



President's Future Leaders Scheme 2026

Applications open until 17 July 2026

Every year, the incoming ICE president chooses six to eight Future Leaders to mentor throughout their year in office. The scheme provides an intensive development opportunity, which includes working on strategic ICE projects, training and engaging with industry leaders.

The theme for 2026: social mobility

"As I prepare for my presidential year, I've been reflecting on my career journey and where it began: as an apprentice in the north east of England, from a less privileged socio-economic background.

That experience highlights the very real barriers that can arise when social class limits opportunity. During my year, I want to explore this issue more widely, bringing together lived experience, data-driven insight and sector-wide perspectives.

The President's Future Leaders Scheme is one I value highly, and I intend to work closely with the Future Leaders to focus on social mobility. My theme is anchored in socio-economic background and social class, and the barriers that accumulate over time through limited access to resources, networks, role models and entry routes.

Expanding social mobility is first and foremost about fairness, but it is also a practical response to skills shortages across the infrastructure sector. In civil engineering, it means recognising and nurturing talent wherever it exists, widening access, strengthening pathways, and ensuring progression is driven by potential rather than inherited advantage."



Julie Wood

ICE President 2026-2027 and director at Mott MacDonald

What does the scheme entail?

Strategic projects

The scheme delivers a series of projects across the whole spectrum of ICE activities. Future Leaders choose a project and work with that team to help shape the profession.

The projects will give Future Leaders the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences. These will include the ability to communicate and influence, which are vital for those who have ambitions to develop as leaders.

Networking opportunities

Future Leaders will be able to join the president on regional visits and at other networking events.

This will allow them to get to know the president better and also see how ICE works for the profession in the different regions across the UK and around the world.

Future Leaders will also automatically become part of the President's Future Leaders Alumni Network, which provides ongoing opportunities to engage with a dynamic peer group for the rest of their career.

Inside track

Future Leaders gain an inside track to the movers and shakers in the industry.

They'll understand industry developments and the latest thinking by attending high-profile meetings and engaging with senior industry figures and politicians.

Who can apply?

We are looking for students on degree apprenticeships, graduate engineers and technicians with exceptional leadership potential. So, if you are ambitious, enthusiastic, and have the confidence to challenge the status quo, please apply!



The Transpennine Route Upgrade, one of Julie's major projects

Hear from David Porter, ICE President 2025-2026

"It's remarkable to think that I'm already halfway through my presidential year. These past months have been filled with rich conversations, meaningful connections, and countless moments that have reminded me why our institution is so special.

One of the most inspiring parts of my year has been spending time with my Future Leaders. They are developing the confidence, capability, and communication skills needed to make a real difference. I've been impressed by their enthusiasm to seize every opportunity.

The Future Leaders Scheme is more than a programme. It's a transformative experience. If this excites you, then I would strongly encourage you to apply."



Why apply?

The benefits for you

The scheme is a fantastic opportunity for up and coming engineers and technicians to enhance their professional development, increase their confidence, and boost their career by learning from industry leaders and working on projects that shape the profession. It creates lasting opportunities through access to the alumni network.

The benefits for your employer

The scheme provides a unique platform for employers to accelerate the development of their Future Leaders.

It also creates opportunities to raise the profile of those employers, highlighting their commitment to the profession and increasing their reputation as an employer of choice.

In return, the ICE asks them to support their Future Leader by allowing them the time they need to take part and to help take advantage of leadership opportunities and experiences in-house.

How you help the institution

The scheme allows the ICE an insight into the thinking and ambitions of the upcoming generation.

It sustains the Presidents' Future Leaders' Alumni Network, a small but influential group of engineers that provide a unique cross-generation perspective on the profession.

And it helps the ICE to showcase the talents of the next generation of industry leaders.

Testimonial



Melanie Barker

President's Apprentice under Geoff French, 2013-2014

"From a personal level it was an amazing experience, being able to represent the ICE in this way and support the current president was really good at building my confidence.

I learnt a lot from Geoff in that year and to be able to shadow such an experienced engineer was monumental for me.

It broadened my horizons with regards to what can be achieved in the world as a collective working together.

Seeing how valuable building those key networks are to the engineering world, with regards to knowledge sharing, collaboration and innovation amongst the profession."



ICE President David Porter with his Future Leaders



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Frequently asked questions

How much time is involved?

You will need roughly 15 days out of the office over the year to attend meetings networking events. You may need to do some additional work in your own time. You need your employers' support, but they should recognise that the ICE will be helping to accelerate your development.

What training and development will I get?

We will discuss training and development options with you that will help you achieve your aims.

How often will I see the president?

You will see the president throughout the year, typically every six weeks, in a variety of different forums: stakeholder meetings, regional visits, individual and group meetings, and mentoring sessions.

How long does it last?

The scheme lasts for one year. You have the option of continuing to work on ICE development projects for a further four years or until you have gained professional qualification with the ICE, if sooner.

What happens afterwards?

You will be part of the alumni network from the moment you become a President's Future Leader and for the remainder of your time as an ICE member.

How many places are available?

There are between six and eight places for the coming year.

Apply today!

If you want to take part, complete the application form and submit it with your CV and a reference from your line manager by 17 July 2026.

You must also answer the following question: how can the civil and infrastructure sector remove class-related barriers so people from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds can enter the profession, progress, and reach leadership?

Interviews for the shortlisted candidates will take place on 6 October 2026.

You will be invited to attend the inaugural presidential address on 3 November 2026.

Your first meeting as President's Future Leader will take place on 4 November 2026.

[Download the application form](#)

With thanks to the following companies for their support for the 2025-2026 Future Leaders:



Tony Gee

