



International School of Economics at TSU
Policy Institute

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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CHAPTER I General Provisions

Article 1 Scope and purpose

- 1.1. This Code of Ethics and Conduct (the Code) establishes binding standards of conduct and responsibility, together with disciplinary procedures for misconduct, for the academic, research, administrative and support personnel, invited lecturers and students of the International School of Economics at TSU (ISET) and the ISET Policy Institute (ISET-PI), jointly referred to in this Code as ISET.
- 1.2. The Code establishes common standards of conduct for ISET personnel, faculty and students. It complies with the Tbilisi State University (TSU) Code of Ethics (2021) and the TSU Regulations on Disciplinary Norms approved on 18 June 2009.
- 1.3. The Code was originally approved by the ISET Director on 8 January 2020, following endorsement by the Governing Board of the Partnership for Economics Education and Research (PEER), ISET's governing body. It was updated in 2026 and approved by the Executive Board on October 5, 2026.

Article 2 Core ethical principles

- 2.1. All ISET personnel, faculty and students shall uphold the highest ethical standards in performing their duties and responsibilities and shall comply at all times with the Georgian Law on Higher Education and other applicable Georgian legislation.
- 2.2. ISET's core ethical principles are integrity, truth, transparency, accountability, fairness and respect for others.
- 2.3. Staff shall act honestly and maintain the highest professional standards. The resources of PEER, ISET, ISET-PI and their partners shall not be used for personal gain. Expense reports, timesheets and other records must accurately reflect expenses incurred and work performed. Deliberate misrepresentation of information violates the principle of integrity.
- 2.4. Any staff, academic personnel or student facing an ethical dilemma under this Code, or aware of another person's misconduct, shall report the matter without delay to the ISET Director, the Deputy Director responsible for HR or their supervisor. These recipients are responsible for referring the matter to the ISET Ethics & Disciplinary Committee. Misconduct includes illegal, unethical or inappropriate behaviour or activity. All reports shall receive serious attention.
- 2.5. A whistleblower is a person who uncovers and reports misconduct or an ethical breach. A verbal or written whistleblowing report shall be addressed to the Deputy Director responsible for HR and Operations. Reports shall be treated confidentially to the greatest extent possible. If a whistleblower's identity becomes known or is suspected, the whistleblower shall be protected from reprisals and retaliatory words or actions.
- 2.6. Retaliation, as defined in Article 3.6, is prohibited.
- 2.7. Anyone aware of a violation committed by an employee, contractor or consultant on ISET premises, or elsewhere in connection with ISET business, shall notify the ISET administration or the ISET Ethics & Disciplinary Committee.
- 2.8. Failure to comply with this Code shall result in disciplinary action under Chapter IV and the applicable TSU rules. Staff and faculty cases shall follow the approval process in Article

Article 3 Definitions

- 3.1. For the purposes of this Code, Employees means administrative staff and academic personnel (including faculty, invited lecturers, teaching assistants). Employees shall perform their duties honestly, competently, impartially and punctually, in accordance with approved programmes, contracts and lawful instructions.
- 3.2. Complainant means a person who reports alleged misconduct or whose rights or interests are allegedly affected. A person reporting misconduct need not be the affected person.
- 3.3. Respondent means a person against whom an allegation is formally examined.
- 3.4. Committee means the ISET Ethics & Disciplinary Committee established under Chapter V.
- 3.5. Disciplinary decision means a written determination of whether this Code has been violated and, if so, the disciplinary sanction to be imposed. In student cases, only the competent TSU body may make this decision. Staff and faculty decisions follow Article 12.3. Academic marking under a published assessment rule is distinct from a disciplinary sanction, but may be reviewed when it is based on an academic-integrity finding.
- 3.6. Working day means a day on which ISET's administrative offices are ordinarily open, excluding official holidays.
- 3.7. Retaliation means adverse treatment, threats, intimidation, interference or disadvantage because a person made or considered making a good-faith report, sought advice, requested an accommodation, exercised a right of defence, gave evidence or participated in a proceeding.

Article 4 Harassment and other abusive conduct

- 4.1. All staff, academic personnel, and students shall respect the rights of colleagues, students and external partners, including grantees and members of the ISET, ISET-PI and TSU communities. All forms of harassment, including verbal, physical and sexual harassment, are prohibited, whether committed by supervisors, colleagues, students, vendors, clients or customers.
- 4.2. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. The context, seriousness, persistence, power imbalance and reasonable perception of the affected person shall be considered.
- 4.3. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, requests for sexual conduct linked to an academic or employment benefit or detriment and conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- 4.4. Bullying means repeated or particularly serious unreasonable conduct, including abuse of power, that humiliates, intimidates, threatens, isolates or materially undermines another person. Legitimate and proportionate academic evaluation, supervision, performance management, criticism or disagreement is not bullying merely because it is unwelcome.
- 4.5. Violence, credible threats of violence, stalking, coercion and deliberate interference with another person's physical safety are prohibited.
- 4.6. Any staff, academic personnel or student who believes that they have experienced harassment shall notify their supervisor, the ISET administration or the Ethics and Disciplinary Committee. Violations are subject to the disciplinary procedures in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER II Rules of Conduct for Staff and Academic Personnel

Article 5 General obligations

- 5.1. For the purposes of this Code, Employees means administrative staff, academic personnel and invited lecturers. Employees shall perform their duties honestly, competently, impartially and punctually, in accordance with approved programmes, contracts and lawful instructions.
- 5.2. Employees shall not use ISET equipment for private purposes, including commercial activity or any prohibited activity. They shall not use professional or institutional privileges for personal purposes.
- 5.3. Employees should promote democratic, fair and respectful values grounded in human rights. They shall treat all colleagues with equal respect, regardless of their professional or personal qualities.
- 5.4. Employees shall respect students and their views and create conditions in which students can express their ideas and opinions freely.
- 5.5. Employees shall treat all students equally, regardless of race, skin colour, language, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political or other views, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, status or place of residence. They shall ensure access to a quality education for students with special educational needs or physical disabilities.
- 5.6. Employees shall refrain from inappropriate public statements concerning ISET, including statements made on social media or through broadcasts, and from communications that directly or indirectly damage ISET's honour, reputation or dignity.
- 5.7. PEER, ISET and ISET-PI do not engage in political activity. Employees participating in external political activities shall do so as individuals and shall make clear that they do not act on behalf of these institutions. ISET facilities, equipment, faculty, students and staff shall not be used for political or related activities.
- 5.8. ISET recognises each Employee's right to petition the government about its past, current or anticipated activities. Employees exercising this right shall make clear that they act as individuals, not on behalf of PEER, ISET or ISET-PI. Before engaging in lobbying, an Employee shall seek advice from the ISET and ISET-PI President or the Chair of the PEER Board if the activity could be understood as an institutional attempt to influence the introduction, amendment, enactment, signing or veto of pending legislation.
- 5.9. Products resulting from employment with PEER, ISET or ISET-PI, including research and other work eligible for copyright, trademark or patent protection, shall remain the property of PEER/ISET-PI unless alternative arrangements are agreed in advance and approved in writing by management. This rule excludes academic papers, publications and other materials produced for ISET's use.
- 5.10. Employees shall protect, in accordance with Georgian legislation, confidential information relating to or provided by students and colleagues. They shall not disclose confidential information obtained through their work and shall protect confidential relationships with employees, consultants, grantees, donors, institutional partners and vendors. Requests for information about current or former employees shall be referred to the ISET President or the Chair of the Governing Board.
- 5.11. Officers, members of the ISET Boards and Committees and staff shall not use confidential or proprietary information obtained through their positions with PEER for financial or other advantage. This duty applies even if the information is not marked confidential or proprietary. It includes computer programmes and databases, personnel files, research and development information, strategic plans, technical information, institutional communications, financial

information and advice from accountants or legal counsel. Access is limited to those who need the information to perform their duties.

- 5.12. Employees shall not accept gifts or favours from students, applicants, their relatives, customers, suppliers, grantees, institutional partners, clients or competitors. Accepting anything of value in return for a promise to influence the selection of a grantee, partner, vendor or other collaborator is unlawful. Gifts or souvenirs worth less than USD 20 may be accepted if they express general appreciation and are not compensation for favours or services.
- 5.13. Employees shall not undertake consulting or other outside activities that may interfere with or conflict with their responsibilities to ISET without approval from the ISET President or the Executive Board.
- 5.14. Governing Board members, principal officers and members of committees exercising delegated Board powers owe duties of care and loyalty to PEER, ISET and ISET-PI. They shall disclose to the Board any actual or potential conflict of interest arising directly or indirectly through business, investment, compensation or family relationships. A conflicted person shall not vote on the matter; unconflicted members shall determine the extent of that person's participation in discussion. Before entering into the transaction or arrangement, PEER shall determine whether it is fair, reasonable and in the institutions' best interests.
- 5.15. Staff, directors, officers, consultants and grantees shall avoid activities or associations that create, or appear to create, a conflict between their personal interests and those of PEER, ISET or ISET-PI. Normally, neither a staff member nor a member of their family may receive remuneration or other financing under a PEER grant or contract, except through the staff member's employment contract.
- 5.16. An Employee shall not participate in selecting or administering a contract or grant where a real or potential conflict exists. This includes a financial or other interest held by the Employee, an immediate family member, their partner, or an organisation employing or about to employ any of those persons, in the organisation selected for the award.
- 5.17. Spouses or other close relatives employed by the institution shall not jointly control its finances or assets or supervise one another's work or performance.
- 5.18. An officer, members of the ISET Boards and Committees, , staff member or faculty shall disclose in writing to the ISET President all material facts about a relationship or interest in an organisation with which PEER has entered into, or is considering, a contract, grant or other transaction. This obligation applies where the individual, their spouse or cohabiting partner, or a direct ancestor or descendant, is an officer, director or staff member of that organisation or holds a financial interest in it. A person with a conflict shall withdraw from every part of the related decision-making process.
- 5.19. Staff and resident faculty shall disclose in writing to the ISET President involvement in other organizations or initiatives such as Board memberships, institutional affiliations and memberships, controlling interests in for-profit or nonprofit organisations, and other potential personal conflicts, including those involving a spouse, cohabiting partner, direct ancestor or descendant. In the case of an ISET President, She/He shall disclose to the Chair of the Governing Board.
- 5.20. ISET facilities and equipment shall not be used for private purposes.

5.21. Failure to comply with these obligations may lead to disciplinary action by PEER/ISET/ISET-PI, up to and including termination of contract, through the approval process in Chapter IV.

Article 6 Professional and teaching responsibilities

- 6.1. Academic personnel shall keep course content and teaching methods reasonably current; give students clear information about learning outcomes, assessment criteria, permitted resources and appeal routes; provide announced consultation opportunities; and assess all students fairly on academic merit.
- 6.2. Favouritism, retaliatory grading, exploitation of students, undisclosed personal conflicts in assessment, and the use of academic authority for personal, financial, political or sexual benefit are prohibited.
- 6.3. Faculty shall respect colleagues' academic independence. Criticism may be robust, but shall not involve knowing misrepresentation, discrimination, threats, harassment or retaliation.

Article 7 Research integrity

- 7.1. Research shall comply with applicable national and international law, funder and ethics-approval requirements, recognised disciplinary standards, informed-consent obligations, data-protection duties and the principles of honesty, accountability and transparency. These duties apply to planning, conducting, reporting and publishing research and to related activities.
- 7.2. Fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, deceptive manipulation of research materials or records, misappropriation of ideas, improper authorship attribution, material undisclosed conflicts and obstruction of a research-integrity inquiry are prohibited.
- 7.3. Honest errors, reasonable methodological disagreements and good-faith interpretations are not research misconduct. Responsible corrections and retractions shall be considered in mitigation and shall not, by themselves, establish misconduct.
- 7.4 Research misconduct allegations requiring specialist review may be referred by the ISET Ethics & Disciplinary Committee to a specialist subcommittee appointed by the Committee for that purpose. The subcommittee may include members of the ISET Ethics & Disciplinary Committee and/or other appropriately qualified persons, as determined by the Committee. The respondent retains all procedural rights under this Code.

CHAPTER III Rules of Conduct for Students

Article 8 General obligations and conduct

- 8.1. Students shall respect ISET personnel, faculty, fellow students and their personal rights, and shall act in good faith in their studies and academic work.
- 8.2. Students shall not discriminate against others, treat them with intolerance, encourage discrimination or prevent them from exercising their rights under Georgian legislation. This prohibition applies regardless of race, colour, language, sex, gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, national or social origin, birthplace, residence, property, status, religion or beliefs, profession, marital status, health, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political or other opinion, or any other characteristic.
- 8.3. Students shall not disrupt teaching, study, research or the work of ISET personnel, or obstruct other students' access to libraries and other resources. Hiding, stealing or destroying study or research

resources is prohibited. As an international school, ISET requires English to be used throughout classroom activities.

- 8.4. Smoking tobacco or electronic cigarettes is prohibited in ISET buildings and on its grounds, except in designated smoking areas.
- 8.5. The use, sale or distribution of illegal drugs on ISET premises is prohibited.
- 8.6. Bringing, distributing or consuming alcohol on ISET premises is prohibited unless the school organises or permits the event.
- 8.7. Gambling on ISET premises, including playing cards for money, is prohibited.
- 8.8. Carrying or using firearms or other prohibited weapons, as defined by the Georgian Law on Weapons, on ISET premises is prohibited.
- 8.9. Using, distributing or transferring explosive or flammable items or substances that create a real risk of fire or explosion on ISET premises is prohibited.
- 8.10. Students shall not engage in verbal or physical abuse, psychological pressure, threats, intimidation or offensive language directed at others. The provisions on harassment, bullying and violence in Article 4 also apply.
- 8.11. Students shall not create excessive noise that disrupts activities on ISET premises.
- 8.12. Students shall not use ISET computers, equipment or property for private or entertainment purposes.
- 8.13. Students shall not infringe another person's property rights, damage or destroy their property, or unlawfully restrict their use of it.
- 8.14. Students shall not misuse confidential information, including obtaining or disclosing confidential examination information. Although academic life depends on the free exchange of ideas, intellectual property and privacy may require information to remain confidential before publication, particularly ideas in research proposals or manuscripts still being developed.
- 8.15. Falsifying ISET data or distributing false information about ISET, its students or personnel is prohibited.

Article 9 Student academic misconduct

- 9.1. Academic misconduct is intentional, knowing or reckless conduct that materially misrepresents authorship, knowledge, data, methods, participation or performance in an academic exercise, or materially compromises the fairness or integrity of assessment or research.
- 9.2. Plagiarism means presenting another person's words, ideas, data, translation, code or creative work as one's own without the attribution reasonably required by the discipline and specific assignment/project/paper. Minor citation errors, common knowledge, authorized templates and honest mistakes are not plagiarism unless the evidence establishes material misrepresentation.
- 9.3. Students are responsible for understanding and avoiding plagiarism in accordance with internationally recognized academic standards. During their first year, students shall sign a plagiarism declaration confirming that they understand and agree to follow these rules. The declaration shall be retained in the student's file.
- 9.4. Cheating includes using or accessing unauthorised assistance or materials; copying or communicating during an assessment without permission; impersonation; obtaining confidential

assessment content without authority; contract breaching; unauthorised collaboration; or assisting another person to engage in such conduct.

- 9.5. Examples include using books, notes, mobile phones or calculators without the instructor's permission; using hidden notes or formulas; looking at another student's work; discussing answers during an examination; representing another person's work as one's own; or having another person carry out research or prepare or write assessed work on one's behalf.
- 9.6. Fabrication or falsification includes inventing, altering or omitting material data, sources, results, attendance, approvals or records intentionally or recklessly so as to misrepresent academic work or performance.
- 9.7. Duplicate submission means submitting substantially the same work for credit more than once without prior permission where assessment rules require new work.
- 9.8. Students are expected to submit original work for each assignment. A student wishing to resubmit a paper, written text, presentation or substantial part of another assignment for which credit has already been awarded shall obtain the instructor's permission before submission. Failure to do so violates this Code.

Article 10 Use of artificial intelligence

- 10.1. This article applies to homework, assessments and bachelor's and master's projects. It promotes academic integrity, critical thinking and fair assessment while recognising the educational benefits of artificial intelligence (AI). AI shall complement individual effort, not replace it.
- 10.2. Each course or assessment shall specify, before submission, the permitted level of generative-AI assistance: prohibited; permitted only for specified preparatory tasks; permitted with disclosure; or required as part of the assignment. In the absence of a specific rule, AI may be used for learning support but shall not substitute for the student's own authorship of assessed work.
- 10.3. Subject to the published course or assessment rule, students may use AI tools, search engines and online databases to gather information, clarify concepts and deepen their understanding. AI may assist with literature searches, data analysis, simulations and complex calculations, provided that students formulate the hypotheses, interpret the results, write the text themselves and draw their own conclusions. Exclusive reliance on AI to complete assessed work is prohibited.
- 10.4. Students using AI to assist with homework or bachelor's or master's projects shall disclose that use and provide citations where necessary. Where disclosure is required, it shall identify the tool, the material purpose and the nature of the assistance. Prompts or outputs shall be supplied only where a published assessment rule reasonably requires them.
- 10.5. Students remain responsible for accuracy, citations, confidentiality, data protection, intellectual property and compliance with the assignment. They shall not upload confidential, personal or restricted material to an AI service without authorisation.
- 10.6. Assistive technology and reasonable accommodations shall not be prohibited merely because they use AI. Restrictions shall be adapted where necessary to provide equal access without undermining essential assessment outcomes.
- 10.7. ISET shall use appropriate measures to detect and prevent AI misuse, including review systems, assessments of students' individual understanding and, where appropriate, AI and plagiarism detection software. An allegation of AI misuse must be established through reliable, contextual evidence and meaningful human review. AI-detection output shall never be the sole or determinative evidence.

- 10.8. A breach of this article constitutes a breach of academic integrity and is subject to disciplinary proceedings as given in Chapter IV. Depending on the seriousness and frequency of the breach, consequences may include a reduced or nullified grade or invalidation of an assignment. Academic consequences shall follow published assessment rules and the opportunity to contest an allegation under Article 15; disciplinary sanctions may be imposed by TSU.
- 10.9. This policy shall be reviewed periodically to reflect technological developments, changing academic requirements and emerging ethical considerations.

Article 11 Examination conduct

- 11.1. Before an examination, students shall receive clear notice of permitted materials and devices, identification requirements, start and end arrangements, accessibility measures and the consequences of specified breaches.
- 11.2. Students shall follow reasonable proctor instructions, use assigned seating where applicable, preserve the anonymity of examination scripts, avoid unauthorised communication and submit required materials at the end of the examination.
- 11.3. A proctor may take an immediate, proportionate measure necessary to protect the examination, including preserving an item, changing a student's seat, recording an incident or removing a student where continued participation materially threatens safety or assessment integrity. The reasons and supporting evidence shall be documented promptly.
- 11.4. Removal from an examination or temporary withholding of a mark is not a final disciplinary finding. A zero or other academic consequence based on alleged misconduct may become final only after the student has received notice and a meaningful opportunity to contest the allegation under Chapter IV, Article 15.
- 11.5. Legally required accessibility, health and religious accommodations shall be arranged without disadvantaging the student or disclosing unnecessary personal information.

CHAPTER IV Disciplinary Proceedings

Article 12 Misconduct and disciplinary authority

- 12.1. Employees, students and invited personnel may be subject to disciplinary proceedings for violations of this Code or the TSU Code of Ethics, applicable legislation, ISET regulations or other applicable TSU regulatory acts.
- 12.2. Only the competent TSU body may make a disciplinary decision or impose a disciplinary sanction in a student case. The ISET Ethics & Disciplinary Committee examines student allegations and submits its findings and recommendations to TSU. ISET shall not make or comment on the final student disciplinary decision.
- 12.3. In staff and faculty cases, the Committee shall submit its findings and recommendations to the ISET President for final confirmation and approval by the PEER/ISET Executive Board. The Committee's recommendation is not itself a final disciplinary decision.

Article 13 Disciplinary sanctions for staff and faculty

- 13.1. The Committee may recommend the following sanctions to the ISET President and PEER Board, subject to the approval process in Article 12.3:
- a disciplinary warning or note;

- a reprimand;
- withholding salary to compensate for damage, where applicable;
- termination of contract or dismissal from employment.

13.2. Termination shall not be recommended unless lesser measures are inadequate or the established misconduct provides a lawful ground for termination. The decision shall identify that ground and explain why termination is proportionate.

Article 14 Disciplinary action for students

14.1. A recommended sanction shall be proportionate to the offence and consistent with TSU rules. Student disciplinary matters shall be reviewed and decided by the Faculty of Business and Economics Academic Council in accordance with Article 5.3 of the TSU Code of Ethics, or by another TSU body where the applicable TSU rules so provide.

Article 15 Examination of allegations and academic integrity cases

- 15.1. Course instructors shall report every incident of suspected cheating or plagiarism to the Committee. Any instructor, proctor or relevant body that suspects plagiarism by a student, faculty member or researcher shall send a description of the allegation, supporting evidence and relevant details to ec@iset.ge. The examination and academic-integrity provisions of this Code shall be read together with the ISET Rules and Regulations and Student Handbook.
- 15.2. The respondent shall receive notice of the allegation and a meaningful opportunity to contest it, respond to the evidence relied upon and present an explanation before an adverse recommendation is finalised. A student shall receive the same opportunity before a zero or other academic consequence based on alleged misconduct becomes final.
- 15.3. The Committee shall review the allegation and evidence and submit its findings and any recommendation for disciplinary action through the applicable route: to the competent TSU body for students through ISET President, or to the ISET President under Article 12.3 for staff and faculty. Its findings and recommendations are not a final disciplinary decision.
- 15.4. An instructor may apply published academic assessment rules within their grading responsibilities. Academic marking is distinct from a disciplinary sanction; the Committee shall not delegate disciplinary decision-making to an instructor. Where an academic consequence depends on an academic-integrity finding, Article 15.2 applies and the consequence may be reviewed through the applicable academic review or appeal route.

CHAPTER V Ethics and Disciplinary Committee

Article 16 Composition and responsibilities

- 16.1. The Committee examines allegations of cheating, plagiarism and other breaches of this Code involving ISET Employees and students. It formulates findings and recommendations for the authority responsible under Article 12. Disciplinary decisions in student cases are made by TSU.
- 16.2. The ISET President determines the Committee's composition, subject to confirmation by the Executive Board. Members serve two-year terms. The Committee shall comprise at least three and no more than five members, drawn from the following roles:
- one Deputy of ISET President, whose membership is mandatory, and one administration representative;

- at least two representatives of the resident, adjunct or invited faculty;
 - one Lead Economist of the Policy Institute, whose membership is mandatory.
- 16.3. A meeting has quorum when at least three members are present. The Committee may appoint subcommittees according to the nature of a case.
- 16.4. The Committee shall elect a Chair from among its members for a one-year term.
- 16.5. The Committee shall convene in response to a written report by any party concerning an ISET-related alleged breach of ethical or behavioural standards, or alleged fraud or corruption under the TSU Code of Ethics, this Code or the Anti-Fraud Policy. It shall meet within ten working days after a case is reported to examine the matter and consider appropriate recommendations. The respondent shall have an opportunity to provide an explanation, in accordance with Article 15.2.
- 16.6. The Committee shall adopt its findings and recommendations by a majority of the members present and record them in writing, including any recommended sanction or recommendation that a sanction be waived. If votes are tied, the Chair shall have the casting vote. This vote adopts a recommendation, not a disciplinary decision.
- 16.7. In staff and faculty cases, the Committee shall submit its written findings and recommendations to the ISET President for final confirmation and approval by the PEER/ISET Executive Board. In student cases, it shall submit its written findings and recommendations to the Faculty of Business and Economics Academic Council or the TSU Rector or administration, as determined by the applicable TSU rules, within 30 days of the date on which the alleged misconduct was first brought to the Committee's attention. 16.8. If a crime as defined by the Criminal Code of Georgia is committed, ISET shall immediately refer the matter to the relevant law-enforcement authorities.