

IN-TRAY EXERCISE

READ AND GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO HOW YOU MIGHT RESPOND TO THE VARIOUS CORRESPONDENCE LISTED UNDER ITEMS 1-12 FOLLOWING. AT THE WORKSHOPS, THESE WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR SMALL-GROUP AND PLENARYDISCUSSION

- The attached papers simulate a hypothetical “in-tray” for a Director of Studies in a typical College at the University of Cambridge. Even though some of the contents may not appear to be directly pertinent to your particular subject or College, the topics are intended to raise awareness of issues that currently are, or may be, applicable to Directors of Studies.

- The aims of the exercises are to:
 - a) introduce aspects of direction of studies in a Cambridge College;
 - b) offer the opportunity to ask questions;
 - c) raise the profile of issues which are likely to be important to Directors of Studies;
 - d) help direct you to where information that you might need can be found.

- Initially, you and your group (which will be assigned at the Workshop) should work through the papers and explore the issues, possible responses and their consequences. This will be followed by a plenary discussion to share the groups' views and to respond to any questions that may have arisen.

- When considering each case, the emphasis should be on:
 - what extra information might be needed;
 - sources of advice, support, information available;
 - what approach/es might you recommend.

- Note down any specific matters that arise and on which you, as a prospective DoS, would like more information during the plenary workshop.

- There will be approximately 20 minutes only for group discussion of these papers before the plenary session, so there is a need to move fast – just like real life.

- For the purpose of this exercise, you are Dr. Pat Scholastic:
 - a University lecturer in Comparative Environmental Studies, and
 - the Director of Studies for this subject in St. Archetypal College.

Instructions for small-group discussions

Before beginning your small-group discussions, please

- briefly introduce yourself (name and College)
- agree an informal 'chair' for the session, who will keep an eye on time and ensure that the small group has time to discuss the specified case studies and the three questions below
- agree who will briefly (up to two minutes) summarise your discussions to the plenary, if invited to do so by the Senior Tutors facilitating plenary discussions

When discussing case studies in small groups, please consider these questions:

1. what extra information might be needed?
2. What sources of advice, support, information are available?
3. What approach/es might you recommend? What might be the impact of these approaches on the student?

Case 1

Dear Pat

I received the below letter in the Department as I am to lecture the course on Waste and Recycling this coming academic year. I have not replied but am forwarding it to you as Sam Briggs is a member of your College and I think it would be better if you dealt with this in your DoS role.

Thanks,

Robin

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Dr. R. Williams
Department of Comparative Environmental Studies
University of Cambridge

Dear Dr Williams,

I understand that you will be taking over and be responsible for the option on Waste and Recycling that Dr. Blake used to give to final year undergraduates. I am writing to you as I would very much like to study this option.

As you know, this option is oversubscribed and numbers have to be limited due to the somewhat restricted practical facilities available in the Department. Unfortunately, I only obtained a 2:2 in the IB exam, and so was told that I could not do the option as there are already too many other students with 2:1s and 1^{sts} who want to do this course. The reason for writing is to ask to meet you so that I can explain why I did not do as well as I should have in the IB examination and so wish to be allowed to take the option.

So that you realise there are good reasons to ask to meet you, I have outlined below what happened that caused me not to do as well in the exams, as was predicted from my supervision reports; my supervisors had thought I would get a 1st.

In essence, my family and I were thrown out of my homeland when I was fifteen and we came to this country. I had to become fluent in English and also do well enough in a new school system to get to university; I was, of course, delighted to be accepted at St. Archetypal College. Unfortunately, my parents did not adapt as well and have been somewhat isolated. Just before my Tripos examinations at the end of May, we had a major family crisis which completely threw me – my brother unexpectedly wanted to marry his girlfriend but my parents opposed a marriage to a British girl. As we have no other family in this country and my parents have few close friends, I had to be the go-between and the stress was considerable, as well as taking up a large amount of my time and energy. This is the reason that I did not do myself justice in the exams.

I was bitterly disappointed with my exam results and could hardly believe them for some time. I have few friends myself and have not told anyone else what actually happened. It is difficult to become more like the British and share my feelings. This letter has been very difficult to write.

Now that you have an idea of what took place, I do hope that you can meet so that I can convince you that I should be allowed to do the option on Waste and Recycling.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Briggs

Case 2

Date: Tue, 25 Sept, 11:57:43 +0100 (BST)
From: Andrew Elkins <aa2003@cam.ac.uk>
To: Pat Scholastic <ps110@cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Supervisions

Dear Pat,

Sorry to let you down at this late stage but it now is obvious to me that I really must concentrate on my research and so cannot supervise again this term. I very much enjoyed the three groups that I have been supervising and realise that I am letting them (and, of course, you) down.

Hope you can find someone even though the students will be back in four days. If you let me know who that person is, I will pass on the information as to the assignments set over the vacation – and the actual work handed in as the arrangement was for the students to leave their work in my pigeon hole.

Apologies again

Andrew Elkins

Case 3

Dear Pat

Further to our very brief conversation when I phoned you this morning and as you advised, I am putting down on paper what happened yesterday in my supervision in the Department

which was at 2.00 in the afternoon.

James Trebuchet has supervised me twice before but, on both those previous occasions, with another student (as we are third year students, the pairings are set by the Department). Yesterday, I found that James had arranged to supervise me on my own. During the supervision, he seemed particularly keen to ask about my life and what I did in Cambridge – sometimes the questions were loosely associated with the academic work we were discussing but it was clear to me that James was trying to find out more about me.

At the end of the supervision, he asked if I was free for dinner at his house in a way that I found quite disconcerting; it was clearly an overture to me and was scarcely disguised. I found this very difficult so I just said that I would think about it and would call him later that afternoon. In fact, I did not.

As we agreed in our phone call, I will come by later today so that you can give me advice on what to do.

Sophie

Case 4

199a Short Lane
Midhurst
MD1 SOS

2nd April

Dear Dr Scholastic

I have very much enjoyed being here in Cambridge and at St. Archetypal College for the two terms so far. As you may be aware, my work in History has been average – not as great as I had hoped for, and probably not what the College had expected either, but equally enough to probably get a 2:1 (and some supervisors are now predicting a 1st!).

Although perhaps not too obvious at my interview and from my application papers, I was somewhat undecided on what subject to read at University. In the end, I made up my mind to read History. However, I now believe that this has not been a sensible choice – and that is probably why my work has not been better. Being here at home and getting a greater perspective has made me realise that I wish to change subject at the end of this academic year to Comparative Environmental Studies.

I took four A-levels and Biology was one of the four – the others being English Language, Sociology and History. Hence I do have experience in Science and, from talking with other students, feel that I could easily hold my own in this subject.

I hope this will be possible and with your permission will come and see you on my return to Cambridge at the beginning of next term.

Chris Robinson

Case 5

Room X1
St. Archetypal College

22nd June

Dear Dr Scholastic,

I was devastated to find out that I had failed to be classed with Honours in the first-year exams. Although my supervision reports had not been fantastic, I did not expect this. Sure, you had indicated at the beginning of term that things did not look great but I assumed that was just to get me to work harder – something my school teachers regularly used to do.

Now that I have completed the first year, I very much want to stay here in Cambridge and at St. Archetypal since I now am just starting to feel I understand the place. I know that I will be able to improve my work next year and will work hard over the summer to catch up and to make sure I really am on top of this year's subjects. Clearly, I would welcome advice on just how to do this but I am determined to make amends.

Coming to Cambridge from a small village community was a great adjustment – just as my teachers in the local school and also you, when we first met, said it would be. It certainly has taken considerable effort for me to fit in and to be able to compete academically with others here. I am sure that is why I have not done better this year but also, now that I have gone through the adjustment, I know that, if I am given a chance, I can do better next year.

What should I do - what happens next?

Frank Smith

Case 6

X-Sieve: CMU Sieve 2.2

Date: Tue, 12 Jan, 11:57:43 +0100 (BST)

From: Pat Scholastic <ps110@cam.ac.uk>

To: Fernando Castelvetro <frc238@cam.ac.uk> Subject:
Appointment

Dear Fernando,

As you will know, two of your supervisors have raised with me your reading and writing difficulties, which you have already mentioned to them.

Could you please come and see me, so we can discuss possible ways forward to help you with these problems.

Please do make an appointment as it would be better to have an undisturbed time to talk rather than risk using my regular hour in College when others also may wish to see me.

Many thanks

Pat

Case 7

X-Sieve: CMU Sieve 2.2
Date: Tue, 8 Feb, 11:57:43 +0100 (BST)
From: Janet Aikins <js3782@cam.ac.uk>
To: Pat Scholastic <ps110@cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Supervision conduct of Sue Jones

Dear Pat,

I have sent you, by snail mail, a copy of the note that one of the students whom I supervise on your behalf has sent me. Please can you deal with this.

Thanks

Janet

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Copy of note which arrived later.

Dear Janet

Would it be possible to reschedule tomorrow's 'Essay Paper' supervision? The reason is that, against expectation, the show in which I am playing the lead has been taking up every second of my days. I wish it were otherwise because I am committed to my subject, but I committed to this play almost a year ago and feel I cannot drop out at this point. It would be absolutely wonderful if the supervision could be held either in week 2 or after our week 3 supervision.

I know I am not giving a very good impression with this conduct, especially after my disappointing results last year, and I am really torn by the whole thing. However, I have spoken to my director and she has agreed to give me the time to do the work for my supervision on Thursday. By the by, what room are we to have the supervision in?

I hope this is alright; I am really sorry but look forward to dedicating my time to philosophy after the play finishes on Saturday! It was wonderful speaking to you. You are inspiring and have given me back the motivation to engage in sociology and academic work.

Kindest regards,

Sue Jones

Case 8

Message received from a first-year, just-arrived undergraduate due to read Comparative Environmental Studies

Dear DoS

I emailed the DOS for Management Studies last week, just before coming to Cambridge, and he replied informing me that that specific course I really want to do is a third year subject available only to those who have already completed the first two years in another course.

Therefore, I would like to attempt to switch to the Economics Tripos because I now think that it would be a better foundation for the management studies course in my third year.

I arrived in Cambridge for the first time this evening and had hoped to speak with my Tutor but was not able to do so. I am still not feeling quite well and as I also have some luggage in London, I will be returning home to London tonight and will return on Monday with my father. Hopefully I will be able to arrange a meeting with the Economics DOS that day. I hope this will not cause a problem.

Yours

I M Clegg

Case 9

Date: Tue, 28 Feb, 11:57:43 +0100 (BST)
From: Janet Aikins <js3782@cam.ac.uk>
To: Pat Scholastic <ps110@cam.ac.uk>
Subject: Sue Jones - again

Dear Pat,

Thanks so much for your help further to my email ten days ago regarding Sue. Sadly, I have a further problem that arose regarding the work handed in this week. This is the draft for her dissertation that counts as one paper in Sociology and the dead-line for which is at the end of the term, in two weeks time.

Sue's work clearly had been copied from a website with very minimal change to the content. When I asked her about this work (without initially mentioning that I was aware of its origins), she was emphatic that it was all her own work. I then showed her the website and she initially disclaimed all knowledge of its existence but, after sentence after sentence was read back, she did. Even then, she wanted to submit it – hoping that no one else would be able to realise the original source.

Over to you, I am afraid!

Thanks

Janet

Case 10

Robin is a good second-year student and you know from your meetings with them that they worked hard the entire academic year. With exams coming close Robin becomes increasingly nervous and anxious, and their GP has firmly advised Robin's Tutor that they are in no position to taking exams and should be allowed to go home. The solution to this is an application for Robin's Tutor to prepare an application to the Examinations Access and Mitigation Committee for Robin to be put in standing to take their final year, and for this you need the CamCORS reports from their supervisor testifying that Robin worked hard and to good effect. Only few reports have been submitted, however, and those do not contain any assessment of Robin's work. What do you do?

Case 11

The following are representative supervision report forms from one of your supervisors.

Sam Briggs (SIT95), St. Archetypal Comparative Environmental Studies, Part IB		XRNLI-2006-539240 Email College Email Directors of Studies Email Tutors							
Supervised by Janet E Aikins (Jea10) in Michaelmas 2006									
Industry: Good Progress: Good Interest: Interested Estimate of term's work: 1	Sam works well.								
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Total Hours by Group Size (GS)</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">of which</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">GS 1 2 3 4 5 6</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Missed To come</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4.0</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">0.0 1.0</td> </tr> </table> Include supervisions missed and to come in Total Hours. Fractions of hours are allowed (e.g. 0.5 for half an hour).	Total Hours by Group Size (GS)	of which	GS 1 2 3 4 5 6	Missed To come	4.0	0.0 1.0			
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GS 1 2 3 4 5 6	Missed To come								
4.0	0.0 1.0								
<i>Pay me directly (preferably by BACS)</i>		<i>Payment to be approved</i>		<i>Submitted on 27/11/2006</i>					
Additional comments for students			None as yet.						

Ima Tarkovsky (IF101), St. Archetypal Comparative Environmental Studies, Part IB		XRNLI-2006-539241 Email College Email Directors of Studies Email Tutors							
Supervised by Janet E Aikins (Jea10) in Michaelmas 2006									
Industry: Poor Progress: Poor Interest: Interested Estimate of term's work: 3	Ima is for the high jump unless she works more.								
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Additional comments for students			None as yet.						