

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Focus Mentoring Programme

Solent Futures – Solent University’s Careers, Employability and Enterprise service – runs a professional mentoring programme called the Focus Programme. This programme aims to help improve the employability of students by matching them to industry professionals. The programme helps students develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the graduate job market, or to achieve their ambition of starting a business or going into further study.

Each year Solent Futures targets the Focus Programme to a specific group of students based on the recommendations in the Access and Participation Plan. The programme is currently aimed at Level 5 (second-year) students who identify as female, with a particular focus on students from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic background, and those from a lower participation neighbourhood (LPN), meaning an area where less people tend to go to university. Mentors come from a range of organisations and many are Solent alumni.

The scheme accepts mentee applications from October each year, with mentoring starting in January. If you are interested in becoming a mentor on the scheme, or if you are a student interested in finding out more, please email mentoring@solent.ac.uk

Students and industry professionals take part in an induction session after completing the application form and are then matched with a mentor.

Mentee feedback:

“ Mentoring was one of the best decisions I made for myself during my time at university. It changed my career trajectory completely by giving me the confidence to apply for grants before I’d graduated; this meant I was introduced to the working world before I had graduated and had the experience and credentials which employers wanted. Without my mentor encouraging me I wouldn’t have had the confidence to go for it. Ever since, I’ve been fearless in what I apply for – I have everything to gain and nothing holding me back! ”

“ My mentor has helped me with real-life career advice such as setting up my CV and website, writing cover letters, getting things ready to print, using grid layouts and more. The mentoring scheme has been so beneficial to me as a graphic designer starting my professional career. ”

“ I am very grateful that the mentoring programme existed at our university. The many conversations with my mentor provided me with clarity about the career path I want to take, where my strengths and weaknesses lie and how I can work on myself personally and professionally. I was able to discuss my ideas about professional life with my mentor on a very personal and equal level. The mentor’s perspective from the management level of a company was particularly insightful and gave me an impression of the real professional world. ”