SANS Technology Institute

2026 Student Handbook

SANS Technology Institute
11200 Rockville Pike, Suite 200
North Bethesda, MD 20852
www.sans.edu | info@sans.edu

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,

Ed Skoudis
President

Table of Contents

WELCOME 2

MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS 5

Our Goals 5

ACCREDITATION AND AUTHORIZATION 6

GOVERNANCE, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATION 7

Board of Directors 7
Program Faculty 8
Administration 8
Affiliations 9

CODE OF CONDUCT AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES 10

Code of Conduct 10
Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy 10
Academic Integrity Policy 11
Financial Obligations and Non-Payment Policy 13
Credit Hour Policy 16
Responsible Computing Policy 16
Academic Freedom 16
Intellectual Property Rights 16
Student Identification Policy & Procedures 17
Public Health and Safety Policy 18
Weapons Policy 18
Visitors and Children at SANS.edu Events Policy 18
Title IX Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Related Conduct 19

FEDERAL EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) 21

Directory Information 21
Other Disclosures Permitted Under FERPA 22

STUDENT SERVICES 23

Advising 24
New Student Orientation 24
Student Portal 25
SANS.edu Student Email Address and Acceptable Use Policy 25
Recording Policy 26
SANS.edu Slack Community 27
Change of Personal Information 28
Academic Accommodations 28
Transcripts 28
Educational or Travel Visas 28
Degree and Enrollment Verifications (including Third Parties) 28

EXAMS AND GRADING 30

Proctored Exam Policies 30
Grading System 31
Grading Scales 31
Rectifying a Failed Course 33

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 34

Attendance 34

Satisfactory Academic Progress....34
Full-time Student Definition....36
Maximum Time Frame....36
Concurrent Academic Programs....37
Changing Program of Study....37
Maximum Enrolled Credit Limits....37
Course Prerequisites and Recommended Preparation....37
Additional Electives....38
Managing Multiple GIAC Certifications....38

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT....41

Graduation Requirements....41
Academic Distinction....42

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISMISSAL....43

Academic Probation....43
Dismissal....43

WITHDRAWAL, LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND READMISSION....44

Withdrawal Policy....44
Leave of Absence Policy....45
Readmission After Dismissal....49

COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE....50

APPENDIX....52

HANDBOOK ARCHIVE....54

Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission:

The SANS Technology Institute equips technically skilled professionals to strengthen global cybersecurity through innovative, hands-on education guided by leading scholar-practitioners. Through experiential learning, our students master advanced practices and graduate ready to implement cutting-edge security."

Vision:

The SANS Technology Institute is committed to sustaining and advancing its position as the world's leading cybersecurity college, translating cutting-edge cybersecurity practice, research, and scholarship into education that strengthens global security.

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 (1007 North Orange Street, 4th Floor, MB #166, Wilmington, DE 1980), 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, Bachelor of Professional Studies and Bachelor of Science degrees in Applied Cybersecurity, 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:

- **Jeremy Rabson**
  Jeremy, the current Chair of the Board, is a member of the executive leadership team of the SANS Institute, where he is primarily responsible for Content and Certifications. Jeremy joined SANS in 2018, with more than 20 years of experience in strategy, financial services and consumer businesses.

- **Dr. Thomas Johnson**
  Thomas, 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.

- **Marc Niketas**
  Marc 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.

- **David Hoelzer**
  As a SANS Fellow, David is author of more than twenty days of SANS courseware, and Dean of Faculty of the SANS Technology Institute. He is an expert in a variety of information security fields, having served in most major roles in the IT and security industries over the past twenty-five years. Currently, David serves as the principal examiner and director of research for Enclave Forensics, a New York/Las Vegas based incident response and forensics company. He also serves as the chief information security officer for Cyber-Defense, an open-source security software solution provider.

- **Richard Hammer**
  A SANS Technology Institute alumnus, Richard is currently a Technical Staff Member at Los Alamos National Laboratory. He is a senior Network/System administrator, Organizational Computer Security Representative (OCSR), and Information System Security Officer (ISSO) for the Advanced Nuclear Technology group (N-2). He has experience with most operating systems and many programming languages. Network and System security has become a larger part of

his job description in the last ten years; Richard attended his first SANS conference in 1998. He is a former high school Mathematics and Computer Science teacher and is currently teaching Networks I&II, Server Configuration, and System Security courses at the College of Santa Fe. He currently holds GIAC GSEC, GCFW, GCIA, GCIH, GCUX, GCNA, and GSPA certifications. He is a former Chair/Vice Chair of the GCFW advisory board and was the first graduate of the SANS Technology Institute (MSISE).

- **Lenny Zeltzer**
  Lenny 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.

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 Zeltser, M.B.A., Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Rob Lee, M.B.A., Georgetown University
- 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.

Ed Skoudis, M.S.
President

Betsy Marchant, M.P.H.
Provost

Rebecca Abbott, M.Ed.
Vice Provost

Danna Wiseman, M.Ed.
Director, Admissions

Betty Deeb, MBA, M.Ed
Director, Advising

Eva Dring, B.A.(Hons)
Director, Academic Affairs

Alex Wang, M.A.
Director, Marketing

David Hoelzer, M.S.
Dean of Faculty

Johannes Ullrich, Ph.D.
Dean of Research

Mark Baggett, M.S.
Assistant Dean of Research
Chief Technology Officer, Internet Storm Center

Joshua Wright
Dean of Students

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 (SANS.edu) Code of Conduct or Institutional Policies should be reported to the Provost.

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, staff, 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, engaging in Institute-related online activities, and interacting with Institute students and staff. SANS.edu 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 SANS.edu sponsored activity.

The Institute may take immediate disciplinary action if your actions pose a threat to the health, safety, or well-being to members of the college community, college property, other readily identifiable private or public property, a violation of local, state, or federal law, or disrupt the College's normal operations.

As educated adults who are leaders and advisors to organizations on issues of compliance with laws and regulations, SANS.edu 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 SANS.edu 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

SANS.edu 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 SANS.edu. Such discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity Policy

Producing independent and original work is essential for students to fully benefit from their education and enhance their learning. This policy outlines the procedures for addressing alleged violations of academic integrity, such as cheating, unauthorized assistance, plagiarism, use of prohibited materials, and falsification of information. These violations undermine both the student's educational experience and the institution's reputation. The policy ensures that allegations are handled with fairness and accountability.

Reporting Violations

Anyone within or outside the college community can report a suspected violation of academic integrity by emailing academicaffairs@sans.edu. Violations may also be reported to the college by GIAC's exam security team. Complaints should be submitted as soon as possible after the incident. Individuals will not be subject to retaliation for making a good-faith report of actual or suspected violations. The identity of a person who reports a suspected academic integrity violation will remain confidential. It will not be disclosed to the alleged violator except as required by law or when necessary to conduct a thorough and fair investigation. SANS.edu may use information from the report without revealing the reporter's identity, provided this does not compromise the rights of the accused or the integrity of the investigation.

Notification of the Student

If a student is sanctioned following a GIAC exam security investigation, they will receive notification via email from GIAC and be given the opportunity to appeal the findings. For further information, students are encouraged to review GIAC's Exam Integrity Policy and the associated appeal process. SANS.edu is not able to provide any information on the GIAC investigation. If no appeal is submitted or one is denied by GIAC, the case will then be referred to the SANS.edu Academic Integrity Council (AIC) for further review to determine its impact on the student's academic record.

If a student is accused of a violation unrelated to GIAC exam integrity, they will be notified by the SANS.edu Academic Integrity Council (AIC) and given the opportunity to respond.

Students under investigation by either SANS.edu or GIAC may be placed on a non-punitive Leave of Absence to protect their academic standing. During this time, students are not eligible to continue coursework until the investigation is resolved.

Investigation

The Academic Integrity Council may seek assistance from other parties, within or outside the college community, during the investigation. The College has reviewed GIAC's exam investigation process and determined it meets appropriate standards for fairness and validity. Therefore, if a violation involves a GIAC exam, the AIC will presume that GIAC investigation results are accurate. Equivalent appropriate sanctions will be applied, unless satisfactory evidence is submitted of significant mitigating circumstances.

The severity of the violation will be determined based on the following factors:

- **Nature of the Violation:** The specific actions taken by the student and how they violate the academic integrity policy or other applicable policy.
- **Intent:** Whether the violation was intentional or accidental.
- **Extent of the Violation:** How widespread or severe the violation was.

- **Impact:** The actual or potential effect on other students, the college community, or others including financial loss, time wasted, missed opportunities, or any other harm caused.

If a student is accused of a violation unrelated to GIAC exam integrity, after reviewing all evidence, the Council will determine if is it more likely than not that a violation occurred and if the student is responsible. The student will be notified in writing of the results of the Council's determination. The notification will include a summary of the allegations, the sanctions imposed, and information about the student's right to appeal.

Sanctions

Sanctions for violations can vary based on severity, and may include, but are not limited to, a formal written warning, a requirement to redo an assignment, a requirement for in-person proctoring for future exams, a requirement to take a substitute course, failure of the course with an academic dishonesty notation on official transcript, dismissal from the academic program, and revocation of previously earned degrees or certificates.

In the event that sanctions are applied, no refunds will be granted for completed or partially completed courses. Please see refund policy on tuition payments.

Appeals Process

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Provost (Provost@sans.edu) within five business days of the decision notification. Appeals may only be based on the following grounds:

- Procedural errors that impacted the outcome.
- New evidence that was not available during the original investigation.
- Sanctions that are disproportionate to the violation.
- There is evidence of clear bias based on a federally recognized protected class by the deciding official.

The Provost will consider the student's appeal, review all evidence, and make a final decision within ten business days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Provost is final.

Confidentiality

All investigations, documentation, and appeals will be conducted with strict confidentiality to protect the privacy of all parties involved, to the extent possible. Records of all reported violations, investigations, hearings, and sanctions will be maintained by the Dean of Student's Office and included in the student's academic record. Records may be disclosed to law enforcement or court officials upon receipt of a valid subpoena or other request.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and fair. Revisions will be made as necessary to address emerging issues and feedback from the college community.

Financial Obligations and Non-Payment Policy

Veteran Students

VA students utilizing Chapter 33 (Post-9/11 GI Bill®) benefits with less than 100% eligibility, or those using Chapter 30, Chapter 35, or Chapter 1606 education benefits, may begin a course without remitting full payment of tuition at the time of enrollment. However, students are required to remit equal monthly installment payments for any out-of-pocket tuition balance throughout the duration of the course term.

Students are required to be current on monthly tuition payments to receive access to their exam. Tuition balances must be paid in full 72 hours prior to the scheduled exam, or exam access will be suspended until payment is received. This policy also applies to early exam requests; exam access will not be granted prior to the published course end date unless a tuition payment is on file. If exam access becomes locked due to non-payment, it will be restored once the required tuition payment is submitted, and an Incomplete grade may be avoided with timely payment.

Example: A student with a tuition balance of $5,700 enrolled in a three-month course is expected to make monthly payments of $1,900. If payments are not submitted, access to schedule and take the certification exam will be locked.

Cash Payer

Students paying out of pocket are required to pay for the course in full at the time of registration. Once the course begins, if the student withdraws, they are not eligible for a refund. Add/drop is prior to the course start date.

Employer Tuition Assistance, Purchase Orders, Letters of Credit

Students using funding from their employer are responsible for ensuring that all required payment arrangements are completed before the course begins.

If the employer is paying the tuition directly and does not require SANS Technology Institute to issue an invoice, the employer must either call in the full tuition payment or submit payment by wire transfer. Payment must be received at least seven days before the course start date in accordance with SANS Technology Institute registration policy.

If the student is using a purchase order (PO) or letter of credit, the documentation must include the following information:

- Student's full name
- Course name
- Course start and end dates
- Tuition amount
- Confirmation of the employer's payment commitment

The purchase order or letter of credit must be received at least two weeks before the course start date.

If the documentation does not confirm that the employer will cover 100% of the tuition, the student must pay any remaining out-of-pocket balance before the course begins.

The student is ultimately responsible for the full cost of tuition. If the employer does not submit payment as expected, any outstanding balance will become the student's responsibility. If the employer notifies the school they will not pay the tuition while the student is still enrolled in the course, the tuition balance must be paid in full 72 hours prior to a scheduled exam, or exam access will be suspended until payment is received.

Scholarships

If a student is using a third-party scholarship to cover tuition, SANS Technology Institute must receive a copy of the official scholarship award letter.

All scholarship funds must be received before the course start date. If the scholarship does not cover the full cost of tuition, the student is responsible for paying any remaining out-of-pocket balance in full before the course begins.

SANS.edu Payment Plans (TPP, SUPP, ISA)

Students utilizing any SANS.edu payment plan are required to make all monthly payments on time and in accordance with the terms of their payment plan agreement.

Students who have **three late payments** may be removed from the payment plan program and may no longer be eligible to use a payment plan as a funding source for future courses. If a student is removed from the program, any remaining outstanding balance will become immediately due.

Students using an Unexpected TPP payment plan are required to pause their studies while paying off the outstanding balance. If a payment is missed, the remaining balance may become immediately due and could be referred to collections. The student may also be subject to dismissal from the college in accordance with institutional policy.

Students are encouraged to contact Bursar@sans.edu as soon as possible if they are experiencing difficulty making a scheduled payment.

Student Responsibility for Tuition and Outstanding Balances

Students are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all tuition, fees, and other charges associated with their enrollment are paid in full, regardless of the funding source or payment method they intend to use.

Funding sources may include, but are not limited to, VA education benefits, employer tuition assistance or reimbursement, scholarships, third-party sponsorships, Income Share Agreements (ISA), Tuition Payment Programs (TPP), Step Up Payment Programs (SUPP), or other payment arrangements or external funding sources.

If an anticipated funding source is delayed, reduced, denied, canceled, or otherwise fails to cover the full amount owed, the student remains responsible for paying any outstanding balance directly to SANS.edu. The use of an external or third-party funding source does not relieve the student of responsibility for the charges associated with their enrollment.

SANS.edu will make reasonable efforts to contact students regarding unpaid account balances, including outreach by phone and email. Students are expected to respond promptly to communications regarding their account and work with SANS.edu to resolve any outstanding financial obligations.

If a balance remains unpaid for more than 30 days, the account may be referred to a collection agency and may be subject to an additional collection fee of up to 35% of the outstanding balance. Students whose accounts are referred to collections may also be subject to dismissal from SANS.edu and may be restricted from registering for or enrolling in future courses or programs.

Students are also responsible for meeting the terms of any contractual payment agreement entered into with SANS.edu. Failure to resolve outstanding balances or fulfill contractual payment obligations, including obligations associated with an Income Share Agreement (ISA), Tuition Payment Program (TPP), or Step Up Payment Program (SUPP), may constitute a violation of the GIAC Code of Ethics.

Continued failure to satisfy these financial obligations may jeopardize a student's current GIAC certifications and may affect eligibility for future training, enrollment, or certifications with SANS and GIAC.

Students are strongly encouraged to monitor their account, maintain current contact information, and promptly notify Bursar@sans.edu of any changes or issues affecting their anticipated funding. Ultimately, the student remains financially responsible for all charges incurred through their enrollment.

Credit Hour Policy

A credit hour is the unit of measurement representing the amount of work typically required by an average student over a specified period in achieving intended learning outcomes. The SANS Technology Institute's Credit Hour Policy calculates credit hours based on reasonable approximations of instruction and student preparation work, in alignment with the credit hour as defined by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

For standard courses, credit hours are calculated based on the total number of contact hours, including course content, assignments, and labs, in addition to the expected student preparation work, as outlined in the course syllabus.

For experiential, internship, and practicum courses, credit hours are reasonably approximated at 1 credit per 45 instructional hours.

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 central to the mission of the college, supporting the pursuit of knowledge through teaching, research, discussion, and publication. It ensures that faculty and students can explore ideas and share expertise freely. This freedom comes with the responsibility to contribute meaningfully to the institution's goals, fostering a collaborative and mission-driven environment. Faculty are encouraged to exercise their academic freedom in ways that uphold integrity and align with SANS' mission, values, and policies.

Intellectual Property Rights

All SANS.edu students grant an irrevocable, sublicensable, worldwide, non-exclusive right and license to any of the student's faculty-directed student writing assignment prepared in connection with any SANS.edu course, project, or extracurricular activity ("material") to SANS.edu for any and all purposes. SANS.edu shall have all rights to the material as described in 17 U.S.C. § 106 and shall be designated as the enforcement agent as described in 17 U.S.C § 512 (c)(2) with respect to SANS.edu's use of the material. Students may use their original works as they see fit. However, students must obtain appropriate permission prior to reposting any other material owned by or licensed to SANS.edu or other candidates. Student further agree that all SANS and/or GIAC exam-related materials that students of SANS.edu may have access to as part of their education shall remain the exclusive property of SANS.edu and/or GIAC, LLC and student waives all rights of ownership or use to any such exam-related materials.

Student Identification Policy & Procedures

In compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, Public Law 110-315, concerning the verification of student identity in distance learning, all credit bearing courses and programs offered at SANS.edu through distance education or correspondence must verify that the student who registers for a course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program for academic credit. To authenticate identities, the SANS.edu uses one or more (as appropriate) of the following methods for verification:

1) Government issued photo ID
2) A secure login with username and password
3) Proctored examinations
4) Previous educational records (official college transcripts)
5) Employment verification

All methods of verifying student identity must protect the privacy of student information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable laws or regulations regarding the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and the College's Privacy Policy.

In accordance with the relevant contractual relationships, personally identifiable information collected by SANS and GIAC may be used in the process of verifying the identity of students enrolling in SANS.edu but is stored and secured in a manner to protect student privacy. This information may include a combination of the following:

1) SANS portal information
2) Student's email address
3) Students home address
3) GIAC Exam completion history
4) Previous purchase history

Identity Verification upon Application

Upon applying to SANS.edu, students are required to create a SANS portal account number, creating a unique user ID and password, and providing personally identifiable information. Applicants who have previously taken a SANS course can use their current portal account number. This account number serves at their student ID. SANS.edu administration will use this information to verify information provided during the application process. As part of the application process, applicants must submit previous academic records and employer recommendations. These supporting documents will be used in verifying the identity of applicants.

Identity Verification for Course Takers

Students registering for courses must provide appropriate identification to establish their identity. A SANS portal account username and password will be required for registering for courses and exams. 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.

There are no specific charges applied specifically to the activity of verifying student identities in our distance education courses, and no separate fees are charged by the GIAC contracted proctoring service.

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 SANS.edu community, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors are prohibited from possessing, discharging, or otherwise using "weapons" on premises of SANS.edu 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 SANS.edu Events Policy

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

Title IX Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Related Conduct

SANS Technology Institute is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy, and nondiscriminatory environment for our students, faculty, and staff. The full Title IX policy can be accessed in the Policies Section of the Advising Center in Canvas, and the Title IX coordinator (Krysta Keale) can be reached at OSC@sans.edu.

Use of AI/ML Tools in Academic Assignments Policy

This policy governs the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) tools by students at SANS.edu. The intent of this policy is to encourage responsible and ethical usage of AI tools while maintaining academic integrity.

1. **Declaration of AI/ML Use**: Students must declare if AI/ML tools were used to assist in their work, especially when AI-generated content contributes significantly to the submission of assignments. Any use of such tools should be documented by citing the tool or including a log or transcript of its outputs.
2. **Prohibition on Assignment Generation**: AI/ML tools may ***not*** be used to write assignments or generate substantive content. They may, however, be used as support tools for tasks such as research, problem-solving, or editing. The student must ensure that their work is original, demonstrating substantial personal contribution beyond the AI's assistance.
3. **Accuracy and Verification Responsibility**: Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of any AI-generated content used. AI/ML tools should be treated as supplementary resources, not as trusted collaborators. Students must ensure that their use of these tools aligns with academic rigor and truthfulness.
4. **Prohibition on Uploading Copyrighted Materials**: Students are ***strictly prohibited*** from uploading any copyrighted course materials, assignments, or proprietary content (e.g., lecture notes, problem sets) to AI/ML systems. This includes any course-related content that is protected under intellectual property laws.
5. **Legal and Ethical Considerations**: Students should be aware of the potential legal implications when using AI tools, as these systems often use large datasets that may include copyrighted materials. It is the student's responsibility to understand the terms of service of the AI/ML tools and ensure compliance with all copyright regulations.
6. **Citing AI Contributions**: When using AI tools, students must provide appropriate citations following the guidelines of the respective academic style (e.g., APA). For more details on how to cite AI-generated content, refer to the additional resources section.

By adhering to this policy, SANS.edu ensures that AI/ML tools are integrated responsibly into academic work, preserving the integrity and originality of student submissions.

Guidance for citing AI use:

- https://www.grammarly.com/blog/citations/ai-citations-apa/
- https://guides.lib.purdue.edu/c.php?g=1371380&p=10135074

Links to specific tools:

- ChatGPT: https://openai.com/api/policies/sharing-publication/
- GitHub Copilot: https://docs.github.com/en/site-policy/github-terms/github-terms-for-additional-products-and-features#github-copilot
- Grammarly: https://www.grammarly.com/terms

Thank you to SANS.edu students, staff, and faculty for contributing to SANS.edu's AI/ML policy. This policy was revised with the assistance of AI technology (ChatGPT, personal communication, October 16, 2024).

Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

SANS.edu values the student's right to privacy. The college adheres to a federal law called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that sets privacy standards for student educational records. The Act serves two primary purposes. It gives eligible students more control over their educational records, and it prohibits educational institutions from disclosing "personally identifiable information in education records without the written consent of an eligible student.

Students have the right to inspect and review their electronic education records maintained by SANS Technology Institute. Students may request a free "Basic Records Export" or pay a $35 flat fee for a "Full Records Export" (which includes communications logs). All records requests will be provided through secure electronic means, unless otherwise requested. Printed and mailed copies of records will incur additional fees. Requests (and any fee-waiver petitions) should be submitted in writing to Registrar@sans.edu. In compliance with federal regulations, the college will provide access to electronic records within 45 days of receiving a valid request.

If students believe information in their record is inaccurate or misleading, they may submit a written amendment request to the Registrar's Office. Decisions will be issued in writing within 30 days, and if denied, students may file a statement of disagreement to be included in their record. See the Appendix for the full policy related to FERPA records requests.

With certain exceptions, SANS.edu will not disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records without the student's prior written consent.

To authorize release of your educational records, please complete this online form.

Directory Information

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:

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

Students may direct SANS.edu not to disclose their directory information by completing this online form at any time. Students should be aware of the consequences of making this request, including non-verification of enrollment or degree status as well as non-inclusion in honors or awards announcements, student research publications, and the SANS.edu Commencement booklet. *If a student opts out of sharing directory information, the decision cannot be reversed.*

Other Disclosures Permitted Under FERPA

FERPA allows SANS.edu 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.

Additional Privacy Rights

How You Can Access Your Information

If you have an online account with us, you can review your personal information by logging into your account. You can also update your personal information by contacting us.

You can ask us to delete, rectify, or port your data by submitting a request through your account or by contacting privacy@sans.org.

We will handle your request as soon as possible; however, we may still need to retain certain information for example for legal purposes.

Opt-Out

We will not share personal information without your permission, unless it is necessary for us to provide services to you.

You can opt out of non-essential use of your data at any time by selecting the "Opt-Out" link found here, or in the footer of the communication or on our Websites and following the instructions or contacting us. You may also choose to enable in your Internet browser, where available, a universal signal from your browser that will automatically send an opt-out signal to participating websites, like ours, which will honor your preference.

If you opt out of receiving promotional communications, you may continue to receive emails and notifications relating to business-related communications.

SMS Communications and Consent

The SANS Technology Institute may communicate with you about your program or courses via SMS (1-4 messages per month). Message and data rates may apply. By matriculating into a program, you are automatically consenting to SMS messages related to your studies. You will be able to reply HELP for help and STOP to cancel.

Additional Information for Residents of Certain Jurisdictions

You may have additional data protection rights afforded to you by the state or country where you reside, including but not limited to, in the United States, European Union member state, the United Kingdom or other jurisdictions. Please click here for additional information regarding data protection rights that may be afforded to you by your state or country of residence.

Student Services

Academic Advising and Mentorship

SANS.edu programs are intentionally designed to provide structured academic engagement and robust instructional support in an online learning environment. Throughout their academic journey, students interact with a coordinated team of faculty and academic support professionals who work together to promote learning, progression, and student success.

Faculty

Faculty are responsible for curriculum design, content delivery, assessment of student learning, and providing personalized feedback aligned with program-level learning outcomes. They actively support student success by fostering an inclusive learning environment, offering guidance and academic support, and addressing individual learning needs.

GIAC Assessment Team

For many courses, final assessments are administered through the GIAC Assessment Team, an ANSI-accredited certification body affiliated with SANS. GIAC independently develops, delivers, and scores certification exams to validate mastery of course content using industry-recognized standards. This separation between instruction and assessment ensures fairness, integrity, and credibility of student outcomes

GIAC-certified Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Instructional support is provided by GIAC-certified Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who serve in a role similar to teaching assistants. SMEs offer direct academic guidance through email, live chat,

and scheduled meetings, helping students understand course material, overcome learning challenges, and apply cybersecurity concepts in real-world contexts. In addition, Faculty, who are experienced cybersecurity practitioners and qualified higher-education instructors, serve as course authors and lead instructors.

Student Advisor

Each student is assigned a dedicated Student Advisor upon admission. Student Advisors serve as the primary point of contact for academic planning and mentorship, working closely with students to develop individualized academic and communication plans, support term-by-term course progression, and provide guidance on program requirements, institutional policies, and student success strategies. Advisors conduct regular check-ins during and between courses to help students stay on track and address challenges proactively

Advising

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
- 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 and pay tuition in full or arrange payment for their first course to complete New Student Orientation. Failure to complete orientation within the allotted 30-day timeframe will

result in the rescinding of the offer of admission. If a student is not ready to begin their first course within 3 months of starting orientation, the student will need to request a deferment via their student advisor. The maximum length of deferment that a student can request is 6 months from their admit date. Students needing to defer their program start date more than 6 months will need to re-apply for admission. Deferring the start of a program may require the student to complete orientation upon return to ensure they are aware of the latest processes, policies, and procedures. Note: Non-matriculated students are not eligible for a deferment and must start their first course within 3 months.

Student Portal

All students are provided access to the SANS.edu 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.

SANS.edu Student Email Address and Acceptable Use Policy

The SANS Technology Institute (SANS.edu) provides email alias services to current students as a means of demonstrating their status as a current student and to secure eligible student discounts from third parties. Current students are provided a vanity email that will be forwarded to their personal email associated with their SANS account. There is no inbox associated with the account, and emails cannot be sent from this account. Individuals who are no longer current students at SANS.edu will be given 30-days' notice before their vanity email address will be terminated, along with any data associated with the account. It is the user's responsibility to adjust any related accounts utilizing this address within those 30 days. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that this service is used appropriately. Students found to be in violation of these policies will have their email account terminated. SANS is free to discontinue these privileges at any time.

Acceptable Use

- Students shall use their email alias exclusively for educational purposes or securing eligible student discounts from vendors.
- Users must comply with applicable laws and regulations, contractual agreements, SANS.edu polices, and licensing agreements.
- Users must use only information technology resources they are authorized to use and only in the manner and to the extent authorized. Ability to access information technology resources does not, by itself, imply authorization to do so.
- Users are responsible for protecting their SANS-assigned accounts from unauthorized use.
- Users of information technology resources are responsible for the content of their personal communications and may be subject to liability resulting from that use. SANS accepts no responsibility or liability for any personal or unauthorized use of its resources by users.

Unacceptable Use

- Students shall not use this email as their primary, personal email, or work-associated email address. It shall not be used for production-level workflow reporting.

- Users must not circumvent, attempt to circumvent, or assist another in circumventing the security controls in place to protect information technology resources and data.
- Users must not knowingly download or install software using SANS information technology resources which may interfere or disrupt service or does not have a clear academic use.
- Users are prohibited from willingly engaging in activities that interfere with or disrupt network users, equipment, or service; intentionally distribute viruses or other malicious code; or install software, applications, or hardware that permits unauthorized access to information technology resources.
- Users must not engage in inappropriate use, including but not limited to:
    - Activities that violate state or federal laws, regulations, or SANS policies.
    - Harassment.
    - Widespread dissemination of unsolicited and unauthorized electronic communications.
    - Intentionally initiating an unreasonable volume of email traffic that could disrupt network performance.

Security and Privacy of Email

SANS.edu seeks to provide secure, private and reliable email services by following information technology best practices. However, we caution all email users to exercise extreme caution when using SANS.edu email to communicate confidential or sensitive matters.

Users of SANS Institute email services should be careful not to open attachments from unexpected external or unknown senders, nor follow web links within an email message unless the user is certain that the link is legitimate. SANS.edu email is protected by Proofpoint and includes "URL re-writing" and "Attachment Defense" to allow users to safely check links and attachments within emails.

SANS reserves the right to employ security measures. When it becomes aware of violations, it is SANS' responsibility to investigate as needed or directed, and to take necessary actions to protect its resources and/or to provide information relevant to an investigation. Users will promptly report any unexpected system behavior or irregularities in information to the SANS Security Team immediately (security-team@sans.org).

Users are advised that all electronic data, electronic communications, and other services using the SANS network for transmission or storage may be reviewed and/or accessed by authorized SANS IT staff as deemed necessary. SANS Institute has the authority to access and inspect the contents of any equipment, files, or email on its electronic systems.

Recording Policy

Prospective and current students who wish to record a meeting/event/advising/etc session with a SANS.edu staff or faculty member must submit a formal request to the meeting organizer in advance and obtain permission from all parties involved. This request must be made via email and include a brief justification explaining the reason for the recording. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:

- The student's need for a reference to review discussion points later.
- Accommodations for accessibility purposes.

- Compliance with institutional requirements.

The meeting organizer will, as a rule and by default, agree to allow the recording so long as it meets these guidelines:

- All attendees have provided consent before the start of the meeting.
- The recording is strictly for personal use and may not be shared or distributed without explicit consent from all parties involved.
- Any sensitive or confidential information discussed during the meeting must not be shared or disclosed in any form.
- No conversations are to be recorded using an AI tool nor should the recordings be uploaded to an AI platform.

Recording a meeting/event/session without prior approval or failing to comply with the recording guidelines outlined in this policy may result in disciplinary action as per our code of conduct.

SANS.edu Slack Community

Upon matriculation, SANS.edu students will be invited to join our online community through Slack and are encouraged to engage with their peers. Participants agree to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Students must use first and last name as their username/display name.
- Sometimes tone and context are lost in text, so assume best intent.
- Communicate using threads. In general, messages in Slack should be either:
    - A response to an existing message, in the thread below that message
    - A new thread, in which case you should put the most important information or questions
    - Use threads to organize smaller group discussions around specific topics
    - Use emoji reactions to reduce information overload and maintain focus
- Understand the use of public and private channels and try to communicate with proper audience.
- Use the search function to locate answers and reduce duplicate questions.
- Remember there are situations in which its best to move conversations off Slack messaging. Student are encouraged to meet face-to-face using Slack calls or other messaging platforms!
- Per the Non-Disclosure Agreement for GIAC exams, students may not release, disclose, or share the content of any GIAC exam to another party.
- Harassment and Inappropriate behavior: Students engaging in harassment or inappropriate behavior should be reported as soon as possible to the Dean of Students Office at deanofstudents@sans.edu.

Policy violations: Students in violation of the above slack policies and guidelines will face expulsion from Slack as well as appropriate action from the school, per the Student Code of Conduct (page 10).

Change of Personal Information

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

For name changes, students must submit the request in writing to the Dean of Students Office at deanofstudents@sans.edu and include a copy of their government-issued identification.

Academic Accommodations

The SANS Technology Institute (SANS.edu) is committed to assisting students with documented disabilities. SANS.edu 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 the student's healthcare provider that explains the nature of the disability and specifies the exact accommodation(s) needed, should be submitted within two weeks of beginning the course. Late requests will be addressed as quickly as possible and to the best of the organization's ability, resources, policies, and standards. All accommodations requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis after careful review of the information submitted. Please note, as each course measures different learning objectives, accommodations requests will be evaluated for each course.

Students should submit their documentation HERE and then send an email to studentservices@sans.edu and ADA@GIAC.org letting us know it has been submitted. Accommodation requests will be coordinated with SANS, GIAC, and SANS.edu faculty.

Transcripts

Students can email their student advisor to request an *unofficial* transcript. For *official* transcripts, the SANS Technology Institute partners with Parchment to order and send transcripts securely. Students can order transcripts at https://www.parchment.com/u/registration/20731330/institution.

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.

Degree and Enrollment Verifications (including Third Parties)

The SANS Technology Institute partners with the Parchment to provide degree and enrollment information for education verifications. Organizations and third-party requestors performing

background checks or verifying degrees can request records at https://www.parchment.com/u/registration/20731330/institution.

Note: *Third party entities requesting records MUST upload a signed FERPA-compliant authorization from the applicable student before records will be released.*

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 as a proctored exam, using either ProctorU for remote exams or Pearson VUE for in-person exams. Students are provided two practice exams to prepare for every GIAC exam.

Proctored Exam Policies

Proctored exams are scheduled through a 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 Detail', 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 **$175 seating fee**. To reschedule, students should log into their SANS account and click on 'Certification Attempts', 'View Proctor Detail', and then 'Reschedule'. To cancel, students should call the customer service line at 301-654-7267. Students who have questions regarding scheduling a proctored exam, visit https://www.giac.org/exams/faq.

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.

For remotely proctored exams, students will need to comply with ProctorU's equipment requirements. See the GIAC Guide to Taking Exams with ProctorU for more information.

In-Person GIAC Certification Exams for First-Time Test Takers

All students who have not yet passed a GIAC certification exam are required to take their first GIAC exam in person at a local Pearson VUE Testing Center. This policy applies only to students who have never previously passed a GIAC certification exam; those who hold an active GIAC certification are exempt.

This requirement is in place to support students' academic success by allowing them to be wholly focused on exam preparation without the added task of arranging a suitable, distraction-free testing area. Testing at a Pearson VUE center ensures access to reliable internet and technical support in a quiet, professional testing atmosphere free from home-based disruptions. Once a student has successfully passed a GIAC certification exam, they may choose between in-person or online proctoring for any subsequent GIAC exams, unless otherwise directed by GIAC.*

If you need any assistance scheduling your exam appointment or do not see a testing center within 60 miles of your location, please email proctor@giac.org for support and copy your Student Advisor.

**GIAC at its sole discretion reserves the right to specify proctoring parameters and testing modality for any examination attempt at any time without explanation, per the GIAC Candidate Agreement.*

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 SANS.edu 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.

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:

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

*An "XF" grade is donated when a course is failed due to Academic Dishonesty.

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 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 approval by the Office of the Registrar, a grade of "I" (incomplete) may be given when a student has been unable to complete the work of the course due to mitigating circumstances. 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.

Incomplete periods vary depending on the course term length and program level. For example, courses that include SANS training and a GIAC exam have an incomplete period of 19 days for undergraduate accelerated terms (8 weeks) and 30 days for undergraduate and graduate standard terms (12 weeks). Refer to the course syllabus in Canvas for details on the applicable incomplete period, or contact your student advisor for more information.

Requests for incomplete grades should begin with the student's advisor. The student advisor will send a request form for the student to complete and submit. The request should outline why the student has been unable to complete the course during the course term, including the mitigating circumstance, and indicate the plan to complete the course within the incomplete period. The Office of the Registrar will evaluate the request and inform the student of the outcome.

An Incomplete period must be requested and approved before the course's official end date; however, the Incomplete period does not begin until after the course's original, official end date has passed. Approval of an Incomplete period does not change or extend the official course term or the course's original end date. The Incomplete period provides the student with additional time after the course has ended to complete outstanding course requirements.

Repeated requests for an incomplete period in an academic year may result in being placed on academic probation if a student fails to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards for their program (see next section). Students with a tuition balance on their financial account (except for those enrolled in a tuition payment plan or income share agreement) are not eligible for an incomplete grade until the outstanding balance is paid.

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 likely incur a debt for tuition charges or housing allowance and should consult with their student advisor before withdrawing.

Students may withdraw from a course only during the active course term. A withdrawal request must be submitted on or before the course's original, official end date. Students who withdraw by this deadline will receive a grade of "W" (Withdrawal) on their transcript and will no longer be expected to complete the course.

Once the course's original, official end date has passed, withdrawal is no longer permitted. This remains true even when a student has been granted an Incomplete period. The Incomplete period provides additional time to complete outstanding coursework; it does not extend the course term or the deadline to withdraw.

Rectifying a Failed Course

Students who initially fail a course will need to retake the course to replace the failure with a passing grade. Students may not begin another course until the failure has been rectified.

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 re-take exam within 60 days from the initial exam failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress. *This GIAC exam retake option does count as a course attempt at the number of credit hours for the original course.*

Degree-seeking students failing more than one exam attempt may be required to retake the entire course. Non-degree seeking students may only retake their final GIAC exam one-time. Once a passing score is achieved, the student's failing exam grade will be replaced with the new grade in the student's record.

Cyber Ranges

A student who fails to reach the required level in a cyber range course may retake the course 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.

Consistent with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and institutional attendance requirements, documented academic interactions with Student Advisors, SMEs, and Faculty are considered evidence of academic engagement. Check-ins, mentoring meetings, instructional support communications, and other substantive academic interactions demonstrate active participation in the program and are used for attendance tracking purposes. Although SANS.edu courses are delivered online and asynchronously, students are expected to actively engage through these interactions to ensure academic accountability, progress monitoring, and meaningful participation throughout each term. Students are expected to respond to communications from their Student Advisors and are strongly encouraged to engage regularly with SMEs and Faculty for personalized academic support.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

A student pursuing a degree has made a substantial commitment of time and financial resources. SANS.edu expects that students take this commitment seriously and proceed through their course of studies in a timely manner and with a specific level of demonstrated learning. To remain in good academic standing with the SANS Technology Institute, students must meet measures for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as defined below and in alignment with federal education guidelines for satisfactory academic progress: US Department of Education regulation 34 CFR §668.34.

	Undergraduate Certificate, Lower Division	**Undergraduate Certificate, Upper Division**	**Bachelor's Degree**	**Graduate Certificate**	**Master's Degree**
Initial Course Success	Required*	Required	Required	Required	Required
Successful Completion of 2/3 Credits Attempted	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required

Minimum Cumulative GPA	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Minimum Credit Hours Earned Per Year	12	6	17	3	8
Basis for Review	At the end of each course term	At the end of each course term	Annual	Annual	Annual

*Students in the lower division undergraduate certificate, Cybersecurity Fundamentals, must pass their first and second course, CSF 2395 and CSF 2373, on the first attempt in order to remain in the program.

Evaluation of SAP measures occurs every six months of enrollment, calculated by using the student's start date and subtracting for approved leaves of absence for bachelor's and graduate students, and at the end of each course term for undergraduate certificate students. Failure to meet SAP measures will result in being placed on academic probation.

Undergraduate Programs

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

1. Successfully complete their first course in the program. Students in the lower division undergraduate certificate, Cybersecurity Fundamentals, must pass their first and second course, CSF 2395 and CSF 2373, on the first attempt in order to remain in the program.
2. Maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0
3. Earn a minimum of 17 credits per year for bachelor's programs, 6 credit hours per year for an Upper Division certificate program, or 12 credits per year for a Lower Division certificate program
4. Successfully complete 2/3 of credits attempted

Graduate Programs

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

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

Initial Course Success Requirement

All 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 will be placed on academic probation. Withdrawal from a course is treated the same as a non-passing outcome for the purposes of academic standing.

Students in the lower division undergraduate certificate, Cybersecurity Fundamentals, must pass their first and second course, CSF 2395 and CSF 2373, on the first attempt. Failure to pass either course on the initial attempt will result in dismissal with no option for probation.

Cumulative GPA Requirement

Undergraduate students must maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 official GPA. Graduate 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 SANS.edu are used in the calculation.

Minimum Credit Hours Earned (Pace)

Students enrolled in a lower division undergraduate certificate program must earn a minimum of 12 credits per year. Students enrolled in an upper division undergraduate certificate program must earn a minimum of 6 credit hours per year. Students enrolled in the bachelor's program must earn a minimum of 17 credit hours per year. Students enrolled in a graduate certificate program must earn a minimum of 3 credit hours per year. Students enrolled in the master's program must earn a minimum of 8 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 3-credit hour 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 to be considered as making satisfactory academic progress.

Full-time Student Definition

Students are defined as full-time for a given term based upon federal education guidelines.* At the undergraduate level, bachelor's degree students attempting at least 6 credits during the same 8-week term are considered full-time. The undergraduate certificate program (ACS) does not have a full-time enrollment option. Graduate students are considered full time when attempting 3 credits within a 3-month term, or an equivalent ratio.

For the purposes of enrollment verification and eligibility for Canadian financial aid, a bachelor's student's overall status as full-time or part-time is determined by their annual rate of pursuit. Students enrolled in 18 to 24 credits per year are considered part-time, while those enrolled in 25 or more credits per year are considered full-time.

*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

Undergraduate Program

Students pursing a lower division undergraduate certificate must complete the program within 18 months. Students pursuing an upper division undergraduate certificate must complete the program within 24 months. Student pursuing a bachelor's degree must complete the program within 36 months.

Graduate Programs

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

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 must reapply to each new program they wish to pursue. After switching programs, students have 30 days to register for their next course. Students wishing to change programs should discuss with their advisor and the admissions team.

Maximum Enrolled Credit Limits

Generally, students will progress through a program of study one course at a time. Occasionally, course terms may overlap. However, undergraduate certificate students may not be enrolled in more than 3 credits at a time and bachelor's students may not be enrolled in more than 12 credits at a time. Graduate students may not be enrolled in more than 4 credits at any time. Students who can complete courses at a more aggressive pace are permitted to finish a course early and then begin another course.

To support steady academic progress and maintain full-time enrollment status, bachelor's students are strongly encouraged to pair certain courses with an additional course during the same term. Specifically, **ACS 3402, ACS 3001, ACS 3002, and BACS 4499** are designed to be taken alongside another course. This is especially important for students who are behind pace or who wish to maintain full-time enrollment.

Course Prerequisites and Recommended Preparation

A prerequisite is a course that enhances a student's chance of success in another course. Without the knowledge and skills provided in the prerequisite, a student is highly unlikely to be successful in the course for which the prerequisite is required. Some courses at SANS Technology Institute have prerequisites, to enroll in a class with prerequisites, students will need to satisfy the prerequisites before the course start date. Course credits or waivers approved during the admissions process can satisfy a course prerequisite. SANS Technology Institute enforces all course prerequisites that are listed in the Undergraduate Course Catalog and Graduate Course Catalog. Any exceptions to the listed prerequisites must be approved by the Dean of Students Office.

Recommended preparation is a course or body of knowledge that increases a student's chance of success or learning value in another course. It is advised, but not required, before course enrollment.

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. Refer to the Course Catalog for a list of approved electives by program. Note that electives must be taken in course order listed for any given program and completed within the allowed maximum time frame.

Managing Multiple GIAC Certifications

As part of the academic journey with SANS.edu, students earn multiple GIAC certifications through their coursework and beyond. It's important for students to understand the tools and policies provided by GIAC and SANS.edu in order to manage, renew, and maintain these certifications over time.

This section outlines GIAC's policies for multi-certification holders, including renewal discounts and Co-Termination benefits, as well as recommendations by SANS.edu for long-term planning including information on our SANS.edu alumni benefits.

GIAC Multiple Certification Renewal Discount

Students renewing more than one GIAC certification within a two-year period may qualify for GIAC's Multiple Certification Renewal Discount.

- This discount offers reduced pricing for students managing multiple certifications, lowering renewal costs.

Eligibility and pricing details are maintained by GIAC and are subject to change. For the most current information, visit: GIAC Multiple Certification Discounts.

GIAC Certification Co-Termination Policy

Co-termination is a benefit for individuals who hold 9 or more active GIAC certifications. It aligns the expiration dates of all active certifications to a single deadline, based on the most recently earned qualifying GIAC certification. This makes it easier to track expiration dates and offers flexibility for multiple certification holders.

Policy Overview:

- Co-termination automatically applies to individuals with 9 or more active *Practitioner or Applied Knowledge GIAC certifications* as of March 25, 2025, or later.
- Co-termination is applied automatically at no cost. No registration or application is required.
- Only **active certifications** count toward the 9-certification threshold; expired certifications are not eligible.

    - Active certifications in **abeyance** count toward the 9-certification minimum.
    - Active **retired** certifications count toward the 9-certification threshold. Retired certifications cannot be renewed or extended with Co-termination.
    - SSAP, AWS Secure Builder, and Micro-Credentials do not count toward the 9-certification threshold and are not extended when Co-Termination is applied.
- After your account has been Co-Terminated, it is applied every time a new qualifying GIAC certification is earned.
- There is no certification limit; Co-Termination applies regardless of how many certifications held beyond the 9 required.

Additional Benefit:

- When Co-Termination is applied, students become eligible to purchase updated courseware at low cost, ensuring continued access to current content.
- To maintain Co-Termination:
    - Earn a new qualifying GIAC certification every four years.

      OR

    - Renew and keep active 9 or more GIAC certifications.

To help alumni maintain their certifications, SANS.edu offers an annual single course discount. See the **SANS.edu Alumni Benefits** section below for information.

Academic Planning Considerations

Degree-Seeking Students:
Students enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree program should expect to earn 9 GIAC certifications by the time they graduate, thereby qualifying for Co-Termination.* Note all certifications must be kept active to count towards the 9-certificaiton threshold.

Certificate Students:
Students enrolled in certificate programs typically earn 4-5 GIAC certifications by the end of their program.* If Co-Termination is a long-term goal, students are encouraged to consider pursuing an additional SANS.edu program such as a second certificate or degree program to meet this milestone and continue building their expertise.

**Certification totals assume no waivers for GIAC certifications earned prior to admission or credit for previously completed SANS.edu coursework applied at the time of admission into the specific program.*

SANS.edu Alumni Benefits

SANS.edu alumni enjoy exclusive opportunities for continued learning and streamlined enrollment in additional programs.

Annual Single Course Discount

Alumni may take one course per year at the current tuition rate for the highest-level program they completed at SANS.edu. This benefit becomes available one year after program completion. Tuition includes both the SANS training and the associated GIAC exam; however, no academic credit will be awarded.

Example: Alumni who completed both a certificate and a master's degree will receive the current tuition rate for the master's program.

Streamlined Enrollment in Additional Programs

Alumni seeking to pursue further education with SANS.edu benefit from simplified processes:

- **Waived Application Fees:** Alumni applying to a degree or graduate certificate program for the first time may request a fee waiver by emailing info@sans.edu.
- **Direct Enrollment:** Alumni who complete a degree or graduate certificate may enroll in a new graduate certificate program within 60 days of completion without submitting a new application.

**Alumni are those who have completed a degree or certificate program offered by the SANS Technology Institute (SANS.edu).*

For full details on these alumni benefits, visit: https://www.sans.edu/alumni.

Recommended Actions for Students

For students to get the most out of their GIAC certifications and plan effectively for renewal:

- Keep certifications active. Expired certifications are not eligible for renewal or Co-Termination.
- Take advantage of renewal discounts offered by GIAC for multiple certifications.
- Plan next academic step if reaching 9 certifications is part of a long-term strategy.
- Speak with a student advisor for help building a certification or academic progression plan tailored to specific goals.

Questions and Contacts

- For general academic advising: **Contact your SANS.edu advisor**
- For GIAC certification renewal policy questions: **Email cert-renewal@giac.org.**

Academic Achievement

Graduation Requirements

Lower Division Undergraduate Certificate

To be eligible for a lower division undergraduate certificate, candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of all required courses within 18 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

Upper Division Undergraduate Certificate

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

5. Successful completion of all required courses within 24 months
6. Successful completion of all required courses within 150% of the length of the program
7. A cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C) or higher
8. Fulfillment of all financial obligations to SANS Technology Institute

Bachelor's Degree

To be eligible for a bachelor's degree, candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of all required courses within 36 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

Post-baccalaureate Graduate Certificate

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

Master's Degree

To be eligible for a master's 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

Academic Distinction

The SANS Technology Institute recognizes the commitment to excellence of our highest achieving students to further distinguish those students who are becoming leaders in the cybersecurity community.

Honors

We grant academic Honors to our Undergraduate and Graduate certificate students who have earned at least a 3.75 GPA upon program completion.

Dean's List

Our Dean's List acknowledges bachelor's and master's students who have earned at least a 3.75 GPA as well as at least 12 credits (bachelor's students) or 6 credits (master's students) during the previous semester cycle.

Distinction

In recognition of the highest academic achievement, we award the *Bachelor's Degree with Distinction* to students who have earned at least a 3.75 cumulative GPA upon completion of a bachelor's program. Distinction is noted on both the transcript and diploma.

Assante Scholar

Mike Assante was the founder of the Industrial Control Systems (ICS) curriculum, ICS and SCADA Lead, and Director of Industrials and Infrastructure at SANS Institute. A pioneer in the field of industrial control system cyber security, Mike made a long list of remarkable contributions to the advancement of critical infrastructure system design, threat intelligence, detection, mitigation, and incident response capabilities within the ICS community. Mike passed away on July 5, 2019, but his legacy is one of innovation, relentlessness, and integrity. He had a profound impact on the security of our critical infrastructure. Each year, in recognition of Mike's legacy, the Assante Scholar award is granted to an eligible candidate from each undergraduate and graduate program with an ICS option.

Eligibility requirements:
Undergraduates in the certificate program who choose to focus in ICS, have a cumulative GPA of 4.0 and obtain a 90 or higher on the GIAC GCISP exam are eligible for consideration. Undergraduate students in a bachelor's program who take at least two ICS courses during their program, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and an "A" with a 90 or higher on the GIAC exam in each ICS course are eligible for consideration.

Graduate students in the Industrial Control Systems Graduate Certificate who graduate with a cumulative GPA of 4.0 are eligible for consideration. Graduate students in the master's program with a focus on Industrial Control Systems, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5, and an "A" in all ICS courses are eligible for consideration. To be eligible for this award, at least two of the ICS-specific courses must be taken during the graduate program enrollment.

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. Probation allows SANS.edu to provide clear steps that the student must meet to improve their academic standing.

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

- Failure to meet the school's requirements for satisfactory academic progress at annual review or at the end of each course term (undergraduate certificate students).
- Failing to successfully complete first course in program of study.
- Failing the same course twice
- Failing the same GIAC exam twice
- Prolonged periods of non-enrollment. All undergraduate certificate (lower and upper division) students will be placed on probation after 3 months of non-enrollment. Bachelor's students will be placed on probation after 3 months of non-enrollment. Graduate certificate students will be placed on probation after 9 months of non-enrollment. Master's students will be placed on probation after 3 months of non-enrollment.

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. Failure to meet probation terms will result in the initiation of dismissal procedures. Students will have 7 days to appeal before dismissal. If granted, students will receive new probation terms and will only have one opportunity to meet terms or continue to dismissal. When probation terms are successfully met, continuing probation terms may be assigned until a student is back in good academic standing. Students only come off probation when they have achieved satisfactory academic progress for their program. 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.

Academic Watch for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Students
Bachelor's and master's degree students will receive a bi-annual academic check. These checks 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. Failing to meet the terms of academic probation
4. Engaging in illegal/unacceptable behavior
5. Failing to pay account balance

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 Readmission

Withdrawal Policy

A student who chooses to withdraw from the Institute must notify their student advisor in writing as soon as is reasonably possible and complete the Program Status Change Form (https://www.tfaforms.com/4962729).

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. A withdraw 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.

Students may withdraw from a course only during the active course term. A withdrawal request must be submitted on or before the course's original, official end date. Students who withdraw by this deadline will receive a grade of "W" (Withdrawal) on their transcript and will no longer be expected to complete the course.

Once the course's original, official end date has passed, withdrawal is no longer permitted. This remains true even when a student has been granted an Incomplete period. The Incomplete period provides additional time to complete outstanding coursework; it does not extend the course term or the deadline to withdraw.

Military Exception (Isakson and Roe Act, Section 1018)

Students who are active-duty service members and are called to **qualified** active-duty military service while enrolled in a course(s) are protected under the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-315, Section 1018).

In these cases, students may elect one of the following options, in consultation with their advisor, instructors, and the Veterans Office:

1. **Full Withdrawal and Refund:** Withdraw from courses, receive a full refund of tuition and fees, and be assigned a "Military Withdrawal (MW)" grade, which does not affect GPA.
2. **Incomplete Grades:** Arrange with advisor to complete coursework at a later date.
3. **Final Grade:** If coursework is nearly complete, receive a final grade based on the work completed to date.

Students who withdraw due to **qualified** active duty are guaranteed readmission to their program without academic or financial penalty upon return from service, with all previously earned credits

and academic standing maintained. For additional guidance, military students should contact the Veterans Office at veterans@sans.edu prior to withdrawal.

For VA education benefits, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill® and Isakson-Roe compliance, only certain types of service qualify as active duty:

- **Qualifying Active Duty (Title 10 Federal Service):** Includes full-time federal service under the Department of Defense or Presidential authority, such as full mobilization during war or emergency, voluntary active duty, partial mobilization, Presidential Reserve call-ups, or recall of retirees to active duty. These periods are federally ordered and count toward VA benefit eligibility.

- **Non-Qualifying Service:** Includes Title 32 or training orders such as weekend drills, annual training, Active Duty for Training (ADT), or State Active Duty. These are typically state-controlled or temporary training statuses and do not qualify as active duty for VA benefits, except in limited cases under Title 32 § 502(f) when federally funded to support a national emergency or federal mission.

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. Additionally, SANS.edu reserves the right to place students on a leave of absence if circumstances warrant it, including but not limited to ongoing investigations related to academic integrity violations.

A student requesting a leave of absence must declare a firm and time-bound 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.

SANS.edu 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.

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

Students on a leave of absence will **not** earn credit in a SANS.edu 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 program 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 Dean of Students Office.

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 complete the Program Status Change Form (https://www.tfaforms.com/4962729) which includes submitting a formal letter, along with supporting documentation.
3. If the student is seeking a leave due to a medical or psychological condition, SANS.edu 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 will be notified 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 student's advisor will contact the student at the end of the leave of absence to make a plan to re-enroll.
6. A student who fails to register for classes within 30 days (1 month) after the end of their leave of absence will be placed on academic probation.

Circumstances	**Documentation Required**
Student's illness, injury, hospitalization, or disability	Written documentation from health care provider on letterhead detailing: • 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
Military deployment	Copy of active-duty orders
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

Military Leave of Absence

Students who are called to **qualifying** active duty are eligible for a Military Leave of Absence under federal law. Such students must provide documentation of their orders to the Veterans Office or their advisor.

Military leaves are approved for the duration of the official orders and will not count against the general 12-month limit on leaves of absence. Upon return, students will be reinstated to their program with their previously earned credits, grades, and academic standing intact.

Procedure for Applying for a Leave of Absence

1. Discuss the leave request with your student advisor.
2. Complete the Program Status Change Form, including a formal letter and supporting documentation.
3. If the leave is for medical or psychological reasons, SANS.edu may require a provider's letter confirming need and fitness to return.
4. The student will receive written notification of approval or denial, including the terms of the leave.
5. The student's advisor will contact the student before the end of the leave to plan re-enrollment.
6. A student who fails to register within 30 days after the end of the leave will be placed on academic probation.

Military Deployment Documentation Requirements

- Copy of official active-duty orders.
- Expected duration of service.
- Preferred communication method during leave (if applicable).

Readmission After Leave or Withdrawal

Students returning from an approved Military Leave of Absence or withdrawal related to **qualifying** active duty will be readmitted in accordance with the Isakson and Roe Act (Section 1018), with no application fee, loss of academic standing, or financial penalty.

Other students seeking readmission after withdrawal or dismissal must follow the standard readmission process outlined in the current Student Handbook and meet all current admission and program requirements.

Readmission After Dismissal

Students who withdraw or are dismissed from a SANS.edu program want to later return to SANS.edu for the same or a different program will need to meet and follow the steps below.

Eligibility to be readmitted:

- Students must wait at least 1 year before reapplying.
- Students who failed a course in their previous program and wish to return to complete the same program must have retaken and passed that course to be eligible to reapply.
- If readmitted, students who withdrew from a course will be required to restart that course as their first course.
- Students must meet the current application and admission requirements.
- Students will be expected to meet the requirements of the current course catalog upon their readmission to complete their program.

Once eligible to reapply to a SANS.edu program, students will need to submit a new and complete application to the new program. Contact the Admissions team by emailing info@sans.edu if you have any questions. Once you begin a new application, you will have a Readmission Form on your application checklist to complete.

The Admissions Committee will review all readmission applications in the normal round of reviews, found on the admissions websites (https://www.sans.edu/admissions). Students may be conditionally readmitted, per the Admissions Committee's review and at the discretion of the Director of Admissions.

Complaint/Grievance Procedure

SANS Technology Institute is dedicated to providing an outstanding educational experience during your time as a student with the college. If you encounter an issue during the course of your studies, please follow the steps below to ensure that your issue is resolved issue in a prompt and fair manner.

Step 1: Contact your student advisor
We encourage students to first contact their student advisor to seek guidance or resolution for a issue. Issues such as access to course material, receipt of course books, or problems processing a course registration can often be resolved easily by a student advisor.

Step 2: Contact the Dean of Students Office
If your student advisor is unable to provide a resolution to the issue, contact the Dean of Students Office at DeanofStudents@sans.edu.

The following are examples of types of complaints that can often be resolved in this step.

- **Administrative complaints**, such as issues registration, billing, advising, Title IX, and ADA accommodations
- **Academic complaints,** such as issues with grading, or interactions with student advisors, faculty, or research advisors
- **Probation or dismissal appeals**, an appeal against academic probation or dismissal within 30 days of official 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.

Students should expect a response regarding complaints within 5 business days of receipt.

Step 3: File a formal complaint
After exhausting the informal resolution process, students may file a formal complaint. A formal complaint will initiate an investigation of the concerns, a formal process to determine whether any college policies have been violated, and if so, what the appropriate outcomes would be. To file a formal complaint, students shall write a letter providing a detailed explanation, including supporting documentation, of the complaint, and submit it to the Provost's Office at Provost@sans.edu. Students will receive written notification of the final decision within two weeks of receipt. All decisions are final.

Step 4: External appeal
A student who is not satisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint with SANS Technology Institute may elevate the complaint (except for complaints about grades or student conduct violations), within two years of the incident, to the following external bodies.

- First, appeal to Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). MHEC contact information is located at http://mhec.maryland.gov/About/Pages/contactus.aspx.
- If satisfactory resolution is not obtained via MHEC, students residing outside of Maryland may, as a final option, elevate their appeal to the National Council for State Authorization

Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), of which the SANS Technology Institute is a member for the purposes of regulating students outside of Maryland. NC-SARA contact information is located at https://nc-sara.org/contacts.

Students should be aware that, as per SANS Technology Institute, MHEC, and SARA agreement, complaints against an institution operating under SARA must first go through the institution's own procedures. Complaints regarding student grades or student conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and the laws of MHEC.

Final step: Closing the loop
As part of SANS Technology Institute's commitment to institutional improvement, complaints are collected and reviewed quarterly by the Curriculum, Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs (CAFSA) Committee.

Appendix

FERPA Records Request and Appeals Policy

This policy applies to all students of SANS Technology Institute, and to all personnel responsible for the management, maintenance, and release of education records. Eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 calendar days of submitting a written request. A "student" means an individual who was admitted and attended an educational program of SANS Technology Institute.

The scope of education records subject to access under FERPA is limited to records that are directly related to the student and are maintained by SANS Technology Institute or by a party acting on its behalf. The following categories of records are not subject to access under this policy:

- Personal notes or memory aids of institutional personnel that are not shared with others (sole possession records)
- Employment records when employment is not contingent on student status
- Admissions records for programs the student did not attend
- Evaluative materials and decision-making documents related to admissions or candidacy for other programs the student was not admitted to and did not attend

These exclusions are consistent with FERPA regulations and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Additional exclusions under FERPA regulations are also applicable to this policy.

Procedures:

SANS Technology Institute maintains all education records in digital formats across secure systems. Records will be delivered in a secure electronic format for inspection at no charge unless otherwise requested. Students who wish to receive printed copies of their records by mail will be charged an additional fee of $0.15 per page printed, as well as the applicable shipping costs. This is in addition to any flat fees that may apply to the export and preparation of records.

Export Options and Associated Fees

FERPA permits educational institutions to charge reasonable fees for the download of education records. In alignment with this, the following export options are available:

A. Basic Records Export – No Fee

This option is provided free of charge and includes:

- Contact Information
- Program Enrollment Details
- Academic Enrollment Activity (e.g., course registration, withdrawals)
- Application Record (for programs to which the student was admitted and attended)

B. Full Records Export – $35 Flat Fee

Includes everything in the Basic Export, plus:

- Copies of all email communications
- Phone call logs or notes
- SMS/text message communications
- Any other relevant electronically maintained student interaction records

A flat fee of $35 will be assessed to cover the cost of securely compiling, formatting, and delivering this comprehensive record. The fee covers reproduction and delivery costs only. No fees are charged for locating, retrieving, or inspecting records.

Waiver of Fees

If the $35 fee would effectively prevent a student or parent from accessing education records, a fee waiver may be granted upon request. Requests for fee waivers must be submitted in writing and may include documentation of financial hardship.

Request Process

Requests for education records must be submitted to Registrar@sans.edu. Please indicate whether you are requesting a Basic or Full export. The institution will fulfill the request within 45 calendar days from the date of the request for Basic Records Export or 45 days from the date of fee payment for Full Records Export.

Appeals and Records Amendment Requests

In accordance with FERPA, students have the right to request an amendment to their education records if they believe the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of their privacy rights. FERPA does **not** permit students to appeal grades or academic decisions unless the challenge involves a clerical or procedural error in the recording of that grade or decision.

How to Submit an Appeal

- Students wishing to challenge the content of their education records must submit a written request to the Registrar's Office at [Registrar@sans.edu]. The request must include the specific record(s) the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- A detailed explanation of the perceived error or inaccuracy.
- Supporting evidence or documentation that justifies the amendment request.

Records will not be amended without substantiated evidence. Review Process

The Registrar's Office and the Provost's Office will review the request and determine whether the record will be amended. A decision will be provided in writing within 30 calendar days of receiving a complete submission. If the amendment is granted, the institution will update the record and notify the student in writing.

If the amendment is denied, the student will be informed of their right to submit a written statement of disagreement, which will be maintained in the education record and disclosed whenever the contested portion is disclosed.

Handbook Archive

The current version of this Handbook can be accessed via the SANS Technology Institute's Student Consumer Information web page: https://www.sans.edu/about/student-consumer-information/

Archived versions of SANS Technology Institute's Handbooks and other academic documents can be accessed using the following website:

https://web.archive.org/

To access a previous version of this document, enter the URL of the current version of the document shown on the Student Consumer Information page into the search bar. From there, you can search by date to find the document version that you require.