

***The International School of Economics
Tbilisi State University (ISET)***

FACULTY HANDBOOK

2007-08 Academic Year



ISET

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GENERAL

The International School of Economics based at Tbilisi State University (ISET) is a regional “center of excellence” modeled after similar centers supported by the World Bank and other international sponsors in Prague, Budapest, Moscow, and Kyiv. ISET provides graduate instruction in economics which is comparable in content and quality to internationally recognized master’s programs in North America and Western Europe. ISET serves the entire South Caucasus region, as well as surrounding areas. The School offers:

- a two-year *Master's Program in Economics* adhering to international academic standards and taught in English by an international faculty
- an affiliated *research center*, and
- a *regional outreach program* for building capacity for teaching and analysis in other universities, government agencies and think tanks in the South Caucasus.

The ISET Faculty Handbook and Orientation Guide outlines the policies and procedures that have been established to further ISET’s academic mission. The Handbook provides a summary of what is expected of faculty, the rules governing teaching and research, and some information about traveling to and living in Tbilisi.

ACADEMIC ISSUES

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING FACULTY

Faculty members are expected to be engaged in teaching; research supervision; academic research, policy consulting and services consistent with ISET’s mission, and perform administrative duties.

Teaching activities include: offering courses and moderating course-related discussion sections; supervising teaching and research assistants; developing courses or course materials, counseling students regarding future graduate study and professional careers;

Research supervision: each ISET faculty member is expected to advise and actively participate in the guidance of 2nd years students in their MA thesis work. This involves becoming a supervisor of MA theses, leading Research Groups and conducting Research Workshops in their area of expertise. The ISET Director will ensure that there is an equitable distribution of the research supervision workload among all the teaching staff.

Academic research: ISET faculty are expected to be actively engaged in academic research activities. Their performance in this area will be evaluated by their publication record in internationally refereed journals.

Service to the community and outreach activities: ISET encourages faculty involvement in policy analysis relevant to the South Caucasus and their active participation in the public policy discussion that enhances ISET’s visibility in the region; ISET will approach media, government, private sector and civil society organizations in order to promote its publications and research results. ISET will also engage faculty in raising funds for policy research and consulting activities. ISET faculty may also be invited to provide guidance or instruction to faculty and students of partner universities.

Administrative duties: To promote self-governance, faculty are expected to participate in committees dealing with such issues as faculty and student recruitment, library development, disciplinary actions, appeals; they may also be asked to perform auxiliary duties e.g. participate in ISET admissions campaigns, serve on organizing committees for conference and seminars;

In consideration of the important role our host university, Tbilisi State University (TSU), plays, we ask our faculty to make every effort to cooperate with TSU officials when called upon. Service activities with organizations outside ISET, including with other units within TSU, which would require a significant commitment of your time should be approved by the ISET Director or his/her designate.

The following are ISET expectations of faculty:

1. On the first day of class, instructors will distribute a course syllabus. Although there will be variations, this document should contain the following information:
 - A general description of the course
 - Required textbooks and other readings
 - Course outline, if possible by week
 - Grading procedures
 - Due dates for papers/projects and exam dates
 - Expectations of students
 - Office hours
 - Reminders about academic integrity, arrangements for students with disabilities, and excused absences.

Course syllabi for all courses must be submitted to the ISET Academic Affairs Office in electronic format before the start of the miniterm. Professors must e-mail the syllabus at least two weeks before the start of the course to the Director, Eric Livny eric@iset.ge and to the Academic Affairs Officer, Ia Gelashvili ia@iset.ge.

Textbook preferences should be communicated to the Director and Academic Affairs Officer as soon as possible and no later than 2 months before the beginning of a course. This is vital due to the time required to order and ship books and, occasionally, the need to find an alternative.

2. ISET shall have the right to post the course syllabus on the Internet and to use, copy, translate, distribute, publish, or modify works based on the syllabus and course assignments without limit.
3. Students shall have reasonable access to the instructor during regular office hours or by appointment. Instructors are expected to hold regular office hours and make themselves available for other informal discussions and review sessions with students at a mutually agreed time. The norm is two hours of office hours per hour of class time.
4. Faculty must teach all scheduled class meetings except if prevented by circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member. If a faculty member cancels a class due to illness or emergency, he or she must schedule a make-up session as soon as possible.
5. Faculty shall comply with the requirements and procedures of ISET, TSU, and the Ministry of Education and Science; local laws; and the prevailing ethical and professional standards of the international economics profession.
6. Faculty are expected to create and update their profiles on ISET website, including education background, current teaching/research topics, personal interests, and photo. We post faculty profiles and photos on ISET's web page: <http://iset.ge/people.faculty.php>

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT NORMS

ISET faculty are expected to adhere to the highest academic and ethical standards in all aspects of their work, and particularly in regards to student/faculty relations, real and perceived conflict of interest, and issues of confidentiality. Faculty, students, and staff should be treated with respect, fairness, and sensitivity at all times.

Faculty-student relationships should be friendly and professional. Faculty should not enter into personal relationships that may raise questions of conflict of interest or complaints of favoritism or coercion. ISET prohibits discrimination and all forms of harassment based on ethnic origin, national origin, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or physical disability.

Of particular importance for ISET is to maintain an international spirit in dealings among students and faculty. The only language of professional interaction at ISET is English. In particular, faculty and teaching assistants are expected to not use any other languages during instruction and when proctoring tests.

Semi-annual activity reports. Faculty members shall submit to the Director semi-annual reports detailing their teaching, research, and outreach performance during the relevant period, as well as engagement in outside consulting and teaching activities.

Faculty absences. Faculty members are expected to teach all class sessions scheduled. If a faculty member must miss a scheduled meeting for a foreseeable reason, he or she must either arrange for a qualified substitute instructor or reschedule the class at a time when all participating students are able to attend. ISET administrative staff should be notified of any rescheduled classes and will assist in finding appropriate meeting times. In cases of unforeseeable illness or emergency, faculty members must notify the Academic Affairs Office and arrange for a rescheduled meeting as soon as possible.

External contracts. From time to time, faculty members may have opportunities to provide consulting or other professional services to organizations other than ISET. Faculty may take advantage of such opportunities so long as the activity does not conflict with their primary responsibility to ISET. The faculty members are prohibited from making any commitments that conflict with their commitment to ISET.

Outside compensated work must be limited to an average of no more than one day per week during the academic year and must be reported to the Director of ISET in their semi-annual report. If any activity is found by the Director to be inconsistent with ISET's mission, it must be terminated immediately.

Any remunerated teaching outside ISET must receive prior approval from the Director of ISET.

ISET resources are not to be used in rendering consulting services unless there have been prior arrangements with the Director, including arrangements for reimbursement where appropriate. If costs are to be reimbursed, there must be a written identification of the costs, and written agreement specifying when and how the costs will be reimbursed.

Research Grants and Overhead Policy. In recognition of the substantial benefits affiliation with the organization provides, ISET expects faculty to administer all research grants through ISET or, where appropriate, PEER or other ISET-affiliated bodies. All research grants should provide a total of 25% of their budget to ISET in the form of overheads or offsets. Overheads are defined as unrestricted funds paid to ISET or an ISET-affiliated organization for general administrative purposes. Offsets are defined as expenses charged to the grant that would otherwise be paid for from ISET's general budget. Examples of such charges include stipends paid to research assistants, purchases of books that remain in the ISET library, purchases of data that is generally accessible to students. In cases where funding agencies prefer to make grants to individuals rather than institutions, ISET expects that members of the faculty will arrange to administer their budget consistent with the above policy. All budgets for research grants must be preapproved by ISET management before submission to ensure that they are in compliance with the organization's overhead and offset policy. ISET management has the authority to negotiate lower or no overhead/offset policy in cases where in the judgment of management such concessions are necessary to obtain the grants.

ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS

The following regulations are used at ISET for the administration of tests:

General. Two types of tests are administered at ISET: final exams and quizzes. Final exams are comprehensive and held at the conclusion of courses. Quizzes cover subsets of material taught during the course. No more than 3 quizzes shall be given during a mini-term for each course. As a rule, duration of exams will be up to 2 hours. Quizzes are limited to 60 minutes.

Quizzes may or may not be announced in advance by the instructor. In any case, the policy must be specified in the course syllabus at the beginning of the mini-term and must be followed during the entire duration of the mini-term.

Final exams are typically held during the 8th week of each mini-term. The complete exam schedule will be published by the ISET Academic Affairs Office no later than the 6th week of each mini term. It will be brought to the attention of students through the intranet system, the bulletin board, and announcements in class.

- A professor is responsible for the administration of a final exam. He/she prepares the exam text and other related materials, administers the test and grades it together with his/her Teaching Assistant. For each final exam, the instructor shall prepare and submit to the Academic Affairs Office at least two different versions of the questionnaire (exam questions shall be of similar difficulty but different in content for the main exam and the make up exam) no later than the 6th week of the mini-term. One version will be used as the main exam; the other version will be used for the make-up exam.
- Photocopying of exam materials is done by the ISET Academic Affairs Office. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure the confidentiality of exam questionnaires.

Make up exam policy. In special cases students are allowed to take exam make-ups. The duration and procedures of the make-up exams are the same as for the main exam. Exam make-ups are allowed in the following cases:

- If a student has missed a test and has an excusable and well documented reason for his/her absence. In this case the test will be graded using the regular grading system. Depending on the personal circumstances, a student may take more than one make-up exam in any mini term.
- Students are allowed to take a make up exam in order to improve their grades. Each student will only be allowed to up to five make-up exams in a given academic year. In this case the maximum grade in a make up exam shall be B. If a student takes a make-up exam, the grade s/he receives in that exam will enter the final calculation even if it is lower than the original grade.
- Quiz make-up policy will be specified by the instructors in the course syllabus and must be clearly explained to the students. If a make-up quiz is allowed, it should follow exam make-up policy.

Proctoring. All tests will be proctored by the course instructor, TA and ISET staff. If required, external proctors may help proctoring. The number of proctors should not be less than one for every 20 students taking the test. All exam proctors present during the test will be equally responsible for supervising the examination/quiz.

Seating requirements. Only one student shall sit at any desk during a test. Desks should be placed at a distance from one another. Students are expected to conform to assigned seats and may be reseated at any time during the test by any of the present proctors.

- Students are generally not allowed out of the room during the tests, except for special cases. A student may leave the room only with a proctor's permission and only once during the entire duration of the exam. Only one student can be out of the room at any given time.

Exam materials. Students will be provided with official examination booklets, scratch paper, and other exam related materials that are allowed for use during the exams. Students are required to write their names in ink on examination booklets and all exam related materials that are not attached to the examination booklets.

- The instructor may allow students to bring to the exam and use other course-related materials, such as articles, books, notes, calculators, etc.; such policies shall be announced to all students and the proctors in advance.
- Students may use "help sheets" if allowed by the instructor. The following rules must be followed when using a help sheet:
 - Help sheets shall be prepared on a special index card that will provided for this purpose by ISET. The help sheet must contain:
 - the student's name and legal signature
 - the course and instructor's name
 - the date of the examination
 - The help sheet must be handwritten
 - Upon completion of the exam, help sheets must be submitted to the instructor together with other examination materials.

- All other materials and personal belongings that are not permitted for use during the exam shall be put aside in a designated area of the room. These include but are not limited to: bags, notes, books, laptop computers, cell phones, and other items.

Appeal policy. After exam results have been announced, students have the right to request their examination booklets for a review. To appeal a grade, students must use an exam appeal form that shall be submitted to the Academic Affairs Office. Appeals will be reviewed by the instructors and returned to the Administrative office within a specified period (typically, one week). Students may be requested to add an oral explanation as part of the review process. Warning: any attempt to alter the exam and then appeal a grade is a serious violation of ISET Ethics Code. To prevent this, a significant number of randomly selected examinations will be scanned and stored before being returned to students.

Cheating and probation policy. Any violation of the ISET Ethics Code related to an exam or quiz will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. Students committing such violations and/or assisting other students in committing violations will face serious consequences as follows:

- When a student is detected violating the Ethics Code related to an exam or quiz he or she will immediately hand all exam materials to the instructor and leave the test room; regardless of the progress with the test the student will be given zero score on the test. If the violation was detected after the test, the grade for that test shall be zero. In addition, the student shall be placed on probation for the duration of her two-year course of study at ISET and an official letter to this effect shall be placed in her file;
- When a student on probation is detected for a further violation the Ethics Code s/he will be immediately dismissed from the program for cause. Such a student shall receive no documentation of her studies at ISET and shall not be allowed to return to the program.

The Academic Affairs Office shall be responsible for maintaining individual files of students, including any documentation related to violations of the ISET Ethics Code.

GRADING POLICY

Posting grades. ISET instructors are typically expected to grade tests and post results within a week from the date of the test; following this guideline, term grades will be posted within a week of the final exam.

Grading standards. The choice of grading scales and structures is an important part of academic freedom for an instructor. As a colleague at the University of Michigan put it, “I reserve the right to decide who gets an A, but I am willing to accept a university standard for a C or even a B.” An “A” signifies that not only the student has mastered the material but exhibits insight and grace in analysis and presentation. “B” typically signifies that the student has broadly mastered the material but has not communicated it with the same élan.

Grading scale. ISET uses the following grading scale weights: A=4, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2, C-=1.67, D=1, F=0. ISET accepts the notion that in a graduate class the average should be in the B/B+ ranges which allows for B- as a signal of marginal performance. This preserves for the faculty member the prerogative for setting and applying standards that define both outstanding performance and unsatisfactory graduate level performance—i.e., “A” and “C”—with average performance empirically defining the mid-range.

CONFIDENTIALITY, STUDENT RECORDS, AND DATA

Student records, research data, and other sensitive materials should be handled with the appropriate regard to confidentiality, respect, and sensitivity.

Examinations and other student records are the property of ISET and TSU. Grades, examinations, theses, and other student records must be submitted to the Academic Affairs Officer, who will post grades and ensure compliance with university and Ministry of Education and Science requirements in regard to record-keeping, disclosure, and confidentiality.

Some research data generated by ISET may be confidential and must be treated with due care. Faculty must exercise appropriate caution when distributing data to students or other researchers.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

ISET offer a high quality working environment for faculty, staff and students. ISET's new building is located in the center of Tbilisi, with easy access to the metro and all ground transportation routes. The seven story building is equipped with state-of-the-art IT and office equipment, 250 sq.m library, high speed Wi-Fi internet connectivity, spacious conference and seminar facilities, classrooms, two computer labs, a video conference room, four hotel suites for visiting faculty, and two cafeterias. The entire building is air-conditioned.

Private offices. All faculty are provided with a private office equipped with a desk, white board, meetings table, storage cabinet and/or bookshelf, and desktop computer. The local area network (LAN) provides access to e-mail account, Internet, electronic library resources and library catalog.

Academic Affairs Office is coordinating all teaching activities at ISET including scheduling of lectures and recitation sessions, ensuring classrooms and other facilities are available for teaching, meetings, research seminars, conferences, etc. It is also responsible for students registration for courses, communication with students, duplication and dissemination of class materials and handouts, administration of tests and teaching evaluation surveys, maintaining a database of student records.

Duplication and photocopying services. Please give at least two days notice of requests for such services. Very large orders should be approved by the Director and submitted several days in advance. In all cases, please be mindful of copyright restrictions.

Classrooms are equipped with multimedia projectors to facilitate PowerPoint and other presentations. Internet access is available through the computer in classrooms. Classrooms are also equipped with whiteboards. No overhead projectors are available.

Teaching Assistants are assigned to faculty teaching first-year courses. Teaching assistants may work up to 12 hours per week under faculty direction.