

# Rising Together: Leadership Skills for the Future of Higher Education in Vietnam and Southeast Asia

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## Case Study Highlight: Digital Transformation at HCMUTE

### Challenge Faced by Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education (HCMUTE):

The rapid shift to a digital academic landscape presented a significant hurdle: a **lack of digitalization skills in the workforce**, specifically essential **AI skills for teaching staff and administrative personnel**. This skills gap impacts institutional development and the future competitiveness of our graduates. This challenge is multi-faceted, affecting both the primary academic mission (teaching) and institutional efficiency (administration):

- Lacking AI Literacy for Teaching Staff:** Many lecturers lack the necessary skills to integrate AI tools (like Generative AI) effectively into their pedagogy, curriculum design, and research. This can lead to:
- **Outdated Teaching Methods:** Reliance on traditional methods, which fail to prepare students for an AI-driven job market.
  - **Hesitation/Lack of Confidence:** Faculty feeling unsure or hesitant about the ethical and practical application of new technologies, which ultimately slows down innovation.
  - **Inability to Guide Students:** Lecturers are challenged to teach students how to critically evaluate and responsibly use AI, which is a key skill to prevent over-reliance and academic integrity issues.

#### HCMUTE's Leadership Response:

- To address this challenge, HCMUTE's management staff initiated a proactive, institution-wide training program.
- **Skills Addressed:** Training in AI tools and essential digital skills was prioritized for lecturers and administrative staff.
  - **Impact:** More than 40 lecturers and over 80 staff members have already been trained.
  - **Future Outlook:** This development is an ongoing commitment, with further training courses planned for the coming years to ensure sustained institutional development and workforce readiness.

### HCMUTE's Leadership Response: Deep Dive into Digital Capacity Building

The proactive training program at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education (HCMUTE) is a strategic intervention focused on creating an AI-Ready Workforce to secure institutional relevance and graduate competitiveness.

#### 1. AI-Driven Skills Addressed

The training goes beyond basic digital literacy and focuses on skills critical for the future of a technical university:

- **AI Integration into Pedagogy:** Training lecturers on how to ethically and effectively incorporate Generative AI tools for creating new learning materials, personalizing student feedback, and designing innovative project-based learning.
- **Data Literacy for Management:** Equipping administrative staff with the skills to use data analytics tools and the university's integrated management systems (e.g., ERP, LMS) to improve efficiency in areas like resource allocation, student enrolment forecasting, and academic quality assurance.
- **Automation and Smart Governance:** Focus on utilizing new digital platforms (like the university's digital archive or AI-powered Q&A portals, as suggested by institutional information) to move toward a "Smart Governance" model, which is a key institutional goal.

#### 2. Impact and Scale of the Initiative

The numbers you provided demonstrate a high-priority, scaled-up commitment:

- **Wide Institutional Reach:** Training more than 40 lecturers and over 80 staff members ensures that the knowledge is disseminated across both the core academic units (lecturers) and the central support/management units (staffs). This prevents the "digital divide" from developing within the university itself.
- **Setting an Institutional Standard:** By making this training an ongoing commitment with courses planned for future years, the university's management is establishing digital competence, especially in AI, as a core professional requirement for all personnel, not just an optional skill.

#### 3. Strategic Alignment and Future Outlook

This specific capacity-building project aligns perfectly with HCMUTE's broader strategic vision, which, according to its official reports, includes:

- **Academic Theme:** The focus on training supports the institutional goal of "Smart governance & Empowering the HCMUTE brand".
- **International Integration:** By developing internal capacity first, HCMUTE strengthens its position to attract and engage in international cooperation in education and research, particularly in high-demand fields like Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, which are core training programs at the university.

HCMUTE is one of the leading institutions in engineering and technology education in Vietnam, with more than 30,000 students. The university has around 15 faculties and institutes, supported by a team of 671 full-time lecturers, including 72 Associate Professors and 321 PhD holders. With a modern learning environment, advanced laboratory and workshop facilities, and highly experienced faculty, HCMUTE not only trains high-quality engineers, bachelor's degree holders, and technical educators but also serves as a reputable center for research and technology transfer.



HCMUTE and the European Union Delegation to Vietnam Strengthen Cooperation Toward Sustainable Development in Education and Renewable Energy



The German Career Orientation Tour arrives at HCMUTE



HCMUTE and Bosch Vietnam held an inauguration ceremony for the Continuously Variable Transmission Laboratory Bosch Transmission Lab



Training AI skills for staffs and lecturers.



Vietnam-Germany Training Center, HCMUTE



60 years of cooperation between HCMUTE and Germany ceremony