



SANS Technology Institute

Student Handbook

SANS Technology Institute
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Welcome

The SANS Technology Institute student handbook is intended to familiarize students with the resources available to assist them in the pursuit of their educational goals. It is a reference including information about academic requirements, policies, student rights and responsibilities, and methods for accessing important services.

We have made every effort in the preparation of the handbook to provide pertinent and accurate information. Periodically, we revise policies and procedures. Significant changes concerning new academic regulations, policies or programs will be published on our website (www.sans.edu) and we will send an email notification to students. We recommend that students periodically visit our website to review the most up-to-date information.

If you have any questions about any part of this handbook, please contact your student advisor.

Again, welcome to SANS Technology Institute.

Regards,

Alan Paller
President

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Mission, Vision, and Goals

Our Mission

The SANS Technology Institute (STI) develops leaders to strengthen enterprise and global information security. STI educates managers and engineers in information security practices and techniques, attracts top scholar-practitioners as faculty, and engages both students and faculty in real-world applied research.

Our Vision

STI aspires to be the preeminent graduate institution by translating contemporary information security practice and scholarship into effective educational experiences. Our graduates will be highly valued because they design state-of-the-art, enterprise-level cyber defenses, champion the adoption of those defenses, and manage their implementation and ongoing operation.

Our Goals

1. Enable private and public sector enterprises of the United States and its allies to preserve social order and protect their economic rights and military capabilities in the face of cyber attacks;
2. Provide the national defense establishment, critical industries, businesses and government agencies with information security engineers and managers who have the most current and critical knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively to the evolving cyber attack landscape; and,
3. Perform leading-edge research that continually identifies current best practice and enhances the state of the art in the practice of information security.

Accreditation and Authorization

The SANS Technology Institute, an independent subsidiary of SANS, is accredited by The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 - 267.284.5000), an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The SANS Technology Institute is authorized by the Maryland Higher Education Commission to offer Master of Science degrees in Information Security Engineering and Information Security Management, as well as multiple graduate programs leading to post-baccalaureate certificates and an undergraduate program leading to an upper division certificate.

The SANS Technology Institute is authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs to accept VA Education Benefits.

Governance, Faculty, and Administration

Board of Directors

An independent board of directors governs the SANS Technology Institute. The board of directors plays an active role in guiding the college, from helping to shape the mission, goals, and strategic plan to actively reviewing assessment data and helping to identify solutions to difficult challenges. Members of the board represent varying constituencies and bring wide-ranging perspectives to their service in assisting the school achieve its mission and goals. Directors serve a three-year term and are eligible for re-election. Current board members are listed below:

- Dennis Kirby, the current Chair of the Board, is a member of the leadership team of the SANS Institute, where he is primarily responsible for training content and instructor development. After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy, he was Commander of a UH-60 Blackhawk Assault Helicopter Company of the 101st Airborne Division and served in Desert Storm. A graduate of Harvard Business School, he has managed private equity investments exceeding one billion dollars and served on multiple boards of directors of portfolio companies.
- Dr. Thomas Johnson, current Vice Chair, is Associate Vice President and Chief of Strategic Initiatives at Webster University. Dr. Johnson previously served as Dean of the College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at the University of New Haven for 13 years, during which time he worked with faculty to develop new programs in the areas of national security, digital forensics, and advanced investigation.
- Dr. Ron Phipps is a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, where he coauthored *Assuring Quality in Distance Education: A Preliminary Review* for the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. He previously served as Assistant Secretary at the Maryland Higher Education Commission and as Executive Director of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.
- Scott Cassity is the Managing Director of the Global Information Assurance Certification (GIAC) organization, and as such he bolsters the Board's insight into student testing, certification, and evaluations. Mr. Cassity was previously an executive in a healthcare, real estate development, and consulting firm, and he is the current President of ChildHelp of East Tennessee, a children's advocacy organization.
- Marc Niketas serves as the Director of North America Live Training (NALT) at the SANS Institute. As a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, Mr. Niketas began his career as an AH-1 Cobra Attack Helicopter Pilot in a Cavalry Squadron. After earning his MBA from Harvard Business School, he joined Price Waterhouse (later PwC Consulting) as a consultant and led many large process change and systems implementation efforts. Upon acquisition by IBM, Marc became a Client Executive where he had overall responsibility for a cluster of key customers in the Aerospace & Defense and Electronics industries.
- Richard Hammer is the Information System Security Officer (ISSO) for the Advanced Nuclear Technology group (N-2) at Los Alamos National Laboratory. He was the first graduate of STI.

- Lenny Zeltzer earned his MBA from the Sloan School at MIT and is now a Product Management Director at NCR Corporation, where he focuses on safeguarding IT infrastructure of small and mid-size businesses around the world. He also teaches digital forensics and malware courses for the SANS Institute, where he is a senior faculty member.
- Dave Shackelford is a consultant and author in cybersecurity. He previously served as Chief Security Officer for Configuresoft and as Chief Technology Officer for the Center for Internet Security. He is the author of *Virtualization Security: Protecting Virtualized Environments*, and recently coauthored the first course on virtualization security for the SANS Institute. He helps lead the Atlanta chapter of the Cloud Security Alliance.
- Ed Skoudis is the founder of Counter Hack Challenges, an innovative organization that designs, builds, and operates popular information security challenges and simulators including CyberCity, NetWars, Cyber Quests, and Cyber Foundations. His expertise includes hacker attacks and defenses, and he has trained more cyber penetration testers than anyone else in America. He is the author of two Prentice Hall best sellers, *Counter Hack Reloaded* and *Malware: Fighting Malicious Code*.

Program Faculty

Program faculty serve as the primary authors and instructors for SANS Technology Institute courses. They are directly involved in the design and maintenance of current and future courses, program design, and student learning outcomes. A few of the current program faculty include:

Johannes Ullrich, Ph.D. in Physics, SUNY Albany

Ed Skoudis, M.S. in Information Networking, Carnegie Mellon University

Lenny Zeltzer, M.B.A., Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Rob Lee, M.B.A., Georgetown University

Jeff Frisk, B.S. in Engineering, Rochester Institute of Technology

David Hoelzer, M.S. in Computer Science, American Intercontinental University

Each member of the SANS faculty has demonstrated competence, through formal education and professional experience, to provide educational courses that meet the objectives laid out in the program goals.

Administration

Administrators for the SANS Technology Institute provide leadership to carry out plans and activities in support of the Institute's goals and objectives. Administrators create and design appropriate processes and services to support students and the learning environment.

Alan Paller, M.Eng.
President

Eric Patterson, M.S., M.A.
Executive Director

Shelley Moore
Director of Operations

Betsy Marchant, M.P.H.
Assistant Director, Graduate School
Operations

Danna Wiseman, M.Ed.
Assistant Director, Graduate Admissions

David Hoelzer, M.S.
Dean of Faculty

Johannes Ullrich, Ph.D.
Director of Research

Affiliations

The SANS Technology Institute is an independent, wholly owned subsidiary of the Escal Institute for Advanced Technologies, dba The SANS Institute, the premier global provider of information security training, certification, and research.

The SANS Technology Institute is also affiliated with Global Information Assurance Certification (GIAC), another subsidiary of the SANS Institute responsible for testing and certifications in the information security field.

Code of Conduct and Institutional Policies

Any action(s) reported or observed by a student, faculty or staff member in violation of the SANS Technology Institute (STI) Code of Conduct or Institutional Policies should be reported to the Executive Director.

Code of Conduct

The purpose of this code of conduct is to express our expectations and to identify behaviors outside of acceptable bounds. We ask students and faculty members to become familiar with and govern themselves by this code of conduct.

Mature behavior and conduct consistent with the highest professional standards of the information security community are expected of every student while attending a live educational event or engaging in Institute-related online activities. STI reserves the right to place on probation, or dismiss, students who engage in unsatisfactory conduct such as disorderly behavior, failure to adhere to rules and regulations, failure to exhibit proper online etiquette, destruction or theft of property, participation in activity that impinges on the rights of others, or the excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of any illegal drugs at any time while participating in an STI sponsored activity.

As educated adults who are leaders and advisors to organizations on issues of compliance with laws and regulations, STI students are held to a high standard in both knowledge and the application of trust, law, and regulation. Violations of city, state, and federal laws while enrolled at STI may also constitute violations of the code of conduct. In such instances, the Institute may proceed with disciplinary action under the code, independent of any criminal proceeding involving the same conduct, and may impose sanctions for violation of the code even if such criminal proceeding has not been resolved or is resolved in the student's favor.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

STI is committed to maintaining an environment of appropriate conduct and respect for individual values. The Institute is committed to enforcing non-discrimination and anti-harassment to create an environment free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and/or sexual assault. Discrimination or harassment based on race, gender or gender identity or expression, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, genetic information, marital status, citizenship status, or on any other legally prohibited basis is unlawful and undermines the character and purpose of STI. Such discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity Policy

All members of our community share the responsibility for academic integrity. Faculty members are expected to establish classroom environments conducive to the maintenance of academic integrity, provide students a syllabus describing the course and its requirements, and grade submitted work promptly and consistently. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will contribute to maintaining academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is the failure to maintain academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, bribery, obtaining or giving aid on an examination, having unauthorized prior knowledge of an examination, doing work for another student, and presenting another person's work as one's own.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's idea(s) or product(s) as one's own without acknowledging their source(s) or receiving appropriate permission(s) to use the idea or product.

Students can avoid unintentional plagiarism by carefully following accepted scholarly practices. Notes taken for papers and research projects should accurately record sources of material to be cited, quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, and papers should acknowledge these sources in references. The first act of plagiarism may result in an automatic reduction in the student's grade. Multiple acts of plagiarism shall result in dismissal from the program.

Responsible Computing Policy

Some courses use educational tools and programs that may enable students to break or “hack” into systems. It is expected that students who have access to these tools will only use them in an ethical, professional and legal manner. Students will only use tools to test the current strength of security networks so that proper improvements can be made. Students are required to get permission before running any of these tools on a network. In the event students misuse or abuse these tools, they will be subject to disciplinary action and possible legal prosecution.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is essential to the advancement of knowledge and understanding, and transmission of this knowledge to others. STI supports and encourages freedom of inquiry for both faculty and students so they may responsibly pursue these goals through teaching, learning, research, discussion, and publication, free from both internal and external restraints that would unreasonably restrict their academic pursuits.

Intellectual Property Rights

In accordance with copyright law, all faculty-directed student writing assignments, including answer material for tests, projects, whitepapers and business plans prepared in connection with any course, are the property of STI and may be used by the Institute for any educational purposes it deems appropriate. Students are free to share or post whitepapers without approval from STI.

Student Identification Policy

Our policy on verifying student identity can be downloaded at <https://www.sans.edu/downloads/policy-regarding-verification-of-student-identity.pdf>.

- Students will be required to show photo identification at all live SANS learning events to obtain facilities pass and materials.

- Students can only access online courses by logging into their portal account using established credentials.
- Students must show two (2) forms of personal identification at proctored exams. Both forms must be current and must have the student's signature. One of the two must have the student's photo. The identification bearing both the student's signature and photo must be government-issued. Students access GIAC exams by logging into their portal account using established credentials.

Public Health and Safety Policy

Students are expected to take reasonable actions in the areas of health and safety.

Prohibited or discouraged conducts include:

- Attending group functions when suffering from a serious infectious disease that may be transmitted.
- Ignoring obvious safety hazards such as blocked exits or accumulation of flammables.
- Knowingly reporting a false emergency.
- Any action that puts another person's safety, physical or mental health, or life at risk, whether intentionally or as a result of recklessness or negligence.

Weapons Policy

All members of the STI community, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors are prohibited from possessing, discharging, or otherwise using "weapons" on premises of STI functions whether or not the person has been issued a federal or state license to possess such weapons. Any person violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, dismissal, or removal from Institute premises or events and criminal prosecution. Exceptions to this policy are considered on an individual basis and only in consideration of the student's employment.

A weapon is defined as:

- Any device that shoots a bullet, pellet, flare or any other projectile, whether loaded or unloaded, including those powered by CO₂. This includes but is not limited to rifles, shotguns, handguns or other firearms, BB/pellet gun, flare gun, stun gun or dart gun and any ammunition for any such device. Any replica of the foregoing is also prohibited.
- Any explosive device including firecrackers and black powder.
- Any device that is designed or traditionally used to inflict harm including but not limited to any knife with a blade longer than three inches, hunting knife, fixed blade knife, throwing knives, dagger, razor, or other cutting instruments of which the blade is exposed.

Visitors and Children at STI Events Policy

Standard policy is that visitors and children are not permitted at STI events. Exceptions are granted on an individual basis and for specific events such as graduation and networking receptions.

Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. Briefly, FERPA guarantees that students have the right to inspect and review their records, the right to request amendments, through informal and formal hearings, to their record if they believe the information is incorrect, misleading or in violation of their privacy rights and the right to have some control over the release of personally identifiable information from their educational records. Students also have the right to file complaints with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office concerning alleged failures by the institution to comply with the Act.

Schools may disclose directory information contained in an educational record that would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released.

Directory information at SANS Technology Institute includes, but is not limited to:

- Name
- Address (city and state of residence only)
- Major program
- Dates of attendance
- Degree awarded and date conferred

STI requires written permission from the eligible student to release any other information from a student's education record, except under very limited conditions. FERPA allows STI to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR S 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law

Information regarding FERPA can be found at the U.S. Department of Education webpage:
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Student Services

Advising

All students are assigned to a student advisor as they begin their program of study. Advisors do not serve as technical subject matter experts, but rather help guide students through their academic programs, monitoring their progress along the way. Student advisors serve as their primary liaison for any questions or concerns a student might have while enrolled at the SANS Technology Institute.

Academic support services that student advisors provide:

- An initial academic advising session to plan first few courses
- Assistance in course registration and troubleshooting
- Regular check-ins during course to encourage course progress
- Official grade report sent at the conclusion of course
- Program check-ins between courses, to help students maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Annual (or quarterly) academic reviews to discuss student progress and future plans
- Prompt answers to emails and voicemails within 24 business hours, Monday-Friday

To maximize support from their student advisor, students are expected to:

- Check email regularly
- Read and follow the guidance provided in emails and syllabi
- Communicate in a manner that is courteous and professional
- Use all course tools and resources to reach mastery of course work

New Student Orientation

Students are required to complete new student orientation upon matriculation. During orientation, students will learn about the academic expectations and procedures for their particular program, will meet one-on-one with their student advisor, and will register for their first course. New students must register for their first course within 60 days of the start of their orientation month. Failure to complete orientation within the allotted time will result in the rescinding of the offer of admission.

Student Portal

All students are provided access to the STI Student Portal, Canvas. Within Canvas, students can find new student orientation, the student center, course support, and information for each course taken during the program. The course syllabus, assessment instructions, and grades are all posted within Canvas. Students should update their notification preferences to ensure timely communication from the school.

Student Email Address

Students will be issued an “@student.sans.edu” email address that may be helpful in obtaining discounts from some manufacturers/suppliers who offer such discounts. This address is an alias that forwards to a student’s main email provider, so there is no ability to send emails from the account.

Student ID Card

Students enrolled in a degree program can request a student ID card. The card may be helpful in obtaining discounts from some manufacturers/suppliers who offer student discounts. Some college libraries may allow SANS Technology Institute students to have library privileges if they show a student ID card. To request an ID be issued, students should submit a JPEG photo with a minimum of 600 x 600 pixels to idcard@sans.edu.

The digital image should adhere to the following:

- Must be in color
- Have sufficient lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- You should be the only subject in the photo
- Your face should be in focus with your head straight and upright
- Wear appropriate professional or business casual attire
- Do not wear a hat or head covering, unless worn daily for a religious purpose
- There must not be glare on eyeglasses that obscures the eye(s)

Once received, a student ID will be mailed to the student within 10 business days.

Change of Personal Information

Students are responsible for keeping contact information, including email and mailing addresses, updated. To change personal information in the SANS portal, students must log into their SANS portal account, then click on personal information.

Disability Accommodations

The SANS Technology Institute (STI) is committed to assisting students with documented disabilities. STI will provide reasonable accommodations according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1991. Accommodations will provide students with a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the functions being assessed by the academic requirement.

To apply for an accommodation, a written request, accompanied by supporting documentation on official letterhead from your healthcare provider that explains the nature of your disability and specifies the exact accommodation(s) needed, should be submitted to (studentservices@sans.edu) at least two weeks before beginning the course. Requests made after the start of the course will be addressed as quickly as possible and to the best of the organization's ability, resources, policies, and standards. Our staff will coordinate accommodation requests with SANS, GIAC, and STI faculty.

Certain accommodation requests may need to be passed to affiliated organizations, such as GIAC, and may be subject to a final decision authority outside of STI.

Transcripts

Students can email their advisor to request an *unofficial* transcript.

For *official* transcripts, the SANS Technology Institute has partnered with Parchment to order and send transcripts securely. Students can order transcripts at <https://www.parchment.com/u/registration/20731330/account>.

Educational or Travel Visas

The SANS Technology Institute serves students in all states and many countries around the world. Although students do not need to reside in the United States to complete the program, We are not involved with securing educational or travel visas for international students. The master's program has in-person requirements, so students should be prepared to make the necessary accommodations before applying to the Institute.

Third Party Requests for Degree and Enrollment Verifications

The SANS Technology Institute has contracted with the National Student Clearinghouse to provide degree and enrollment information for education verifications. Organizations and third-party requestors performing background checks or verifying degrees must submit their requests directly to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Exams and Grading

The SANS Technology Institute uses the services of GIAC for the exams given in many of our courses. In addition to benchmarking a student's classwork knowledge acquisition against industry job standards, students will also earn an industry-leading certification as a result of their successful study. GIAC exams are open book but must be taken at a proctored testing center. Students are provided two practice exams to prepare for every GIAC exam.

Finding a GIAC Certification Exam Proctor Location

The primary method for taking a proctored exam is through the GIAC testing partner, Pearson VUE. Pearson VUE is an industry leader and offers more than 3,500 testing centers worldwide. It is expected that any candidate within a reasonable driving distance (1-2 hours) from a Pearson VUE testing center will utilize this option. Visit www.giac.org to locate the closest Pearson VUE testing center.

Students who will be taking a GIAC proctored exam in the future without a testing center within reasonable driving distance (1-2 hours) should email proctor@giac.org. Students should not attempt to schedule a testing appointment with Pearson VUE before registering for a GIAC certification and receiving access to the certification attempt through the student's SANS portal.

The scheduling process for Pearson VUE will be web-based through the student's SANS/GIAC portal account. Exam slots are available on a first come, first serve basis. Students should schedule their appointment at least one month before their desired exam date.

Students who need to cancel or reschedule an exam appointment must do so at least one business day (24 hours) before their exam appointment by logging into their SANS/GIAC account and clicking on 'Certification Attempts,' 'View Proctor Details' and then 'Change.' Students who need to cancel or reschedule an exam less than 24 hours in advance will forfeit their appointment and be charged a \$150 seating fee. To reschedule, students should log into their SANS account and click on 'Certification Attempts,' 'View Proctor Details' and then 'Reschedule.' To cancel, students should call the customer service line at 301-654-7267.

Students should be prepared to show two (2) forms of personal ID. Both must have a signature, and both must be current. One of the two must have the student's photo. The ID bearing both a signature and photo must be government-issued.

Students who have questions regarding scheduling a proctored exam, should email proctor@giac.org or call 301-654-7267.

Grading System

Students are evaluated by their retention of substantial information, insight regarding the significance of this information, ability to apply it to new situations, and ability to communicate the knowledge assimilated. Grades represent the faculty's evaluation of student competencies in a course. Grades assigned by STI faculty are derived from a variety of assessment instruments administered by the faculty and/or third-party evaluators, such as GIAC. Each course syllabus contains specifics on the course components used by faculty to formulate a grade for that course. At the completion of each course, grades are calculated and recorded in the student's electronic academic record.

Graduate and undergraduate students must attain not only a required **number** of credits but also a certain **standard** of excellence, which is determined according to quality points.

The number of quality points each grade is worth appears below. The quality points earned in a course are the product of its credit hours times the quality points for the grade received in it. A grade of A earns quality points equal to 4.0 times the credit hours in the course; a grade of B, quality points equal to 3.0 times the credit hours, and so on. Quality points are computed to two decimal places. They are truncated, not rounded.

Academic standing is determined by the ratio of the total number of quality points received to the total number of credit hours attempted.

Grading Scales

Final course grades are based upon graded assignments during the course using the scale below:

Graduate Programs

| Letter Grade | Grade Points (per credit hour) |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| A | 4.0 |
| A- | 3.7 |
| B+ | 3.3 |
| B | 3.0 |
| B- | 2.7 |
| C+ | 2.3 |
| C | 2.0 |
| F | 0.0 |

Undergraduate Program

| Letter Grade | Grade Points (per credit hour) |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| A | 4.0 |
| B | 3.0 |
| C | 2.0 |
| D | 1.0 |
| F | 0.0 |

A grade assigned for work in a course is not subject to change except in the case of a specific error. Students should address concerns with assigned grades to their student advisor. Student advisors will make good faith efforts to resolve any discrepancies, however, in the event a grading issue cannot be resolved, students should submit a formal request to the Assistant Director, Graduate School Operations for additional review. The request should succinctly describe the issue and provide any documentation to support a decision.

Incomplete Grades

SANS Technology Institute students are expected to complete a course during the course term. However, upon request, a grade of “I” (incomplete) may be given when a student has been unable to complete the work of the course. Students who receive an incomplete will have additional time to complete remaining assignments so that the faculty can replace the grade of “I” with the appropriate letter grade. If the student does not complete the remaining course assignments within the incomplete period, the grade of “I” will be replaced with a grade of “F” for the course.

For standard course terms at the graduate and undergraduate levels, the allowed incomplete period is 30 days. For courses taken using the accelerated course term, only available in the undergraduate program, the allowed incomplete period is 15 days.

Requests for incomplete grades should be made to deanofstudents@sans.edu. A request should outline why the student has been unable to complete the course during the course term and indicate the plan to complete the course within the incomplete period. Students may find that repeat requests for an incomplete period may result in being put on academic probation.

Withdrawals

If a student withdraws from a course after the start of the course, a “W” will be recorded on the student’s transcript. A “W” is not calculated in the student’s GPA and can be replaced once a student has re-enrolled in the course and successfully completed all requirements. Additional tuition or fees may be incurred as part of re-taking a course under these circumstances.

Students using VA education benefits who withdraw from a course will owe the VA for tuition and any associated housing allowance and should consult with their student advisor before withdrawing.

Rectifying a Failed Course

Students who initially fail a course will need to retake a failed assignment to replace the failure with a passing grade. Students will not be allowed to begin another course until the failed course has been passed.

GIAC Exam

Students who fail a GIAC exam may purchase a retake exam through GIAC. There is a mandatory 30-day waiting period following the date of the failed exam attempt. Students are required to complete the retake exam within 60 days from the initial exam failure in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress. The student should contact their student advisor regarding how to proceed with additional course requirements, if applicable.

Students failing more than one exam attempt may be required to retake the entire course. Once a passing score is achieved, the student's failing exam grade will be replaced with the new grade in the student's record.

NetWars Continuous

A student who fails to reach the required level in NetWars Continuous may retake NetWars Continuous at the cost of a single credit hour. Students should coordinate this retake with their student advisor.

Once a passing score is achieved, the student's failing grade will be replaced with the new grade in the student's record.

Written Assignments

Turning in sub-standard written work will result in an F for the assignment and an F in the course. In this situation, the student may be permitted, at faculty discretion, to correct and re-submit the assignment within 30 days. If the final submission is still not passing quality, the student will be required to re-take the course. Additional tuition will be incurred as part of re-taking a course under these circumstances.

Academic Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Students are expected to demonstrate continuous progress in meeting course requirements. We encourage students to review the course syllabi for specific attendance and assignment requirements as well as important course deadlines. Failure to maintain regular course participation (meeting substantial course deadlines every 30 days, or weekly in accelerated undergraduate courses, such as making progress on an OnDemand course) may result in students being withdrawn from the course without a refund of tuition.

A student who is unable to attend a course session should contact their student advisor with as much notice as possible. Students should submit any documentation necessary with this advance notice. It is up to the instructor's discretion to allow students to make-up any missed assignments or submit assignments late.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

| | Master's Degree | Graduate Certificate | Undergraduate Certificate |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Initial Course Success | Required | Required | Required |
| Successful Completion of 2/3 Credits Attempted | Required | Required | Required |
| Min. Cumulative GPA | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 |
| Min. Credit Hours Earned | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| Basis for Review | Annual | Annual | Quarterly |

Conditions and processes defined in this policy were developed to align with federal education guidelines for satisfactory academic progress: US Department of Education regulation 34 CFR §668.34.

Graduate Programs

To remain in good academic standing with the SANS Technology Institute, students must meet all of the following measures for satisfactory academic progress (SAP):

1. Successfully complete their first course in the program
2. Maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0
3. Earn a minimum of 8 credit hours per year for master's programs or 3 credit hours per year for certificate programs
4. Successfully complete 2/3 of credits attempted in a calendar year

Evaluation of SAP measures occurs at the conclusion of each full year of enrollment, calculated by using the student's start date and subtracting for approved leaves of absence. Failure to meet these measures of satisfactory academic progress will result in being placed on academic probation. Please note, master's students who fall below an average of 6 credit hours per year will be considered for dismissal.

Undergraduate Program

To remain in good academic standing with the SANS Technology Institute, undergraduate students must meet all of the following measures for satisfactory academic progress (SAP):

1. Successfully complete their first course in the program
2. Maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0
3. Earn a minimum of 3 credit hours per year
4. Successfully complete 2/3 of credits attempted in a calendar year

Initial Course Success Requirement

Students must successfully complete their first course in their program of study. If a student fails to complete their first course successfully, they will be deemed to fall short of the SAP policy and be subject to special requirements to regain a state of Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Cumulative GPA Requirement

Graduate students must maintain at least a cumulative 3.0 official GPA. Undergraduate students must maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 official GPA. GPA is calculated by dividing the grade points earned by the number of credits attempted. Only courses taken through STI are used in the calculation.

Minimum Credit Hours Earned (Pace)

Students enrolled in master's program must earn a minimum of 8 credit hours per year. Students enrolled in the graduate or undergraduate certificate programs must earn a minimum of 3 credit hours per year.

The 2/3 Rule for Credits Attempted

Students must also maintain a successful level of course completions. Cumulative earned hours are compared to cumulative attempted hours to determine if a student is meeting this standard. Cumulative attempted hours will include hours associated with each failed and passed course. For example, a student who first fails a course and then retakes and passes it would have 6 attempted hours and 3 earned hours. Students must successfully complete at least 2/3 of the credit hours attempted within a year to be considered as making satisfactory academic progress.

Full-time Student Definition

Students will have a “full-time” course load within each enrollment period if the following applies:

1. Undergraduate students: enrolled in our accelerated course terms, or
2. Graduate students: are enrolled in courses with a 1:1 credit per month ratio.

This definition was developed to align with federal education guidelines for full-time student status: US Department of Education regulation 34 CFR §668.2.

Maximum Time Frame

Graduate Programs

Students pursuing a master of science must complete their degree within five years. Students pursuing a graduate certificate must complete their program within 30 months.

Undergraduate Program

Students pursuing an undergraduate certificate must complete their program both within 30 months and within 150% of the average length of their program. In other words, a student pursuing an undergraduate certificate program that is 12 credits long would need to complete the degree within 18 attempted credits.

Concurrent Academic Programs

Students may pursue multiple academic programs; however, the academic programs cannot be completed concurrently. Students can only be enrolled in one academic program at a time.

Changing Program of Study

Students may only change their program once without reapplying. Students wishing to transfer from one program to another should contact their student advisor to discuss options.

Maximum Enrolled Credit Limits

Students may not be enrolled in more than 4 credits at any given time. Students who are able complete courses at a more aggressive pace are permitted to finish a course early and then begin another course.

Additional Electives

Students in programs that include elective options may choose to take up to two additional electives. The courses must be approved electives within their program curriculum.

Academic Achievement

Graduation Requirements

Master of Science Degree

In order to be eligible for a master of science degree, candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of all required courses within five years
2. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher
3. Fulfillment of all financial obligations to SANS Technology Institute

Post-baccalaureate Graduate Certificate

In order to be eligible for a post-baccalaureate graduate certificate, candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of all required courses within 30 months
2. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or higher
3. Fulfillment of all financial obligations to SANS Technology Institute

Upper Division Undergraduate Certificate

In order to be eligible for an upper division undergraduate certificate, candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of all required courses within 30 months
2. Successful completion of all required courses within 150% of the length of the program
3. A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C) or higher
4. Fulfillment of all financial obligations to SANS Technology Institute

Academic Distinction

The SANS Technology Institute recognizes the commitment to excellence of our highest achieving students. Students with this honor have earned at least 6 credits in their academic program, have earned a GPA of at least 3.5 or higher, and are at an annualized course pace of 12 credits or greater for master's students, and 6 credits or greater for graduate and undergraduate certificate students. This accomplishment serves to further distinguish those students who are becoming leaders in the cybersecurity community.

Graduate students are recognized with the distinction of 'Dean's List' while undergraduate students are recognized with the distinction of 'Honors.'

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Academic Probation

Academic probation is a warning that a student's performance is falling below the institution's requirement for satisfactory academic standing. It is not meant to be punitive, but rather a warning with steps that a student is expected to take to improve their situation.

Students will be placed on academic probation for the following reasons:

- Failure to meet the school's requirements for satisfactory academic progress at annual (graduate students) or quarterly (undergraduate students) review
- Failing to successfully complete first course in program of study

Students will receive an email notification when they are placed on academic probation. This notification will include specific probation terms that must be met by specific deadlines. Students must follow and complete their approved probation terms and academic plan of study to be removed from a probation status.

It is the responsibility of every student to monitor their academic progress and to be aware of the requirements of their program and the SAP standards. Failure to take action to remedy academic standing will result in the initiation of dismissal procedures.

Academic Watch for Master's Degree Students

Master's degree students will receive a mid-year academic check in with their advisor. These check ins review GPA and pace, verify course history, and confirm plans for upcoming courses. This mid-year check will alert students who may be approaching, or are already below, the minimum requirements for satisfactory academic progress. These students will go on an "academic watch" status that will help both the student and their advisor be proactive in avoiding academic probation at their annual academic review.

Dismissal

Students will be subject to dismissal for the following reasons:

1. Failing to make satisfactory academic progress
2. Failing to meet the terms of conditional admittance
3. Engaging in illegal/unacceptable behavior

The SANS Technology Institute may initiate an administrative dismissal in the event of extended inactivity or non-payment.

Students will receive an email notification, including effective date, when they are being dismissed from the school. Please see the refund policy for refunds on tuition payments made.

Withdrawal, Leave of Absence and Reinstatement

Withdrawal Policy

A student who chooses to withdraw from the Institute must notify their student advisor in writing as soon as is reasonably possible. After the request has been received, the student's record will be updated to reflect the date of withdrawal. Students who withdraw while enrolled in a course will receive a 'W' on their transcript for that course.

Leave of Absence Policy

Students are expected to maintain regular progress in their program of study. However, it is sometimes necessary for a student to take a leave for a period of time, for purposes of national service, serious illness, or material personal or financial difficulties. The determination of "material" will be the sole responsibility of SANS Technology Institute administration.

A student taking a leave of absence must declare a firm and time-bounded intention to return by a certain date. A leave of absence requested while enrolled in a course does not qualify the student for any refund of tuition for the course in progress. Please see refund policy on tuition payments.

STI is committed to handling reasonable requests for leaves in a responsible manner. This policy may not be used in lieu of disciplinary action to address any violations of Institute rules, regulations, policies, or practices. A student who is granted a voluntary leave while on academic and/or disciplinary status will return to that same status upon return to the Institute. A student may not request a leave of absence following a notice of dismissal unless and until the dismissal is successfully appealed.

A student who requests and is approved for a leave of absence while enrolled in an ongoing STI course will be withdrawn from the course and will receive a grade of "W." The student will be required to re-register for that course upon returning to active status, subject to any alternative plan approved by the Executive Director. Additional tuition or fees may be incurred as part of re-taking a course under these circumstances.

Students on a leave of absence will not earn credit in an STI program should they attend SANS classes or take GIAC exams while their leave of absence is in effect.

A student who is granted a leave of absence will still be required to complete all degree requirements; however, a leave will extend the program by the length of the approved leave of absence.

Except where a leave is mandated by compulsory national service, the duration of the leave generally will be a maximum of twelve (12) months. An extension or reduction of the leave period may be granted for good cause, as determined by the Executive Director.

Procedure for Applying for a Leave of Absence

1. The student should discuss a leave of absence with their student advisor.
2. The student must submit a formal letter, along with supporting documentation to their student advisor. The student advisor will submit for approval.
3. If the student is seeking a leave due to a medical or psychological condition, STI may require the student to submit a letter from his or her health provider substantiating the need for a leave of absence and a similar letter from a health care provider indicating fitness to re-enroll when returning to start coursework.
4. The student advisor will notify the student in writing with the approval or denial of the request. If the request is approved, the terms and conditions of the leave shall be set forth in the approval notification.

| Circumstances | Documentation Required |
|--|--|
| Student's illness, injury, hospitalization, or disability | Written documentation from health care provider on letterhead detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximate date of onset of the illness, injury, or disability• General nature of the illness, injury, or disability• Healthcare provider's release to return to school• Prognosis for being able to meet SAP standards |
| Illness, accident, or injury of a significant person in the student's life | Documentation (i.e., physician's statement, police report, or documentation from a third-party professional) relating to the individual for whom the student provided care or support |
| Death of a family member or significant person in the student's life | Copy of the obituary or death certificate |
| Student's own divorce or separation | Attorney's letter on letterhead, petition for dissolution, or copy of divorce decree |
| Victim of a violent crime or natural disaster | Provide a written statement on letterhead from a professional involved in the situation and/or other supporting documentation |

Reinstatement

Return from a Leave of Absence

1. The student's advisor will contact the student at the end of the leave of absence to make a plan to re-enroll.
2. A student who fails to register for classes within two (2) months after the end of their leave of absence will be administratively dismissed from the program and will need to apply for readmission.

Withdrawn Students

Students who have been withdrawn from the SANS Technology Institute must reapply for admission. Former students may be required to submit new admissions documents, including the application fee. Please contact info@sans.edu to determine if there is a need to resubmit undergraduate transcripts, or in the case of non-native English-speaking students, new TOEFL scores. Previous students are subject to the waiver policy outlined earlier in this handbook.

Grievance and Appeal Process

SANS Technology Institute is committed to treating all students fairly. The primary objective of a student grievance procedure is to ensure that concerns are dealt with promptly, and resolutions are reached in a fair and just manner. It is essential that each student be given adequate opportunity to bring complaints and problems to the attention of the Institute's administration with the assurance that each will be given fair treatment.

General Complaint Process

We encourage students to first contact their student advisor to seek guidance or resolution for a complaint. Issues such as access to course material or problems processing a course registration can often be resolved easily by a student advisor. If your student advisor is unable to provide a resolution to the issue, contact the Assistant Director of Graduate School Operations.

Appeals

A student who is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint may file an appeal. Students should submit a formal, signed letter with supporting evidence to the Executive Director. A formal appeal will be responded to within 5 business days of receipt.

Instructions for Submitting an Appeal

1. Write a letter providing a detailed explanation as to why you are appealing. A student must submit an appeal against academic probation or dismissal within 30 days of notice. If you are appealing academic probation or you must demonstrate:
 - a. Extreme or unusual circumstances beyond your control that caused failure to meet the minimum standard, and;
 - b. Resolution of the issue(s) that caused the deficit, and;
 - c. Assurance that the issue(s) will not affect your performance in the future.
2. Attach supporting documentation at the end of the appeal letter. Refer to the list below for required documentation. Additional documentation may be requested after the appeal is reviewed.
3. Submit the appeal letter and documentation to the Executive Director. Students should retain a copy of all documents submitted for their records. No documents will be returned.
4. The Executive Director will review appeals. The student will receive written notification of the final decision within 5 days of receipt. All decisions are final. A second review may only be requested if the student can provide new information and documentation that was omitted from the initial appeal.