



ISET President's Graduation Speech 2026

Dear Graduates, Distinguished faculty, honored guests, proud families, and friends, dear staff of ISET,

Today is a day of celebration for the ISET community. A special day for graduates of the master's in economics Class 2026, the master's in finance Class 2026, and the bachelor's in economics Class 2026 and their families and friends.

Today we recognize the years of hard work of our graduates, determination, and countless hours spent studying, questioning, and learning. Earning a degree is a major achievement, and we all gathered in this ballroom are very proud of you, dear Graduates!

And let's think for a minute what comes next. Here, I ask two questions:

Firstly, I want to ask you **WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO WITH WHAT YOU KNOW**, with the knowledge you obtained at ISET?

We are facing extraordinary opportunities and equally extraordinary challenges. Technological change, climate change, Demographic shifts, wars, geopolitical tensions, and growing inequality remind us **that professional decisions affect people's lives**. I hope you will look at the opportunity **as a privilege and the responsibility** to think beyond today's problems, into building tomorrow's solutions.

Each of you will follow a different path. Some will work in public agencies, designing policies that affect people's lives every single day. There please ask – did these policies you contributed improve people's lives? Others will build businesses. There, please ask: does the business create jobs, decent jobs, and drive innovation? Some of you will become researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, consultants, or leaders in international organizations. Please ask - did you contribute to creating opportunities rather than barriers?

Success should not be measured only by the positions we hold or the salaries we earn. It should also be measured by the opportunities we create for others, the problems we help solve, and the positive impact we leave behind.

Second question - what future will you help to create, both locally and globally?

The legacy begins at home in your country, where your knowledge can help shape a better future. Georgia is now in cross-roads, again, with its European aspiration endangered. Before you commit and contribute to something, please make an effort to understand what you are contributing to.

That said, our responsibility does not end at national borders. Global challenges we face require cooperation, empathy, and shared responsibility. We should think not only as citizens of our own countries but also as citizens of the world. **Global development is not someone else's mission. It belongs to all of us.**

Now, a little bit about ISET. ISET turned 20 years old this summer. It was established as a world-class economics school in Tbilisi with an important mission by very visionary people, Georgians and foreigners, friends of Georgia – to contribute to efficient economic transition and development in the Caucasus. To train world-class economists who would be competitive globally and contribute to the local and global development agenda. And today we are proud that ISET's legacy is a very strong professional community of over 1,150 alumni.

All these years, with nearly 100% employment rate of graduates, ISET has been a key contributor of top human capital in key private and public economic institutions and in academia. Over 60 of our graduates have been admitted to PhD programs in the USA, Europe, and the UK. Now is the record year - 6 of our graduates are heading to PhD this year. With international Accreditation from the German international accreditation agency FIBAA, with affiliation with CFA Institute, with Dual degree programs with the University of Bremen of Germany and Clermont Auvergne University of France, and many other European partnerships, we are committed to continue providing knowledge and tools to equip our students to deliver a better future for themselves and their communities. This is a major joint effort and mission of the brilliant faculty and academic program heads, super Committed staff of ISET, and Academic and Governing Boards of ISET. ISET's success story is strengthened by the fact that our graduates are proud of ISET and ISET is proud to be their Alma mater.

Dear Graduates, please remember, as you leave ISET, you carry more than a diploma. The world does not simply need more economists and finance specialists. The world needs professionals who care, who remember that behind every decision is a human story. ISET's strength and pride are YOU, its graduates.

Once again, Congratulations!!!