

### **Dave's problem**

You have just been appointed to a Lectureship at Middlemarch Metropolitan University. Prior to this you had held a temporary lectureship in a “five-rated” department at the University of Barchester. In your new appointment this has meant, amongst other things, that you have been expected to take on the supervision of a number of postgraduate research students as well as pursuing your own research. You also have responsibility for teaching a first year undergraduate course.

Soon after your appointment, in your first meeting with Professor Lydgate, your Head of School, you were invited to become your Department’s Postgraduate Tutor. You quickly realised that the “invitation” was one that Professor Lydgate did not expect you to decline. He suggested that you spoke to the School’s Postgraduate Co-ordinator, Dr Rosamund Vincy for advice and guidance.

It turns out that Dr Vincy has a special favour to ask of you. She raises the case of one PhD student in particular. It seems that this student, Elizabeth, (who is not a member of your new department) has been causing some “difficulties”. She is a former undergraduate and MA student in the School who is well known to your new colleagues as having a long history of personal problems and awkward relationships with staff. Recently she has had a disagreement with her current supervisor, Professor Trumbull. You know Trumbull is very highly regarded in his field and is one of Middlemarch’s most eminent scholars. However, following their disagreement, Elizabeth has written to the School “...to withdraw from the supervision until the School provides a more suitable supervisor.”

Dr Vincy says that she has tried to dissuade Elizabeth from her unilateral boycott of current supervisory provision by pointing out the benefits of continuing to work with such an international authority as Professor Trumbull, who is, apparently, willing to continue as her supervisor. However, Elizabeth has firmly maintained her wish to be found another supervisor.

In desperation, you sense, Dr Vincy asks you to act as Elizabeth’s supervisor on the grounds that you have had no previous relationship with her, that Professor Trumbull remembers your giving a paper on an associated subject at a conference he attended a couple of years ago, and that currently “... your quota of postgraduate students is less than the School’s average for research-active staff.”

You ask for some time to think about it.

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#### **Team Task**

#### **On the acetate provided**

- 1. list the main issues raised by this request, and**
- 2. set out the main elements of your response to Dr Vincy’s request.**