

ADMISSION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

Admission Criteria

Admissions Criteria and Procedures for Certificate Programs Carrying Graduate Credit

Concordia College admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, age or gender to its programs and activities. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability in the administration of its educational policies, financial aid program, athletics and all other educational programs and activities. Admission criteria include:

1. Applicants must possess an earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution with a GPA of at least 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale). Exceptions to this rule may be granted by the Graduate Programs Committee.
2. Applicants shall demonstrate that they possess sufficient academic and/or professional background and experience.
3. Each program may have additional admissions requirements or may set higher qualifications. Refer to specific certificate program requirements for details.

Admission Deadlines

– see individual program

Admission Procedures

– see individual program

Admission Procedures for International Students

In addition to meeting the previously stated admission requirements, to qualify for admission, all international students must demonstrate proficiency in English, must complete a credentials check through a third party provider, and must provide evidence of adequate financial support for themselves and any dependents for the duration of their certificate program.

Deadline – Programs may have particular deadlines for applications and deposits in order to allow enough time to process the application and complete other requirements for international students. Please see individual programs for specific dates and requirements for admission.

Language Proficiency – English proficiency shall be demonstrated prior to admission by achieving a score on the IELTS (minimum score of 6.5) or TOEFL (minimum score of 80) that meets the specific graduate certificate program requirements. The test date must be within two years of the date of application. Information on these tests can be obtained online (www.ielts.org (<http://www.ielts.org>) and www.toefl.org (<http://www.toefl.org>)). Students' official results must be received directly from the testing service before they may enroll. Concordia's TOEFL code is 6113; no code is required for IELTS. Individual programs may have additional proficiency requirements.

Validation of Credentials – International students must submit their undergraduate transcript(s) to an approved credential evaluation agency for evaluation. These approved agencies can be found on the NACES website (www.naces.org (<http://www.naces.org>)).

Financial Requirements – International students must demonstrate and certify adequate financial support before Concordia can issue an I-20 form. To do so, students must submit the International Student Financial Aid and Certification Form and a certified bank statement.

Medical Insurance – International students are required to carry and show evidence of health insurance valid in the United States while they are enrolled.

Procedures for Transfer of Credit

While a program may elect to set additional requirements for evaluating the credentials of applicants who propose to obtain credit for graduate work completed at other institutions or in other programs, the following standards shall apply for transfer of credits into a graduate certificate program at Concordia College.

1. **Comparability of academic credit.** In order to be acceptable for transfer credit, the academic credit earned at other institutions or programs shall be from programs that are at least equivalent to that into which the applicant proposes to transfer. For example, if the Concordia program carries specialized accreditation or meets specific professional standards in order to facilitate licensure or similar recognition, transfer credits need to have been earned in programs with equivalent standards.
2. **Recency of course completion.** In order to be eligible for transfer credit, the courses for which the academic credit was earned must have been taken within seven years of application and carry a grade of B or higher.
3. **Level.** In order to be eligible for transfer credit, the academic credit must have been earned at a minimum of the graduate level.
4. **Content.** In order to be eligible for transfer credit, the academic credit must be at least 75% equivalent to the course established for the Concordia graduate certificate program into which the transfer is proposed.
5. **Limitations and residency.** A maximum of 4 graduate transfer credits may be counted toward a Graduate Academic Certificate Program. Individual Graduate Academic Certificate Programs may choose to not allow any transfer credits.
6. **International Transfer Credit.** Students requesting transfer of credit for courses taken at universities outside of the United States must have their final transcripts evaluated by an approved credential evaluation agency found on the NACES website (www.naces.org (<http://www.naces.org>)).

Action on Applications

All applicants who have provided the required application materials will be notified of action taken on their request for admittance to the graduate certificate program. Admission requires approval by the Graduate Program Director.

Admission Status

The following definitions will be applied in making admission decisions for a graduate certificate program at Concordia College:

1. **Accepted.** The applicant has satisfied all the criteria for full acceptance into the graduate certificate program and is expected to begin active graduate study with the beginning of the next available term. Students should consult their individual program guidelines, as some programs may accept students to a program on a deferred status basis. An applicant who is accepted has completed the application process in full, including payment of application fee.

2. **Admission denied.** Indicates that the applicant did not meet one or more of the criteria for admission to the program. Applicants may also be denied admission because a program's maximum enrollment has been reached. The applicant shall be advised of whether they may re-apply at a later time.
3. **Applicants not seeking degrees.** It is anticipated that certain programs will attract individuals who are pursuing post-baccalaureate level education for purposes other than earning a graduate degree. These individuals may be admitted at the discretion of the program provided that such admission does not displace qualified applicants who desire to pursue degrees. Such non-degree-seeking graduate students are expected to satisfy minimum admission standards including possession of a baccalaureate degree. Non-degree-seeking graduate students are subject to the same retention standards as degree-seeking graduate students, except for the aforementioned course limitation. Financial aid is not available for non-degree-seeking students.

Change in Classification

Students enrolled with non-degree status may subsequently desire to be considered for admission to pursue a graduate certificate or an advanced degree. Such students should consult with the director of the program in which they are interested. Such a change in status may be accomplished for a subsequent term by submitting a complete application to Graduate Admissions as a degree-seeking student. Appropriate credit hours earned in the non-degree-seeking status may be used to fulfill graduate degree requirements if approved by the student's program director. No course taken in the non-degree status for which the grade is less than C will be permitted on a Plan of Study for a graduate certificate. No course taken in the non-degree status for which the grade is less than B will be permitted on a Plan of Study for a graduate degree.

Academic Progress

Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average

The overall cumulative GPA must be at least 2.5 for all graduate certificate coursework completed. Because a 2.5 cumulative GPA is required for graduation, this is the standard by which academic progress is determined. No courses with grades lower than a C may be counted for graduate credit. Students receiving two grades of C (2.0) or lower in the program, earned after they have been admitted, will have their progress in the program reviewed by the Office of the Registrar. Students falling below the 2.5 cumulative GPA requirements may continue coursework. However, only those students who earn a 2.5 cumulative GPA will be awarded the certificate. Concordia cumulative GPA is the GPA calculated from just the courses attempted at Concordia (not transfer grades).

Academic Suspension and Dismissal

The college reserves the right to suspend or dismiss students who otherwise fail to meet college academic or conduct standards. In the case of academic dismissal, the student is not eligible to be considered for readmission.

Each program may elect to set additional requirements for continuation of study in their certificate program.

Appeal Procedures Related to Admission and Retention in a Graduate Certificate Program

Students have the right to appeal decisions that negatively affect their progress in their graduate certificate program. Graduate students may appeal decisions pertaining to transferability of courses from other

institutions or programs, grades awarded, and recommendations against continuation of study in the program.

1. **Admission Decisions:** In cases in which applicants disagree with admission decisions or believe that their applications warrant special consideration in light of program and/or college admission guidelines, the following appeal procedures may apply.
 - a. **Written appeal.** The applicant shall file a written appeal with the Graduate Programs Committee within 30 calendar days of the date of the letter notifying the applicant of the admission decision.
 - b. **Content of the appeal.** The appeal letter shall include a complete explanation of the basis of the appeal.
 - c. **Investigation.** The Graduate Programs Committee shall determine appropriate investigative measures and conduct an analysis to resolve the appeal within 30 calendar days of receiving the written appeal. The committee shall consider the record of the decision and appeal in its entirety, applying college and certificate program graduate admission standards as its criteria. The decision of the committee may be appealed to the dean of the college as a final step in the appeals process if desired by the applicant. The decision of the dean is final and not subject to further appeal.
2. **Retention:** In the event that graduate students disagree with a decision made concerning their progress in the program once they have been admitted to the program, these appeal procedures may apply.
 - a. **First level of appeal.** In order to be considered a valid appeal, the graduate student shall address the appeal first to the faculty member in case of a course grade or to the department chair or program director for other issues. In order to be considered, the appeal shall be made within 30 business days of notification and in a form acceptable to the sponsoring department or program. In the event that the graduate certificate program director or department chair is the faculty person responsible for the decision to which the student objects, the program will arrange for an appropriate person to hear the appeal at the first level. The program director must advise the student in writing of the decision within seven business days of receiving the appeal.
 - b. **Second level of appeal.** If the student does not agree with the decision made at the first level of appeal, the matter may be submitted to the Graduate Programs Committee for consideration. In order to be considered a valid appeal at the second level, the appeal must be in writing, filed with the Graduate Programs Committee within seven business days of the first level appeal decision, and include a complete description on which the appeal is based. The graduate student filing the appeal must notify the sponsoring program that the appeal is being pursued to the second level by providing a copy of the written appeal at the same time as it is filed with the Graduate Programs Committee. The sponsoring program may file a response to the appeal at this time.
 - c. **Investigation.** The Graduate Programs Committee shall examine the entire record of the appeal, including the response by the sponsoring program, and conduct such investigation as it determines is warranted. The committee shall apply the college and program performance and retention standards in reaching its decision concerning the appeal. The chair of the committee shall notify the student and the program in writing of its decision.

within seven working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Committee is final.

Background Checks

Background checks may be required by some graduate certificate programs. See individual program for details or additional requirements.

Records Information

The official student record will be maintained by The Office of the Registrar.