



## When One Size Policy Does Not Fit All. Safe Guarding the Wellbeing of Online Teaching Staff

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For the past five years, the Legal Studies team at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (formerly The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, New Zealand) has engaged in delivering programmes in an online environment. Whilst the team has made a considered effort to evolve programmes and methods of delivery to address the well-being of off-site online students, no such considered effort has ensued to address the well-being of off-site and on-site online staff.

From 2014 the Legal Studies APERs (Annual Programme Evaluation Report) for online programmes began noting staff concerns around issues of well-being: anxiety, stress and vulnerability; workload, timeframe and support service inequity; advanced specialist skill requirements. Many of these issues were due in part to unsuitable institute-wide policies being applied to staff and programmes using online delivery models.

At the end of 2016, an action plan to address these concerns was still not in place. Tired of waiting, in 2017 the Legal Studies team initiated their own plan - research into online teaching well-being so as to generate a business case for the acceptance of 'unseen' differences between online and face-to-face staff and programme needs. The intention is that once accepted, implementation and/or adaption of applicable institute policies can occur making them suitable for application in an online environment in order to safe-guard the well-being of online teaching staff.

This presentation will cover a short history of programme evolution leading to staff well-being issues, the challenges in explaining and advocating these issues to management and other stakeholders unfamiliar with the online environment, and the initial steps being taken to garner acceptance that online delivery is different and highlight policy challenges that require addressing in order to safe-guard staff well-being.