

INTRODUCTION

The SANS Technology Institute does not accept transfers of credit for coursework completed at other regionally accredited higher education institutions. The SANS Technology Institute does waive requirements for course elements or courses within its program of studies as a reflection of a student's previous attainment of substantially similar intended learning outcomes.

WAIVER OF CREDIT

To maintain the integrity of the program offerings, waivers may be granted for up to, but not more than, one-quarter of the total number of credit hours required by the program (the "25% limit"), and are subject to the requirements outlined below:

- If prior work represents only part of the credits and requirements of a course, the incoming student will need to complete the remaining course requirements to receive full credit and a course grade.
- All waivers are granted prior to a student's matriculation.
- Course waivers receive no credit hours or grades awarded. Waivers are not figured into the calculation of a student's cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Previous SANS Institute Classes:

Waivers will be granted from having to re-take a particular SANS Institute class when the prospective student has already taken that class within the two years prior to admission.

- Previous SANS courses waive only a partial course component. Students must complete the associated GIAC certification to receive a full course waiver.

Current GIAC Certifications:

Waivers will be granted from a requirement to take a particular GIAC exam (and the required SANS Institute class associated with that exam) when the prospective student took and passed the relevant GIAC exam within the past three years.

- GIAC exams waivers apply to all course components, waiving graduate school courses in the entirety.
- This is not associated with whether the GIAC certification is considered 'current' or 'renewed', but related solely to the passing of the exam itself in the past three years.
- Waivers approaching the three-year mark are reviewed to determine if a renewal is appropriate prior to granting a full waiver.

Other Certifications:

CISSP Certification

- For students who hold a current CISSP from the ISC2 organization, a waiver will be granted within ISE 5101 for the SANS Institute class SEC 401 or ISM 5101 for the SANS Institute class MGT 512. Students must still complete the associated GIAC exam.

PMP Certification

- For students who hold a current PMP from the Project Management Institute, a waiver will be granted for all course components of ISE/ISM 5800.

CISA Certification

- For students who hold a current CISA from the ISACA, a waiver will be granted for all course components of ISM 6201.

GIAC Gold Papers

- GIAC Gold Papers completed prior to matriculation may be reviewed for waivers within the Research Practicum requirements. If approved, a waiver would be granted for all course components of RES 5500 or RES 5900.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

There are two primary drivers that govern whether a waiver will be granted for a SANS Institute class or GIAC exam that has been taken in the past:

1. *The relevancy of performance on a past GIAC exam is reduced by the passage of time.* The field of information technology changes quickly, and SANS courses and GIAC exams are frequently updated to reflect these changes. At the time of admissions, the content of the former class or certification exam must be considered fully relevant by the SANS Technology Institute.
 - a. Generally, we deem a GIAC certification exam *taken and passed within the three years prior to admission* to be sufficiently current and applicable and therefore those exams qualify for a waiver of that exam (and the associated SANS Institute class) in the program.
 - b. Relative to a SANS Institute class where the student didn't take the relevant GIAC exam, the student will receive a waiver for the class only if it was taken within the past two years.
2. *There is a limit on the number of waivers that can be granted in order to maintain the integrity of the progression of courses in the program.* The master's programs are formal graduate-level curricula, designed as an integrated and holistic progression of course experiences that build upon each other throughout the student's experience:
 - a. Courses assume a timed relationship between classes, exams, papers, and presentations.

- i. Research papers are meant to be written while the course material from class is still fresh
 - ii. Presentations of those research papers are meant to be completed sequentially over time to allow for assessment, feedback, and continued improvement
- b. Students are presumed to be gaining working experience in their jobs while they are advancing through the program, and their work experience is a presumed and integrated part of their learning.

The SANS Technology Institute establishes criteria beyond whether the GIAC certification is current because the applicant must be able to prove that their knowledge in the area remains current. GIAC's procedures for certification renewal include accepting a wide variety of professional activities as Continuing Professional Experience (CPE) credits. While this is a common practice for certification, the flexibility of these CPEs mean there are instances where a certification may be renewed by taking additional coursework in an area of information security unrelated to the original exam.

Limiting the graduate school waiver policy, excluding renewal through CPE, confirms that a student's skills in the original area have not atrophied. Renewal exams can be purchased directly through [GIAC](#). Renewals should be taken prior to matriculation be granted a waiver. Once renewed, your GIAC certification will extend 4 years from its current expiration date, not from the date of renewal.

There are a limited number of exceptions for waivers of GIAC exams taken more than three years ago. Successful completion of advanced GIAC exams within the past three years may establish a waiver for other, related GIAC exams the student also holds as current and renewed. These are:

- Applicants that hold a current or renewed GSEC certification but took the exam more than three years ago may receive a waiver for that GSEC exam in ISE 5101 if they have taken and passed the GCED within the past three years.
- Applicants that hold a current or renewed GCFE certification but took the exam more than three years ago may receive a waiver for that GCFE exam in ISE 6420 if they have taken and passed the GCFA within the past three years.
- Applicants that hold a current or renewed GPEN certification but took the exam more than three years ago may receive a waiver for that GPEN exam in ISE 6320 if they have taken and passed the GXPEN within the past three years.
- Finally, all applicants that hold a current GSE certification and will be granted waivers for the GSEC, GCIA, or GCIH certification exams, regardless of whether they have taken and passed the exams within the past three years.

TUITION APPLICABLE TO COURSES WITH WAIVERS

The following represent the basic tuition charges associated with waivers:

- Certification exam for renewal – [Renewal fee determined by GIAC](#)
- GIAC Exam Attempt (with or without SANS course) - \$729 per exam attempt
- Written Assignment - \$625

POLICY ON FAILURE OF GIAC EXAMS FOR WAIVER

If a student attempts a GIAC Exam (with or without taking the associated SANS training) and fails to pass the exam, that student must enroll in the associated master's course in full. No credit will be given until the student passes all course components. No refund will be given for the tuition paid and these amounts will not be applied towards the cost of the full, associated course.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Approved programs based on the same course instruction and exam requirements, that are taught by SANS Technology Institute faculty, are eligible for credit towards the master's programs. This is considered a transfer of credit, not a waiver of credit.

- Transfer credit receives earned credit, but is not included in the cumulative GPA.
- All eligible coursework can be applied to the anticipated master's program. This exception to the 25% limit does not extend to certificate programs.
- Students can combine transfer credit and waiver credit. Waiver credit cannot exceed the 25% limit.