

Every Researcher Counts

Resource D

Case study exercise 'Don't put me in a box'

D3 – 30 individual case study cards

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Angela



- Angela is a settled junior lecturer with a permanent position within your department and she typically works 50-60 hours on research, teaching and administration
- She wants to do more research over the next five years at more senior levels
- Her (civil) partner has just been made redundant and she will be relied upon to be the main income earner in the short-term as her partner is looking to spend time retraining

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Barbara



- Barbara, a junior lecturer, came back from maternity leave earlier this year on a part-time basis
- She worked 12 hours of teaching prior to maternity leave over the whole week and is now teaching seven hours over two days. She works one half day in the department with no teaching commitments
- Barbara and her partner share childcare responsibilities but neither have much flexibility in being able to change the hours they have currently negotiated

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Georgia



- Georgia is a member of your research group in the early stages of her first postdoctoral position having completed her doctorate in your department
- She finds it difficult to maintain social relationships with other members of staff and can often appear diffident and overly direct in communication with others or absorbed in her own work to the oblivion of other things
- Georgia can become quite agitated if you change the pattern of the work of the department (e.g. meetings at times she wasn't expecting, a change of location for a discussion) and she isn't keen on going to conferences although she has been to one or two per year
- She produced a doctoral thesis that needed very few corrections and her postdoctoral work is strong; you are keen to fund her ongoing work given her current results

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Jo

- Jo is a member of your support staff and she does a strong job of assisting everyone in the group and she makes a big effort to get on with, and work for, everyone in her immediate work environment (staff and students alike)
- Jo had a sex change and is aware that some students gossip about it

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Judith



- Judith (58) is a part-time lecturer in your department who has completed her doctorate part-time. She is also a part-time occupational therapist
- She sits on multiple boards and committees outside University in her wider working and home life. She provides high quality undergraduate teaching and a small but consistent research output each year
- In her induction lecture to undergraduates she encourages them to look after their health now for longevity of working life and she is open about wanting this portfolio of interesting work well into her 70's plus

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Lisa



- Lisa is 37 and has been suffering from a degenerative sight condition over the last ten years and whilst not fully blind she has around 40% of the sight she had during the time she was doing her doctorate
- It is predicted that she is likely to lose her sight almost completely by the time she is 45. As a strong communicator and teacher her lectures are well attended and her research progress is steady (if slower)
- The department has made a number of adjustments to the way in which it works to accommodate Lisa's failing sight and she is a member of staff whose contract they would like to renew

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Maria

- Maria is currently one year into her two year funded postdoctoral position in your area and she works hard, is driven and has a significant output of work
- You haven't much idea about her life outside work but your head of department has recently told you that she has written a letter of complaint to the Vice Principal of the institution
- She objects to the Christmas and Easter holidays being renamed the Winter Holiday and the Spring Holiday as (given her strong Christian faith) she feels that the religious significance of these times is being reduced and felt that she wanted to express her opinions at a senior level within the institution

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Mary



- Mary is a researcher who has happily worked on a series of short-term contracts as a research assistant in the same department since she finished her doctorate
- This has suited her career development as she has been keen to continue to do research which supports the efforts of her principal investigator and to be in consistent employment in the same location when others are not. She is now in her late 30s and planning the next stage of her career

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Natalia



- Natalia is a postdoctoral research associate in your group who completed her doctorate in her native Argentina and her first postdoctorate in Italy
- She is ambitious and focused; she has engaged with the wider group in the short time she has been here and is a gregarious member of your group. (She is frequently ‘teased’ about being from Argentina by older members of your department and occasionally referred to as an ‘Argie’)

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Sharon



- Sharon is a part-time member of the support team for your department and she is helpful, capable and engages strongly with the undergraduates
- You would estimate that Sharon weighs in excess of 20 stones and you notice in department meetings that she is having difficulty walking and sets off for the meeting 10-15 minutes ahead of the start time to allow her time to get there and settle in to the meeting environment

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Suriya



- Suriya is a Syrian doctoral researcher who is a lively and active member of your research group. She has had good findings from her doctorate and she has taken a diligent approach to her work as well as communicating her research widely at conferences
- In the relaxed environment of the last conference you both attended she spoke tentatively of her nervousness of completing her doctorate and returning home as there was little tolerance for her homosexuality. She felt more able to be expressive in the UK environment

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Susie



- Susie is about to complete a second postdoctoral appointment in your department; she is a competent and committed researcher
- Following an accident as an undergraduate she permanently walks with the aid of a crutch in her left hand. Although she navigates her way around your building well she isn't as comfortable with travel beyond the building and can neither sit nor stand for long periods of time; she needs to alternate her position to maintain comfort and manage pain

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Petra



- Petra is in the first year of her second three-year postdoctoral position in your group; she took maternity leave in between her first and second postdoctorates. She is very focused, flexible within the working day and clearly works more hours on her research than her time in the department allows her to. Her eighteen month old son is cared for at nursery
- Concerns have recently been raised for her and her partner because their son isn't reaching his development milestones and is being referred for specialist help that will require a series of doctors/consultant appointments and possible changes in childcare

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Xiao



- Xiao is working as a postdoctoral research associate on a China-UK programme for researchers from both countries to explore each other's research and research environments
- Xiao has settled in well to the department although she is the only Chinese researcher in the group of mainly European researchers. She is working in the UK for three years and will then return to China

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Zulfa



- Zulfa is a part-time (0.4) lecturer in your department teaching five hours per week, supervising a doctoral researcher and managing a two year research project funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). This is a collaboration between this institution and a partner South African university
- She works flexibly between the department, home, meetings overseas and managing her family of four

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Chris



- Chris, a part-time (0.6) junior lecturer, has recently started work in your department and has nine hours teaching to fit into his three days, supervision of two doctoral researchers and his own research
- You are aware that he has taken this job on a part-time basis to be able to share childcare of his two children with his (freelance science journalist) partner

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Daniel



- Daniel is a energetic and driven researcher in your department who makes effort to engage with social activities, attend conferences and engage in research communication exercises
- He tends to keep his work and home life very separate although you know that he joins his family each week for Friday evening dinner and balances his work and religious observance through careful management of his holidays and minimal work over the weekend period
- You are aware of a conflict for Daniel last year when a useful conference for him coincided with Yom Kippur and he chose to attend another conference later in the year instead

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David

- David is a researcher within your department currently looking for fellowship funding for his research. He is expected to leave this university to go overseas for wider experience and career development
- He is reluctant to leave this university as he has started to assume more and more responsibility for his brother Rory who has long-term depression. David's parents are now in their late 60s and unable to be the first point of contact for issues to do with Rory which now falls to David
- Rory is single and employed at another local university as a lab technician

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George



- George is a recent addition to your group on a fellowship with three and a half years funding. He completed his doctorate and postdoctoral research at universities in Scotland before relocating for this fellowship
- George is an engaging communicator although his strong Scottish accent has provoked a reaction in others (either through imitation or for others to denigrate regional accents)

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James



- James is a lecturer within your group who has recently required more flexibility in his role to be able to care for his mother who has had a stroke and for whom he is the major carer (she lives over 200 miles away)
- He has arranged, and is paying for, local care. He is currently trying to maintain his career here and relocate his mother to live with him (he is single after divorce two years ago) or looking for a more local job nearer her home

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Jim



- Jim is a postdoctoral researcher in your department who is making good progress with his research, publishing and is thinking about possible fellowships
- He was diagnosed with type one diabetes in his teens and manages it through injection of insulin and he tests his blood, injects insulin and manages his food intake publicly and is always willing to answer questions about his condition

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Malik



- Malik is completing the first year of his second postdoctorate at your institution after his doctorate and first postdoctoral position at the Institute of Technology, Delhi
- He is a well respected junior researcher who works hard, publishes and engages with the wider life of your department and has volunteered to take on small group teaching to develop his communication to UK audiences
- Malik is polite and respectful to all those he works with. You are aware that the undergraduates he teaches take advantage of this in seminars and in deadline management

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Mark



- Mark is two years into his three year postdoctoral position in your group and is a very focused, flexible individual who has a strong output of research and publications and works more than the standard working week
- He and his partner have an eighteen month old son. Concerns have recently been raised for them as their son isn't meeting his development milestones. They are being referred for specialist help that will require a series of doctors/consultant appointments and possible changes in childcare

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Michael



- Your colleague Michael is in his late 40s. He was married for 24 years and has two children (one of which is completing a masters and the other is in the second year of her doctorate)
- He came out two years ago and has been in a relationship with Rob for most of that time.
- He is a full-time lecturer within your department

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Peter



- Peter (62) has worked in your department for many years
- He has a consistent (although small) research output, provides consultancy on behalf of the university and his teaching is well received with undergraduates and masters students alike
- He has a preference for face-to-face teaching and is keen to do this for many years to come as he has no plans to retire; this is his second career having joined the university in his 40's

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Philip



- Philip is a research assistant who has worked in the same university since he graduated with a Masters 15 years ago. He has been willing to work on short-term contracts as (with hindsight) it has turned into a relatively stable job for him
- He was funded to do his doctorate at the university and has worked flexibly to be able to manage this with his job. He has just completed it and is now looking at the next steps for his career

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Sadiq



- Sadiq is a postdoctoral researcher in your research group. You think he has a wider set of skills than some others in your group and you could see him having a broader career than he envisages for himself at the moment
- He starts just before 8am and works hard during the day. He is committed to leaving the department at 3.30pm on three out of five days to pick up his six year old son as his surgeon wife doesn't have the flexibility in her job to be able to do that

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Tariq



- Tariq is an Iranian doctoral researcher who is very active in your group, has made strong progress and will probably finish his doctorate within his funded and visa requirements
- You are aware that Tariq is very driven and your conversations are almost always confined to work
- In your last supervision meeting you noticed a series of fresh and older scars on Tariq's lower arms which (you consider) could be self-inflicted

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Theo



- Theo is a member of your research group in the early stages of his postdoctoral position having completed his doctorate with minor corrections last summer
- He is aware of (and confident in communicating) his high-functioning autism. He converses one to one and in groups but almost never makes eye contact; he is aware that he misses social cues but doesn't know how to address this.
- You are aware that he typically only sleeps around 4-5 hours a night as you, and members of your group, regularly get emails from Theo in the early hours of the morning

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Tony

- Tony is in the middle of his second postdoctoral position. He is making good progress with his research and is currently looking for ways to fund the next part of his career; he makes a strong contribution to your group and could have a career in research if he can start to establish his own grant income
- People who know and work with him know that he is a completely deaf in one ear. When speaking to him you need to be towards his left hand side to ensure that he is able to hear you
- He does not have a hearing aid or use any kind of assistance

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