

Institutional culture

Institutional culture refers to the **shared values, norms, beliefs, practices, and assumptions** that shape the behavior and identity of an organization or institution — such as a hospital, university, corporation, or government body.

* **Unwritten rules**: “How things are done here.” * **Power structures**: Who makes decisions and how. * **Communication style**: Formal vs. informal, transparent vs. opaque. * **Attitudes toward change**: Innovative, conservative, risk-averse, etc. * **Moral tone**: What is rewarded or punished — excellence, loyalty, conformity, silence?

* In a **surgical department**, an institutional culture may value **hierarchy and decisiveness**. * In a **university**, it may promote **intellectual freedom** or, conversely, **bureaucratic inertia**. * In a **corporation**, it could center around **competition, innovation, or compliance**.

Institutional culture influences everything from **decision-making** and **staff morale** to **patient outcomes, academic integrity**, or **employee turnover**. It often persists regardless of individual leadership — and can **resist or facilitate change**.

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