

Alumni profiles

Questionnaire

- Name: Thea Bjaaland
 - Nationality: Norwegian
 - Course studied at Southampton: MA Transnational Studies
 - Year of graduation: 2009
 - Current position (job role or title): Project officer
-

Questions about your experience with us

(Maximum of 100 words for each answer)

- What did you enjoy about the course?
I really enjoyed that there were students from very diverse backgrounds – from different countries and continents, but also of different ages, opinions, interests and backgrounds. The group atmosphere was really nice and we had great discussions – both during class and afterwards! The course content was very interesting and topical, and the lecturers were interesting and interested, supportive and inspiring.
- What is Southampton like as a place to study?
I enjoyed my time as a student in Southampton – the University campus is nice with lots of green spaces (even ponds with ducks!) and the University lecturers are highly qualified and inspiring. The city itself has also many green spaces, as well as plentiful of shopping opportunities, and it's easy to get to places like the Isle of Wight, the New Forest, and London. I have some great memories from my time at the University of Southampton, and I'm really pleased I chose it as my place of study.
- Tell us about your current job?
I'm working with migrant women who have been living in Norway for several years without finding work. We only work with 10 women at a time per project officer, so we're able to follow each woman closely and help with anything from learning Norwegian, to health and family matters, and applying for jobs. The main goal is paid work, but we see that the women are thriving when meeting other women in similar situations, becoming more confident, happier and healthier. This will not only benefit themselves, but their children, their network and the society too. I'm really enjoying it!
- How did your course help you in your current role?

I'm using the knowledge and the skills that I acquired during the course every day: when talking to the women that I work with and learning about their situation, their country and culture, and when presenting in meetings and discussing topics related to migration. I also know that they invited only people with Master degrees when they interviewed for the job! It shows that you need a higher degree to stand out in a competitive job market.

- What advice would you give to a student starting their degree at Southampton?
 - Talk to the lecturers – they're great and really supportive
 - Get to know some international students (if you're not one yourself)
 - Volunteer – do something that you enjoy, but that also will be useful on your CV when you start applying for jobs
 - Go for long walks on the Common and get out of the university 'bubble' every so often
 - It's hard work, but it's worth it – and it only lasts one year. Make the most of it!