



# SANS Technology Institute Student Handbook

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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](http://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

# Table of Contents

<b><u>MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS</u></b>	<b>6</b>
OUR MISSION	6
OUR VISION	6
OUR GOALS	6
<b><u>ACCREDITATION AND AUTHORIZATION</u></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>GOVERNANCE, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATION</u></b>	<b>8</b>
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	8
PROGRAM FACULTY	9
ADMINISTRATION	10
AFFILIATIONS	10
<b><u>CODE OF CONDUCT AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES</u></b>	<b>11</b>
CODE OF CONDUCT	11
NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY	11
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY	12
RESPONSIBLE COMPUTING POLICY	12
ACADEMIC FREEDOM	12
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS	13
STUDENT IDENTIFICATION POLICY	13
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY	13
WEAPONS POLICY	13
VISITORS AND CHILDREN AT STI EVENTS POLICY	14
<b><u>FEDERAL EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)</u></b>	<b>15</b>
<b><u>TUITION AND FEES</u></b>	<b>16</b>
TUITION	16
TRAVEL COSTS	16
ADD-ONS	16
FINANCIAL AID/TITLE IV ELIGIBILITY	16
TUITION PAYMENT PLAN	17
VETERANS BENEFITS	17
CANCELLATION AND CHANGE FEES	17
<b><u>CREDIT TRANSFERS AND WAIVERS</u></b>	<b>19</b>
CREDIT TRANSFERS	19
WAIVERS	19
<i>WAIVERS FOR SANS INSTITUTE CLASSES</i>	19
<i>WAIVERS FOR PMP CERTIFICATION</i>	20
<i>WAIVERS FOR CISSP CERTIFICATION</i>	20

<b>STUDENT SERVICES</b>	<b>21</b>
ADVISING	21
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION	21
STUDENT PORTAL	21
STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS	22
STUDENT ID CARD	22
CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION	22
DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS	22
TRANSCRIPTS	23
EDUCATIONAL OR TRAVEL VISAS	23
THIRD PARTY REQUESTS FOR DEGREE AND ENROLLMENT VERIFICATIONS	23
<b>EXAMINATIONS</b>	<b>24</b>
FINDING A GIAC CERTIFICATION EXAM PROCTOR LOCATION	24
<b>ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>	<b>25</b>
CONCURRENT ACADEMIC PROGRAMS	25
CHANGING PROGRAM OF STUDY	25
MAXIMUM ENROLLED CREDIT LIMITS	25
ADDITIONAL ELECTIVES	25
<b>ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>	<b>26</b>
ATTENDANCE	26
GRADING SYSTEM	26
GRADING	27
RECTIFYING A FAILED COURSE	28
<b>SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS</b>	<b>29</b>
PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS	29
INITIAL COURSE SUCCESS REQUIREMENT	30
ACADEMIC WATCH	30
ACADEMIC PROBATION	30
<b>STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT</b>	<b>31</b>
DEAN'S LIST	31
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS	31
MASTER'S DEGREE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	31
<b>WITHDRAWAL, LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND REINSTATEMENT</b>	<b>32</b>
WITHDRAWAL POLICY	32
LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY	32
<i>PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR A LEAVE OF ABSENCE</i>	33
<i>RETURN FROM A LEAVE OF ABSENCE/RE-ENROLLMENT</i>	34
REAPPLICATION TO SANS TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE	34
<b>DISMISSAL</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCESS</b>	<b>36</b>

GENERAL COMPLAINT PROCESS	36
APPEALS	36
<b><u>CONTACT INFORMATION</u></b>	<b>37</b>
<b><u>EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES</u></b>	<b>37</b>
FACILITIES	37
RESEARCH SOURCES	37
INTERNET STORM CENTER/DSHIELD RESOURCES	38
GENERAL IT AND MANAGEMENT RESOURCES	38
<i>CASE STUDY AND RESEARCH DATABASES</i>	38
<i>MAGAZINE DATABASES</i>	39

## **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**

STI, 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.

STI is authorized by the Maryland Higher Education Commission to offer Master of Science degrees in Information Security Engineering and Information Security Management, and post-baccalaureate certificates in Cybersecurity Engineering Core, Incident Response, and Penetration Testing and Ethical Hacking.

STI 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 STI. 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 STI achieve its mission and goals. Directors serve a three-year term and are eligible for re-election. The STI board members are listed below:

- Bill Lockhart, the current Chair of the Board, is a member of the leadership team of the SANS Institute, primarily responsible for marketing and information technology. He served in the past as Director of Strategy for the SANS Technology Institute and then as its Executive Director, reporting to Alan Paller. Prior to his employment at the SANS Institute, Mr. Lockhart managed portfolios of public and private investments for multiple investment companies, including Lockhart Capital Management, which he founded in 2003, and served on the boards of publicly traded and private companies. Mr. Lockhart graduated Yale University summa cum laude, and holds a Master in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School.
- 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.
- Dr. Thomas Johnson 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.
- Dennis Kirby, Vice Chair, is a member of the SANS management team 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.
- 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.

- 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 Shackleford 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 STI 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 Zeltser, 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, B.S. in Information Technology, State University of New York at Binghamton

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

Alan Paller, M.Eng.  
President

Danna Wiseman  
Assistant Director, Admissions

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

David Hoelzer  
Dean of Faculty

Shelley Moore  
Assistant Director

Johannes Ullrich, Ph.D.  
Director of Research

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

## **Affiliations**

STI 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. STI is affiliated with 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 STI's 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 STI's 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 Institute's 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, white papers 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 white papers without approval from STI.

## Student Identification Policy

STI's 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 SANS 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>

## Tuition and Fees

### Tuition

Students are required to pay tuition at the time of registration for each course. Master's student's tuition is based on a credit hour rate. Certificate and non-matriculated single course students pay a flat rate per course. The current rates for each program can be found at [www.sans.edu](http://www.sans.edu). All course materials are included in the course tuition price and are provided to the student directly through STI, SANS, or GIAC. Discounts or promotions offered by SANS Institute, including the Work Study Program, do not apply to graduate school tuition.

Students taking courses using one of the distance modalities (OnDemand, vLive, or Simulcast) will have course materials shipped to the address on file in their SANS account. Students attending live events will pick up their course materials during conference check-in.

### Travel Costs

Students are responsible for the costs of hotel, food, and travel to attend any of the live events. The average hotel and food cost, if the hotel rooms are not shared, is \$1,800 per residential institute (\$200 per night for accommodations and \$100 per day for food), though significant savings are available through room sharing. These amounts are to be paid directly to the hotel at which the residential institute is being conducted.

### Add-Ons

SANS offers several options for to add supplemental products, such as an OnDemand bundle or 2-day summits, to live courses. These items are not program requirements and are not included in course tuition. Students should ask their student advisor how to add a desired supplemental product to a registration. Students using VA Education Benefits may not use benefits to cover SANS add-ons.

### Financial Aid/Title IV Eligibility

The SANS Technology Institute is approved by the US Department of Education as an eligible Title IV institution. While we do not participate in Title IV funded student loan programs, eligibility status permits us to, from the date of eligibility forward, offer the following opportunities to our students:

- Provide a 1098-T to students who are funding part of their program cost in order for them to file for possible tax credit.
- Students may be eligible to utilize 529 educational funds where there is a state requirement for Title IV eligibility.

- Students may be eligible to utilize corporate or employer tuition reimbursement programs where Title IV eligibility is required.

### **Tuition Payment Plan**

The SANS Technology Institute Tuition Payment Plan allows eligible master’s degree students to fund their tuition in monthly installments. Students should contact their student advisor to apply.

### **Veterans Benefits**

STI is authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs to accept VA Education Benefits. Students using VA Education Benefits are responsible for any tuition not paid to STI directly by the VA by the end of their course term. Please refer to STI’s Veterans Guide for more detailed information.

### **Cancellation and Change Fees**

Students should ensure their schedule supports enrollment in a course before registration. Students who wish to cancel and receive a refund for a particular graduate course must submit a request by email to their student advisor. Requests must be received 45 days before the start of the course. Payments will be refunded by the method that they were submitted and a processing fee of \$300 will be deducted. Requests received within 45 days of the start of the course may not receive a refund, but credit towards enrollment in a future course.

Students who seek to change the venue, timing, or modality for a graduate course should submit a change request to their student advisor. Requests must be received 45 days before the start of the course. Processing fees may apply. No transfers will be given once online course materials have been accessed, or course materials have been mailed to the student.

Cancellation Fee*	\$300 processing fee + shipping charges
Course Change Fee*	\$150 processing fee + shipping charges

\*Fees may apply per SANS policy for each modality

Cancellation of any approved registration for a capstone lab within 45 days prior to the start of the lab will be subject to forfeiture of the full lab fee.

Students using VA Education Benefits may cancel a course up to 7 days prior to the start of a course without incurring any cancellation or change fees. For cancellations within 7 days of a course starting, students will be responsible for paying cancellation or change fees. Refunds of military education benefits will be resolved via the VA’s Debt Management Center. As part of any such refund, any overpayment received by the

student (e.g., Chapter 30 tuition payments or Chapter 33 book or housing stipend) will be the responsibility of the affected student.

# Credit Transfers and Waivers

## Credit Transfers

STI does not accept transfers of credit for coursework completed at other higher education institutions.

## Waivers

STI waives requirements for course elements or courses within its program of studies when a student has previously attained substantially similar intended learning outcomes. Waivers may be granted for up to, but not more than, one-quarter of the total number of credit hours or credit-hour equivalents required by the program and are subject to various limits and requirements as described below.

- An evaluation of waivers, indicating all course waivers, will be completed and agreed upon before matriculation.
- Waivers will not be granted when the requirements of the waiver are met after a student matriculates.
- In the event a waiver is granted for an entire course, no credit hours or grade will be awarded, nor will the course figure into the calculation of a student's cumulative grade point average.
- In the event a waiver is granted for part of a course's components, the grade(s) received for the remaining components completed by the matriculated student will be used to determine the course grade.

### *Waivers for SANS Institute Classes*

A waiver will be granted to a student for the transfer of a specific SANS Institute class when the student has completed that class within the two years before matriculation. For example, a student who completed the SANS Institute class SEC 401 less than two years before matriculation must, upon matriculation, complete the associated GIAC GSEC exam required by ISE 5101.

Individuals who participated in government or military educational programs that were taught by STI faculty may be granted credit for the applicable work completed during their former program. The work must have been based on substantially the same SANS Institute class content and GIAC exam requirements and be a component of a STI master's program. These students must have passed the relevant exams no more than four years before their acceptance to the master's program.

### *Waivers for GIAC Certifications*

A waiver will be granted to a student for both a relevant SANS Institute class and GIAC exam if the student has taken and passed the relevant GIAC exam within the past three years. Waivers for GIAC certifications achieved without having taken the relevant SANS

Institute class are known as GIAC challenges. A student is allowed a maximum of two GIAC challenges.

### ***Waivers for PMP Certification***

For students who hold a current PMP from the Project Management Institute, a waiver will be granted for the requirement to take ISE/ISM 5800 in its entirety (waiving both the SANS MGT 525 course and the GIAC GCPM requirement).

### ***Waivers for CISSP Certification***

For students who hold a current CISSP from the ISC2 organization, a waiver can be granted within ISE/ISM 5101 for the SANS Institute class SEC 401 or MGT 512, respectively. Achievement of the associated GIAC GSEC or GSLC certifications, respectively, will still be required for the award of credit. Please note that students should consider this waiver carefully because course materials for the associated GIAC exam will not be provided.

Students who have received a waiver but still must complete an associated GIAC exam will be charged the tuition and fees in place at the time the student seeks to engage in these activities for credit.

## **Student Services**

### **Advising**

All students are assigned to a student advisor as they begin their program of study. Advisors are not technical subject matter experts, but rather help guide students' progress through their academic program and serve as their primary liaison for any questions or concerns.

Academic support services that student advisors provide:

- An initial academic advising session to plan first few courses
- Assistance in course registration and troubleshooting
- Monthly 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 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 graduate-level 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 his/her 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 Graduate Student Center, graduate 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 graduate 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**

Master’s degree and graduate certificate students 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 graduate 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](mailto: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](mailto: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, 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**

STI 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, STI is 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**

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.

## Examinations

STI uses the services of the GIAC organization for the exams given in STI 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 GIAC's 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:proctor@giac.org) or call 301-654-7267.

## **Enrollment Policies and Procedures**

SANS Technology Institute's academic programs and courses include challenging learning objectives and deadlines that require a significant investment of time and energy. Thus, there are several policies in place to ensure student success.

### **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 the program curriculum.

## 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, 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.

### 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 the GIAC organization. Each course's syllabus contains specifics on the components of a course that are used by the faculty to formulate a grade for the course. At the completion of each course, grades are calculated and recorded in the student's electronic academic record.

Candidates for a master's degree or a graduate certificate 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 A-, quality points equal to 3.7 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

The course faculty ensures that each course syllabus contains specifics on the components of a course that are used to formulate a grade for the course. At the end of a course, faculty will assign a final course grade based upon graded assignments during the course using the scale below.

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Grade Points (Per credit hour)</b>
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
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 Grade***

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 30 days 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 30-day period, the grade of “I” will be replaced with a grade of “F” for the course. Requests for incomplete grades should be made to [deanofstudents@sans.edu](mailto: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 30-day incomplete period. The grade of incomplete is a limited privilege and repeat offenders may be subject to 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 for the course again 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 will 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 re-take exam within 60 days from the initial exam failure 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***

A student who fails to reach the required level in NetWars Continuous will be required to retake NetWars Continuous at the cost of one 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.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

A student pursuing a graduate degree has made a substantial commitment of time and financial resources. STI expects that its students take this commitment seriously and proceed through their course of studies in a timely manner and with a specific level of demonstrated learning.

### Progress Requirements

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.

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.

#### ***3.0 Cumulative GPA Requirement***

Students must maintain at least a cumulative 3.0 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 an STI master's program must earn a minimum of 8 credit hours per year. Students enrolled in graduate 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.

## **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.

## **Academic Watch**

Master's 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.

## **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 STI's requirements for satisfactory academic progress at annual 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.

## **Student Achievement**

### **Dean's list**

The SANS Technology Institute's bi-annual Dean's List was created in an effort to publicly recognize 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 certificate students. This accomplishment serves to further distinguish those students who are becoming leaders in the cybersecurity community.

### **Graduate Certificate Completion Requirements**

In order to be eligible for a 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
4. Completion of the Graduate Exit Survey

### **Master's Degree Graduation Requirements**

In order to be eligible for the Master of Science in Information Security, 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
4. Completion of the Graduate Exit Survey

## **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 STI 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 during the conduct of 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 over 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 are not permitted to attend SANS classes or take GIAC exams for STI credit 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 the Executive Director.
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 graduate coursework.
4. The Executive Director 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.
5. The Executive Director will be responsible for notifying the appropriate student advisor of the approval of the leave.

<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Documentation Required</b>
Student's illness, injury, hospitalization, or disability	Written documentation from health care provider on letterhead detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximate date of onset of the illness, injury, or disability</li> <li>• General nature of the illness, injury, or disability</li> <li>• Healthcare provider's release to return to school</li> <li>• Prognosis for being able to meet SAP standards</li> </ul>
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

### ***Return from a Leave of Absence/Re-enrollment***

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 from the end of their leave of absence will be administratively dismissed from the program and will need to apply for readmission.

### **Reapplication to SANS Technology Institute**

Students who have been withdrawn or dismissed from the Institute must reapply for admission. Former students are required to submit new admissions documents, including the application fee. Please contact [info@sans.edu](mailto: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 STI's waiver policy.

## 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

STI 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 SANS Technology Institute. Please see the refund policy for refunds on tuition payments made.

## 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.

## Contact Information

STI offices are open 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each student is assigned a student advisor (who can answer most questions) and advisors are available during normal business hours in their respective time zone.

## Educational Resources

### Facilities

STI does not operate a traditional brick and mortar campus. Live instruction is conducted through learning events hosted at hotel venues and other facilities across the United States and in select foreign countries.

### Research Sources

The challenges of information security are constantly evolving. Excellence in performance demands continuous monitoring of changes in threats, technology, and practices. SANS conducts an extensive research program that will help STI students and alumni to maintain their edge in security. All of these services are available at no cost to STI students and alumni unless otherwise specified. SANS supplies a learning resource center with a compilation of thousands of original research papers, security policies, security notes, along with a wealth of unique network security data. The following can be found within the resource center:

1. The SANS Information Security Reading Room contains over 2,500 original research studies, not available from any other source, in approximately 100 categories relevant to the study of information security. The papers in the [SANS Reading Room](#) are prepared by information security professionals to meet the requirements to earn GIAC (Global Information Assurance Certification) certifications. On average, each of the papers reflects 60 to 90 hours of original research.
2. The [SANS Security Policy Collection](#) contains model security policies developed by major corporations and government agencies. They serve as guides and templates for security managers who need to understand and create effective security policies. The collection grows as new security issues arise and policy templates are needed.
3. The [SANS 20 Critical Controls](#) is a recommended set of actions for cyber defense that provide specific and actionable ways to stop today's most pervasive and dangerous attacks. A principle benefit of the Controls is that they prioritize and focus a smaller number of actions with high pay-off results.
4. The [SANS Newsletter Collection](#) provides a high-level perspective of the latest security news.
5. The [Security Glossary](#) is among the largest glossary of security terms available on the Internet. It was developed jointly by SANS and the National Security Agency. It

provides authoritative definitions of many of the specialized terms students will encounter.

6. The SANS Collection of Frequently Asked Questions about [Intrusion Detection](#) contains authoritative discussions of the primary topics that arise when planning and implementing intrusion detection technologies.
7. The SANS [Internet Storm Center](#) archives contain contemporaneous analyses of new attacks that are discovered on the Internet. Internet Storm Center is the first site most government and commercial security officers visit after learning of a new attack because experts use the site to share what they have learned about the damage being done by the new attack and what can be done to block the attack. The archives are an extraordinary research asset because of the depth of the analysis and the currency of the topics covered. Internet Storm Center archives also provide STI students with access to raw data, summaries, and query facilities to analyze malicious Internet traffic records. The Storm Center is a rich data source for advanced security research projects looking at attack patterns and how fast worms spread through the Internet.
8. [S.C.O.R.E.](#) A community of security professionals working to develop consensus regarding minimum standards and best practice information. This cooperative research program delivers authoritative checklists and tools.
9. SANS [Webcasts](#). Several times a month, STI and SANS faculty, and other Security experts provide up-to-date web briefings for STI alumni on new threats seen at Internet Storm Center, new technologies that are emerging, and analysis of security trends. These web briefings are archived so students may listen to them at any time.
10. [The GIAC resources page](#) offers several white papers on key issues included in the Common Body of Knowledge and is a rich source of resources for every person seeking certification and technical expertise in network security and information security.

## **Internet Storm Center/DShield Resources**

Master's degree students of STI can request access to Internet Storm Center/DShield - (DShield/ISC) data. The student must submit a one-page proposal to [jullrich@sans.org](mailto:jullrich@sans.org) outlining how the student wishes to use this resource. If the request is approved, the student will be given ssh access to the DShield data via its research mirror at the University of Wisconsin, or the student will be given a VPN account to access the malware lab.

## **General IT and Management Resources**

The following resources that are maintained by other organizations are available to STI students. Many of the resources are freely available, but some require registration and fees for use.

### ***Case Study and Research Databases***

- a. [Harvard Business School Working Knowledge](#) provides access to a wealth of research on management, finance, operations, negotiation and related management topics.
- b. [INSEAD Knowledge](#) offers access to articles, case studies, working papers, and other material on innovation, finance, entrepreneurship, marketing, people leadership and more.
- c. [Knowledge Wharton](#) has articles and case studies on managing technology, finance, ethics, and more.

### ***Magazine Databases***

- a. [MagPortal.com](#) provides a search engine for locating individual magazine articles on the web.
- b. [FindArticles.com](#) offers access to articles published in the last two years from over 300 publications.