



Áine



Option 1: Call the student

If this is the first such encounter Áine has had with a student, then she would be well advised to seek the advice of a colleague.

In order to plan for this call Áine should be prepared for the call. Áine should try the following:

- Carefully read what Conor has written, make sure she considers his criticisms from his viewpoint. Do these relate to her teaching and/or the course design? Is there some validity in them?
- Consider her specific role in the course. Is Áine responsible for the course design and materials? Or does it fall to someone else? If it is not her responsibility, she will need to pass these on to the relevant person, and then assure Conor that she has done so.
- Áine needs to step back from personal criticisms. Perhaps there are one or two things that she could change, and she should inform Conor that she will do so for next iteration. If the criticisms are not at all warranted, try to ignore them for now. Shift the focus back to Conor and his specific issues. Obtain greater clarity on his problem.
- Examine the guidelines that were given to students at the beginning of the course. Do they outline how online teaching is different than face to face and that student engagement may be different too? Do they specify how much time students need to allocate each week to learning by themselves? Have a copy to hand for the call.
- Check Conor's engagement with the course. Has Conor attended the online classes, or if not has he accessed the recordings? What has his engagement in the course been like up to this point? Conor may be struggling with a number of conflicting priorities and may need more time to engage with the learning materials.
- Has Áine issued guidelines/code of conduct for her discussion forums and have the students signed up to them? Did the students sign team contracts? Have a copy to hand, they should cover issues around 'negative' postings. (If not, then introduce them now!).



Option 2: Pass the issue onto the course program manager

If this is the first such encounter Áine has had with a student, then she would be well advised to seek the advice of a colleague such as her programme manager, Niall. However, it is really up to Áine to resolve this issue herself.

In the event that Áine does pass this onto her manager she may find that Niall is unwilling to take it on and has decided to give the following advice.

The following might be some of the ideas/advice Niall gives to Áine:

- Reassurance that she has the skills herself to resolve the issue and that he is willing to support her decisions.
- If possible, suggest and arrange for Áine to meet with a colleague who has dealt with a similar situation.
- While she may not be the person responsible for the course design, he is willing to take any ideas she has for changes on board. She can inform her students that their suggestions will be implemented in future iterations of the course.
- Áine needs to deal with this issue openly, so students both know that she listens to them and that they can trust her to do something.
- Niall will also give her advice as outlined in Option 1.

Option 3: Tell the other members of the group to get on with the project and ignore the other student

This is probably not a good idea. Conor will be even more aggrieved and make take this issue further, for example to an institutional manager. In addition, the other students may not be happy with this, they may agree with some of Conor's criticisms. Áine needs to respond, her presence as a caring educator must be evident to all students.

If Conor escalates the issue things can get complicated very quickly. Institutions may have protocols in place to deal with students complaints and such a process may have a negative impact on all concerned until a resolution is reached.

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In the event that Conor does contact the institutional manager (Deirdre) then she will most likely suggest a meeting with Áine, Deirdre and Conor present. Deirdre might first speak with Áine and suggest she speaks with colleagues who have been in similar situations so that Áine can have a strategy ready. She will also discuss the types of advice outlined in Option 1 and 2 above.

Option 4: Or is there something else?

Read the response suggestions in the discussion forums and reply to your favourite.