

ISET

International School of Economics at TSU



BA PROGRAM IN ECONOMICS

STUDENT HANDBOOK

WWW.ISET.GE

International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University

Bachelor's Program in Economics

Student Handbook

Academic Year 2018-2019

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About Us

ISET is a flagship school under the premiere institution of higher learning in the South Caucasus, Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU). TSU was founded in 1918 through the leadership of the famous Georgian historian, Ivane Javakishvili.

The International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET) was created in response to a letter in 2005 from Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania - just three weeks before his tragic death - to World Bank President James Wolfensohn, in which he appealed for help in "creating our own capability to train young economists in modern economics as it is taught all over the world and to conduct economics research here in Georgia."

With initial input from the World Bank and the ongoing support from the Government of Georgia, the Government of Germany, and Tbilisi State University, in cooperation with an international group of donors including BP, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Open Society Institute Higher Education Support Program, and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), Zhvania's dream has become reality. ISET opened its doors to MA students in 2006 to offer the first world-class Master's Program in Economics in the South Caucasus. In 2017, ISET created and accredited the BA Program in Economics and received the first cohort of BA students in September 2017.

Address, Contact Information and Working Hours

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

Telephone: (+995 32) 250 71 77/8

Fax: (+995 32) 299 86 44

Email for general inquiries: info@iset.ge

Email for admission inquiries: admissionsBA@iset.ge

Website: www.iset.ge

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

Bachelor's Degree Program

The Bachelor's program at ISET is an undergraduate higher education program. It aims to qualify participants of the program for work requiring a Bachelor's degree or for continuation into the Master's program. The Bachelor's program culminates with the qualification of a bachelor's degree. The program consists of 240 ECTS credits that are distributed as follows: 160 ECTS credits are allocated to mandatory courses; the rest of the credits are distributed as follows: 35 ECTS for elective courses, 20 ECTS for free credits and 25 ECTS credits for a course paper (15 ECTS - research/applied project; 10 ECTS – professional internship).

The program consists of 4 years (8 semesters) of study. According to Georgia's law on Higher Education, to complete the program, a student needs 240 ECTS (1 credit equals 25 hours, which includes classes as well as independent work). The duration of the semester is 17 weeks, of which 13 are study weeks, 2

weeks are devoted to midterm examinations, and the 16th and 17th are the final and additional/make-up examinations weeks.

Academic Registration Requirements:

- Notarized copy of secondary education diploma;
- Copy of passport/ID (together with original for comparison purposes);
- Two photos, printed (3x4cm) as well as digital versions of them on CD;
- Copy of military registration document (if applicable);
- Copies of any foreign education documents (if applicable);
- If the student is a minor (under 18 years of age), then their contract with Tbilisi State University must be signed by their parent(s). In this case, the student's birth certificate and a copy of the parent's ID (together with original for comparison purposes) are required.

Assignment of the Academic Degree and Qualification:

- A student who successfully fulfills the requirements of the Bachelor's program will graduate from the program and receive a Bachelor's degree;
- A graduate receives a diploma and a transcript.

Student Rights and Obligations

A student has the right to:

- Receive quality education and participate in scientific research;
- Use university resources, technical facilities, library, information and other facilities;
- Receive full information about TSU educational programs and associated syllabi;
- Request evaluation criteria and appeal against test results according to the law;
- Receive quality consultation about educational programs, study courses, terms, test formats, and any other issues concerning the educational process;
- Periodically check the work of academic and administrative staff;
- Repeat courses before completion of study in order to improve his/her marks, for up to 30/35 credits per semester (65 credits in total per year);
- Change or cancel his/her specialization after appealing to the University Education Management Service within the first week of the academic year.

A student is obliged to:

- Regularly get acquainted with official announcements concerning the study process;

Students' Workload and Terms:

- To complete the bachelor's program, a student must successfully fulfill a minimum of 240 credits;
- A credit is a unit that expresses the workload necessary for a student to complete a given course;
- A student's course load averages 65 credits (30/35 credits per semester) per academic year;
- A student may finish his/her educational program during additional terms at his/her own expense.

Administrative Registration:

- A student fulfills the administrative registration requirement when he/she fully or partially (see payment info at bottom of page) pays their tuition fees for autumn and spring terms.

Academic Registration:

- Academic registration is the process of registering for study courses through the Education Process Management System (lms.tsu.ge);
- Changing or canceling a study course is possible only during the first week of each semester;
- A student's status becomes active upon completion of academic registration.

Education Process Management System – lms.tsu.ge

- In order to sign in to the Education Process Management System, a student receives a password for his/her profile during initial registration. A student is able to do the following services via the Education Process Management System:
 - Form an individual curriculum;
 - View their chosen subjects, grades, and fulfilled credits;
 - Get acquainted with the educational programs of the department, the study courses offered, syllabi, and class and test schedules;

Tuition Fees

- For Georgian students the tuition fee is 1,125 GEL per semester; for international students the tuition fee is USD 1,500 per semester;

Students may pay the term fees in stages;

- The tuition fee can be paid at Liberty Bank or TBC Bank affiliates, via TBC Pay (fast transfer) machines, or at any affiliate of Liberty Bank via fast transfer machines;
- In case of any problems with tuition fee payments, students should communicate with the Financial Department of ISET.

Internal Mobility

- TSU students have the right to change their educational program within a department or between TSU departments;
- Internal mobility is realized via the electronic portal;
- Internal mobility is possible only between semesters. Any period during which a person was deprived of student status does not count as study time;

The right to change educational programs is limited to the number of vacant positions (either those that were previously vacant or those vacated by students through internal mobility); priority is given to students based upon National Exam scores.

Enrolling in TSU through Mobility

- The right to enroll in TSU through mobility is regulated by law. Mobility is administered by LEPL National Center for Education Quality Enhancement.

External Mobility (Mobility)

Information on external mobility can be found here on the official website of National Center for Education Quality Enhancement Suspension of Student Status.

Grounds for Suspension

- Failure to complete administrative or academic registration;
- Personal application (a student may apply for suspension without reason to the university rector no later than two weeks after the beginning of an academic year);
- A student may apply for suspension with reason to the TSU rector within 5 weeks after the beginning of the study process—the reason may be studying abroad (not through exchange programs) or illness (medical documentation must be provided);
- Pregnancy, childbirth, baby nursing;
- The rector may grant exception for serious illness (throughout the period of classes);
- Student status may be suspended for a maximum of 5 years, except for cases determined by law (studying abroad or illness).
- *After the maximum limit is reached, a student may no longer continue to suspend their status as well as lose any state financial assistance.*

Grounds for Expulsion or Conclusion of Student Status:

- Personal application;
- Graduation;
- If student status has been suspended for more than 5 years;
- Failing a mandatory course three times;

- Disciplinary punishment per the University Ethics Code and “The Norms of the Internal Order and Disciplinary Norms”;
- *After a year has passed since the decision to suspend student status, the suspension is considered cancelled unless a student exercises his/her external mobility right;*
- *If student status is canceled, it can be regained after passing national exams; for students who have the right to study without retaking national exams, status is assigned on the basis of law.*

Exams

Midterm Exams

If a student misses a midterm exam held by the department, then he/she will not have the opportunity to retake the exam.

Final and Makeup Exams

- Students must be capable of scoring a total of at least 51% in the course including the final exam before being allowed to take the exam.
- A student can fail an exam if:
 - A) At the exam a student acts contrary to the exam rules and ISET Ethics Code
 - B) He/she gets less than 50% of the points established for the final exam;
- A student is allowed to take an additional exam during the exam period of the current term if and only if scoring an FX (see grading scheme on page 9) on the final exam¹;

If a student misses final or additional exams due to a reasonable excuse(s) (when the exam is held by the faculty), then he/she must appeal to the Academic Department for a retake.

Proctoring

- All tests will be proctored by the course instructor, TAs, and/or ISET staff.
- Behavioral violations during exams are subject to ISET’s warning stamps system. At the discretion of the proctor, a student may receive a warning stamp on their test booklet. Such stamps can be given for behaviors such as talking, turning around, leaving the assigned seat without prior permission from the proctor, passing a calculator, etc. One stamp results in a reduction of 10% of the possible score of the exam. A second stamp results in an additional 40% reduction of the possible score. A third stamp results in a score of zero on the test; the student will be required to immediately hand over all exam materials to the instructor and leave the testing room.
- Cheating is equivalent to three stamps.

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.

¹ On top of that, student is not allowed to retake the final exam unless he/she provides a verified proof (document) of absence.

- Students are generally not allowed to go out of the room during tests, except for special cases. In such 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. Students are required to write their names in ink on their examination booklets.

- 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, and cell phones.

Behavior during tests

Students are expected to follow these rules during all tests:

- Be calm and quiet in 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 the 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 and file an appeal request if they deem it necessary. Reviewing the exam should be under the supervision of the instructor or the TA. To appeal a grade, students must use an exam appeal form that will be submitted to the Academic Affairs Office within two days after grades have been communicated. During the review/appeals period the students *cannot* take their exams out—they stay in the possession of the instructor or TA until the pre-specified appeals period is over. 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. The faculty decision on a student's appeal will be final. It cannot be further appealed.

Absences and late arrivals

No penalties are imposed for absences if they are coordinated with the Academic Affairs Office. 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:

- 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 in order 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, calculators, etc.

Only after receipt of these documents and materials will a student be able to receive a transcript. Tuition payments will not be reimbursed to students dismissed from the program.

Cheating and probation policy

Any violation of the ISET Ethics Code will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. The Ethics Committee is in charge of all allegations related to cheating, plagiarism, or any violation of the code of ethics at ISET.

Students committing any violation of the ethics code and/or assisting other students in committing such violations will face serious consequences as follows:

- A student detected violating the Ethics Code in relation to an exam or quiz will immediately hand over all exam materials to the instructor and leave the testing room; regardless of the progress the student will be given a score of zero on the test. If the violation was detected after the test, the grade for the test will be zero. In addition, if found guilty, the student will be placed on probation for the duration of his/her four-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 be subject to a penalty that lies between receiving a zero on that assignment and failing the course, as ruled by the ethics committee. The student in this case will be placed on probation for the duration of his/her four-year course of study at ISET and an official letter to this effect will be placed in the student's file;
- A student exhibiting unruly behavior during a quiz/final will be asked to immediately hand over all exam materials to the instructor and leave the test room regardless of their progress on 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 exam will be graded in the regular manner.

Adjudication Procedure Regarding Cheating

If an instructor, a proctor, or the body in charge of checking for plagiarism believe a student has violated the Ethics Code, they will report the case in question to the Ethics Committee (ecba@iset.ge) with the

evidence and all relevant details attached. The Ethics Committee will decide the outcome of the case, and its decision will be final—it cannot be appealed or overturned. The Ethics Committee will decide whether the ethics code has been violated and, if so, what actions will be taken.

The standard ISET penalty, if the student is found guilty, is as follows:

- First offense: a score of zero on the assignment (if applicable), 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 violation of the Ethics Code will be a permanent part of the student’s record at ISET. Individual files of students, including any documentation related to violations of the ISET Ethics Code, are maintained by the Academic Affairs Office.

Student Evaluation

Final and additional exams are usually in written form. Considering the specifications of the study course, the exams may include oral components. In case the exam has multiple components, an exam is passed if a student scores at least 50% on each portion (written/oral).

Student Achievements Evaluation System²

a) Five types of positive evaluation:

- (A) Excellent – 91-100 points;
- (B) Very good – 81-90 points;
- (C) Good – 71-80 points;
- (D) Satisfactory – 61-70 points;
- (E) Sufficient – 51-60 points;

b) Two types of negative evaluation:

- (FX) Could not pass – 41-50 points, which means that a student needed to work harder in order to pass and he/she is given the opportunity to take an additional exam;
- (F) Failed – 40 points or less, which means that a student has not worked enough and he/she has to retake the course.

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Letter Grade Descriptions	GPA
91 - 100	A	Excellent	4.0
81 - 90	B	Very good	3.0
71 - 80	C	Good	2.0
61 - 70	D	Satisfactory	1.0
51 - 60	E	Sufficient	0.5
41 - 50	FX	Could not pass. Student is given an opportunity to take an additional exam	0.0
< 40	F	Failed. Student has to retake the course	0.0

² Scores are rounded to the nearest integer by the standard mathematical rounding procedure.

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. 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 to leading working paper series, such as 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 full advantage 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 the ISET library catalogue (Koha). 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, so as not to distract others. 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: semester loan, long-term loan (three weeks), short-term loan (one week) and overnight loan. Some books are not allowed to be used outside the library.

Fines will be imposed for overdue, damaged or lost library materials. In particular, ISET may revoke users' permission to use 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).

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).

Printing

Printing/copying and scanning is administered by ISET-owned software. Each student receives a limited number of credits to be spent in printing. A Printing Manual is provided by the IT department.

ISET Facilities

ISET administrative offices are open from 09:30 AM until 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.

Computer Facilities

ISET is equipped with one computer lab 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.

Computer labs are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week except for periods of technical service.

Behavior within the computer facilities

Use of 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.
- During periods of heavy use, time limits on access to the Internet may be imposed.
- 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 server disc space 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 a violation of the general rules of behavior and is sufficient grounds for punishment up to, and including, expulsion from the program for serious offenses.