

24 JULY 2026

A Global Leadership Development Programme for **The Access Group**



LEADERS IN A GLOBAL BUSINESS

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WORD COUNT - 2098

WHY THE ACCESS GROUP NEEDS GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY NOW

WELCOME TO GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

This brochure explains why The Access Group needs stronger global leadership capability as it expands across international markets. It outlines the business case, key global leadership competencies, and a practical development programme for managers working across cultures and regions. It also presents the rollout approach, governance, evaluation measures, expected investment and potential organisational return.

The Access Group has moved beyond a UK-centred model into a complex multinational operation. In FY2025, it served more than 160,000 customers across Europe, the United States and Asia-Pacific and employed an average of 9,732 people. Ten acquisitions across seven countries added 1,296 colleagues, while 42% of the workforce had joined through acquisition (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025). Growth is supported by Global Operations Centres in Romania and Malaysia, alongside expansion in the US and APAC.

This creates three leadership challenges: integrating acquired teams into one culture, coordinating geographically dispersed employees, and communicating consistent priorities across different cultural, legal and stakeholder environments. Recent research shows that global virtual teams face communication, trust and coordination risks when cultural and geographic distance are not actively managed (Liu, 2025).

Domestic UK management practices are therefore insufficient. We recommend a structured Global Leadership Development Programme that establishes common standards while enabling locally appropriate leadership.



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Global Leadership Is Not Domestic Leadership at Greater Scale

Domestic leadership

- Familiar assumptions
- Common institutional context
- Shared communication context
- Local stakeholders
- Direct interaction
- Greater predictability

Global leadership

- Multiple or conflicting assumptions
- Different legal and political systems
- Language and interpretation risks
- Multi-level stakeholder networks
- Virtual and distributed relationships
- Complexity, ambiguity and interdependence

Global leadership is not domestic leadership delivered across more countries. It requires leaders to interpret cultural differences, coordinate across boundaries and build trust where communication is technology-mediated. Cultural and emotional intelligence can reduce task, relationship and process conflict in global virtual teams (Davaei et al., 2022). Virtual leadership requires deliberate communication, role clarity and relationship-building because distance weakens information exchange and understanding (Bell, McAlpine and Hill, 2023).

For The Access Group, this distinction matters. Its operations span Europe, the United States and Asia-Pacific, including centres in Romania and Malaysia (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025). Managers must combine a global mindset with culturally intelligent behaviour: maintaining Access-wide priorities while adapting communication, feedback and decision-making to local contexts. Without this capability, UK-centred practices may cause misunderstanding, weaker engagement and inconsistent execution across regions.



The Strategic Value of Global Leadership Development



Value created

The Access Group's acquisition-led expansion creates a clear need for leaders who can integrate new teams, coordinate dispersed operations and maintain consistent priorities across Europe, the United States and Asia-Pacific (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025). A structured programme could strengthen cross-border decision-making, accelerate integration of acquired businesses, and create a stronger pipeline for international and regional roles, as well as stronger succession planning capability. International assignments can generate organisational value through knowledge transfer, relationship building and capability development, but that value must be deliberately managed and measured (Renshaw, Parry and Dickmann, 2024). Coaching can also improve performance, engagement and other organisational outcomes when it is integrated into workplace practice (Cannon-Bowers et al., 2023).

Risks of inaction

Without formal preparation, managers may interpret unfamiliar behaviour through home-country assumptions, increasing conflict in global virtual teams (Davai et al., 2022). Weak language and communication strategies can also slow post-acquisition integration and undermine organisational legitimacy (Malik et al., 2023). For Access, excessive centralisation may suppress local knowledge, weaken collaboration and create inconsistent leadership across acquired teams (Bauer et al., 2024). These risks could damage retention, stakeholder confidence and reputation.

Training alone does not guarantee improvement. Leadership development creates value when it addresses strategic needs, includes practice, receives senior support and is measured through workplace outcomes (Geerts, 2024). Approval should therefore depend on a phased programme linked to live cross-border projects and indicators such as retention, engagement, internal mobility, project delivery and stakeholder confidence.



THE CAPABILITIES THE ACCESS GROUP MUST DEVELOP

Access's growth through expansion and acquisitions requires leaders who can combine global consistency with local judgement (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025).

Global mindset - Leaders connect decisions across regions, challenge UK-centred assumptions and consider consequences for employees and acquired businesses. Hasse (2022) argues that global mindset develops through perspective transformation, not information alone. For Access, observable behaviour includes consulting regional colleagues before standardising policy.

Cultural intelligence - Managers notice behaviour, seek context, test interpretations and adapt. Cultural and emotional intelligence can reduce task, process and relationship conflict in global virtual teams (Davai et al., 2022). Access leaders should ask questions before attributing conduct to competence or motivation.

Global dexterity - Leaders adapt meetings, feedback and influencing styles to different cultural contexts while preserving authenticity, ethics and Access's values. Effective adaptation requires cultural awareness and behavioural flexibility, but should not become imitation or acceptance of unethical practices (Semenov and Randrianasolo, 2024; Villesèche, Klitmøller and Bjørnholt Michaelsen, 2024).

Cross-cultural communication and relationship-building - Managers use plain language, confirm understanding, invite dissent and create communication routines. Communication is central to trust, cohesion and coordination in culturally diverse virtual teams (Liu, 2025).

Ethical and stakeholder judgement - Leaders assess decisions against their effects on employees, customers, regulators, communities and partners. Stakeholder theory links responsible decision-making with strategy and performance rather than treating ethics as separate from business (Mahajan et al., 2023).

Leading distributed and virtual teams - Managers clarify decision rights, share information inclusively, manage time-zone inequality and maintain connection. Effective virtual leadership depends on communication, coordination and relationship management (Bell, McAlpine and Hill, 2023).

Emotional intelligence supports all six capabilities through self-awareness, regulation and empathy. Access should assess these competencies through observed behaviour, multisource feedback and results in cross-border work-not attendance or self-confidence alone.



THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME: LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE

The Access Global Leader Programme will combine diagnosis, learning and workplace application across Access's international operations (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025).

Diagnostic assessment. Participants will complete leadership and cultural intelligence assessments, a stakeholder map and short interviews with line managers. These tools will identify priorities, capability gaps and cross-border challenges, establish baselines and define measurable development objectives. Structured needs analysis improves programme relevance and supports later evaluation of individual and organisational outcomes (CIPD, 2023; Geerts, 2024).

Module 1 - Global mindset and strategic awareness. Managers will examine global versus domestic leadership, institutional differences, stakeholder complexity and the risks of applying UK-centred assumptions across markets.

Module 2 - Cultural intelligence and global dexterity. Simulations will require participants to interpret unfamiliar behaviour, test assumptions, avoid national stereotypes and adapt without compromising Access's values. Cultural and emotional intelligence can reduce conflict within global virtual teams (Davaei et al., 2022).

Module 3 - Global communication and relationships. Participants will practise active listening, plain-language communication, confirmation of understanding, trust-building and culturally appropriate feedback.

Module 4 - Leading distributed teams. Managers will establish clear decision rights, inclusive hybrid-meeting routines, time-zone fairness and relationship-building. Effective virtual leadership depends on communication, coordination and social connection (Bell, McAlpine and Hill, 2023).

Module 5 - Ethical leadership and stakeholder responsibility. Case discussions will examine conflicting legal, commercial and cultural expectations, escalation, accountability and protection of organisational values (Antunez, Ramalho and Marques, 2024; Tolstoy, Melén Hånell and Ghauri, 2025).

Module 6 - Applied global leadership challenge. Cross-regional teams will solve a live Access problem involving at least two markets, present recommendations to senior sponsors and reflect on their behaviour.

Delivery will blend short workshops, Access-supported digital learning, simulations, case studies, coaching, mentoring, peer groups, action learning and reflective journals. Coaching has positive effects on organisational and behavioural outcomes, although results depend on design and context (Cannon-Bowers et al., 2023). Workshops can introduce concepts, but classroom knowledge alone does not ensure workplace transfer. Practice, feedback, sponsorship and line-manager reinforcement must be built into the programme and evaluated over time (Geerts, 2024). Participants will receive a toolkit, while progress will be reviewed at milestones by participants, managers and coaches.

Five Practices for the First 90 Days

01 Listen before interpreting

Observe, ask questions and avoid judging unfamiliar behaviour through UK-centred assumptions. Cultural intelligence can reduce conflict when leaders examine context before concluding (Davaei et al., 2022).

02 Make expectations explicit

Clarify roles, deadlines, decision rights, escalation routes, channels and response times across regions (Sperry et al., 2025)

03 Confirm understanding

Do not treat silence as agreement. Ask colleagues to summarise decisions, responsibilities and next steps. Deliberate communication supports trust and coordination in global virtual teams (Liu, 2025).

04 Adapt without stereotyping

Use cultural frameworks to generate questions, not fixed judgements. Adjust feedback, meetings and influence while protecting Access's values.

05 Map stakeholders locally

Identify formal authority, informal influence, specialist knowledge and those affected by decisions. Stakeholder mapping supports responsible judgement (Mahajan et al., 2023).

One Global Standard, Locally Relevant Delivery



The Access Global Leader Programme should follow a “global core, local flexibility” model. The global core will define Access’s leadership purpose, ethical expectations, six competencies and assessment standards. This provides consistency across Europe, the United States and Asia-Pacific while supporting integration across acquired businesses and Global Operations Centres (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025).

Local delivery should adapt language, examples, cultural scenarios, regulatory content, scheduling and facilitation. Regional stakeholders should test relevance before launch. This avoids two extremes: complete standardisation, which may reproduce headquarters assumptions, and unrestricted localisation, which could fragment Access’s leadership identity. Recent evidence indicates that multinational organisations achieve stronger alignment when they pursue global integration and local responsiveness simultaneously, while leadership programmes are more relevant when affected stakeholders inform their design (Chung and Sparrow, 2024; Geerts, 2024).

Scaling risks require controls. Language barriers should be addressed through translation, multilingual facilitation and plain-language materials. Cultural resistance requires consultation and region-specific cases. Unequal access should be reduced through digital learning, supported workshops and asynchronous resources. Separate pathways should serve new, middle and senior managers, while certified facilitators and standards protect consistency. Global virtual-team research identifies communication, cultural interpretation, trust and coordination as recurring challenges, supporting regional cohorts and communication practices (Liu, 2025).

Dissemination will combine executive sponsorship, regional champions, certified internal facilitators, Access-supported digital learning, local HR partners, cross-border mentoring, communities of practice and an annual leadership forum. Learning transfer should be reinforced through line-manager reviews, cross-border projects and opportunities to apply new skills; recent evidence emphasises that formal, informal and self-regulated learning must be socially supported and integrated into work (Kauffeld, Decius and Graßmann, 2025). Controlled adaptation offers the strongest route to scale, relevance and consistency.

A Phased and Measurable Rollout

Phase 1 - Diagnose and design (Months 1-2). Confirm priorities, select participants, assess capability, consult stakeholders and establish baselines.

Phase 2 - Pilot (Months 3-5). Test the programme with managers from Europe, the United States and Asia-Pacific, reflecting Access's footprint (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025). Gather line-manager feedback, compare delivery methods and revise weak elements.

Phase 3 - Scale (Months 6-12). Certify facilitators, launch regional cohorts and introduce mentoring and action-learning projects. Monitor participation, quality and consistency.

Phase 4 - Embed (from Month 12). Integrate the six competencies into recruitment, performance management, promotion and succession planning. This converts temporary training into an organisational leadership system.

Governance should include an executive sponsor, programme board, HR learning lead, regional representatives, local managers and an external consultant responsible for design assurance and evaluation.

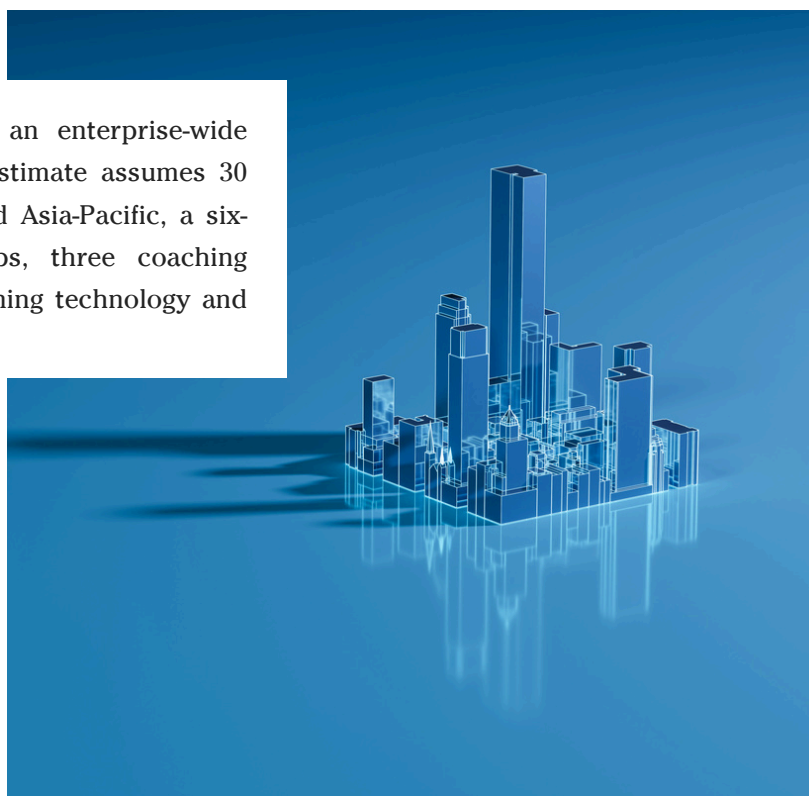
Evaluation must move beyond attendance and satisfaction. It should measure learning experience, capability development, workplace behaviour and organisational results. Indicators include cultural-intelligence improvement, retention, multinational-team engagement, cross-border project performance, internal mobility, stakeholder satisfaction and fewer cultural escalations. Effective evaluation begins with outcomes and continues after delivery, while workplace support is essential for learning transfer (Geerts, 2024; Kauffeld, Decius and Graßmann, 2025).



Investment with Measurable Organisational Return

Investment should begin with a pilot, not an enterprise-wide commitment (Helm, 2024). This illustrative estimate assumes 30 managers from Europe, the United States and Asia-Pacific, a six-month blended programme, four workshops, three coaching sessions per participant, existing Access learning technology and limited travel.

Cost category	Estimate
Diagnosis and design	£18,000
Assessments	£6,000
Facilitation and simulations	£24,000
Coaching and mentoring	£27,000
Technology and localisation	£8,000
Travel	£10,000
Evaluation and governance	£8,000
Participant time	£15,000
Indicative pilot investment	£116,000



These are planning assumptions, not supplier quotations. Final cost must be confirmed after diagnosis. Access's international scale and acquisition strategy justify testing before wider rollout (Access Technology Group Limited, 2025).

Return should include financial and strategic outcomes:

$$\text{ROI (\%)} = (\text{monetised benefits} - \text{programme costs}) \div \text{programme costs} \times 100$$

If verified first-year benefits reached \$175,000 through lower turnover, reduced external recruitment, faster integration into global roles and improved cross-border project delivery, illustrative ROI would be 51%. Benefits must be evidenced, not assumed. Leadership development produces stronger returns when objectives, workplace application, organisational support and evaluation are designed together (Geerts, 2024). Coaching can improve organisational outcomes, although effectiveness varies by design and context (Cannon-Bowers et al., 2023). We recommend, in principle, approval of the diagnostic and pilot phase, followed by evidence-based refinement and phased rollout.

Decision required: approve the \$116,000 pilot envelope.

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