

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
AT TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY**

ISET

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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ISET

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Contents

GENERAL	4
TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY	4
ADDRESS, CONTACT INFORMATION AND WORKING HOURS	4
I. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	5
PROPOSED TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID POLICY	5
CURRICULUM	7
SCHEDULING OF CLASSES, RECITATIONS AND OFFICE HOURS	9
ACADEMIC CALENDAR.....	10
ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS.....	10
ISET GRADING POLICY.....	13
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND DISCIPLINARY REQUIREMENTS	14
II. ISET FACILITIES	14
ISET LIBRARY	15
COMPUTER FACILITIES	16
III. PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES	17
EMPLOYMENT AT ISET.....	17
INTERNSHIPS	17
PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE.....	17
APPENDIX A: ISET RESEARCH PROJECTS AND MA THESIS PROCESS	19
APPENDIX B: ISET CODE OF ETHICS	22

STUDENT HANDBOOK

General

ISET's MA program in Economics was launched in fall 2006 as a graduate program at Tbilisi State University, serving the entire South Caucasus region. It is recognized by the World Bank as one of five "centers of excellence" in economics education and research in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.* The program takes students through a challenging two-year curriculum, comparable in content and quality to the first two years of study in reputable Ph.D. programs in North America and Western Europe. All courses are taught in English by highly-qualified international faculty. During the second year of studies, students participate in research projects, and write a master's thesis or a literature critique with the support of resident and visiting faculty. Graduates receive a Master of Arts in Economics diploma from the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University.

Each year, ISET enrolls up to 70 students from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and other countries in the region. ISET graduates are working as economists in the private sector, central banks, Ministries of Finance and Economic Development, international organizations and think tanks. Several are already teaching at other universities in the region. Five students from the first graduating class entered Ph.D. programs in North American and European universities. ISET itself hires academically-minded graduates to work closely with our faculty on teaching and research projects.

International donors and the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia act through the Partnership for Economics Education and Research (PEER), a non-profit charitable organization incorporated in the US. PEER collects and focuses donor resources and expertise to create sustainable local capacity for economic training and research in the South Caucasus. Its main activity is support and guidance for ISET.

Tbilisi State University

ISET is a flagship school under a premiere institution of higher learning in the South Caucasus, Tbilisi State University. TSU was founded in 1918 through the leadership of a famous Georgian historian, Ivane Javakhishvili. It was the first educational institution of this type in the Caucasus.

Address, Contact Information and Working Hours

ISET is located at: 16 Zandukeli St., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia.

Telephone: (+995 32) 50 71 77

Fax: (+995 32) 98 48 15

Email for general inquiries: admissions@iset.ge

Website: www.iset.ge

Administrative offices are open from 09:30 AM till 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday. The School's facilities are available for staff, faculty and students 24 hours a day, every day.

* The others are the New Economic School in Moscow, Kyiv School of Economics, Central European University in Budapest, and CERGE-EI in Prague.

I. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Tuition and Financial Aid Policy

ISET's sponsors make a substantial investment in the future of the students, but they also expect students to be willing to invest in their own future. For the 2010-11 academic year, the annual tuition fee at ISET is set at the level of \$8,000. However, thanks to the generosity of ISET supporters, the School will be able to offer **merit-based scholarships and tuition waivers and need-based assistance, including subsidized loans and need-based scholarships**. Students who have received Georgian government grants may apply the grants toward the cost of tuition.

Any form of financial assistance is conditional on the students' maintaining their **full-time student status** with ISET. To be considered a full-time student, one has to comply with the academic requirements of ISET, including attendance of lectures. Stipends, housing allowances, tuition waivers and any other form of social assistance for **part-time students** will be decided by the Housing and Social Assistance committee on a case-by-case basis.

Students are eligible for financial aid during two academic years of study only. Those students who fail to fulfill all graduation requirements within two academic years, or who retake first-year courses during the second year of study, will be charged as follows:

First course	\$250
Second course	\$200
Third course	\$150
Fourth course and above	\$100 per course

The fee for re-defending a Writing Project will be determined by ISET management on a case-by-case basis, depending on the Project's degree of completion.

Merit-based Scholarships

All students accepted into the Master's program will be invited to study tuition-free during the first miniterm. Merit-based scholarships for the first year of study will be allocated based on the overall performance in the first miniterm (including English/Academic Writing course) of the first year of study. Merit scholarships for the second year of study will be determined based on performance during the entire first year of study. The following criteria will be applied for both first and second year merit based scholarships[†]:

Type of merit-based scholarships for the first year of study at ISET	GPA after the first miniterm	Number merit-based scholarship available
Covers 80% of tuition (students pay \$1,600/year)	≥ 3.00 (B)	Maximum of 30
Covers 60% of tuition (students pay \$3,200/year)	≥ 2.67 (B-)	Maximum of 15

Special Merit Tuition Waivers

Those students with a GPA of at least 3.33 (B+) may, at the discretion of the financial aid committee, be issued a special tuition waiver by ISET up to a maximum of \$1,600. The purpose of these waivers is to allow exceptional students who have not received a state grant to study for free.

[†] Students re-admitted into the program (i.e. those who have previously studied during at least one mini-term at ISET) will also be eligible for financial aid, however, the size of merit based scholarships for such students will be one notch below what they would have been awarded based on GPA. Example: re-admitted students whose GPA at the conclusion of the first miniterm is 4.00 would only be awarded 60% scholarships.

Tuition waivers for students from Armenia and Azerbaijan

All students from Azerbaijan and Armenia who enter ISET for study beginning in September 2010 (Class of 2012) will study tuition-free, as long as they remain in good standing as full-time students in the master's program.

Additional Tuition Waivers

For both first and second year students, at its discretion, ISET may also offer partial tuition waivers (up to 60% of tuition) to potentially promising students whose GPA's fall below 2.67.

In exceptional cases, a student below a quality threshold may be bumped up if he/she demonstrates sufficient improvement towards the end of the year and provided the quantitative quota has not been reached. This rule will only apply to end-of-first-year decisions about scholarships for the second year of study.

All exceptional cases are reviewed by the ISET Social Assistance Committee.

Educational Loans

ISET is in the process of negotiating a tailored low-cost **bank loan program** to help students from Georgia cover the cost of their education. The program is expected to roll out in September 2010.

Need-based Assistance

In rare cases, ISET may consider providing needs-based assistance in the form of partial tuition waivers or zero-interest bank loans. Need-based assistance may require students to work in a part-time administrative capacity.

Applicants should complete the required form available from the Outreach and Admissions Officer. Applications are reviewed within two weeks by the ISET Housing and Social Assistance Committee that includes representatives of ISET administration, faculty and two members of the student body (one from each class).

Living Stipends

In academic year 2010/11 students will receive stipends to cover living expenditures. During the first miniterm, all students admitted in fall 2010 will receive living stipends of \$80/month during the first miniterm (September-October 2010). In every subsequent miniterm, the level of stipends will be determined based on academic achievement in the previous miniterm, as follows:

Level and number of stipends	GPA in previous miniterm	Number of stipends
\$100	≥ 3.33 (B+)	Up to 15
\$80	≥ 3.00 (B)	Up to 15 stipends
\$60	≥ 2.67 (B-)	Up to 15 stipends

Stipends will be paid on a monthly basis during 10 months of the academic year, at the end of each month. In the event that a student's GPA in a particular miniterm is adjusted after stipends for the subsequent month(s) have been paid, appropriate retroactive adjustments will be made to future stipend payments.

Students from Armenia and Azerbaijan are eligible for 1.5x the standard living stipend amounts, to help defray the cost of travel to/from Tbilisi and living in another country. (Thus, a student from Armenia with a GPA of ≥ 3.33 who falls in the top 15 students in the class would be eligible to receive a living stipend of \$150/month.)

Future Leaders Scholarships

Future Leaders Scholarships, offering special living stipends of up to \$500 per month, may be awarded to a maximum of three students from each country, at the discretion of ISET's Admissions and Social Assistance committee. Such stipends may be used to either attract or retain outstanding students, and, thus, may be awarded either upon admissions or after the results of the first miniterm of study are known. The terms of each individual Future Leader's Scholarship will be communicated individually to the recipient, and will require the recipient maintain a certain GPA in order to continue to receive the stipend. These scholarships are reserved for truly outstanding cases, and ISET is not obligated to give Future Leaders Scholarships each year.

Housing Assistance

ISET will provide living space in a shared apartment for students from outside of Georgia. Additionally, students from the outlying regions of Georgia, may be eligible for either a space in a shared ISET apartment or a small housing allowance of up to \$100/month to help defray the cost of apartment rental in Tbilisi.

Bank Accounts

Students are expected to open an account at **Bank Republic** during the first month of study at ISET where they will receive their monthly stipends and housing allowances. Banking information and any changes in it should be communicated to ISET's Financial Officer at least three days before the end of the month for the stipend to be paid on time.

Paying Tuition

Tuition is paid in two installments per academic year. The ISET administration will announce exact payment dates each academic year. In general first year students need to make their first payment by December 15, and second year students by October 15. Students who have not paid tuition on time will be barred from taking the final exams at the end of the miniterm.

The details of ISET's bank account will be communicated to the students during the first week of September.

Tuition payments will not be reimbursed to students who are dismissed from or choose to leave the program.

Curriculum

The basic unit of instruction in the ISET Master's Program is the eight week miniterm, consisting of seven weeks of lectures and a week for review and exams. There are five such miniterms in the academic year.

In the first year, all students take the same four economics courses (Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Statistics/Econometrics, and Mathematics for Economists), plus supplementary English/Academic Writing courses taught at three different levels.

In the second year, students are given the possibility to draw up an individual plan of elective courses. They also participate in a Writing Project, applying the tools acquired in the program to some aspect of economics.

Eligibility for Graduation

Students earn three European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits for each course consisting of 21 hours of instruction. 120 credits in economics, mathematics and statistics are required to complete the MA. The ECTS credit system facilitates recognition of the degree internationally. Additional coursework in Academic Writing/English and Professional Skills is also required.

ISET uses the U.S. grading system (A-B-C-D-F).

To successfully complete the program, students must:

- Pass all first year courses (achieve at least B- average in each core subject) for a total of 60 credits, not including English/Academic Writing courses. Students whose average for the year in any core subject is less than B- are required to retake one or more modules in that subject during the second year of study in order to bring their average to at least B-.
- In the second year, students writing a Master's Thesis must complete 14 elective courses or a total of 42 credits (i.e., 14 miniterms of elective coursework). Students writing a Literature Critique must complete 16 elective courses or a total of 48 credits.
- Pass the written and oral English proficiency exams.
- Write and successfully defend an MA thesis (18 credits) or Literature Critique (12 credits).
- Meet the minimum overall GPA requirement of 2.67 (B-).

First-year Curriculum

The first-year curriculum consists of core courses in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Statistics/Econometrics, Mathematics for Economists, and English/Academic Writing. All courses are obligatory.

In miniterm 5 all first-year students must register for and successfully complete a paper-writing seminar.

Also in miniterm 5, all first year students are required to take a non-credit professional seminar (interview skills, preparation of CVs, cover letters, statements of purpose, etc.) taught by the English Department.

Grades in miniterms 1 and 2 for first-year students will be recorded in transcripts as a pass (A through D-) or a fail (F) and will not influence official GPAs. Conventional letter grades will also be given, but they will be used only for internal purposes, including the calculation of GPAs for core subjects.

Attending at least 70% of lectures in each course is required to maintain full-time student status.

Second-year Curriculum

Students at ISET are given the possibility to draw up an individual plan of elective courses during their second year of studies to give them mastery of several sub fields of modern economics. Students also participate in a Writing Project resulting in either a Master's Thesis or a Literature Critique. Both involve independent critical study of a problem in economics, writing a professional paper in English, and presenting that paper in English to a workshop. Producing a Master's Thesis takes more time than a Literature Critique, receives more academic credit, and must include a significant original research contribution. Because of the difference in academic credit, a student who writes a Literature Critique instead of a Master's Thesis will need to take an additional two elective courses to satisfy degree requirements. (see Appendix A: The ISET Writing Requirement for more detail).

Students should register for not more than 5 elective courses in each miniterm.

To maintain full-time student status, students are required to take at least three electives in each of the first three miniterms, at least two electives in the fourth and at least one in the fifth miniterm. Exceptions from this rule would require prior approval by the ISET Academic Affairs Office.

During the second year of study, ISET students are given the opportunity to exclude up to three elective courses from their transcript (diploma supplement). No more than one elective course can be dropped in any miniterm. Students may not drop any courses in which they have been found guilty of violating ISET's Code of Ethics. Grades of excluded electives will not be taken into

account when calculating students' GPA. The total number of elective course credits remaining on the transcript must be sufficient for the student to meet the graduation requirements.

Registration for Elective Courses

Students are to register for an elective by the end of the first week of classes (or after two lectures, in case of intensive courses). The first lectures will give students a better idea of the different subjects and help them choose elective courses from among those offered by ISET. To continue attending, students have to register for the course in question online, via Moodle. Once registered, students will receive a grade for the course. To drop that grade, students would have to follow the policy described in the preceding paragraph. Courses are chosen from an offering of electives. ISET aims to offer four-to-seven second-year elective courses each miniterm.

Students may also be allowed to audit courses offered by senior visiting faculty. To do so, they have to indicate this option in the course registration form. Students auditing a course are supposed to attend at least 70% of lectures and participate in class discussions. Taking tests is not required.

Concentrations

A concentration is a set of four core courses in a particular area, with perhaps additional optional courses. To receive a degree "with a concentration in [*sub field X*]" a student must pass all four core courses with an overall average of at least B-. At present, two concentrations are offered: in Energy Economics and in International Trade and Economic Integration. We hope to introduce additional concentrations in the future.

Quality Control and Teaching Evaluations

The ISET curriculum and teachers' performance is regularly reviewed by the School's management, including the Academic Director. To ensure that students' views are incorporated in the quality control process, teaching evaluation surveys are conducted for each course during the last week of instruction before the final exam in the course. The purpose of such evaluations is to aid the faculty and staff in implementing improvements in the teaching methods and content. Evaluations are anonymous and faculty members can view the results only after grades have been recorded.

Civil Discourse

ISET insists upon freedom of inquiry and freedom of speech. Discourse between persons of differing views is central to what universities are all about. But it is also essential that individuals, who may sharply disagree, maintain civility and mutual respect at all times.

1 In thesis defenses, classroom presentations and discussions, etc., faculty have the responsibility to ensure that civility and mutual respect are maintained while preserving the ability for all to express freely their views. We regret that this has sometimes not been the case, and are resolved to ensure it in the future.

2 ISET does not take positions on political or social issues. Faculty should ensure that neither they nor their students suggest that ISET does have positions on such issues.

Scheduling of Classes, Recitations and Office Hours

The teaching schedule is posted by the Academic Affairs Office at the beginning of each miniterm.

Typically, each course consists of 14 lectures delivered twice a week, for seven weeks. The last week of each miniterm is used for review sessions and exams. Each class (lecture) lasts 1.5 hours. Additional or longer lectures or recitation may be offered by course instructors and TAs in

coordination with the Academic Affairs Office. Visiting faculty will sometimes concentrate the 21 class hours into fewer than seven weeks. Micro-courses, of 3 or 6 hours, addressing very specialized topics may sometimes be offered as second-year electives.

Teaching Assistants (TAs) are assigned to first year courses with the responsibility of holding a weekly session (“recitation”) to review topics covered during classes, solve problem sets, etc.

TAs and course instructors will also offer weekly office hours (two hours per week per course) for individual consultations by appointment.

Academic Calendar

The academic year generally begins the first week of September and runs through the first week of July. Studies are divided into five miniterms, each consisting of seven weeks of classes followed by a one-week exam period. The exact calendar for each academic year can be found on the ISET website.

Administration of Tests

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 will be given during a miniterm for each course. As a rule, duration of exams is up to 2 hours. Quizzes are limited to 90 minutes.

Quizzes

Quizzes may or may not be announced in advance by the instructor. In any case, the policy for each course is specified in the course syllabus (available to students at the beginning of the miniterm). Most courses include one-two midterm tests, which are categorized as quizzes, and are generally 90 minutes long.

Final Exams

Finals are typically held during the 8th week of each miniterm. The complete exam schedule is published by the ISET Academic Affairs Office at the start of the miniterm so that it can be taken into account by students when registering for elective courses or retaking first year courses. Individual faculty members communicate exam requirements to the students enrolled in their classes.

Make-up Exam Policy

Students are allowed to take make-up exams as follows:

- A make-up test will be graded using the regular grading system if a student has an excusable and well documented reason for his/her absence at the initial exam. ISET administration/instructors will review such documentation on a case-by-case basis. (Health-related requests for a make-up test will only be accepted in case of hospitalization.)
- The individual course make-up policy will be specified by the instructors in the course syllabus and will be clearly explained to the students.
- A student violating the ISET Code of Ethics at a quiz/final exam will not be allowed to take a make-up exam.

The duration and procedures of the make-up exams are the same as for the main exam.

Proctoring

All tests will be proctored by the course instructor, TAs and ISET staff.

Seating requirements

Students will be placed in assigned seats, one student per desk, for all tests. A student may be reseated at any time during the test by any of the 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 required exam materials. 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 will be announced to all students and the proctors in advance.
- Students may use "help sheets" if allowed by the instructor, as follows:
 - Help sheets will be prepared on a special sheet of paper that will be 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 will be put aside in a designated area of the room. These include but are not limited to: bags, notes, books, laptop computers, cell phones.

Behavior during tests

Students are expected to follow these rules during all tests:

- Be calm and quiet in the class during the test
- Do not talk to other students during the test
- When you have a question, raise your hand. You can say something to draw attention if the professor or proctor does not see you.
- Do not talk to the proctor or to the professor from a distance in a loud voice.
- Bring your own calculator, no calculator sharing is allowed during the test
- Do not use mobile phones (even as a calculator)
- Notes and paper should be put in a bag and placed in a designated area (not in the space under the table).

Appeal policy

After exam results have been announced, students have the right to review their examination booklets. To appeal a grade, students must use an **exam appeal form** that will be submitted to the Academic Affairs Office **within three days** after the grades have been communicated. Appeals will be reviewed by the instructors and returned to the Academic Affairs Office within a specified

period (typically, one week). Students may be requested to add an oral explanation as part of the review process. Any attempt to alter the exam and then appeal a grade is a serious violation of the ISET Ethics Code. To prevent this, all examination booklets are scanned and stored before being returned to students.

The faculty decision on a student's appeal will be final. It cannot be further appealed by either the student, or the Academic Director.

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:

- A student detected violating the Ethics Code related to an exam or quiz will immediately hand all exam materials to the instructor and leave the test room; regardless of the progress the student will be given a zero score on the test. If the violation was detected after the test, the grade for that test will be zero. In addition, if found guilty, the student will be placed on probation for the duration of his/her two-year course of study at ISET and an official letter to this effect will be placed in the student's file;
- Students may not exclude from their transcripts any course in which they have been found guilty of violating the Ethics Code.
- A student who is found guilty of cheating on a homework assignment will receive a zero on that assignment and will be placed on probation for the duration of his/her two-year course of study at ISET and an official letter to this effect will be placed in the student's file;
- A student on probation who is found guilty of a further violation the Ethics Code will be immediately dismissed from the program. Such a student will receive no documentation of his/her studies at ISET and will not be allowed to return to the program.
- A student exhibiting unruly behavior at a quiz/final will be asked to immediately hand all exam materials to the instructor and leave the test room regardless of the progress with the test. Acts of unruly behavior in this context include talking, turning around, leaving the assigned seat without prior permission from the proctor, passing a calculator, etc. The assignment will be graded in a regular manner.

Adjudication Procedure Regarding Cheating

1. If an instructor or proctor believes a student has cheated on an examination or quiz that shall be reported to the Academic Director along with all details.
2. The Academic Director will determine whether the student is guilty of the alleged offense. If the student is found guilty, the standard ISET penalty shall be applied:
 - First offense: a score of zero on the exam or quiz, being placed on probation for the full course of study at ISET, and a letter to that effect in the student's file.
 - Second offense: dismissal from the program.

Any instance of cheating will be a permanent part of the student's record at ISET.

3. A student found guilty has the right to appeal. Such an appeal will be heard by a faculty committee that includes neither the Academic Director nor the faculty member who made the original charge of cheating.

4. The decision of the appeal committee will be final. It cannot be further appealed by either the student, the Academic Director, or another faculty member. Individual files of students, including any documentation related to violations of the ISET Ethics Code, are maintained by the Academic Affairs Office.

ISET Grading Policy

Posting Grades

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

Grading Scale and Standards

ISET uses the following grading scale weights: A=4.00, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.00, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2.00, C-=1.67, D+=1.33, D=1.00, D-=0.67, F=0. ISET accepts the notion that, in a graduate class, the average should be in the B/B+ ranges with B- serving as a signal of marginal performance. This preserves for the faculty member the freedom to set and apply standards that define both outstanding and unsatisfactory graduate level performance—i.e., “A” and “D”.

Retaking First Year Courses

- Students who do not obtain the required average (B-) in any given sequence of first-year required courses (Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Mathematics for Economists, and Stats/Econometrics) must retake one or more courses[‡] in that sequence while in the second year of study in order to bring their average to at least the required level.
- Students whose average for a given sequence is above B- are permitted to retake no more than one course in that sequence in order to improve their GPA.
- Students who fail the English Proficiency Exam at the end of the first year will not be allowed to retake the exam without retaking English/Academic Writing courses during the second year of study.
- To retake a course, students must register at the Academic Affairs Office during the first week of classes. The maximum grade for any first-year course retaken in the second year of study will be B. A registration fee will be charged per each 3-credit course retaken, including English/Academic Writing, as follows:

First course	\$250
Second course	\$200
Third course	\$150
Fourth course and above	\$100

Transcripts

ISET transcripts include course names, weight in credit units, and grades. The Academic Affairs Office is responsible for maintaining student records, including grades and other evaluations, and for providing English-language transcripts.

ISET transcripts include a grade-point average, or GPA. The GPA is a number that indicates the weighted average grade received in all credit courses.

In calculating the GPA, letter grades are converted into numerical values (see Grading Scale and Standards above).

[‡] A course is defined as a standard one-miniterm class, which usually carries three credits. Thus, two modules of a single sequence—microeconomics 2 & microeconomics 3—would be considered as two courses.

Courses graded on a pass/fail basis are not considered when calculating the official GPA.

ISET transcripts also include the individual ranking of students, based on their GPAs.

Graduation with honors

The requirements for an Honors Diploma are as follows:

- Summa cum Laude: GPA no less than 3.8 and Writing Project graded A.
- Cum Laude: GPA not less than 3.6 and Writing Project graded at least A-.

Academic Performance and Disciplinary Requirements

Absences and late arrivals

Timely and regular class attendance is mandatory. Students are also expected to be present for the entire class. No penalties are imposed for absences if they are coordinated with the Academic Affairs Office. Students may be removed from the program for repeated, unexcused absences; instructors have the right to not allow students to enter the classroom more than five minutes after class has begun.

Dismissal

Students can be dismissed from the program for the following reasons:

- At the request of the student;
- In order to transfer to another university/college;
- Failure to pay required tuition;
- For repeated unexcused absences from classes;
- For failure to meet the minimum academic requirements of the program;
- For violation of ethical rules of conduct.

When a student leaves the program, he/she is obliged to do the following within one week after dismissal for ISET to respond to requests for student records:

1. return all library materials, including textbooks
2. return all student ID cards, locker room keys, etc.

Only after receipt of these documents and materials a student will be able to receive a transcript.

Tuition payments will not be reimbursed to students dismissed from the program.

Academic leave

Academic leave is a **one-year deferral from studies**. The final decision whether to grant an academic leave to students belongs to the ISET Academic Director. Students can request academic leave for the following three reasons:

- Serious health issue, including pregnancy;
- Short-term study at another educational institution/program;
- Military service.

Students must submit all relevant documentation and a letter stating the reasons for their request of academic leave to the Academic Affairs Office. To return from academic leave, students should submit a letter to the Academic Affairs Officer by the end of August requesting re-enrollment in the following academic year. A student returning from academic leave will be eligible for financial aid at the level he/she was eligible for at the moment of having their academic leave approved (including living stipend and scholarship).

II. ISET FACILITIES

ISET administrative offices are open from 09:30 AM till 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday. The School's facilities are available for staff, faculty and students 24 hours a day, every day.

ISET is a smoke-free facility. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on ISET premises.

ISET Library

ISET library services are provided to students, faculty, researchers, and the general public. Certain services are available to registered users only.

The library is located on the fourth floor of the ISET building, occupying a total space of 250 sq.m. The library houses the Robert E. Kuenne Memorial Research Collection, the Caucasus Research and Resource Centers (CRRC) collection in social sciences, The World Bank Public Information Center (PIC), and a broad range of IMF publications. The library is expanding its holdings of books and journals covering all fields of economics. Special emphasis is placed on electronic collections of data and journals, such as JSTOR, ScienceDirect, EBSCO, SSRN, EconLit, and ICPSR Social Science Data Archive. ISET subscribes to all these collections, as well as leading working paper series, e.g. NBER and CEPR. The entire library space is equipped with Wi-Fi internet connectivity. Although there are workstations in each study room, students are encouraged to bring in their own laptop computers to take the full benefit of ISET's digital collections.

Library catalogue (<http://koha.iset.ge>)

Records on books, monographs, ISET Working Papers, statistical materials, etc. can be retrieved online from ISET library catalogue (Koha). The advanced search methods allow users to browse the catalogue by document title and author's name or author's index only, by publisher and series, and by subject headings or keywords. Registered users are allowed to check their account status (loans, reservations, renewals).

Renewals:

Registered users are able to renew their loans. Please note that it is not possible to renew items which are overdue or reserved by another user.

Behavior within the Library

The library space is intended for study and reflection. Parts of that space are designated as "quiet areas" for students' individual study. Students are expected to refrain from loud conversations, when working in these areas, to not cause distraction. The use of cell phones within the library is strictly forbidden except for text messaging. The sound of cell phones, computers, and any other electronic devices should be shut off. Failure to obey these rules may result in a temporary or permanent suspension of library privileges.

Book Lending Rules:

Books can be borrowed for different terms depending on their categorization: miniterm loan, long-term loan (three weeks), short-term loan (one week), overnight loan. Some books are not allowed for use outside the library.

All students are required to make a refundable deposit in order to be allowed to borrow materials from the library. The number of books any user can borrow from the library depends on the size of deposit. The size of deposit may be adjusted at users' discretion.

Fines will be imposed for overdue, damaged or lost library materials. In particular, ISET may revoke users' permission to use the library resources, and levy fines at the discretion of library staff up to 120 percent of the replacement cost (including ordering, purchase, and transportation to ISET). Fines must be paid within ten days to avoid additional penalties and sanctions, up to revocation of the library user status and dismissal from the program (for ISET students).

Photocopying:

Photocopiers are available in the library for student use. Normally, photocopying limited amounts of materials from a book or other document for personal use is permissible. However, copying large segments of books or other materials may violate copyright laws.

Computer Facilities

ISET is equipped with two computer labs on the second floor. In addition, workstations are available in the library.

Each ISET student is provided with a personal e-mail account and disc space.

The computer labs are open 24 hrs./day, 7 days a week except for periods of technical service.

Behavior within the computer facilities

Use of the computer facilities is restricted to ISET students, staff, faculty and alumni. Visitors may use the computer facilities only in coordination with ISET management.

- While ISET recognizes that students may occasionally use the computers for non-ISET related (personal) use, such use may be restricted by ISET management, if necessary.
- Computer facilities must be used in a lawful manner
- Computer games are not allowed in the lab.
- Users are not allowed to download movies or MP3s, etc. Violation of this rule may result in financial or academic sanctions.
- During periods of heavy use, time limits on access to the Internet may be imposed
- Students are not allowed to download or install software in computer labs
- Safety rules and rules designed to prevent infection by viruses must be observed
- No food or drink may be consumed in the computer laboratories
- Smoking is strictly prohibited.
- Upon leaving the lab, users should close individual login sessions.
- All the information on the hard drives of the computers in the computer labs is erased every month. Users are encouraged to use designated disc space of the server or copy files to their personal storage devices.
- At night, computer use is to be strictly limited to ISET-related work, and students may be asked to leave the computer laboratories if they are not engaged in ISET-related work.

Violation of these rules is considered equivalent to the violation of the general rules of behavior and is sufficient grounds for punishment up to and including expulsion from the program for serious offenses.

Textbooks

A significant benefit of the ISET program is the use, free of charge, of up-to-date textbooks. These textbooks are for the student's use during the course and are to be returned upon request to the library. To avoid damage charges, the books must be returned unmarked and with only reasonable wear and tear. To facilitate this, instead of highlighting or marking in ink, students are advised to make light notations in pencil in the margins and erase these prior to returning books.

The textbooks are costly learning tools entrusted to students for their own benefit, but also need to be preserved for the use of future students. When a student is assigned a book, he/she will sign a

form indicating the condition of the book. Loss of or damage to a book will result in fines up to 120% of the replacement cost (including ordering, purchase, and transportation to ISET).

III. PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Employment at ISET

Due to the very serious workload of full time students, ISET discourages students from outside employment during their course of study at ISET. However, students may be asked to perform occasional tasks at ISET, such as translation of course syllabi or portions of the School's website into their native languages. Second-year students may be asked to perform ISET-related work (up to 12 hours per week) by serving as teaching and research assistants, interns in government agencies or policy research organizations, working in the computer lab or library, helping with the ISET admissions, seminars and conferences, etc.

Teaching assistantships

A small number of outstanding second year students may be offered teaching assistantships. These students will work closely with faculty, assist in grading, lead discussion groups and other sessions for first-year students. Students serving as teaching assistants will be remunerated.

Selection for Teaching Assistantships is conducted at the beginning of each miniterm. Teaching assistantships are offered in all first core disciplines: Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Statistics & Econometrics and Mathematics for Economists.

Research assistantships

From time to time, ISET will competitively select second year students as Research Assistants in research projects implemented by the School. Research assistantships may involve a variety of tasks, including data collection, cleaning and manipulation, conducting data analysis, and writing of independent chapters or parts of papers. Such work will be compensated by research grants and fellowships from the Partnership for Economic Education and Research.

Internships

In order to develop professional skills and to learn the principles of the field, ISET encourages its students to seek internships during the summer between the first and second years of studies, as well as on a part-time basis during the second year of studies. Experience of this sort provides an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to the actual policy-making or business environment. Sometimes, internships may lead to permanent job offers.

ISET has agreements in place with a number of partner organizations in and outside Georgia concerning organization of summer and longer term internships for ISET students. Some of these internships are paid, others are not. In 2007, agreements have been signed with the National Bank of Georgia and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Similar partnership agreements have been reached with international organizations such as IMF and WB (local missions). In the past, ISET has also been able to organize internships with private companies in the South Caucasus, and the central banks in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In 2008, ISET created the Advisory Business Council (ABC). The ABC assists internship and job placement for ISET students and graduates. It will also bring to ISET distinguished policymakers and business leaders to meet student and discuss issues related to their companies and national/regional economic development.

Placement assistance

ISET seeks to assist its graduates in securing employment in the South Caucasus region and placement in reputable PhD programs abroad.

PhD placement

We expect that up to 25% of ISET graduates will continue their education towards a PhD degree. ISET encourages many of the best students to apply for admission to quality programs abroad by:

- consulting on the relative advantages of various schools and programs
- helping with the preparation of CVs, writings samples, research papers
- providing GRE/TOEFL orientation, and covering registration costs for the best students
- covering the cost of application fees for the best students, when not waived
- providing reference letters from faculty and others.

Labor market placement

ISET is committed to assisting its graduates with placement in professional positions in the public and private sectors of countries in the region. To this end, ISET engages local employers through institutional partnership agreements, contract research, and the organization of public forums and seminars for the regional business and policymaking elites.

ISET students will be encouraged to take internship positions with leading firms and government agencies. Several such agreements are already in effect, as described above.

APPENDIX A: ISET Research Projects and MA Thesis Process

The ISET Writing Requirement

Developing skills for research and for professional writing and speaking in English are vital components of the MA program. In the second year, each student will participate in a Writing Project, applying the tools acquired in the program to some aspect of economics. This Writing Project will produce either a Master's Thesis or a Literature Critique. Both involve independent critical study of a problem in economics, writing a professional paper in English, and presenting that paper in English to a workshop. Producing a Master's Thesis takes more time than a Literature Critique, receives more academic credit, and must include a significant original research contribution. Because of the difference in academic credit, a student who writes a Literature Critique instead of a Master's Thesis will need to take an additional two courses to satisfy degree requirements.

The Writing Project extends over the second year and proceeds in the following sequence.

Mini-term I (1 credit)

Early in the mini-term, ISET resident faculty members prepare statements outlining their own research interests and possible topics for MA theses under their supervision. The Academic Director distributes the statements to all students via-e-mail, together with an explanation of ISET policy. These statements do not constitute commitments by faculty members unconditionally to supervise Writing Projects, nor need actual projects be restricted to the suggested possible topics.

Requirements. During the mini-term, each student will informally consult with faculty to determine a Writing Project topic and a faculty advisor. At this point it is not necessary for a student to decide between doing a thesis or doing a literature critique. If a student experiences difficulty in finding a link to an advisor, the Academic Director will intervene to secure a match. Subject to the approval of the Academic Director, faculty not currently in residence at ISET may supervise Writing Projects. By the end of Week Six each student must register with the Academic Affairs Office, indicating which faculty member has agreed to supervise that student's Writing Project.

Grading. A grade of Pass will be given to each student that does register and a grade of Fail to any student that does not.

Mini-term II (2 credits)

Requirements. During the mini-term, students will meet regularly with their advisors to develop their Writing Projects in more detail and to decide whether to write a thesis or a literature critique. Students will have the opportunity to consult the English Department of ISET with regard to academic writing issues.

By the end of Week Six each student must submit a proposal to his/her advisor. The proposal should indicate whether the student wishes to write a thesis or a literature critique. For a thesis, a detailed thesis proposal must be provided. For a literature critique, two or three published papers that are key contributions to some problem in economics must be specified for critiquing. A faculty

member has no obligation to agree to supervise a thesis whose potential worth the faculty member is skeptical about or that would cause the faculty member to be supervising an unusually large number of theses.

Grading. Each faculty member will assign letter grades (on the usual A-F scale) to students, reflecting the efforts the faculty member perceives the students have put into their Writing Projects.

Mini-terms III and IV (9 credits)

Requirements. Students will work on their Writing Projects. During these mini-terms they will meet regularly with their advisors.

Theses. By Week Six of Mini-term IV all students writing theses must submit full preliminary drafts to their advisors. These papers must conform to a normal format for a finished academic research paper. During Weeks Seven and Eight advisors will furnish their advisees with written comments on their papers. Also during Weeks Seven and Eight each student will be given an External Advisor from the faculty visiting ISET sometime during mini-terms IV and V. (If necessary, an External Advisor not visiting ISET during that time may be chosen). The External Advisor will submit a set of comments on the paper to both the student and the faculty advisor.

Grading. The faculty advisor and the External Advisor will agree on a letter grade reflecting the quality of the student's paper. (Should the two advisors be unable to agree, the matter will be referred to the Academic Director for resolution).

Literature Critiques. By Week Six of Mini-term IV all students writing literature critiques must submit their critiques to their advisors. A simple summary of the papers involved is *not* an acceptable literature critique: The papers under critique must be analyzed, integrated, and evaluated in a substantive way. During Weeks Seven and Eight a Critique Workshop will be held during which the students orally present and defend their critiques. At each presentation, attendance is required by the faculty advisor and by all other advisees of that advisor also writing critiques. Other students and faculty will also be invited to attend.

Grading. The faculty advisor will assign a letter grade to the critique based upon its intrinsic merit, but may also choose to give weight to the quality of the oral presentation and to whether the student attended the Workshop as required.

Mini-term V (6 credits)

Requirements. Students who are writing master's theses prepare final versions of their theses, in the format of published academic papers, taking into account the two sets of comments on the preliminary drafts. The English Department will be available to consult with students working on the final versions of their papers. Students will consult with their advisors as the latter require or the former desire. They may also consult with External Advisors (by email if necessary), if either the students or their advisors think that helpful.

If a student decides at this point that an acceptable thesis will not result and requests to do instead a literature critique, that shall be allowed. The critique will be orally presented at the Thesis Defense Workshop described below. Such a student will be deemed to have satisfied the Writing

Project requirement, but will receive no further academic credit (beyond the 6 credits received at the end of Mini-term IV), and so will receive 9 fewer credits than if a thesis had been successfully completed. Thus such a student may well not have satisfied all degree requirements by the end of Mini-term V.

By May 15, each student will submit the final version of his/her thesis to the faculty advisor. It shall also be furnished to the External Advisor, and shall be made available online to all ISET faculty.

All students will present their papers at a two-day Thesis Defense Workshop, usually held in late May, to be attended by all faculty in residence at ISET. Between submission and the Workshop, students are allowed and encouraged to revise their theses in response to comments received.

Grading. The faculty advisor and the External Advisor will agree on a letter grade reflecting the quality of the student's thesis, but may also choose to give weight to the quality of the oral presentation. (Should the two advisors be unable to agree, the matter will be referred to the Academic Director for resolution).

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Ethics Code. In case of plagiarism, a student's grade will be F.

After the Thesis Defense Workshop, a prize will be awarded to that thesis judged to be the best of the current year. If a faculty advisor and External Advisor agree that a thesis they have supervised is a reasonable candidate for the prize, they may nominate that thesis to the Academic Director. The Academic Director will then appoint a committee of three faculty (which may include visitors) to read the nominated theses and pick a winner. The prize may be shared if the committee believes that appropriate, and the committee may decide to award no prize at all if it believes that appropriate.

Students who defend and fail are no longer considered to have an active student status. They receive an academic certificate about attended courses and may re-defend within three years, by either writing a thesis on a new topic or reworking the initial one.

In order to re-defend a Thesis, students must re-enroll in the program and participate in the Research Workshop during a number of miniterms as determined by the ISET Academic Director. Students re-defending Theses will be charged fees to defray additional costs to ISET. A student can only re-defend a Thesis once.

APPENDIX B: ISET CODE OF ETHICS

Studies at ISET are built on the basis of collaboration, partnership, mutual respect and trust between the students, faculty and administration. It is impossible to build such collaboration without introducing the highest standards of academic ethics which are as important as the teaching process itself.

Honest and responsible attitude to the studies is the best indicator of the above goal. ISET strives to operate in accordance with the highest ideals of personal honesty and scientific inquiry. Therefore ISET considers severe penalties, up to and including expulsion, for violations of the following academic integrity norms:

Taking Physical or Intellectual Assets

Unauthorized taking of supplies, equipment, or other tangible goods from ISET is stealing. This also holds true with regard to intellectual property. For example, the software used in the computer lab is made available on the basis of certain conditions, and in accordance with those, no student is to copy this software or provide it to others either free of charge or for payment.

Cheating

Cheating is the use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. Examples include: use of books, notes, tutors, calculators on any examination (unless the instructor has authorized their use); copying information from someone else's examination or talking about answers during examinations; using hidden notes or formulas or looking at another person's work during an exam; submitting substantial parts of the same essay, exercise or other assignment for credit in more than one course, without instructor approval; representing someone else's work as your own; allowing others to do research or to prepare or write any work for you.

IMPORTANT: Assisting someone else to cheat is cheating.

Students are expected to submit original work for any course assignment. Students who wish to submit a paper, written text, or presentation for which they have already received credit in another course are required to receive permission from the instructor in advance of the submission; failure to do so will be considered a violation of the ethics code.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of another's words, ideas, or creative product without properly crediting the original source. Students are responsible for learning and understanding the definition of plagiarism, as accepted in Western Academic institutions, and for avoiding plagiarism.

Violation of Confidentiality

The principle of free exchange and open dissemination of ideas and information sometimes comes into conflict with the principle of intellectual property and privacy. At certain stages information not yet ready for public dissemination may be treated as confidential. Potential abuse of confidentiality is most likely to arise in relation to data that a researcher has collected but not yet had time to analyze, or in relation to ideas in research proposals or manuscripts that the originator is still in the process of developing.