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# Guide to Veterans Benefits

## SANS Technology Institute

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GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill).



## Introduction

This Guide to Veterans Benefits provides you with explanations for how your veterans benefits will work relative to the SANS Technology Institute master’s degrees and certificate programs. In addition to this guide, we recommend that students review STI’s institutional Catalog and Student Handbook, which contain additional academic and student conduct policies.

## Background information on Veterans Benefits and the SANS Technology Institute

The SANS Technology Institute programs are delivered in a format that differs from the ‘standard’ graduate school experience. Because we serve full-time, working professionals, our programs are designed to maximize the flexibility by which a student can engage in the coursework required to complete the graduate program. Rather than engage in courses taken on-campus during fixed semesters, our programs are delivered through a series of courses taken via a mix of modalities (primarily at a student’s option) with rolling enrollment start dates. All students enrolled in a particular program will need to satisfy the same requirements, but the timing of individual student progression may differ according to individual schedules and the availability of courses.

Program Characteristic	‘Standard’ Graduate School	SANS Technology Institute Programs
<b>Enrollment Period</b>	Typical semesters	Open-enrollment program and rolling start dates.
<b>Standard Terms</b>	15-19 weeks	Varying course-term lengths depending upon course.
<b>Course Modality</b>	Either on-campus, in-person classroom instruction or 100% online	Mix of in-person and at-a-distance modalities, at the student’s option.

The structure of STI programs – the flexibility afforded by our rolling enrollment, the mix of in-classroom and at-a-distance options, and the varying terms for courses and their associated credit hours and calculated pace of progress – impacts how payment benefits are calculated by the VA. As a result, there may be significant fluctuations in the payments you receive throughout the course of your program. This is not to suggest that total available benefits are enhanced or diminished, but simply that our structure may cause a variability in payments at different times as you enroll in courses, experience gaps between courses, and engage in different instructional modalities. The resulting payments will be different and less consistent than they would be if you were to attend a traditional, brick-and-mortar graduate school with fixed semester terms and standard credit hour assignments per course.

At this time, the SANS Technology Institute is approved and eligible to receive veterans benefits only in the State of Maryland. Because of this, veterans may apply their benefits only to courses where the instruction element is delivered live at an approved location in Maryland, or delivered at-a-distance



through SANS OnDemand, vLive, or Simulcast. In person course offerings in Maryland vary each year; however, we expect at least two learning events per year with additional events being offered depending upon need. Students will work with an advisor before starting the program to plan out their course of study at STI.

There are multiple chapters related to veterans educational benefits, and each applies to our programs differently.

- Chapter 33 (typically referred to as the Post 9/11 GI Bill®) pays tuition and fees directly to the SANS Technology Institute, up to an annual cap. Additionally, veterans using this benefit receive separate payments for a monthly housing allowance and stipend for books.
- Chapter 30 (typically referred to as the Montgomery GI Bill®), makes standard monthly payments directly to the student regardless of the actual tuition, fees or other costs incurred by the veteran. All students are responsible for full payment of tuition and fees, but payment due dates will be delayed for those students using veterans benefits. The full balance must be paid by the end of the course term and students will not be allowed to register for their next course until their tuition balance is paid. Veterans may also be eligible for benefits under Chapters 31, 35, 1606, or 1607.
- Because the rules and processes associated with these educational benefits are complex, a full description is beyond the scope of this guide. However, we will generally distinguish between Post 9/11 GI Bill® and other Chapters in this guide, and will seek to point out where and how payment amounts you receive are determined by the courses you might be taking at the time.

### Chapter 33 – “Post 9/11 GI Bill®”

For Chapter 33 benefits, tuition and fees are sent directly to the school to pay for courses that have been certified. It also provides a housing allowance and book stipend which are described below. Student veterans do not need to use Chapter 33 benefits for every course throughout the program but can instead elect to use it for only certain courses. Therefore, students need to submit an enrollment certification form for each enrollment period in which they would like to utilize their benefits.

### Housing Allowance

The Basic Allowance for Housing (also referred to as the ‘BAH’) is paid directly to the student on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, based upon calculations related to the previous month. BAH will be paid:

- a. For periods when a student is enrolled in at least one course and
- b. The student is earning credits at a ‘rate of pursuit’ greater than half-time and
- c. The student is not on active duty

The calculation of the Housing Allowance is impacted by the following considerations:

1. Course Modality



- a. Students who take a course in-person (in Maryland) will be paid according to the calculation determined by the BAH for an “E-5 with Dependents” using the ZIP code of the SANS Technology Institute, 20814.
  - b. Students who take a distance education course will be paid a housing stipend set at one-half the national average.
2. The ‘Rate of Pursuit’
- a. “Full-time” is set by the SANS Technology Institute as 12 credit hours earned per year and “half-time” is 6 credits per year.
  - b. The ‘rate of pursuit’ is a ratio of credits earned over months in an enrollment period. For example, a 3-credit course taken over the 3-month period is considered full-time (3/3), while a 1-credit course taken over that same 3-month period is less than half-time (1/3).
  - c. The VA will calculate the prorated BAH amount based upon a student’s benefit level, the rate of pursuit, and the number of days in a month the student was enrolled in a course.
  - d. Students may complete coursework earlier than the targeted timeframe and STI will adjust the certification to reflect the actual time taken to complete the course. These adjustments may impact BAH payments.

Table 1 lists all graduate courses and their equivalent rate of pursuit, given the credits that are earned and the expected timeframe for completion of the course.

### Books and Fees Stipend

The book stipend is a lump sum paid directly to the student for each enrollment certification processed, up to an annual cap. The stipend pays \$41.67 per credit certified, and is prorated by your qualification percentage. The annual cap re-sets the 1<sup>st</sup> of August each year.

### Other Chapters, including Chapter 30- *Montgomery GI Bill*<sup>®</sup>

The primary distinction between Chapter 33 (‘Post-9/11 GI Bill<sup>®</sup>’) and the other Chapters is that the Post-9/11 GI Bill<sup>®</sup> process makes payments of tuition and fees directly to the school, while the other Chapters make payments solely to the veteran, who must pay the school for tuition and fees. Students who are certified to receive benefits under Chapters other than Chapter 33 will be required to pay their tuition on normal terms, and will receive payments from the VA according to the VA’s normal process.

### Yellow Ribbon Program

The SANS Technology Institute does not participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program at this time.

### Registering and Paying for Courses

- 1) Once you are ready to begin taking courses please follow the registration instructions provided to you by your student advisor.



- 2) You will submit a Course Certification Request Form to [VAbenefits@sans.edu](mailto:VAbenefits@sans.edu) for every course that you would like to use VA Benefits.
- 3) STI will submit VA form 22-1999 (Enrollment Certification) on the first day of class for courses taken in-classroom or via our vLive or Simulcast modalities, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for OnDemand courses. **Please note refunds are not given after classes begin for in-person/vLive courses and after date of registration for OnDemand courses.**
- 4) SANS Technology Institute will leave your STI invoice as “unpaid” until payment has been received from the VA. You may see another invoice in your SANS portal listed as “comped” to order the associated SANS components.
- 5) Chapter 30 (Montgomery Bill) students have up until the end of the course to pay tuition.

Please note the following:

- The VA will pay veterans only for the courses listed in the catalog that are required for a degree and for programs that have been approved for study by the VA.
- If students take courses in addition to those listed for their approved program, they will not be entitled to receive VA benefits for them.
- Students who do not complete a course that has been certified by the VA, or do not submit adequate evidence for a mitigating circumstance, may have to pay back tuition and fees to the VA.
- Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress as outlined in STI’s Institutional Catalog.

## VA Requirements of the SANS Technology Institute

### 1. Monitor Course and Program Progress

STI will monitor your course activity to ensure that you are progressing appropriately. Additionally, you will be required to follow the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy as mandated by the SANS Technology Institute to remain in good standing with the institution.

### 2. Certify Enrollments (VA Form 22-1999)

STI will submit and maintain enrollment certifications (VA form 22-1999) on or after the first day of the enrollment period for any course.

### 3. Report Enrollment Information

STI is required to report any changes in your enrollment status to the VA. Enrollment changes could include withdrawals, change course date, change delivery modality, etc. These changes could affect your rate of pursuit which could impact your stipend and/or benefits payments. We also report academic progress (including academic probation or dismissal), and certify graduation/program completion.

### 4. Review of School Records by VA and Maryland State Approving Agent

By law, STI is required to maintain and make available student records (such as enrollment periods, grade information, student application, etc.) to authorized representatives of the government. STI will retain your records for a minimum of 3 years following the termination of your enrollment.



The Department of Veteran Affairs will:

1. Mail an award (benefit) letter to you showing we certified you and indicating the amounts you will receive during the course enrollment period/term.
2. For MGIB-AD, MGIB-SR, DEA, and REAP: deposit money directly into the bank account you have provided to them.
3. For Post-9/11 BI Bill (Chapter 33): Send funds for tuition and fees to the SANS Technology Institute, and deposit funds for the book stipend and BAH to you.

## VA Resources and Contact Information

While STI will make every effort to help you navigate your benefits, it is ultimately your responsibility to understand your benefits. We cannot advise students on eligibility of benefits, as we do not represent the Department of Veterans Affairs. Any questions should be directed to 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). The following resources are available to help you find the information you need:

VA GI Bill Official Web Site: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/>

VA VONAPP-Veterans Online Application:

<https://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp>

VA Education Forms hard copies:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/handouts\\_forms.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/handouts_forms.asp)

VA GI Bill FAQ:

<https://gibill.custhelp.com/app/answers/list>

Payment Rates and Comparison Tool:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison\\_tool.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/comparison_tool.asp)

VA Post-9/11 GI Bill Summary:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911\\_gibill.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp)

### Contact information for the VA (Buffalo Regional Office)

Education Benefits Phone Number: 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551)



Table 1: Courses and Rate of Pursuit

Required Courses (MSISE Program)	Credits	Days	Rate of Pursuit	Modality (Live or Dist)
ISE 5101 Enterprise Information Security	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 5201 Hacking Techniques & Incident Response	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 5300 Building Security Awareness	1	45	70%	Choice
ISE 5401 Advanced Network Intrusion Detection & Analysis	3	90	100%	Choice
RES 5500: Graduate Research Paper 1	2	90	60%	Distance
*ISE 5500 Research Presentation 1	1	30	70%	Distance
ISE 5600 IT Security Leadership Competencies	1	45	70%	Choice
ISE 5700 Situational Response Practicum	1	30	70%	Distance
ISE 5800 IT Security Project Management	3	120	80%	Live
RES 5900: Graduate Research Paper 2	2	90	60%	Distance
*ISE 5900 Research Presentation 2	1	30	70%	Distance
ISE 6001 Standards Based Implementation of Security	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6100 Security Project Practicum	1	30	100%	Distance
Required Courses (MSISM Program)	Credits	Days	Rate of Pursuit	Modality (Live or Dist)
ISM 5101 Enterprise Information Security	3	90	100%	Choice
ISM 5201 Hacking Techniques & Incident Response	3	90	100%	Choice
ISM 5300 Building Security Awareness	1	45	70%	Choice
ISM 5401 IT Security Planning, Policy and Leadership	3	90	100%	Choice
RES 5500: Graduate Research Paper 1	2	90	60%	Distance
*ISM 5500 Research Presentation 1	1	30	70%	Distance
ISM 5601 Legal Issues in Data Security and Investigations	3	90	100%	Choice
ISM 5700 Incident Response Practicum	1	30	70%	Distance
ISM 5800 IT Security Project Management	3	120	80%	Live
RES 5900: Graduate Research Paper 2	2	90	60%	Distance
*ISM 5900 Research Presentation 2	1	30	70%	Live
ISM 6001 Standards Based Implementation of Security	3	90	100%	Choice
ISM 6100 Security Project Practicum	1	30	100%	Distance
ISM 6201 Auditing Networks, Perimeters and Systems	3	90	100%	Choice

\*These courses fall below half-time rate of pursuit and (taken alone) would not qualify for BAH payments. These courses can be taken simultaneously with another course to reach half-time or full-time rate of pursuit.



Technical Electives	Credits	Days	Rate of Pursuit	Modality (Live or Dist)
ISE 6215 Advanced Security Essentials	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6230 Securing Windows and Resisting Malware	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6235 Securing Linux/Unix	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6240 Continuous Monitoring & Security Operations	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6315 Web App Penetration Testing and Ethical Hacking	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6320 Network Penetration Testing and Ethical Hacking	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6325 Mobile Device Security	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6330 Wireless Penetration Testing	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6350 Python for Penetration Testers	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6360 Advanced Network Penetration Testing	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6420 Computer Forensic Investigations	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6425 Advanced Computer Forensic Analysis and Incident Response	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6440 Advanced Network Forensic Analysis	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6450 Advanced Smartphone Forensics	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6460 Malware Analysis and Reverse Engineering	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6515 ICS/SCADA Security Essentials	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6520 ICS Active Defense and Incident Response	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6615 Defending Web Applications Security Essentials	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6715 Auditing Networks, Perimeters and Systems	3	90	100%	Choice
ISE 6720 Legal Issues in Data Security and Investigations	3	90	100%	Choice