

# ADMISSION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

## Admission Criteria

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 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). Exceptions to this rule may be granted by the Graduate Programs Committee.
2. Applicants shall demonstrate they possess sufficient academic and professional background and experience.
3. Applicants shall present evidence they possess the potential for success in a graduate level academic program.
4. Applicants shall demonstrate their proficiency in written and oral communication in English necessary for success in graduate study.
5. Each program has its own requirements. Refer to specific 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 in an advanced degree program, 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 graduate 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 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) (<http://www.ielts.org/>) and [www.toefl.org](http://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) (<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 program at Concordia College.

Effective fall 2016, transfer credits will be calculated in the total credits earned but grades calculated in the GPA will be only Concordia courses. In practice, this means that transfer credit is marked with satisfactory (S) grades. Transfer credits taken on a pass-fail basis are not accepted.

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 program into which the transfer is proposed.
5. **Limitations and residency.** Transfer of credit is limited to no more than one-third of the total number of graduate hours required in the program for graduation purposes. Individual programs may further limit the number of transfer credits allowed.
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) (<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 program. Admission of all graduate students requires approval by the Graduate Program Director.

## Admission Status

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

1. **Accepted.** The applicant has satisfied all the criteria for full acceptance into the graduate program and is expected to begin active graduate study with the beginning of the next available port of entry. 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 any application processing fees.

2. **Provisional acceptance.** The applicant has satisfied most but not all the criteria for admission into the graduate program. The status of the applicant must be converted to full acceptance no later than the completion of first three courses in the Plan of Study. When the conditions are fulfilled, the Office of the Registrar will convert to full acceptance into the program. If an applicant fails to satisfy the conditions set at the time of provisional acceptance within the first three courses, the provisional acceptance reverts to denial of admission and the applicant will not be allowed to proceed with further graduate study. The student may appeal this decision to the Graduate Programs Committee.
3. **Admission denied.** The applicant did not meet one or more of the criteria for admission to the program and it is unlikely that provisional acceptance would remedy the situation. Applicants may also be denied admission because a program's maximum enrollment has been reached. The applicant shall be advised of whether they may reapply at a later time.
4. **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 an advanced degree. 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 B will be permitted on a Plan of Study for a graduate degree.

## Academic Progress

### Minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average

Concordia cumulative GPA is the GPA calculated from just the courses attempted at Concordia (not transfer grades).

The overall cumulative GPA must be at least 3.0 for all graduate coursework completed. Because a 3.0 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 or admitted provisionally, will have their progress in the program reviewed by the Office of the Registrar.

## Academic Probation

Because a 3.0 cumulative GPA is required for graduation, this is the standard by which academic progress is determined.

A student not meeting the standards for acceptable academic progress at the end of the term is placed on academic probation by the Office of the Registrar. Academic probation will require the student to work with the program director to develop an academic improvement plan.

## Academic Suspension

Two consecutive or three nonconsecutive probation-level terms (less than a 3.0 cumulative GPA) will result in suspension. In some programs, academic suspension may require a complete withdrawal from the program. Please see your individual program. In addition, students may be suspended from Concordia at any time if their academic performance in any given term falls below a 1.0 GPA.

A student may appeal suspension status if they have mitigating circumstances beyond their control such as illness or injury, death of a relative, or other circumstances that result in undue hardship. The Student Academic Performance and Procedures Committee and Director of Graduate and Post Baccalaureate Education will review appeals and their decision is final.

The suspension period will be two academic terms including summer.

After the suspension period has passed, a student is eligible to apply for readmission. The readmission decision will take into consideration the student's history and actions or circumstances that would justify readmission. If readmitted, the student may be reinstated on a probationary and contractual basis and required to meet specific expectations.

## Academic Dismissal

If the student fails to meet the expectations established upon readmission after suspension, the student will be dismissed from the college and is not eligible to be considered for readmission.

In addition to the criteria listed above, the college reserves the right to suspend or dismiss students who otherwise fail to meet college academic or conduct standards.

Note: Students receiving financial aid should consult the Financial Aid Office for the Financial Aid Academic Progress Policy as different criteria apply.

## Retention

While each program may elect to set additional retention requirements for continuation of study in their graduate programs, the following minimum standards evidencing acceptable progress shall apply to all graduate programs at Concordia College.

1. **GPA.** To continue as a student in a graduate program, the cumulative GPA must be at least 3.0 for all graduate courses taken in the program. If the student transfers graduate credit hours from another institution or program, the GPA for purposes of this guideline will be calculated for courses taken at Concordia only. Further, no courses in which a grade lower than a C (2.0), including C-, was awarded may be counted for graduate credit at Concordia. (See Repeating Courses (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/graduate-academic-community/masters-degree-programs/#Repeating-Courses>).) Students receiving two grades of C (2.0) or lower in their graduate program (including prerequisites carrying undergraduate course designations) earned after they have been admitted or admitted

provisionally will have their progress in the program reviewed by the Office of the Registrar. See specific program guidelines for additional GPA requirements.

2. **Work evaluations.** In programs requiring clinical, studio or experience-based components, the attendant evaluations must be favorable and recommend continuation of the student in the program.
3. **Final evaluation.** At the conclusion of the capstone course or culminating experience, the program faculty shall prepare a final evaluation of each candidate for graduation. That evaluation shall be performed in accordance with the standards set by each program. The program director shall notify students whether or not they may advance to graduation.
4. **Graduate program grades.** Grades given in graduate courses are in the Grades and Grade Points chart (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/graduate-academic-community/masters-degree-programs/#Grades-and-Grade-Points>). (<https://catalog.concordiacollege.edu/graduate-programs/registration-information/>) Only those credits that were completed with a grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, or S may be applied toward a graduate degree.
5. **Appeals.** The college maintains procedures available for applicants and students who disagree with decisions concerning admission to and/or retention in graduate programs of the college. These procedures are specified in the section below.

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

Students have a right to appeal decisions that negatively affect their progress in their graduate 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 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 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 business days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Committee is final.

## Background Checks

Background checks may be required by some programs. See individual program for additional information.

## Records Information

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