping.
5. You will be kind to others and not judge how they are coping based on how you are coping.
6. Your team's success will not be measured the same way it was when things were normal.

These are extraordinary times
#AwhiAtu #AwhiMai #COVID-19

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One concern being raised by local TEU reps is that workloads have ramped up. This rise is because the drive for productivity has been so ingrained in our sector. We strive to do the best by our students and we know that both academic and professional staff are trying to make sure there is no difference in experience for learners and no drop in productivity.

We need to ensure all staff in the tertiary education sector understand that these are extraordinary times and ordinary tasks may take longer or may not get done at all. Here's a couple of op-eds that may help put it all in context:

1. [Advice on how to help students learn by releasing pressure on yourself](#)
2. [Why You Should Ignore All That Coronavirus-Inspired Productivity Pressure](#)

As part of wellbeing, we also want to make sure our members working in essential services during the Level-4 period are looked after. **It is crucial that people working outside their homes during this period have personal protective equipment.** If you don't think you are being provided with the right equipment email teu@teu.ac.nz

One matter that cannot be done as effectively during this Level 4 period is the rigorous quality assurance for changes to teaching and learning. **In most cases the changes being done to get teaching on-line cannot go through normal approval channels. For this reason what we are doing now should NOT be considered permanent.** As we have said throughout the last month, anything that is significantly different – in terms of delivery or assessment – will only be temporary. [We have sought the assurance of chief executives and vice chancellors to this effect.](#)



Decades of hard work by union members
means paid holidays for many - enjoy them!

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And finally, the importance of leave for well-being. You should also be making sure that you take time over Easter to relax. In all cases our public institutions – universities, wanagna, and polytechnics - will be closed from Friday 10 April (this Friday) to Tuesday 14 April. For those working in PTEs you will have the statutory public holidays – 10-13 April.

To ensure the well-being of the TEU staff, we are going to a skeleton crew next week (15-17 April). This means you can still call us and get advice by talking to one of the rostered team members:

	Day	Time	Email	Mobile
Kris	Wed 15	8.30 – 12.30	Kris.smith@teu.ac.nz	027 229 5570
Nicki	Wed 15	12.30 – 4.30	Nicki.wilford@teu.ac.nz	027 444 2893
Jill	Thurs 16	8.30 – 12.30	Jill.jones@teu.ac.nz	027 442 4809
Megan	Thurs 16	12.30 – 4.30	Megan.morris@teu.ac.nz	021 290 0385
Jane	Fri 17	8.30 – 12.30	Jane.kostanich@teu.ac.nz	021 390 835
Dan	Fri 17	12.30 – 4.30	daniel.benson-guiu@teu.ac.nz	022 312 1439

You can also email teu@teu.ac.nz or phone 0800 278 348

We hope that you are enjoying a break over Easter – we will be back to our full staffing complement on Monday 20 April.

Work rights – leave, costs, and union access

Just a reminder about the annual leave approach during the lockdown: Employers can talk to you about taking annual leave but you may request that your currently booked annual leave is cancelled. This is the case at any given time. Please contact your organiser if you have any concerns about leave changes.

During the time when we are being asked to work from home, there are costs that are associated with this. The biggest costs notified so far are internet and data packages. Most telecommunications companies are extending customers’ packages to unlimited data/wifi during this time. If this is not the case for your telco, **contact your manager and let them know if there are charges that you want the employer to cover. It is reasonable for them to cover this cost.**

With regard to queries about others costs, the first step is to approach your manager and ask if the cost is covered by your institution. This varies widely across our sector.

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Unions who have members' in essential services – and that includes a number of TEU members – are themselves now listed as essential services. Clear guidance for unions on operating as an essential service has been put together by the CTU: <https://www.union.org.nz/covid19/unions-as-essential-services/> As we've said TEU staff are working by phone, by email, and online, so stay in touch.

The TEU's temporary normal

While in lockdown, the collective work of the TEU continues but there are some changes.

We are holding a range of zui (zoom hui)

- TEU's council – the national decision-making body – is meeting weekly
- TEU's branch presidents – you can find out who yours is here – are meeting fortnightly
- Many branch committees are meeting fortnightly or monthly

If you want to participate in your local meetings, you can email the branch presidents – details [here](#).

One major change is the decision to move conference. Council has agreed that the Annual Conference of the union cannot proceed as planned on 22 & 23 May this year. This means that existing deadlines for rule and policy remits (10 April and 24 April respectively) will not apply. We are considering new dates: 2-4 November.

We'll be back with another COVID-19 check-in on 20 April. Until then #StayHome and #StaySafe.



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