



**CONVENIENCE LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAMME  
2021**

## ▶▶▶ THE PARTNERS



Here at Surrey Business School our executive education brings together experts in academia and industry to deliver a range of innovative courses, seminars and workshops; alongside more tailored and bespoke executive programmes to support your specific business needs. We equip leaders and managers with the knowledge to make sense of their business environment, inform organisational change and execute responses that are fit for purpose and effective.

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) is the voice of over 33,500 local shops, supporting members through effective lobbying, comprehensive advice and innovative networking opportunities. Over and above lobbying the Government the ACS support their members with a variety of different services, e.g. reports, events and advice. During the programme you will participate in various ACS events and get to know ACS representatives and other members.



## ▶▶▶ WELCOME TO THE CONVENIENCE PROGRAMME



Launching this programme in 2020 has certainly been challenging and eventful, we had to show great resilience, flexibility and be open to change as we navigated through an unprecedented time.

The switch to online sessions enabled us to invite some high-profile sector experts which added even more value to the programme. Due to its success this year, the blended learning approach is here to stay to feature both online and face to face elements.

It would be a pleasure to welcome you onto the programme in 2021.

**Sabine Benoit**  
Professor of Marketing,  
Surrey Business School, University of Surrey  
[S.Benoit@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:S.Benoit@surrey.ac.uk)



We were blown away by the quality of the students, lecturers and content in the first year of the Convenience Leadership Programme. From a standing start, and facing unforeseen disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Sabine Benoit and her team at Surrey Business School delivered a compelling programme that has turbo charged the development of many of our industry's future leaders.

In the space of just a year, this course has become recognised by CEOs around the industry as the gold standard for executive education in the convenience store sector. It gives a grounding in operations, information management, entrepreneurship, innovation and management, all tailored to the specific needs of our sector.

The 2021 course will take everything we have learned in our first year and make this fantastic development opportunity available to more of our industry's brightest people even more valuable. I strongly recommend booking now to make sure you are part of this journey.

**James Lowman**  
Chief Executive,  
Association of Convenience Stores



## ▶▶▶ WHO IS THE PROGRAMME FOR?



An **area manager, function head or member of a buying team** from a retailer or wholesaler that aims to step up towards more responsibility by better understanding the breadth of issues and factors related to the convenience market, and the levers that can be pulled to influence store and business performance.



The **next generation within the family business or top performer within an independent retailer** that aims to take the family business forward, but wants to gain knowledge beyond its own business to appreciate wider issues and network with other like-minded individuals in the sector.



**Sales specialist** from suppliers of convenience stores that aims to become the business's expert in the growing convenience sector to devise better strategies.



**Consultants, market research specialists or journalists** that aim to become a convenience expert and see strategic issues from a variety of viewpoints and ensure an understanding on how these play out operationally.

## ▶▶▶ WHY SIGN UP FOR THIS PROGRAMME?

- You'll understand what's changing in convenience retailing, and why.
- You'll learn the skills to make and implement effective decisions in this industry, and acquire a great network of like-minded people and senior mentors.
- Doing this course will help you move ahead with your business and your career!



## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

| TOPIC  | DELIVERY              |
|--|-----------------------|
| Session 1: Thursday 11 March, 4pm-5.30pm. Introduction to the programme and networking   | Online                |
| Session 2: Wednesday 24 March, full day. Analyzing the factors affecting the convenience sector<br>Social evening: Store visit                           | Surrey                |
| Session 3: Thursday 25 March, full day. Personal development and career positioning  |                       |
| Session 4: Monday 12 April, full day. Making attractive value propositions in convenience retailing<br>Social evening: ACS international dinner          | Birmingham            |
| Session 5: Tuesday 13 April, full day. ACS Summit  |                       |
| Session 6: Tuesday 20 April, 4pm-5.30pm. reflection on the Summit  | Online                |
| Session 7: Tuesday 11 May, 2pm-3.30pm, 4.00-5.30pm. Data and decision making in the convenience sector   |                       |
| Session 8: Monday 7 June, full day. Supply chain management, entrepreneurial practices and innovation management<br>Social evening: Convenience pub quiz | Surrey/<br>London     |
| Session 9: Tuesday 8 June, half day. Store and customer management   |                       |
| Session 10: Tuesday 8 June, half day. ACS Store Tour, London   |                       |
| Session 11: Tuesday 15 June, 3.30-5.00pm. Feedback session from ACS Study Tour   | Online                |
| Session 12: Tuesday 6 July, half day. ACS Study Tour   | Manchester/<br>Online |
| Session 13: Tuesday 6 July presentation of the final projects and graduation   |                       |

## PROGRAMME MODULES

### Session 1: Introduction to the programme

### Session 2: Analysing the factors affecting the convenience sector

- How is the convenience sector impacted by demographics, technology politics, economics and society?
- What does ethical retailing mean, and why does it matter?

### Session 3: Personal and professional development

- How can we manage competing business pressures?
- How can we best communicate with others?
- How to handle difficult conversations
- How can we network, influence and present your best self?

### Session 4: Making attractive value propositions

- What are the key market trends, and how are the needs of the convenience consumer changing?
- How can we decide on the right offer for a convenience store, and how do we evolve it in line with our customers?
- How do we make decisions on pricing and national, local and in-store marketing?
- What is great service and how do we deliver customer satisfaction?

### Session 5 and 6: ACS Summit

- Participation in ACS Summit
- Reflection session on the Summit, what does it mean to my business?

### Session 7: Data and decision making in the convenience sector

- What data sources are available to support decision making in convenience retailing?
- How can this data be integrated into the decision making?

### Session 8: Innovation thinking and supply chain management

- How different kinds of companies innovate?
- How can innovations be managed and how can organisations be more agile?
- How is our supply chain and the way we source products changing?
- How do we manage the supply of products and services into stores?
- What do good relationships with suppliers look like?

### Session 9: Store and customer management

- What's the future of store design and layout?
- How can data help us to control stores and grow sales?
- How do we get stock levels, inventory, health and safety, security and systems right?
- How do we find, develop, keep and inspire our colleagues?

### Session 10 and 11: ACS Study Tour

### Session 12 and 13: ACS Study Tour / Presentation of final projects and graduation

## ▶▶▶ TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT APPROACH

### Outcomes of the programme:

Students successfully completing the programme will have

- a solid strategic and practical knowledge of convenience retailing, knowledge of the portfolio and activities from the ACS.
- gained a network of like-minded people within the sector.

### Cohort:

Going through the programme as a cohort is an important part of the programme, it will allow candidates to get to know each other and exchange experiences openly. It is usually the foundation of a lifelong network.

### Teaching approach:

This is an applied, evidenced-based programme that aims to be directly relevant to business decisions in convenience retailing, but also has a sound basis in academic and practical evidence. The modules will usually have a theory and a practical component. The programme structure is aligned with various ACS activities and embeds them into the curriculum.

### Assessment:

The assessment has two components. First, attendance and active participation in the modules. Second, you will be conducting a consultancy or research project and compose a final report.

### Final project:

The final project and report summarising the results of the project will cover one particular topic in convenience retailing in-depth. It can be proposed by the employer of the participant funding the programme or by the participant him/herself. The report will enhance the convenience retailing related knowledge of the participant and deliver insights to the employer and the sector. All the projects are presented at the end of the programme, which will also enable the participants to practice their presentation skills and enhance the knowledge of the entire group through the insights generated in the final projects. The final presentations will be supervised by staff from Surrey Business School.

## ▶▶▶ FEEDBACK FROM 2020

“Overall an excellent programme with so much context and so many learnings to help shape my future and the business I work for. The involvement from the ACS has also been key and you can see the passion from the team it creates such a buzz!”

**Participant 2020 Programme**

“It was great fun to help deliver the Convenience Leadership Programme, and I learned a lot from taking part. Along with other experienced retailers I shared my experiences and perspectives on the industry to help the students get a practical understanding of the challenges and opportunities of running convenience stores. I was really impressed with the students taking part in the course – they were energetic, inquisitive and committed.”

**Jonathan James, Teacher 2020 Programme  
Owner, James Convenience Retail Ltd**

“The networking I have gained is invaluable. The learnings from experienced retailers, the ability to engage in conversation and learn from other retailers on the course was fantastic and great to be able to discuss personal experiences to take back to the business we work for.”

**Participant 2020 Programme**





## ▶▶▶ HOW TO SIGN UP

### Degree

At the end of having successfully accomplished the programme you will receive a graduation certificate attesting you a “Convenience Leadership Programme graduate” from the University of Surrey.

### Entry Requirements

We accept applicants with a wide range of educational and business experience to study in the “Convenience Leadership Programme”. There is no need for a previous degree in the higher education sector, but experience in the convenience retailing sector is required.

### English Language Requirements

You will need good written and spoken English language skills.

### Fees

This programme is offered in partnership with the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS), UK. Therefore the ACS members receive a preferential tuition fee.

**Premier Club & Retail Members** £3,495

**ACS Club or Connect Members** £4,995

**Non-member rate** £7,500

The fees include all teaching activities and material, refreshments during class, lunch and entry fees for events, but exclude accommodation and food at events.

### Early Bird Discount

Participants signing up on or before **15 January** receive a 5% discount on their tuition fee.

### Scholarships

Depending on the number and composition of participants we might be able to offer partial scholarships to exceptionally talented individuals. Please contact Mark Simmons to apply or receive further information.

### Timelines

Applications can be made up to the start of the programme. However, the group size is limited and we recommend applying early to avoid disappointment.

### The Sign Up Process:

We aim for a cohort of like-minded individuals with expertise and interest in convenience retailing.

Please book on to the programme via the following link: [Convenience-Programme](#)

Please direct queries to Sabine Benoit or Mark Simmons, we are happy to answer them.

### Professor Sabine Benoit

S.Benoit@surrey.ac.uk

Academic Director of the Convenience Leadership Programme

### Mark Simmons

mark.simmons@surrey.ac.uk

Executive Education Coordinator



“Having worked with the ACS for many years including more recently as a Board member, I was delighted to propose two candidates for the inaugural Convenience Leadership Programme. I felt the programme would give these two colleagues a broader perspective on the convenience channel and market as a whole whilst also supporting their own career progression through the development of new skills and importantly an opportunity to network with peers and industry experts.

The programme certainly lived up to these expectations and more. I can see first-hand the confidence gained by our colleagues and how the programme has equipped them to look at their roles through a new perspective and implement a greater extent of solution based thinking. I will be delighted to propose additional candidates whilst also recommending the programme to any organisation looking to develop its colleagues and through the gaining of great insights, access to key people and a broader understanding of the strategic challenges and opportunities ahead.”

### Phil Ponsonby

Group Chief Executive Officer, The Midcounties Co-operative

**Learning is a  
constant process of  
discovery – a process  
without end.**

– Bruce Lee

