

SANS Exam Preparation Tips

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BBST, CISSP, GSEC, GCIH, GCIA, ITIL, LPIC-1

GIAC Exam style

*Proctored multiple guess timed **open book***

- “Select the most correct answer”.
- Mark a handful to go back
- Checkpoints every 15 questions or so
 - Update running score total onscreen
- Breaks are on your time.

Strategies

Be prepared and practiced!

- Look up what you need to ... but not too much
- Mark hard questions ... but only a few
- Manage your time ... don't run out
- Make best use of **Practice Exams!**
Study, Test, Study, Test, Test

Study materials

"an armload"

Prepare your books

- ✓ Tabs, flaps, highlighting and other ~~markings~~
- ✓ To **Index** or Not to Index?

- ✓ Handouts and additional paper
 - ✓ Cheat sheets and handouts!
 - ✓ Man pages!
 - ✓ Other books?

Indexes

- Some courses have TOCs or indices built-in
 - Most have glossaries, reference lists in appendices
- Many students create their own index
 - Tailored to your learning and exam needs
 - Very valuable use of study time
- Index by ... ?
 - ✓ Topic or Subject
 - ✓ Keyword or Tool name
 - ✓ Exam Objective
 - ✓ Colour ??

Practice Exams

just like the real thing, but way cheaper

- Same exam engine, same question formats
 - Identical if you happen to use IE for practice exams
- Uses questions from different pool
 - Practice exam questions are written to same standards.
- Optionally show you answers, explanation after
 - *This feature not available on real GIAC exams.*
- Same feedback (score, stars) as live exam
 - Track your performance through your studying and practice.

Study, Test, Study, Test, Test

Recommended cycle

- **Finish (some) studies first**
 - Read books, listen to podcast, watch videos
- **Simulate your exam conditions**
 - Take practice exam #1 seriously:
 - ✓ Quiet environment
 - ✓ Books and material prepared
 - ✓ Full time allotted
- **Reassess with detailed results**
 - Score as well as topical star ratings

Study, Test, Study, Test, Test (2)

Satisfied with that score?

- **Study more as needed**
 - Re-read, re-listen, re-watch course materials
 - Ask for help: peers, instructors
 - Look to open source: Internet sources, other books
- **Simulate Exam conditions**
 - Take practice exam #2 seriously, do better!
- **Take the real exam with confidence!**
 - *Or consider your options for extension, help...*

Spend Money

<http://www.giac.org/exams/retakes-and-extensions>

- o **Time Extension** : \$299 for 45 days
 - o +15d to -30days from exam deadline
 - o Hardship/Deployment? Call/mail GIAC.

- o **Practice exams**: 2/\$100

- o **Missed** scheduled exam: \$150 seating fee

- o **Fail and retake**: \$579
 - o Wait 30d
 - o Includes 60d extension
 - o Fail thrice, must wait a year!

- o **Challenge** an exam (no course) : \$999
 - o <http://www.giac.org/registration/challenge>

Bonuses for high scores

Why not just pass and be done?

- 85% + to apply for **SANS Mentor** program
 - Opportunity to teach SANS material to your peers
 - First step on the road to Instructor
- 90% + to join **GIAC Advisory Board**
 - Amazing mailing list(s) full of accomplished professionals
 - Influence SANS/GIAC direction

Renewal

<http://www.giac.org/certifications/renewal>

GIAC certs must renew every four years

Need GIAC CMUs:

- ✓ Can re-take exam
- ✓ Or Take/Teach SANS/graduate classes
- ✓ Or Publish qualifying research

Q & A

- Need help studying?
- Comments about this presentation?
- Ideas for future talks?
- These slides?

<http://f.adric.net>

- Thanks!