

Let Credentialing Assistance pay your SANS renewal fees version 2.0

TL;DR Yes, CA will once again pay SANS renewal fees. The only limit is the amount of TA you have left for the year. Details & the step by step to apply are below.

Background

The old ArmygnitED worked alright for CA but everyone had heard the horror stories regarding using it for TA. Some of us lived them. Apparently the site was so poorly ran that the DoD terminated the contract and hired a new company. The new site is here (<https://www.armyignited.army.mil/student/public/welcome>) and the good news is that they are now paying CA.

The new ArmygnitED site stood up around Oct 2022. They almost immediately paid my TA request for my UMGC class I had taken in Jun 2021, so that was promising. I put in a CA request to get my GMON renewal paid for immediately, only to find out that due to some Congressional snafu the funding would not be available until 10 Jan 2023.

Well it's now 11 Jan 2023 and I was notified by CA first and then SANS later on that the renewal was paid. I figured I would update the original howto (<https://medium.com/@happycamper84/let-credentialing-assistance-pay-your-sans-renewal-fees-1b4c306810b1>) in case it helps anyone else.

This brings up the main point of using CA for SANS renewal fees; start the process early. I recommend putting in for CA the day you get the email notification from SANS that you can now pay the fee.

So without further ado let's walk through the process together.

SANS portal

The process starts out the same as the old armyignited site. To recap, begin by navigating to www.sans.org and login to your account. Hit 'Certification History'.

My GIAC Certification

- [Practice Tests](#)
- [Assessments](#)
- [Certification History](#)
- [Manage Opt Ins For Job Task Analyses](#)

Scroll down to the cert that you want to renew. I am using GCED for illustrative purposes here. I didn't bother making screenshots for GMON as the SANS portion didn't change. Hence the price shown is the old one. Don't worry, we aren't paying it. CA is :P

	<p><u>GIAC Certified Enterprise Defender (GCED)</u> First Certified: April 19th, 2019 Expiration: April 30th, 2023</p> <p>Go Gold Order Certificate View Digital Badge</p>	<p>Exam Score: 85.0% View Summary</p>	<p>Purchase Renewal</p>
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Select 'Renew with CPEs'.

Your GCED certification expires on April, 30th 2023.

You can take the current version of the certification exam to renew your certification by clicking the Certification Exam button.

You can also utilize our alternative certification maintenance option by clicking "Alternative CPEs". You need to obtain 36 CPE credits to renew your certification. For more information on the alternative options, [please click here](#).

Renewing your certification will extend it 48 months from the previous expiration date.

Please Note: The exam option carries a 4-month access period (from date of issue) regardless of the original expiration date.

Take Exam Again	Renew with CPEs
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If you plan this out properly then there will only be \$469 renewal fee on one SANS cert and the rest will be \$239 (<https://www.giac.org/knowledge-base/renewal/>). Yes these prices went up recently. I am sure they will go up again shortly.

Product
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIAC Certified Enterprise Defender Fee: 429 USD 219 USD Discount for purchasing multiple renewals within two year window.

This part is important!

Make sure you select 'Call in Credit Card' as the payment option after you verify your information. This is the only option that will allow CA to pay. Then hit 'Review Order'

Registration Code <input type="text"/>	You must submit your code at the time of your original registration. SANS CANNOT modify your tuition fee once you have submitted this form. Notice: Only one registration code may be used for each order.
Payment Method * <input type="text" value="Call in Credit Card"/>	
Check / Call in Credit Card Details on how to make payment will be included on your invoice.	
Customer Reference / PO <input type="text"/>	Submitting a PO Number doesn't mean we will accept your PO or the terms of your PO. However the number will display on your invoice as a reference.

Review Order

Verify the amount and hit 'Place Order'.

Order Ready To Process

Order Summary

Product	Subtotal	Discount	Total
GIAC Certified Enterprise Defender	\$429.00	-\$210.00	\$219.00
Grand Totals	\$429.00	-\$210.00	\$219.00

No problems found when reviewing order. Please click the "Place Order" to complete your order.


[Edit Order](#)[Place Order](#)

Hit "Please print a copy ... for your records". Print to PDF. Save that PDF somewhere handy. You will need it shortly to complete the process on the ArmyignitED portal.


ArmyignitED

[Active TA](#)[Active CA](#)


Fiscal Year Cap: 2023
\$4,000.00
Funding Remaining




Start here to get your funding



Explore Programs




Explore Institutions



Credentialing Assistance


The new site starts out much like the old one. You login, select CA, select that you want a cert that is MOS related. The difference is that you create an education goal first, kinda like how you have to create one for TA.



student portal

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EDUCATION PROGRAMS



HELP

Dashboard

Messages

EDUCATION RECORD

Funding Requests

Education Goals

← Education Goals

CREATE NEW GOAL

GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification (GMON)

APPROVED • Credentialing Assistance - MOS Related • Eligible for Active CA

85% COMPLETE

Select 'Credentialing Assistance – MOS Related'

Create a New Goal

First, Choose an Education Goal

Associates Degree

Not Eligible

Bachelors Degree

Not Eligible

Masters Degree

Foreign Language - Army Strategic

Foreign Language - Host Country

Credentialing Assistance - MOS Related

Credentialing Assistance - Non MOS Related

Search the SANS cert that you are renewing

1 Credential

What credential will you be pursuing?

Credential that you will be pursuing


GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification (GMON)

NEXT

CANCEL GOAL

This part is important!

Upload the PDF renewal fee quote that you saved from SANS earlier and select 'Submit Goal'.

■ Attach custom quote from vendor: - SANS-Invoice-11267400 (GMON).pdf 

Attach custom quote from vendor:

 CHOOSE FILE

Drop files here

Supported file types are: .xlsx, .xls, .doc, .docx, .pdf

Other documents from vendor: (Optional)

 CHOOSE FILE

Drop files here

Supported file types are: .xlsx, .xls, .doc, .docx, .pdf

PREVIOUS STEP

SUBMIT GOAL

CANCEL GOAL

Apply for funding

We now come to the final step of applying for funding. Once the education goal is approved select 'Apply for Funding'.

GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification (GMON)

APPROVED • Credentialing Assistance - Non MOS Related • Eligible for Active CA

0% COMPLETE



Required Credits: **1.00**

Completed Credits: **0.00**

APPLY FOR FUNDING

VIEW DETAILS

Verify your information and proceed.

Contact Information 	Address 		
Email	Street 1		
Personal Email	Street 2		
Work Phone	City	State	Zip
Mobile Phone			

VERIFY AND PROCEED

CANCEL

Check all the boxes that you agree to the terms of CA and continue.


Select whether you are applying from a deployed location.

Please note that you must select a start date that is 90 days out. This is why it's best to start this process as soon as you hit your 2 year renewal window. Don't wait until the last minute!

Pick any date really that is a month or more after the start date as your end date. You just need to give yourself enough time to submit your 'Proof of Completion' after CA pays SANS.

Search 'SANS' in both boxes and select what shows up. It should look like the below.

Select your Vendor:

 If you are attempting to locate a Vendor not listed, p

Vendor *

SANS Institute

Campus *

SANS Institute - MAIN CAMPUS

BACK

NEXT

CANCEL

This part is important!

The old ArmyignitED had its counterintuitive parts of the process. This is the new site's one.

Select 'Add Training'.

DO NOT select 'Add Exam'. That path leads to asking for an exam voucher, which will not match your PDF invoice, and will cause your request to get kicked back about a month later. If this happens you have to submit a new request, with the obvious time delay involved.

Demographic

Vendor

Dates

You must upload a custom price quote, provided by your vendor, for each Credentialing Assistance (CA) request you submit. Each custom quote must include the cost for each item on your CA request to include exam(s), training(s), or book(s) and material(s), and all administrative, application and shipping fee(s). All items on the CA Request and custom quote must be from the same Vendor. Upload the vendor's custom quote to your Supporting Documents located at Education Record > Education Goals > VIEW DETAILS (in your CA Goal) > Supporting Documents. Failure to provide the Vendor's custom quote will result in rejection of your CA request. The quote MUST match what is listed in the CA request.

What do you need funding for?

ADD EXAM

ADD BOOKS AND MATERIALS

ADD TRAINING

BACK

SUBMIT

CANCEL

Free Certification Resources

Free resources such as books, courseware, and boot camps may be available to help you prepare for your certification at <https://usarmy.skillport.com>.

Once you have logged in, click on Browse Library, then Certifications under the Skillsoft Library. These resources are relevant and current professional resources to help prepare you for your certification examination. Using these free resources will save your Credentialing Assistance funding for future uses.

Please review these resources to see if what you need is available for free before submitting a tuition assistance request.

PROCEED WITH CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE REQUEST

CANCEL CREDENTIALING ASSISTANCE REQUEST

We are then presented with the elusive option to apply for payment of the renewal fee. Select it, with prejudice.

Add Training

SEC511: Continuous Monitoring and Security Operations

Description: <https://www.sans.org/SEC511>

SELECT

Cert Renewal - SEC511: Continuous Monitoring and Security Operations (GMON)

Description: N/A

SELECT

ADD MANUALLY

BACK

Don't worry if the site shows the full renewal fee amount of \$469. As long as you uploaded the PDF invoice then CA will pay the right, discounted amount.

TRAINING - Cert Renewal - SEC511: Continuous Monitoring and Security Operations (GMON)

Government Cost	Student Cost
\$469.00	\$0.00

ADD FEE

Costs

Total Costs	Government Costs	Student Costs
\$469.00	\$469.00	\$0.00

BACK

SUBMIT

CANCEL



Congratulations your credentialing assistance request has been submitted!

Your credentialing assistance request ID is 4062069

Here are the next steps

- 1 Your Credentialing Assistance (CA) request must be approved and paid by CA Finance before you can start your training or exam.
- 2 As a reminder, ensure you have uploaded your custom quote from the vendor in your Supporting Documents located at Education Record > Education Goals > VIEW DETAILS (in your CA Goal) > Supporting Documents. Failure to provide will result in rejection of your CA request.
- 3 You can view your Credentialing Assistance Requests section under your Education Record to check the status and details of your applications.

FINISHED

Hit 'Submit', hit 'Finished', and rejoice.

Submitting a PDF once CA pays

CA just paid my GMON renewal 2 days ago, so this part is subject to an update if ArmyignitED tells me I did it wrong. I submitted my 'Proof of Completion' from the 'Education Goals' screen by selecting my GMON goal and then selecting 'View Details'.

GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification (GMON)

APPROVED • Credentialing Assistance - Non MOS Related • Eligible for Active CA

0% COMPLETE

Required Credits: 1.00

Completed Credits: 0.00

APPLY FOR FUNDING

VIEW DETAILS

Hit 'Supporting Documents', 'Add', Select 'Certificate of Completion' from the drop down, 'Choose File', select your PDF, and 'Add'.

The screenshot shows a web interface with a modal window titled "Add Supporting Documentation". The modal contains the following elements:

- File Name ***: A text input field containing "GMON Proof of Renewal.pdf".
- Attachment Type ***: A dropdown menu with "Certificate of Completion" selected.
- CHOOSE FILE**: A button with an upload icon.
- Supported file types are: .xlsx, .xls, .doc, .docx, .pdf**: A text label.
- ADD**: A yellow button.

In the background, a table of supporting documents is visible with columns "Name" and "Size (KB)". It lists "SANS-Invoice-" with a size of "55.01". There is also a "1 total" count and an "ADD" button at the bottom left of the table area.

I had accidentally created two education goals for this renewal as I really had no idea what I was doing at first. I started this process the day the new ArmyignitED site stood up. There was a good deal of fumbling around and hitting random buttons involved in getting this request submitted. I took notes and screenshots along the way so that I would remember WTH I had done the next time around.

I have said it before, but everything here is really just my notes. I go back and reference them myself all the time. If it helps anyone else then great, but 'me in a year from now' is really my intended audience.

On a sidenote, my 'Proof of Completion' for a renewal has always just been a copy/paste from SANS site showing the invoice was paid and the cert's new expiration date. I just make a quick & dirty PowerPoint and then print it to PDF as

the new ArmyignitED doesn't accept *.pptx. This method was always acceptable on the old ArmyignitED site and looks like the below.

My renewed cert's paper copy is en route from SANS. Please accept the below from the SANS/GIAC portals as proof of my completed CA request.



**Certification Renewals (CPE)
(PAID)**
Aug. 08 2022
Online

Order ID: GIAC 11267400

Certification(s):
GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification
Book Password:

Copy

Invoice / Receipt

	<u>GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification (GMON)</u> First Certified: May 29th, 2020 Expiration: May 31st, 2028 Order Certificate View Digital Badge	Exam Score: 95.0% View Summary	--
 GMON	Certification: GIAC Continuous Monitoring Certification Expires: May 31, 2028 (in 5 years) <div>0/36</div>		

Download the new books

The last step is to go back to the SANS portal, download the books for the course that goes with the cert you just renewed, and save the PDF password. The DoD just paid good money for them, so I'd recommend downloading the course ISO as well.

Your Course Materials

Once you sign the license agreement, you are no longer eligible to receive a refund.

Note: These are large files that require a good internet connection and sufficient time to download. If you experience difficulty, please email support@sans.org for assistance. Downloads appear 7 days before your event start date.



CCOE Fort Gordon 25D3 2022 (013/014)
SEC555: SIEM with Tactical Analytics

Order: 11466545-10901520
Version: SEC555_H01_01

Access Expires
2023-02-17



Certification Renewals (CPE)
SEC511: Continuous Monitoring and Security Operations

Order: 11267400-10572645
Version: SEC511_G01_05

Access Expires
2023-05-09

Learning is free, SANS ... not so much

I have said it many times before, but I absolutely love CompTIA. They are a non-profit, their exams are some of the most affordable 'vendor neutral' 8570.01-M compliant ones out there, and they have one of the lowest renewal fees of anyone. Their fee is also a flat rate. It doesn't matter if you have 1 CompTIA cert or 10, its \$50 a year.

ISC2 is also a non-profit. They share many of CompTIA's pros. Their fee is higher at \$125 a year, but it is also a flat rate.

By contrast SANS is a for profit business. Their prices reflect this. Their renewal fees are per cert. If the DoD has given you vouchers for 8 SANS exams then the fees are $(\$469 + (7 * \$239)) = \$2,142$ every 4 years. That's \$535.50 a year. I'll let that sink in for a moment.

Ok we're back. A lot has happened since we wrote the original 'Let Credentialing Assistance pay your SANS renewal fees' (<https://happycamper84.medium.com/let-credentialing-assistance-pay-your-sans-renewal-fees-1b4c306810b1>). We have written something like 55 howtos on here. The vast majority of those are regarding setup & security of a hybrid AD environment. We learned this topic from a combination of two dirt cheap Microsoft certs, the screaming deal that is CRTP, a cheap refurbished server, free software, and lots of Google.

The now retired MCSA was \$495 total for 3 exams and is 'Good for Life'. The new Microsoft exam dealing with Identity & Access Management in a hybrid AD environment would have been \$165, but was free thanks Microsoft's Enterprise Skills Initiative. There is no renewal fee. One just has to brush up on the free Microsoft Learn and pass a free quiz to renew. Pentester Academy's Certified Red Team Professional (CRTP) was \$500 for the course, 3 months of lab access, and a 100% hands on exam.

VMware gives away a free version of ESXi. Microsoft gives away evaluation copies of their stuff. An Azure AD Premium P2 license is \$9 a month. Here at test.local we got our refurbished sever for \$320 'out the door'.

The point is that we run this lab on an absolute shoe string budget. We learned how to do really everything we have written about on here either for free or for \$108 a year. Our future plans include a M365 license at \$23 a month including Intune.

We still have a long ways to go but we won't get there by spending 8k.

Study well my friends.

Summary

If this walkthrough helps someone else then that's great. I am all for letting CA pay my SANS renewal fees and using my paycheck for mundane things like groceries or the utility bill.

If you read this far and you have any questions then just message me on FB, work email, Teams, etc.

V/R

Rich

References

The original CA for SANS renewal fees howto: <https://happycamper84.medium.com/let-credentialing-assistance-pay-your-sans-renewal-fees-1b4c306810b1>

New ArmygnitED site: <https://www.armyignited.army.mil/>

SANS renewal prices, CPEs, etc: <https://www.giac.org/knowledge-base/renewal/>