



# Institutional Performance Framework and Management

## Promising Practice

*Implemented by:* Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT)

*Where:* United Arab Emirates

*Status:* Launched in November 2017

*Summary:* HCT's Performance Framework and its Management System were combined to create an innovative digitalized managerial practice which boosts competitiveness and overall organizational performance.

## Overview

Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) is the UAE's largest applied higher educational institution, renowned for its agile, innovative and job-focused practices. It has a student body of approximately 23,000 across 16 modern campuses, 71 programmes and 6 faculties. More than 2,000 staff are currently employed from over 80 nationalities and HCT has issued over 89,000 qualifications to about 65,000 graduates.

### Realizing HCT's vision, mission and strategic goals

The impact-driven Institutional Performance Framework (IPF) is a managerial practice that is directly linked to HCT's strategic goals in terms of boosting competitiveness for continuous performance improvements and strategic realignments for the realization of its vision, mission and strategic aspirations. The practice was designed and implemented after a strategy development exercise in 2017.

### Institutional Performance Management System (IPMS)

As the previous performance measurement system and practice had certain disadvantages with questionable accuracy, HCT transformed its management by the establishment of an advanced digital infrastructure called the Institutional Performance Management System (IPMS). The new system has resulted in enhanced data accuracy, data reliability, process efficiency and spare time for developing further insights. HCT communicated the framework to the entire organization through multiple awareness sessions, workshops, townhall meetings, roadshows and digital exchanges.

### Input from a wide range of internal and external stakeholders

A number of key internal and external stakeholders such as students, alumni, staff, employers, industry and technology partners were involved in the development of the Institutional Performance Framework and its implementation through the Institutional Performance Management System.

## Objective

The objective behind its implementation was to address the areas for improvement that were identified in the previous management framework. The target group was all HCT business units, including the academic divisions, campuses and administrative departments.

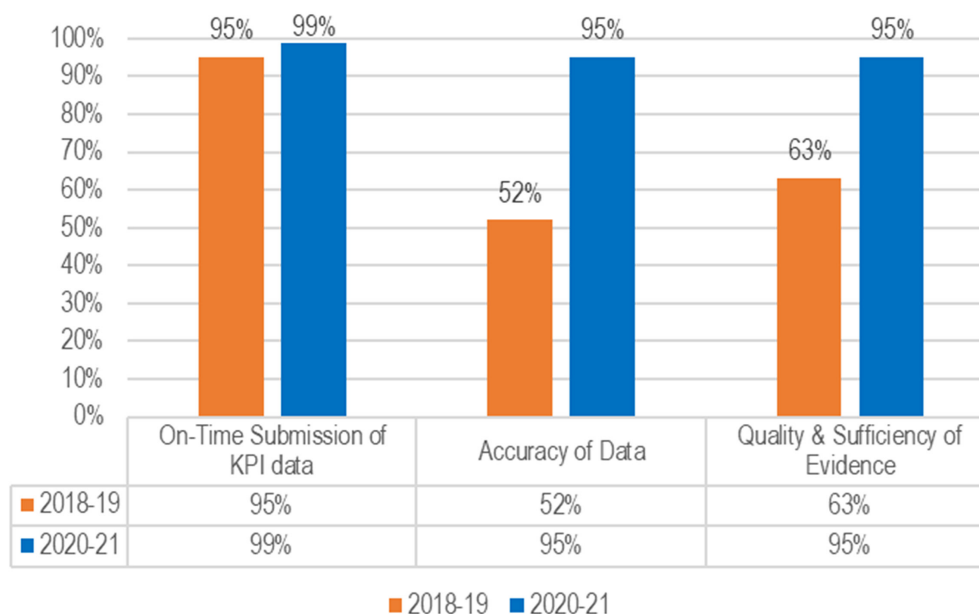
## Fostering institutional agility and innovation

Since its initial deployment, the system has been gradually improved over time. HCT has put considerable efforts into refining the practice and related processes every year to make it more stable and sustainable.

With the adoption of a balanced scorecard methodology in the public higher education system, HCT has embedded three themes aligned with national priorities into the framework, along with goals and objectives to continually boost future readiness. The framework supported the entire organization to work towards institutional goals and implement effective methods to measure performance against set objectives.



## Year-on-year comparison of key activities



Digitalization of the framework added much needed dimensions of agility and innovation. Performance contracts became accessible anytime and from anywhere in the world and the integration of data significantly reduced the amount of time and effort needed to analyse information. In addition, monitoring of the key performance indicators (KPIs) became easier and more robust.

## Outcomes and impact

This practice has had a significant impact on the entire HCT community. With the implementation of the framework:

- Business units are aligned with the strategy and work together towards achieving the set institutional objectives;
- HCT has adopted a performance-driven culture, enhancing overall organizational practices; and
- The leadership and management team can take proactive, data-driven decisions with the aid of comprehensive, real-time business intelligence.

### Validation process

The validation process with integration and automation of KPI data has ensured reliability, while helping management to analyse the root cause of any performance gaps. With this new process, the cycle time for the Institutional Performance Reporting Process has been reduced by 21 days (from 90 days to 69 days), resulting in a cost reduction of 23% for overall process improvement.

A comparison of three years of data shows that accuracy has increased to 95%, on-time reporting of KPIs is up to 99% and quality of evidence provided now stands at 95%. This transformational thinking resulted in the achievement of a 92% overall performance rating and HCT placing third nationally, up from 85% in 2017.

The practice was validated as “Very Good” based on the assessment by the Internal Audit Department and a similar conclusion was made based on internal experiences and usage as compared to previous alternatives. Overall, it produced better results, which eventually became a standardized way of performance management for HCT.

## Challenges and insights

### Resisting digital upgrades

The main challenge during implementation of the practice was natural resistance from employees when faced with a move from a manual to an automated process. This digital upgrade was crucial as HCT firmly believes that sustainability is linked to its capacity to function pre-emptively, with agility and innovation. The institution focuses on implementing adaptive and transformational changes through a periodic benchmarking process and exploring new trends to improve practices towards excellence.



## Seeking staff buy-in for the initiative

HCT selected the practice and performance system based on intensive research and benchmarking with innovative customization. When developing the practice and its digital component, a feasibility study was conducted with internal and external stakeholders and technology partners. Multiple systems were analysed with vendors, along with examining the pros and cons of the same to ensure it was best suited to overcome the identified areas in need of improvement. This extensive process involved several rounds of feedback and helped to achieve buy-in from staff for use of the Institutional Performance Management System.

## What gets measured, gets done

Through its experience of rolling out the framework, HCT has shown that “what gets measured, gets done”. The implementation of the framework and its management has helped the institution to align all of its stakeholders and systems to meet strategic objectives. Also, digitalization has had a significant impact on performance by increasing efficiency and reducing the required resources to ensure competitiveness and future readiness.

## Next steps

The government of UAE and the management of HCT have systems and methods for reviewing the practice and analysing the results based on monitoring and evaluation. In this way, the practice is always benefitting from continuous improvements and digital transformation to achieve the required and desired outcomes and impact.

Another important improvement plan is to embed a disruptive capability by the launch and deployment of a predictive measurement system and framework to monitor future scenarios, trends and patterns, thereby boosting future readiness and resilience. This will be accompanied by a benchmarking platform and the integration of a performance management system to track all KPIs (both at strategic and operational level) and to monitor the level of competitiveness in every department.

## Learn more

**Ahmed Samy**, Executive Director of Strategy and Future; **Hana Alyazeedi**, Senior Manager - Institutional Performance; and **Hari Prasad**, Analyst - Institutional Performance at Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE, helped to compile this document.

For more information, please contact:

[halyazeedi@hct.ac.ae](mailto:halyazeedi@hct.ac.ae) and/or  
[officeofedsf@hct.ac.ae](mailto:officeofedsf@hct.ac.ae)

To learn more about HCT, visit:

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