



**ROFFEY PARK
INSTITUTE**

Jisc

Leadership Development

A UK data, digital and technology Agency

Jisc is a social enterprise that provides a broad range of technology infrastructure, products, services, and sector expertise to higher and further education and research institutions. They work closely with the UK's universities and colleges as well as key national institutions such as the British Library and the National Archives.

The Challenge

In March 2021, Jisc partnered with Roffey Park Institute to co-design a Leadership Development programme for 200 people leaders and 60 strategic leaders within Jisc. Our client sought a supplier who would co-design a programme that would assist in embedding their newly published People strategy whilst also equipping their people managers with the skills to become authentic and inspirational leaders.

Jisc sought a particular focus on upskilling their people and strategic leaders' ability to give effective feedback, and develop their strategic thinking, communication, prioritisation, inclusivity and self-awareness. Our client emphasised their desire to establish the long-term sustainability of the programme through developing the in-house capabilities of Jisc employees.

The Solution

We partnered with Jisc to co-create a Leadership Development programme for their people managers and strategic leaders. The solution we designed together consisted of 6 virtual modules, Insights Discovery personal development profiles and 360 reports on participants, action learning sets (ALS), facilitation skills training, in-house coaching, online masterclasses, and access to Moodle our online Learning Management System (LMS). A combination of internal facilitators and alternative suppliers designed and delivered modules 1 and 8.

We have delivered to 20 cohorts of up to 20 delegates since September 2021. It was important to Jisc to have mixed cohorts to give participants a diagonal slice perspective of Jisc, to enable them to see where there were similarities and differences in experiences across the organisation and at different levels.

The programme was delivered in four 90-minute sessions on the following topics:

1. Emotional Intelligence & Self-Awareness
2. Influence & Communication
3. Feedback for Performance
4. Leading Teams
5. Strategic Awareness
6. Leading change

Before each of these modules, learners were issued a variety of pre-work activities through our LMS such as reading materials, access to videos, and exposure to new ideologies such as the GROW coaching model.

Learners also attended a digital launch event before the first module to set the programme's expectations and objectives. This enabled us to engage with the appropriate stakeholders to ensure our programme reflected Jisc's current needs and organisational culture.

Before attending module 1, participants received their Insights Discovery personal development profiles and 360-degree feedback. These tools help reveal to leaders their leadership style, their strengths and weaknesses, value to their teams, communication styles, and suggestions for further development. These insights were explored in Module 1, which was delivered by Jisc's internal learning and development team.

Embedded throughout each individual's learning journey were five internally facilitated Action Learning Sets. During these interactive sessions, groups of leaders from across Jisc would meet to resolve work-related problems, to come away with a set of realistic actions that could be integrated into the workplace. These sessions enable individuals to see how others approach challenges and expose ways of working. This encouraged participants to learn how to engage in difficult conversations, navigate conflict, and improve their communication and collaboration skills.

Roffey Park Institute provided facilitation skills training for 15 in-house Jisc coaches around action learning to develop internal capability and generate sustainable change beyond the lifetime of the programme.

To conclude our work with Jisc leaders, Jisc ran a celebration event. This was to recognise and appreciate the efforts of participants and aimed to motivate learners to continue applying their newfound skills to become authentic leaders and embed Jisc's new People Strategy. It provided an additional opportunity for leaders across the organisation to meet and network, strengthening the sense of community and shared understanding of accountability to embed the new People Strategy.

Programme Impact

It was important to Jisc to evaluate the impact of the programme and we strive to constantly champion our client's needs. Such continuous improvement helps us to evolve our solutions to meet clients' emerging needs. To this end, during our partnership with Jisc, we evaluated the programme to assess its impact.

The key focus of our evaluation was on the immediate, and long-term impact of the programme on its participants and the whole organisation and was conducted through focus groups and surveys. Key findings revealed that participants valued the interactive aspects of the programme and sought the length of the facilitated modules to be shorter to increase the space and time for break-out discussions and the application of theory to practice.

Leveraging these insights, we amended our programme to be delivered over a longer period and allocated more time for the interactive elements of our solution so participants could practice transferring the learning and engage in reflective discussion in breakout groups.

Our evaluation revealed that overall participants felt an increased confidence in their leadership and management skills. Participants reported that the Action Learning Sets were the most positive and powerful element of the programme.



One learner told us:

The ALS has been a revelation to me. I felt quite sceptical at first about how much I'd gain from it, but I've benefited a lot. I've learned that there is some diverse experience across Jisc, and some excellent attentive listeners.

Another participant, in response to mixed cohorts, found:

...impacted my confidence (in a positive way) to know that everyone had very similar issues, challenges.

Participants reported significant changes to their ways of thinking and leadership practice. Some specific examples of how this programme impacted participants thinking included their improved view of diversity and inclusion, emotional intelligence, influencing skills, and generally, a variety of communication styles used aligned with contemporary leadership. They also expressed seeing the importance of being able to create a safe space for their teams to be able to express their opinions and comfortably share their vulnerability.

Significant changes to learners practice include, but are not limited to:



A more inclusive leadership approach, with increased awareness of diversity and emotional intelligence. Stronger abilities to manage up, down and across the organisation.



Enhanced influencing skills and the adoption of diverse communication styles whilst creating safe spaces for teams to express opinions and vulnerabilities. Addressing any biases to foster increased psychological safety.



Coaching techniques, and ALS principles are now brought to project meetings and support groups enhancing their effectiveness and productivity and promoting active networking across the wider organisation.

A contributing factor to these changes was the mixed cohorts which enabled participants to network and connect across the organisation.

We are proud that the leadership programme we co-designed with Jisc was shortlisted in 2023 for 'Most Innovative Institute Approved Programme award' by The Institute of Leadership



Roffey Park have been an excellent co-pilot on our journey of leadership development at Jisc. I have valued their flexibility and creativity and preparedness to make changes based on feedback. It was essential to me that we develop a sustainable programme, developing inhouse skills and capabilities to deliver impactful aspects such as action learning.

This has had positive ripple effects across Jisc in terms of a strong coaching and leadership culture and I'm proud of what the programme has achieved and continues to achieve! – Harriet Attwood - Head of Talent Development at Jisc.