



Educational Leadership Credential Program

**Adult Learner Handbook and
Course Catalog**

2026

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“I define a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential.”

Brenè Brown

Leadership is a concept we often resist. It seems immodest, even self-aggrandizing, to think of ourselves as leaders. But if it is true that we are made for community, then leadership is everyone’s vocation, and it can be an evasion to insist that it is not. When we live in the close-knit ecosystem called community, everyone follows, and everyone leads.

Parker J. Palmer

Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.

Maria Montessori

Welcome to the Center for Guided Montessori Studies

We are pleased to welcome you as an adult learner in our Montessori Leadership Credential Program. As you prepare to become a certified Montessori School Leader, you

will have many opportunities to learn about leadership, Montessori education, and yourself as a lifelong learner. We are happy to take this journey of discovery with you and look forward to your contributions to the CGMS learning community.

This handbook provides valuable information that will help you be successful in this course. Please read it carefully and feel free to contact us if you need any clarification. It is important to keep this Adult Learner Handbook handy throughout the course as it provides important policies and procedures that may need to be referenced periodically.

The CGMS faculty of experienced Montessori leaders and instructors is here to assist you at every step of this learning adventure, throughout your on-going study and your internship. Our commitment is to provide high quality instruction in a supportive environment. We encourage you to seek our help and guidance, and we promise to do all we can to make this a meaningful experience that prepares you for your work in your Montessori school and community.

Our Mission

The Center for Guided Montessori Studies is committed to creating a collaborative learning community that produces the highest quality Montessori teachers and school leaders in a lifestyle friendly way. We strive to give learners a deep appreciation for the philosophy and spirit of Montessori as well as the practical skills needed for a successful and meaningful career as a Montessori educator and or school leader.

Our Fundamental Values for Teacher and School Leadership Education:

1. We are committed to delivering school leader and teacher education that produces authentic Montessori practice and healthy Montessori communities.
2. We are committed to instilling a mindset of partnership.
3. We are committed to attracting more people into the field of Montessori education and leadership.
4. We are committed to making the training energizing and effective for the adult learner by making our programs life-style friendly for the learner with multiple personal and professional responsibilities.
5. We are committed to serving people from different educational backgrounds, and cultures, i.e. a wide spectrum of backgrounds and international locales.
6. We are committed to working with schools from a variety of sectors - public, private, charter, schools in development - without diluting our program and educational product. We are committed to helping people and schools build strong Montessori learning communities.

Contact Information

CGMS faculty and staff are committed to providing assistance and support to our adult learners throughout the course. The following contact information will help adult learners identify whom to contact for their various needs.

CGMS Principal Office

4532 W Kennedy Blvd. Suite 233
Tampa, FL, 33609
1-888-344-7897
Outside the US and Canada,
1-941-870-1945

**Administrative Director
Adult Learner Services**

Ellyn Lastinger, 813-833-8871
ellynl@cgms.edu

Admissions Coordinator

Heather Fuller, 1-888-344-7897
hfuller@cgms.edu

Business Office

Marc Seldin, Director of Operations
9560 Strickland Road
Suite 103-127, Raleigh, NC 27615
mseldin@cgms.edu

**Associate Director of Finance and
Operations, Project Coordinator**

Anita Blalock
ablalock@cgms.edu

Technical Support

Kyle Gagliardo & Germaine DiJohn
support@cgms.edu

Director of Education

Kitty Bravo, 352-210-0472
kbravo@cgms.edu

Infant Toddler Level Director

Elaine Glier, 540-272-7715
eglier@cgms.edu

Early Childhood Level Director

Lori Karmazin, 918-284-6474
lkarmazin@cgms.edu

Elementary Level Director

Anya Bartlett 443-473-7925
abartlett@cgms.edu

Secondary Level Director

Lisa Rill, 410-913-6810
lrill@cgms.edu

Leadership Course Director

Martha Carver, 815-245-9051
mcarver@cgms.edu

Communication

Clear and frequent communication is critical for success with distance learning. As CGMS training is conducted predominantly using distance learning technologies, it is essential that we mutually agree to maintain healthy lines of communication. CGMS is committed to responding to adult learner inquiries and needs as quickly and as efficiently

as possible. Likewise, adult learners are expected to reply to emails and return phone calls to CGMS faculty and administration in a prompt manner.

We can only support our adult learners and keep them informed about course matters if we can reach them. Email is the primary means of communication outside of the Moodle forums. Please ensure that the CGMS staff always has your current contact information. Generally, important announcements will be placed in a Moodle forum as well as sent by email. Correspondence to individual adult learners will usually be attempted first by email and then by phone. Please check email on a daily basis. When it is impossible to immediately send a detailed response, at least send a reply that the message was received and inform the sender when you will be able to communicate further. Adult learners who are behind in coursework and fail to respond to CGMS communication are considered academically at risk and may be placed on probation or expelled.

Our Commitment to Ethics and Responsibility

The Center for Guided Montessori Studies, (CGMS), is committed to the creation of a positive and supportive learning community. We resolve to treat all adult learners and faculty with the same respect granted to children in Montessori classrooms. All policies and procedures of CGMS will reflect our commitment to integrity and ethical practices on the part of all participants. All policies and procedures will be applied equally to every faculty member and adult learner regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, marital status, or national origin.

CGMS is responsible for providing a learning environment that will promote the professional development of our adult learners and prepare them for successful careers as Montessori Educators.

Adult learners are responsible for adherence to the policies and procedures of The Center for Guided Montessori Studies. Adult learners will demonstrate respect for the course requirements and standards by their commitment to actively participate in the learning community and by evidence of their best efforts in all their coursework. Adult learners will further demonstrate this commitment through respectful interactions with fellow learners, instructors, administration, and all parents, children, and faculty they encounter in their practicum.

Overview of Programs

The Center for Guided Montessori Studies (CGMS) offers comprehensive online learning courses which incorporate web-based and video technologies to provide quality online Montessori training at a distance. CGMS offers an Educational Leadership Certification

Program as well as teacher preparation and certification for the following levels: Infant – Toddler (birth – 3), Early Childhood (also called Primary ages 3-6), Elementary I -II (ages 6-12), Elementary 1 (6-9), Elementary II (9-12) and Secondary (ages 12-18).

CGMS offers Full and Associate level certification programs. Full Certification consists of 3 phases: distance learning phase, residential phase, and practicum phase. The Associate Certificate requires the distance learning and practicum phase but does not require the onsite residential seminars.

A brief description of each phase for Full Certification is described below:

Distance Learning Phase: Using the latest internet technology, CGMS presents video lectures and curriculum presentations offering a deep and comprehensive exploration of the Montessori approach. Learners complete a variety of meaningful assignments which relate directly to their practicum experience and provide opportunities for practical application of the course material. Weekly interactions with instructors and fellow learners in online discussion forums and Live Class via video conferencing serve to build a rich and supportive learning community and provide additional opportunities for integration of course topics.

Practicum Phase: Adult learners are also required to complete a minimum of a nine-month practicum/internship in an approved Montessori school. Practicums for the Leadership program require the adult learner to serve in an administrative or leadership role within a Montessori school. Program assignments will relate directly to one's leadership/administrative work in the school. There is also a 6 month concurrent Observation requirement as part of the practicum phase.

Residential Phase: Full Certification for the Leadership Program requires attendance at a 40 hour onsite residential session and a minimum of 40 additional hours of participation in Virtual Live classes.

* Adult learners needing to enroll in the Associate certification program must get approval by the Level Director. Also keep in mind that only Full Certification programs will be eligible for MACTE accreditation (once MACTE makes accreditation available for School Leadership/Administrators Programs.)

Leadership Credential, Affiliation and Accreditation

CGMS is affiliated with The International Montessori Council (IMC). Adult learners who complete all CGMS course requirements will receive an IMC school leadership credential.

All CGMS Full Certification Teaching Programs and Leadership program are accredited by The Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), which is a US Department of Education approved accrediting organization. Full Certification graduates for these levels will receive an IMC certificate that bears a MACTE gold seal.

For additional information about our affiliating and accrediting organizations visit their websites at:

International Montessori Council (IMC)

<https://imcmontessori.org/>

MACTE

420 Park St., Charlottesville, VA 22902

Phone: (434) 202-7793

www.MACTE.org

CGMS Leadership Program Faculty Roles

The CGMS Faculty is made up of experienced Montessori Educators and Leaders who are dedicated to guiding and supporting the development of adult learners seeking to understand Leadership principles and practice for running healthy Montessori schools with high fidelity. Many instructors will work with learners in several capacities during their journey through our program.

Below is a description of the CGMS Faculty Roles:

Video Instructors organized course content and filmed the lecture presentation videos which make up the major portion of CGMS instruction. The video resources, presented through online streaming, enable us to provide instruction from a variety of seasoned Montessori leaders with expertise in the topics presented.

Instructional Guides (IG) facilitate the distance learning phase of the program. Instructional Guides generally work with the cohort for the entire course, with one or two guides assigned to the cohort depending on the number of adult learners enrolled. The role of the IG is similar to that of a Montessori classroom teacher in that he/she is there to guide and to support the learning process, rather than to pour in information. The IG will answer questions, facilitate forum discussions, lead Live Class video conferencing sessions, track participation and progress with coursework, grade assignments and offer feedback. As experienced Montessori educators and leaders, the IGs share knowledge and practical tools based on their own personal work within Montessori schools.

When a cohort has two Instructional Guides, they will work in partnership to support all members of the cohort, but one of the two will be assigned as a specific advisor for each adult learner. Each **IG advisor** will take the lead in tracking progress, grading assignments, and maintaining communication with their specifically assigned learners.

Assistant Instructional Guides are sometimes assigned to a cohort during their initial orientation to the CGMS program. The assistants will participate in Live Class and discussions. In some cases, the Assistant will, in time, become a full Instructional Guide in the same cohort and be assigned learners to track and support. In other cases, the Assistant may move to another cohort to take a lead IG role.

Practicum Advisors work with adult learners during the practicum phase. Each learner will be assigned a Practicum Advisor (PA) who meets with the adult learner through video conferencing at least once each month during the practicum phase to provide guidance and support for putting course leadership topics in practice in one's school. The PA will also provide feedback to both the adult learner and CGMS with monthly reports. The PA will virtually conduct comprehensive evaluations during the practicum phase. Additionally, there will be one onsite practicum evaluation visit which will be completed by the adult learners assigned PA or another qualified Practicum Advisor.

Residential Instructors present course topics and provide instruction at the onsite residential seminar that is mandatory for Full Certification. Residential Instructors are typically also IGs, PAs, and some are Video Instructors. All are very experienced Montessori Leaders.

Instructor – Adult Learner Ratios

We take the “Guided” part of our name very seriously, which means we assure that each adult learner has access to support from faculty when needed. Faculty – adult ratios will vary according to the size of the distance learning cohort or the residential enrollment at a specific site. We hold to a 1:15 maximum instructor to adult learner ratio, but generally the ratio will be closer to 1:10.

Admission Policy

CGMS welcomes applications from all candidates interested in pursuing careers as Montessori educators and leaders. The CGMS learning community is enriched by the diversity of the human population, and, therefore, enrolls adult learners without regard to race, color, religion, gender or gender identity, marital status, age, or national origin. CGMS is committed to treating all applicants and learners with respect and dignity and strives to assure that all participants uphold ethical practices.

CGMS holds that success as an educational leader in general, and in Montessori Education specifically, requires a unique combination of abilities and skills. Montessori educators and leaders throughout the history of this educational movement have come from a variety of backgrounds. Our admissions requirements and procedures are designed with this in mind, allowing applicants ample opportunity to demonstrate sincere interest and ability to develop the skills and knowledge needed for success in both the CGMS program and their career as a Montessori educator and leader.

While applicants will generally hold a bachelor's degree, exceptions are made at the Director's discretion when individuals can demonstrate the skills and aptitude for college level studies and possess significant experience and or/interest in Montessori Education. or school leadership.

Entrance requirements for the programs include the following:

- All applicants must demonstrate a strong facility with both spoken and written English. Non-fluent speakers may be required to submit [TOEFL](#) scores.
- Applicant experiences, essays, interviews and recommendations must all demonstrate a commitment to mastering the values and methods of Montessori Leadership.
- Applicants must submit transcripts for all colleges attended. Candidates will generally hold a bachelors' degree or international equivalent from an accredited university or college.
CGMS will consider applicants without a bachelors' degree with approval from the Director of Education. Submission of a portfolio of experience and educational plan must be submitted to be considered for the bachelor's degree waiver.
- Applicants must submit a signed tuition agreement and pay the application fee.
- Applicants must own or have constant access to a computer with broadband internet connection capable of displaying a test video file.

Verification of Learner Identity for Online Studies

Adult Learners are required to submit a copy of photo identification to verify their identity. The photo ID will be submitted with a [Statement of Honor](#) in which the learner agrees that they will be the one who completes all distance coursework and assignments. The form is available digitally at [this link](#). This statement will also require learners to protect their course password and not allow anyone access to the course site without permission from the CGMS office. The photo ID must be a clear copy and must be an official legal identification such as a driver's license or passport. A copy of the physical form is located in the appendix of this document.

A photo of the Adult Learner must be uploaded to the course site during the Orientation week. This photo will show up whenever the learner posts responses to discussion topics. Also, periodically learners will post videos of lesson presentations and will participate in video conferencing, all serving to assure the identity of the learner. Ultimately, we will be able to further verify that the Adult Learner completes the work by evaluations of learner progress submitted by the Practicum Advisor.

Attendance Policy

Distance Learning: While attendance in online studies cannot be recorded in the same manner as in a traditional residence course, adult learners are expected to spend approximately 10 hours per week on CGMS course work. Adult learners will be required to participate in weekly online discussions and participate in weekly live class meetings via video conferencing. The online course management system, Moodle, records adult learner video viewing and participation in discussion forums and assignment uploads. This provides a definitive record of course participation. The Instructional Guide will keep a record of participation in the weekly live class and make up summaries for excused absences. Additionally, the IG will be able to assess appropriate time spent in independent work by the quality and timeliness of assignments.

Adult learners who need to take time off due to emergency or unexpected circumstances will need to inform both the CGMS office and the Instructional Guide who will help create a plan for making up missed work. Completion of all online assignments is required for a learner to receive certification. The CGMS course is designed to be interactive with learners working with a cohort and instructor. At the discretion of the Course Director, excessive time missed within any module may result in the adult learner having to retake the module with another cohort. A fee will be assessed when adult learners must retake modules.

Residence Phase Attendance: Full attendance is required at the Leadership Program residential sessions. Should an absence during the residence phase be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances, arrangements must be made with both the Residence On-site Coordinator and the Director of the program to make-up the missed time and course work. All time missed in the residency must be made up either through relevant assignments or attendance in another session for the required makeup hours.

Practicum Attendance: The adult learner must complete the required practicum hours. Should unusual absence be necessary due to emergency or illness, the intern is expected to contact the Course Director to set up a plan for making up missed practicum hours. Excessive hours missed could result in failure of the practicum phase and/or require a second year of internship. An extension of the practicum phase may require the assessment of an additional fee.

Overall Attendance Requirement: Certification requires an overall attendance of 90% for the entire course. This percentage of attendance will be based on attendance at the residential session as well as completion of online course video viewing and participation in online discussions.

Leadership Course Schedule

Adult learners will receive a detailed, week-by-week schedule during orientation, noting course topics, dates, and breaks.

The online course work is scheduled in 7 modules; each module being 7-9 weeks. Most modules will include a catch-up/exploration week at the end followed by a one to two

week break. There will be a winter holiday in the winter (summer in the southern hemisphere).

The Residential Session sometimes takes place during the summer module (winter in the southern hemisphere) There may be the option of hosting a residency at another time of the year.

The practicum phase runs concurrently with the online coursework, generally beginning in the third module and continuing for nine months with a break during the summer module.

Holidays, Vacation, and Breaks

The Distance Learning virtual classroom/website is always open, allowing adult learners the flexibility to work when it is convenient, including weekends and holidays. The weekly 1-hour Live Class is the only activity set at a specific time. When a Live Class falls on one of the holidays listed below, it will automatically be canceled or rescheduled.

HOLIDAY
Memorial Day - Last Monday in May
Independence Day – July 4th
Labor Day - First Monday in September
Thanksgiving Day - Fourth Thursday in November
Winter Break - Fourth Monday in December to First Monday in January

With participants from many locations worldwide, we respect individual needs for observing other cultural and religious holidays. Learners needing time off for this purpose may inform the Instructional Guide. Attendance for the Live Class on such holidays will be waived but a summary may be required.

Financial Policies

Adult Learners are required to have a signed tuition agreement form or

School Contract on file indicating their choice of payment plan and the party responsible for payment. The signed tuition agreement is due with the application and should be received before the admission interview. If the Director approves submission of the tuition agreement after the interview, then it must be received within 10 days of acceptance **and before the start of the course**. The first tuition payment must be received within 30 days of acceptance.

Tuition Accounts must be in good standing with all payments up to date for Adult Learners to attend the residency session. June enrollees must make at least one payment before the start of the residency session.

Leadership Program Tuition and Fees

Application Fee - \$100 due with the application fee – nonrefundable *

Professional Fees - \$450 – nonrefundable * These fees provide a 2-year IMC student membership and the required MACTE accreditation fees. These fees are non-transferable. (If an adult learner changes certification programs after enrolling, the fees will be due for the new program)

Postage Fee for International Adult Learners - For documents mailed outside the U.S., there will be a fee. Adult Learners and/or schools may combine documents in a mailed package to a single address.

Base Tuition – The current base tuition fees are provided to adult learners on the Tuition Agreement during the enrollment process. The CGMS website also provides the most up-to-date tuition rates at <https://www.cgms.edu/apply/tuition-and-dates/>

Payment Options

Schedule for payment plans B & C will be provided by the Finance Department.

A. SERVICE FEE (1 PAYMENT) 0
1 Payment, Tuition and Fees paid in full is due when training begins and must be paid no later than 30 days from the cohort start date.

B. SERVICE FEE (2 PAYMENTS) \$100
Tuition and Fees submitted in two payments, the first half of the total amount due at the beginning of the training, second half due 9 months after training begins.

C. SERVICE FEE (3 PAYMENTS) \$200

Tuition and Fees payment submitted every 6 months, with the first payment due the month the training begins. Residency payment must be paid prior to participating, based on the time of enrollment a 4th payment date will be added to cover the residency fee. Exact payment schedule will be determined based on the month of enrollment.

D. SERVICE FEE (6 PAYMENTS)

\$300

Tuition and Fees payment submitted every other month. The first payment is due the month the training begins.

E. SERVICE FEE FOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ONLY (16 PAYMENTS) \$500

Tuition and Fees payment submitted monthly, beginning the month the training begins. Authorization must be signed for monthly auto-drafts on a debit or credit card.

Tuition payments cover all downloadable course handouts, and online and phone practicum consultations and evaluations. One onsite practicum evaluation is required for Full Certification. **Adult learners or sponsoring schools are responsible for the travel and lodging cost for the Practicum Advisor for this one visit.**

All payments must be current in order for learners to continue their coursework, and all accounts must be paid in full, for graduates to be eligible to receive a credential.

Expenses Not Included in Tuition

The cost of additional texts and supplies necessary for projects are the responsibility of the learner. Adult learners should budget approximately \$300 for this purpose. One may be able to reduce expenses by purchasing used books through online retailers.

Adult Learners or sponsoring schools are responsible for all travel and lodging expenses to the residential session and for the travel, meals and lodging for the Practicum Advisor to come to one's school for the required one onsite visit.

Cancellation and Refunds

All tuition and fees – (less the application fee) paid by the applicant shall be refunded if the applicant is not accepted in the CGMS program before enrollment.

If, for any reason, the course is canceled, adult learners will receive a full refund of any tuition that has been paid. Refunds will be paid within 30 days of notice of course cancellation.

Should the adult learner need to withdraw from the course, a notice of cancellation of enrollment (for school-sponsored adult learners, the sponsoring school must sign as well) must be sent to the CGMS office. A completed, signed form may be submitted (email adminteam@cgms.edu for the form). The receipt date of the letter or form is considered the date of withdrawal. Reasons for withdrawal must be given. The adult learner needs to be aware that faculty obligations have been made based on enrollment numbers for the course, therefore a full refund is not available after the course begins.

Any adult learner who elects to withdraw from the course after classes have begun, will receive a partial refund, according to the following schedule. The appropriate refund will be made within 30 days of approval.

If making payments, adult learners who withdraw, or the sponsoring school who signed the tuition agreement, are responsible for tuition as noted in the schedule below.

Tuition Refunds for Withdrawal:

- Application Fees are non-refundable.
- All tuition and fees (except the application fee) paid by the applicant shall be refunded if requested within 3 business days after signing a contract with CGMS. All refunds shall be returned within 30 days.
- Professional Fees are non-refundable.

Withdrawal after the Residency Session

Withdrawal after attendance at a residency session will result in responsibility of \$2400 for the session(s) attended. This will be taken into consideration when calculating refunds or balance due, along with the following policies regarding withdrawal during the distance-learning phase.

Withdrawal or Dismissal during the Distance Learning Phase

(application and professional fees are nonrefundable)

- Before the end of week # 2 of the distance learning phase - 90% of the base tuition will be refunded. The sponsoring party or parties are responsible for paying 10% of the total base tuition.
- Before the end of week #8 or at the end of the first module of the distance learning phase, 80% of the base tuition will be refunded. The sponsoring party or parties are responsible for paying 20% of the total base tuition.
- Before the end of the second module, 60% of the base tuition will be refunded. The sponsoring party or parties are responsible for paying 40% of the total base tuition.

- By the end of the third module, 30% of the base tuition will be refunded. The sponsoring party or parties are responsible for paying 70% of the total base tuition.
- By the end of the fourth module, 20% of the base tuition will be refunded. The sponsoring party or parties are responsible for paying 80% of the base total tuition.
- **No refunds will be made for withdrawals after the fifth module, and the sponsoring party or parties are still responsible for the entire tuition.**

Enrollment Deferment Policy

This policy applies to those who have completed the enrollment process and have been accepted to a CGMS certification program but have not begun the program.

An enrollment deferment may be granted to admitted candidates who experience unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances, including but not limited to medical or health-related issues, family or caregiving obligations, employment or academic conflicts and/or personal emergencies.

Deferments are not automatic and must be formally requested. To request a deferment, candidates must submit a written deferment request to adminteam@cgms.edu that briefly explains the reason for the deferment. This must happen before logging into the course website (Moodle).

Deferments may be granted only to the immediately following enrollment.

Candidates who are unable to enroll within the next cohort start date must reapply to the program.

Those who do not enroll in the approved deferred cohort, or fail to complete required enrollment steps, will have their admission automatically forfeited and must reapply for future consideration.

Financial Aid

CGMS does not have a formal process for offering financial assistance to our applicants. Should an applicant or currently enrolled adult learner experience financial difficulties, we encourage you to contact our Finance office and we will assist in working out a payment plan.

Leave of Absence Policies

Adult Learners who need to temporarily suspend their studies may request a Leave of Absence. A Leave of Absence Form must be submitted and approved by the Director. If the Adult Learner is school sponsored, the Leave of Absence form must be signed by the Head of School as well. A

Leave of Absence may be granted for a short term, generally for no more than one year. Adult Learners who take a Leave of Absence from the program and return within six months will be eligible to continue their training with a future cohort. After six months the returning Adult Learner may be required to complete a review of past coursework before joining another cohort.

During an approved Leave of Absence, the Adult Learner's Moodle course access will be temporarily closed. This ensures the integrity of the course sequence and protects both learner data and the active learning community. Moodle access will be restored upon official return and re-enrollment in an assigned cohort. Adult Learners on a Leave of Absence are not able to submit assignments, participate in online discussions, or attend Live Class sessions during this period.

Learners who take a Leave of Absence for longer than one year will be required to complete a re-enrollment process to confirm their readiness to resume studies, complete a current tuition agreement with current financial prices and policies, pay additional Professional Fees if expired, and provide any updated contact information.

Re-enrollment requires a \$100 fee to assess past coursework and develop a review plan. The amount of credit given for past coursework will be determined at the sole discretion of the CGMS Director, but learners can expect a minimum of a one-month review with a review fee of \$100 per month. Additional training fees (current repeating module fee) will apply for those with incomplete modules at the time of their Leave of Absence.

All enrolled learners have submitted a signed tuition agreement which legally obligates the signing party for tuition. The obligation amount is calculated based on the time spent in the training. For example, if someone is within the second module, the obligation is 40% of the base tuition. However, after the start of the fifth module the responsible party is responsible for the entire tuition and payments must continue until the obligation amount has been paid.

Should a learner request and be granted a Leave of Absence, that Leave of Absence neither delays nor cancels the legal obligation per the signed tuition agreement. In some situations, the Finance department may agree to suspend the requirement for payments during a Leave of Absence for up to a maximum of six months. A period of suspended payments will only be considered if the account bears no financial obligation based on the time the Adult Learner has spent in training. If a suspension of payments is temporarily granted, payments must resume immediately when the Adult Learner returns to continue the training or after six months, whichever comes first.

Should a learner at any time choose to fully withdraw from their enrolled course at CGMS, including during or at the end of an approved Leave of Absence term, the signing party will be immediately responsible for satisfying whatever tuition amount remains according to CGMS policy (see cancellation – refund policy).

Withdrawal Policies

If an adult learner wishes to permanently withdraw from the course, they are expected to document the reasons on the required withdrawal form, provided by the administration. Please email adminteam@cgms.edu for this form. This form must be dated and signed by the learner and sent to adminteam@cgms.edu or faxed to 941-827-2981. If an adult learner is sponsored, the sponsoring school must also sign the form. **All refund policies established by CGMS will be followed and any refund, or the adult learner's remaining tuition obligation will be based on the date of the withdrawal form submission.**

Dismissal Policy

The goal of CGMS is to support the success of our adult learners. Should a learner have difficulty meeting course requirements and standards, every effort possible will be made by the CGMS Director and faculty to remediate the situation. The following dismissal policies will only be applied in rare circumstances when the adult learner demonstrates the following:

1. Substantial inability or unwillingness to meet the requirements and standards of the program.
2. A serious lack of compatibility with Montessori philosophy.
3. Inappropriate professional or personal behavior which does not reflect the CGMS Commitment of Ethics and Responsibility as stated in the Adult Learner Handbook. This includes unprofessional behavior that leads to dismissal at one's practicum site.

Dismissal Procedures

When serious concerns arise, the adult learner will be asked to meet with the Level Director (most likely by video or phone conference), who will advise the learner of the issues in questions. The Course Director will be specific about the concerns and what is needed to remediate the situation. The learner will receive written documentation stating the concerns discussed in the conference and the remedial actions required in order for the learner to continue in the course. The learner may have the option of immediate withdrawal from the program or acceptance of the criteria determined in the conference.

In some extreme circumstances the Course Director may elect immediate dismissal of the adult learner.

If the adult learner elects to remain in the program, he or she will be on probation. An improvement plan will be created by the learner and Course Director outlining the specifics of the problem, the expectations for resolving the issues, and a date for follow-up assessment.

At the agreed upon time, the learner will confer with the Course Director for assessment of progress during the improvement plan/ probationary period. With input from the appropriate faculty members and/or supervising teacher, the Course Director will recommend one of the following:

1. Dismissal
2. Continued probation with revised improvement plan goals and new assessment target dates.
3. Removal of probationary status

After an agreed upon period, during which the faculty will continue to advise the Course Director of the adult learner's progress, the final recommendation will be made. The adult learner will be informed of the final decision by the Director.

Adult Learners who are school sponsored should be aware that CGMS has a responsibility to inform sponsoring schools when there is a situation warranting the above stated dismissal process. Adult Learners will be included in communications to the sponsoring school administration. When the concerning circumstances are only related to the Adult Learner's CGMS academic coursework, the sponsoring school will only be informed that there is a serious concern warranting a possible dismissal. Details of the concern will not be shared with the sponsoring school. Concerning circumstances related to work in the practicum at the sponsoring school will necessitate an open dialog with administration at the sponsoring practicum school to assure we have full understanding of the situation.

Dismissal from the program does not release the individual from their obligation to pay course fees. Refunds or obligation to pay tuition balance will be based on the coursework completed up to the date of dismissal.

Dismissal or Resigning from Practicum Position

Any adult learner who is dismissed from one's practicum position will immediately be placed on probation while CGMS administration investigates. A dismissal from the practicum site will, at the least, result in additional practicum hours to make up any time missed and may result in immediate termination of enrollment and/or the failure of the practicum and thus the inability to receive certification.

Adult learners who are experiencing serious difficulties at one's practicum school and considering resigning before the start of the practicum or during the practicum school year must also contact the CGMS Level Director before resigning. Leaving a school mid-year has a great impact on the children, the continuity of the training and can be a negative reflection upon one's professionalism. If issues arise, the CGMS Level Director and/or Director of Education will provide guidance and support to resolve the problems so the adult learner is able to successfully complete the practicum.

If the adult learner leaves a practicum site during the training and is being sponsored by the practicum school, continuation in the program is contingent upon the adult learner's contractual financial obligations to the sponsoring school being met first. If a balance remains on the tuition, the adult learner has the option of signing a tuition agreement form and taking over the remaining payments.

Administrative Leave Policies

Adult learners may be placed on Administrative Leave in which their Moodle account is suspended under the following circumstances. We consider this a serious action that will only occur after CGMS faculty and directors have made numerous attempts to reach out to the adult learner by email, text, and/or phone call to resolve the problem. An Administrative Leave may occur for one of the following reasons:

1. Failure to respond to requests for required admissions or practicum documents.
2. Failure to log in and complete module coursework for more than two weeks with no communication with instructors or level directors to explain the absence.
3. Significant lack of participation in the online coursework and/or failure to adhere to an agreed upon plan for continuing coursework, with no response to instructor or director attempts to mitigate the situation.

Adult learners may be removed from Administrative Leave and return to coursework with approval of the Level Director once the problem is resolved. Adult learners may be placed on academic probation upon resuming coursework. If learners remain on Administrative Leave for more than one month, they may face withdrawal and will be required to go through a re-enrollment process before being allowed to resume studies. Continuation with studies after Administrative Leave may require course review and/or placement with a new cohort with appropriate fees assessed.

Plagiarism Policy

CGMS considers any improper use of published or unpublished text written by another individual to be a very serious offense. We recognize that there is a lot of good information available on the internet related to Montessori and our course assignments.

You may review these materials as resources, but your assignments must be your own work in your own words. Resources quoted or paraphrased must be properly cited. It is not acceptable to cut and paste any part of a document found on the internet or from another's work. To do so is plagiarism, which is illegal and highly unethical. Suspicion of plagiarism will result in an investigation by CGMS instructors and administration. Disciplinary action will be taken if it is found that any part of an adult learner's assignment includes purposefully copied material that is not cited and is given to be the learner's work. Under such circumstances the learner, at a minimum, would be placed on probation for the remainder of the course, and it could lead to termination of the adult learner.

AI Policy for the Center for Guided Montessori Studies (CGMS)

At the Center for Guided Montessori Studies (CGMS), we are committed to fostering a forward-thinking and innovative learning environment. We recognize the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and its potential to enhance the learning experience. Our goal is to embrace the benefits of AI while ensuring it is used ethically, responsibly, and in alignment with Montessori principles of self-directed, experiential learning. Adult Learners are expected to adhere to the guidelines provided in the Orientation Course in the CGMS online learning website (Moodle) for each Credential Level Program. These guidelines clarify when and how AI may be used for CGMS assignments and the requirements for appropriate citation of AI as a resource. Failure to identify when and how AI is used in your CGMS coursework will be considered the same as plagiarism and subject to the same disciplinary measures.

This policy was created with the support of: OpenAI. (2025). AI policy for the Center for Guided Montessori Studies (CGMS). Generated by ChatGPT (v2.0). Retrieved from a conversation with ChatGPT

Grievance Procedures

Any adult learner finding themselves in disagreement with CGMS over an action or policy is expected to go through appropriate channels to resolve the issue, first bringing to the person/staff member involved. If further help is needed one should seek assistance from the Level Director. Adult learners are expected to respectfully express concerns and to protect the Community Trust by not sharing concerns only with those directly involved. Every effort to resolve the concern will be made through conferences involving the Level Director and/ or the Education Director and those concerned. If the preliminary conference fails to resolve any or all of the concerns, the following arbitration procedures may be followed:

1. Grievances must be submitted in writing stating the specific nature of the grievance.

Upon receipt of formal submission of the written grievance, the Course Director will convene the Grievance Committee and schedule a formal meeting within fourteen (14) days at a mutually convenient time for all parties concerned (note, this meeting may take place by video conference). Any individual named in the formal written grievance will not serve on the committee.

2. The Grievance Committee will consist of the Course Director, legal counsel for CGMS, one course instructor appointed by the Course Director, and an adult learner from another CGMS cohort or a CGMS graduate.

3. The Course Director will chair the meeting; if the Course Director is involved in the dispute, a faculty member mutually acceptable to the Course Director, and the complainant will be chosen to chair the meeting.

4. After consideration, the Grievance Committee will attempt to reach a resolution through compromise, recommendation, and/or agreed action in so far as the action does not conflict with the policies and/or requirements of CGMS and The International Montessori Council (IMC).

5. The Grievance Committee has the right to determine that the problem presented is not serious enough to warrant a hearing and thus will recommend dismissal. In such cases the Course Director will offer to mediate a conflict resolution or will make a judgment on how the problem should be resolved.

6. All decisions will be reached by a majority vote of the Grievance Committee. Written notification of all decisions and recommendations will be made within five (5) days of the hearing.

7. Complainants who feel they still have legitimate grievance after all of the above procedures have been exhausted may bring their grievance before the Arbitration Committee of the IMC Teacher Education Committee. The IMC decision will be binding upon all parties without appeal.

IMC Contact Information:
19600 State Road 64 East
Bradenton, FL 34212-8921
(941)729-9565

8. Adult learners may also take grievances to The Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE)

MACTE Contact Information:
420 Park Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902
(434) 202-7793

Adult Learner Records and Adult Learner Privacy

All transcripts and records are maintained digitally on a password protected website. All adult learner files are confidential and only accessible to the CGMS Course Director and appropriate staff. Adult learners may gain access to their own files upon request.

School administrators who inquire about the status of the adult learner whom they have sponsored will be given minimal information to confirm if the adult learner is current with coursework or behind. If such an inquiry is made, CGMS will inform the adult learner. Sponsoring school administrators may be copied in emails when Level Directors are communicating concerns about the learner's participation, especially if the learner has not been responsive to past communications or has not followed through on plans for completion of coursework.

Information related to the adult learner's performance in the practicum classroom will be discussed with the appropriate administration at the practicum school in an effort to work in partnership with the practicum school in supporting the adult learner.

Adult Learner Services

CGMS is committed to supporting our adult learners both personally and professionally. To this end, we provide resources for meeting learners' needs in the areas of academic guidance, professional development, and career counseling. Adult Learners who find themselves in need of assistance are encouraged to contact the Level Director or Director of Education who will provide appropriate counsel and when needed, help the learner find additional community resources.

Academic Guidance and Continuing Education

The Level Directors are available to consult with the adult learners about academic challenges that may affect the learner's ability to meet course requirements. Should it be needed, the Director will assist in finding a tutor or mentor to help the learner with developing specific skills. (Tutors or mentors may request a fee for services).

CGMS has a partnership with three universities who may award Graduate credits to be applied toward completion of a bachelor's or master's degree at their university. Please keep in mind that credits for your CGMS coursework may be applied only for designated Montessori degrees offered at the universities and only if accepted in these programs. Information can be obtained at the following websites:

Sarasota University –

Programs: Masters in Montessori Leadership, Masters in Montessori Education, and Bachelor's completion in Montessori Education

<https://www.sarasotauniversity.edu/masters-programs/>

Lasell University in Newton, MA/TIES, The Institute for Educational Studies
<https://ties-edu.org/>

Programs: Masters in Montessori

Integrative Learning

For information, email Warren at

warren@ties-edu.org

St. Catherine's University -

<https://www.stkate.edu/academics/academic-programs/gc-education-online-montessori>

Programs: Master of Arts in Montessori Education (Primary or Elementary), and Bachelor's completion in Early Childhood Education for Montessori EC credentialed learners.

There are other colleges and universities that may give credits to individuals with credentials from MACTE accredited programs. CGMS Directors are happy to consult with Adult Learners and provide additional educational resources for learners who wish to continue their education toward a Bachelors, Masters, or Doctorate degree.

Career Opportunities

CGMS cannot guarantee employment, salary, and/or occupational advancement. We are, however, committed to assisting our graduates in finding information about open positions for teachers around the world. CGMS also maintains a file of job opportunities that come into our office. Job postings are listed in our monthly community newsletter and can be accessed at <https://www.cgms.edu/jobs/> Information regarding career opportunities may also be obtained from the Montessori Foundation, Teach Montessori , <https://www.teach-montessori.org/montessori-jobs/> and other job sites.

Professional Development

Conferences, seminars, and workshops are some of the professional development activities that take place within the Montessori community throughout the year. Our affiliating organization, IMC in partnership with the Montessori Foundation, holds an annual conference in the fall. As IMC student members, CGMS adult learners can attend at the discounted member rate. Additionally, CGMS adult learners and graduates are

eligible for a discount on Montessori Foundation and IMC webinars and courses. Please check <https://imcmontessori.org/> for information. Additional information about workshops and conferences can be obtained from various publications such as “Tomorrow’s Child,” “The Public School Montessorian”, “Montessori Life Magazine” and “Education Week.” The Internet is an additional source of information on the Montessori professional opportunities.

Technological Requirements and Support

Adult learners may be required to install software packages such as a browser plug-in to support Flash or programs such as Zoom for video conferences. These programs will either be free to download or otherwise covered by CGMS tuition. The technical requirements for adult learners are not very high. In fact, almost any computer made over the last few years can serve as the foundation of your educational system.

Below are the **minimum** requirements that participants must meet:

1. High speed Internet access - 2Mbps/Second download or faster
2. Either:
Macintosh running OS 10.8 or newer with
4 GB of RAM PC running Windows 8 or
newer with 4 GB of RAM
3. Computer microphone and speakers
4. Web camera (or computer with built in camera)
5. Video Camera, phone, or tablet capable of creating videos.

*Please check the latest Zoom requirements since that is probably the most demanding application used on a regular basis.

Below are the **recommended** technical requirements:

1. High speed Internet access - 5Mbps download or faster.
2. Either:
Macintosh running OS 10.10 or newer with
8 GB of RAM PC running Windows 10 or
newer with 8 GB of RAM
3. Computer microphone and speakers
(Chrome books are not encouraged.)
4. Microphone – speaker headset
5. Video Camera, phone, or tablet capable of creating videos.
6. Tripod for video camera, phone, or tablet

Technical Support

Although much of the learning in this program will take place over the Internet, very little technical skill will be required. If you can surf the web, then you can take this course. CGMS does recognize that problems may arise that threaten the educational progress of adult learners. For this reason, limited technical support will be available to each learner, particularly in the area of audio and video conferencing. CGMS does not guarantee the ability to solve all technical problems a learner may have and, at its discretion, may refer a participant to a local third party. Due to the diversity of video camera equipment, CGMS cannot offer any support with this technology.

If you are a current adult learner struggling with a technical problem, write to us at support@cgms.edu . **Immediately contact the above email if you receive an error – system down alert when attempting to get on the course site. If unable to reach anyone at those numbers call the Administrative Director or Educational Director (Director numbers are on the Contact Page of this handbook).**

Successfully Navigating the Learning Education Technology

The CGMS teacher preparation course will utilize several teaching modalities, including the use of traditional books as well as observations and practice in Montessori classrooms. The majority of the curriculum, however, will be delivered electronically through videos; PDF downloads of albums, books, articles, etc.; and web-based discussion forums, message boards, and live class video conference sessions. The distance education component will take place predominantly on our website, where we utilize a very user-friendly course management software package called [Moodle](#). Each adult learner will receive a password which will enable them to access the course material on Moodle from any computer with broadband internet access.

Learners will also utilize voice and video chat software for collaborative learning with fellow cohort members and Instructional Guides. On a regular basis, learners will be required to participate in video conferencing for class meetings, as well as one on one conferences with Instructors and/or Field Consultants.

Getting Familiar with Moodle

After receiving a password, learners should log onto the CGMS/Moodle website and take the time to look around and explore the website before the first day of the course.

After you log on, your first task will be to click on your name in the upper right corner, which will take you to the screen for your own profile. We encourage users to manage

their own profile in the way most suited to them, including uploading photos and sharing contact information with other learners. From the profile screen you may also change your password and email address for Moodle notifications.

We believe the website is quite intuitive, however, some instruction will be provided in the orientation during the first week of the course. Comfort and familiarity with the Moodle will make it possible for learners to identify and possibly solve any technological challenges so one will be ready to move forward in the curriculum with the cohort group. Support and Help articles are available in the Main Menu on the Homepage of the Moodle. You may also contact our support staff to ask questions or get assistance by emailing support@cgms.edu

Leadership Course Descriptions

Module 1 – Orientation and Leadership from a Montessori Perspective

This 8-week module lays the foundation of what it means to be a Montessori Leader. It explores the many types of Montessori schools and what it takes to develop institutional clarity, vision, consistency and integrity. The adult learner is introduced to the nine areas of Montessori Leadership for operating healthy Montessori schools; Educational Programs, Faculty, Facilities, Leadership, Governance, Admissions and Marketing, Building Community, Fundraising and School Finance.

Module 2 - Faculty and Human Resources

This 8-week module explores human dynamics as it relates to organizational behavior with a focus on interpersonal communications and human resources. The module will present hiring and recruiting strategies for building a strong faculty committed to the school vision and mission. Adult learners will also learn communication and negotiation strategies, team building, and management skills for developing collaboration and cohesion. The module concludes with a look at holistic staff development and evaluation.

Module 3 – Educational Programs and Survey of Montessori Education

This 10-week module provides a comprehensive look at how Montessori theory and child development inform curriculum and practices for the education of children from birth through high school. Adult learners are introduced to the key principles of the prepared environment, the importance of mixed age groups, the long-uninterrupted work cycle and encouraging learning through child-initiated exploration. An introduction to the characteristics and curriculum for each level will be presented as well as tips for administrators observing and recognizing best practice. The module will also introduce practices for supporting children with various exceptionalities and special needs within the Montessori environment. The module concludes with an exploration of the role of data and strategies for assessing Montessori programs.

Module 4 - School Leadership and Governance

This 6-week module explores leadership as it relates to different structures of governance with a focus on board dynamics, and fidelity to Montessori best practices in the realm of governance and legal environments. Adult learners will also be introduced to the role of accreditation, the importance of strategic planning, and the fundamentals of developing school handbooks.

Module 5 – School Finance

This 8-week module presents theory and practical strategies for creating a financially stable school including budgeting, data collection and analysis, and strategic financial planning. Adult learners will also review common school financial pitfalls and solutions as well as strategies for accountability and communicating about finances to stakeholders.

Module 6 – Institutional Advancement

This 9-week module looks at several important factors which contribute to the development of strong schools. Topics include admissions, marketing, building community, parent relations and education and fundraising. Adult learners will learn theory and practical strategies for finding the right families, gaining their trust and commitment, and engaging them in the advancement of the school's mission.

Module 7 – School Facilities and Electives

This 7-week module begins with a three-week exploration of the leadership role in the development of school facilities including building and grounds, facility management and technology infrastructure. The final weeks will provide adult learners with opportunities to choose from several topics for more in depth exploration. This final module also provides time for adult learners to complete all course requirements and take the final exam.

Evaluations of Adult Learner Outcomes

Adult Learner assessment will occur continuously throughout the course through:

1. Faculty assessment of class participation in online discussion forums as per the Rubric for Forum and Journal Posts. An overall Participation grade of 3 is required for each module.
2. Evaluation of assignments and projects for academic coursework will be completed by the IG based on clear assignment criteria. Evaluations will provide feedback to encourage further development with the final goal being sufficient evidence that the adult learner has met the Leadership Competencies.
3. Practicum evaluations by Practicum Advisor/ Field Consultants, and Self-evaluations will be completed during the practicum phase. These evaluations will assess progress in the practical application of course topics with a goal of developing competency in all 9 areas of School Leadership.
4. Practicum Portfolios will be assessed monthly noting completion and progress toward developing competency.

5. Final Written Exam will include questions designed to provide evidence of understanding of the course topics and the ability to integrate and apply these topics to practical leadership situations. Passing grade will be a minimum of 80 out of 100 points.

Grades are posted online on the Moodle where only the learner can access and view his/her own grade. The grade will include comments so that the learner can see his/her strengths and the areas that need improvement. The Instructional Guide is available to discuss the grade by email, phone, or video conference and will initiate such a conference if there are significant problems with the assignment. The course website has activity reports and grade reports that enable the learners to check their progress at any time.

Adult learner performance in his/her practicum school will be evaluated in person and/or by video. The learners will receive a copy of the evaluation form. The Practicum Advisor will meet with the learner either in person or by video conferencing to discuss the evaluation and provide support.

CGMS requires a high level of proficiency in all areas of study leading to clear evidence of competency in the development of the Leadership School Competencies provided below. Adult learners are encouraged to seek mastery and deep understanding in their work.

Whenever possible, a learner submitting assignments that do not meet the minimum standards of proficiency will be provided feedback that will enable him/her to make needed improvements before resubmitting for final evaluation. Our goal is for learners to gain the knowledge and skills needed for success in their school leadership career. Evaluation of assignments is an important part of the learning process, providing further instruction and guidance to help learners better understand themselves and the material. Ultimately, the course evaluations allow us to assess a learner's progress and determine that he/she has successfully completed the course requirements, enabling CGMS to recommend the adult learner for graduation and certification as a Montessori School Leader.

Leadership Competencies

IMC School Leadership Competencies		
<i>The Adult Learner Understands Theory and Content related to Competency Categories, Subcategories, and Demonstrates Appropriate Evidence</i>		
<i>Competency Categories</i>	<i>Competency Subcategories:</i>	<i>Evidence of the Competencies</i>
Leadership Skills	Montessori Leadership Principles	Demonstrates how Montessori principles are actualized in the Montessori approach to school leadership.

	Spiritual Preparation	Demonstrates evidence of personal and professional growth through self-evaluation and introspection
	School Operations	Demonstrates an understanding of effective leadership in the nine Major Areas of Montessori School Operation
Faculty & Staff Management	Onboarding Faculty & Staff	Demonstrates and implements an effective system for recruitment, hiring, orientation of faculty and staff
	Support for Faculty & Staff	Demonstrates mentoring and development of professional faculty and staff that is aligned to the school's Montessori philosophy and methodology
	Management Faculty & Staff	Demonstrates a system of formal evaluation, observation and ongoing guidance of faculty and staff
Educational Program	Montessori Philosophy	Demonstrates a strong understanding and commitment to Montessori philosophy, methodology and educational practice based on the developmental needs of children
	Montessori Curriculum	Demonstrates an understanding of the Montessori curriculum at each age level, its implementation, and expectations for Montessori teachers.
	Legal Environment	Demonstrates knowledge of school/child-care governmental regulations
	Educational Identity, Culture & Policies	Demonstrates and develops systems, policies and procedures that support high-fidelity Montessori programs at all levels.
	Communication	Demonstrates an understanding of and an ability to communicate to parents, faculty and community members the essential principles of Montessori philosophy and curriculum.
	Community	Demonstrates a commitment to the development of a comprehensive and fully functioning Montessori community, including strategies that enhance the school's climate and culture resulting in support of children, families, faculty and staff.
Finance	Financial System	Demonstrates understanding of basic financial systems in a school environment
	Financial Practices	Demonstrates knowledge of effective utilization of resources and fiscal management practices

	Budget	Demonstrates how a school is financially stable and able to provide sufficient resources for a safe and effective Montessori learning environment.
Fundraising & Capital Development	Principles of Fundraising	Demonstrates an understanding of the principles and practices in effective fundraising within a Montessori school setting, public, charter or private.
	Annual Fund	Demonstrates an understanding of principles and tactics needed to host an Annual Fund campaign.
	Capital Campaign	Demonstrates an understanding of principles and tactics needed to host a Capital Campaign.
Facilities	Facility Management Short Term	Demonstrates the ability to create and sustain a school campus
	Facility Management Long Term	Demonstrates an ability to offer a variety of learning spaces and facilities that are aesthetically appealing, clean, neat, in good repair
	Environment Design	Demonstrates an understanding of how indoor & outdoor environments are organized to support Montessori philosophy and demonstrates a commitment to supporting faculty to create and maintain positive Montessori learning environments
Public Relations and Recruitment	Marketing	Demonstrates the ability to develop and implement an effective and affordable plan to recruit, evaluate, and orient prospective families to the school's Montessori organizational culture.
	Retention	Demonstrates the ability to develop and implement a system of tactics to encourage retention. Demonstrates the ability to develop and implement a system to track retention for each classroom setting and use that information for continuous improvement and planning.
Governance - Strategic Plan	Principles of Governance	Demonstrates the ability to understand the different types of school governance including public, private for profit and private not for profit school governance structure.
	Leadership and Governance	Demonstrates an understanding of the role of the school leader within different school types and the ability to provide appropriate

		leadership related to governance within the school he or she is working.
	Strategic Planning	Demonstrates an understanding of the role of strategic planning and the ability to utilize strategic planning to work toward school improvement

Course Modules and Expectations

What is a Module?

A Module contains 6-10 weeks of work. The purpose of a module is to have all the work for one period of time or term in one section on the Moodle. While the modules will generally have a main theme, such as *Leadership from a Montessori Perspective*, each week of the module will provide a specific focus.

There will be a module syllabus for each module which will provide the course topics covered in each week and define objectives and assignments. Module participation will be assessed according to the Forum and Journal Participation Rubric below. Adult learners must complete the weekly module requirements during the week assigned in order to remain active and current in the course.

Weekly Course requirements include:

- Viewing all course lecture videos is required for passing each module. Adult learners are encouraged to take notes as per your learning style or needs. Keep in mind that videos will remain available even after completion of the course so taking in depth notes may not be necessary, nor practical from a time management perspective.
- Participation in Leadership Discussion Forums and Journal Forums which provide opportunities for deep reflection and articulation of one's understanding of course topics. Participation in discussion forums enables learners to share ideas and learn from each other.

Assignment Posts for periodic individual or group assignments or projects will be noted in each module syllabus and in the weekly memo. These assignment posts are in addition to the weekly required discussion forum posts.

Forum or Journal Participation Rubric

Each week, one substantial forum post to a discussion question/topic is required along with a minimum of two responses to fellow learners. In some weeks, a reflective journal post will be required as well. Some weeks will also require an additional Assignment post which will be posted in the discussion forum. Check your module syllabus and weekly memo for clarification of weekly requirements. Posts will be assessed as per the rubric below. Note that a 3.0 minimum average is required to pass.

	Comprehensive	Complete	Somewhat Incomplete	Incomplete
	4	3	2	1
Timeliness	Posts completed on or before Thursday, allowing others to respond.	Posts completed just after Thursday and before Saturday, allowing others to respond.	Posts completed by Sunday, offering few opportunities for a response.	Post completed by end of Module, offering few, if any, opportunities for a response, or not completed at all
Quality of Forum or Journal Post	Post is complete, uses classroom/school examples, and/or sites videos or other course resources, and supports thesis with Montessori concepts.	The answer is complete and gives concrete examples.	The answer is complete but lacks examples or Montessori's writings for support.	The writing does not answer the question, or the work is not done.
Quality of Forum or Journal Response	Response gives positive feedback, constructive analysis based on Montessori philosophy.	Response gives positive feedback and constructive analysis.	Response gives positive feedback but lacks constructive analysis.	Response lacks feedback and constructive analysis.

The final module grade will be an average of all forum, journal, and assignment grades for the entire module. Finishing with a "2" is unwise because it can be detrimental to your average grade for the entire course. You must receive an average grade of "3" for all course work, exams and long-term assignments. Adult learners may resubmit work or add to posts to raise the grade to a "3." Making up for missed posts after the end of a module will require a summary of the forum. You will need to contact your IG and/or the Director to determine the specific work required to raise your grade.

Module Grading Period

Modules will be graded one week after the completion of the assigned module weeks,

including catch up weeks. Adult learners may complete any missing assignments, submit summaries for missed chats or forums, and complete reflective journal posts during this time. Completing all module work by the end of the Module Grading Period is important for successfully achieving the goal of certification.

Finishing a Module with a grade of "1" automatically puts the learner on probation and your certification at risk. Should this occur, you will need to meet with the Director by video conference or telephone to determine what additional work must be done, or to determine if you must retake the Module at another time. **An additional fee will be charged if you are required to retake the Module with another Cohort.**

Final Grades for all modules and course components must come to an overall 3.0 average to pass and receive certification.

Assignment Due Dates and Late Submissions

Due dates for assignments are set to help you keep up with the overall pace of the course. While we can offer some flexibility based on extenuating circumstances, adult learners are expected to meet these deadlines. Late assignments will require an automatic deduction of 1 point level (i.e. from 4 to 3). **Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Instructional Guide for an alternate due date (generally a one-week delay in submission) with no points lowered. The learner must contact the IG prior to the original due date and the IG must agree to the plan for late submission in order for the point deduction to be waived**

Embracing Opportunities for Self-Improvement

Adult learners are encouraged to develop a positive attitude regarding evaluations, both formal and informal. There will be many opportunities to receive feedback from, instructors, advisors and peers. Naturally, one is likely to have some challenges and/or needs for improvement as one seeks to develop proficiency in their application of Montessori and Leadership theory and methods. CGMS recognizes the value of learning from mistakes and the development of strength through facing areas of challenge. With this in mind, we stress the importance of embracing one's opportunities for self-improvement. To this end, we recommend seeking and accepting feedback, both positive and negative, reflecting on this feedback, and developing strategies and goals for making improvements. The Instructional Guides and Practicum Advisor will be available for any assistance learners may need to process feedback and set goals.

Guidelines for Participation in Forum Discussions

The following guidelines should be considered for positive and successful online participation in discussion forums.

1. The frequency and regularity of participation in and contributions to weekly cohort discussions. Please note participation requirements as outlined in the module syllabi and rubric. Keep in mind one's learning experience and that of your fellow learners is enhanced by participation that goes beyond the minimum requirement.

2. The ratio of questions (inquiry) to ideas (input). Being a learner as well as a leader in cohort discussions is excellent preparation for working with diverse populations of children, parents, and fellow staff in your school community.
3. The use of active or reflective listening practices. Posing questions that can help you better understand and empathize with the speaker.
4. Supporting one's ideas and opinions with a well-articulated rationale. Citing evidence from empirical research, course videos or resources, and/or observable field experience that supports your stated ideas and assumptions. Dr. Montessori called her method of education a "scientific pedagogy". She did not take things on faith or jump to conclusions from a limited base of experience.
5. A demonstrated willingness to consider and test new ideas and alternative approaches. Dr. Montessori was a systematic and bold experimenter.
6. Being prepared for the discussion of the topic at hand, by completion of assigned readings, reflective writings, observations, interviews, and video viewings.
7. Ability to empathize with the needs of fellow learners by being nonjudgmental, helpful, and supportive.
8. Demonstrated appreciation and acknowledgment of one's fellow learners. Focusing on the positive in people.

Suggestions for Making Online Discussions a Safe and Enjoyable Learning Experience for All

1. Focus on the positive first. Express points of appreciation, agreement, and commonality early and often.
2. Ask inquiring questions when you don't understand something. Never hesitate to seek clarification on something that is unclear.
3. Explore differences of experience and opinion openly and respectfully. Be both humble and confident in considering others views and in presenting your own.

Guidelines for Participation in Weekly Live Class

A Live Class will be held weekly during each module via video conferencing. The cohort along with the IG will determine a schedule for these classes with attention to time zone

variance and personal schedules. This is an important part of the weekly course work in that it provides for shared inquiry and a deeper dive into course topics. These sessions will sometimes include break out groups for partner and small group discussions and projects.

While attendance is mandatory, we recognize that there will be extenuating circumstances that may require learners to occasionally miss the live class. In such rare occasions, adult learners should notify the IG before the class that you will not be able to attend. The live class session will be recorded to enable one to make up the missed session. A summary of the viewed recording must be submitted within one week of the missed class to receive full credit. The makeup/summary option must be used only on rare occasions with only one excused absence per module. Participation with the group is extremely valuable and required.

Please keep in mind the following guidelines for participating in Live Class.

1. Be respectful to all speakers. The purpose is to share and learn from each other. This is intended to be a safe place for people to express themselves, and actions to provoke will not be tolerated.
2. Be prepared for class. The class topic, questions and/or an agenda will typically be posted in the Community Corner Forum ahead of each session. When there are assignments, please come to class with the requested materials.
3. Make sure you are sitting in front of your screen and paying attention to the speakers. Please refrain from multitasking. We should see your full face in good lighting. Your camera should be on.
4. If you are having trouble with your camera, connection, etc. please contact support@guidedstudies.com asap. You should have your camera on during class.
5. Take notes on instructions for procedures, assignments or reminders.
6. Please put yourself on mute in order to reduce background noise interfering with our discussion when you're not speaking. Earbuds etc. are very helpful.
7. Please do not consume food or alcoholic beverages during our Live Classes.
8. If an Adult Learner has a problem entering the zoom room for the live class or there is an unexplained delay in the start of class, contact your IG by phone - text or call, or text the Level Director. If unable to reach either the IG or Director, call the Administrative Director or Educational Director (Director numbers are on the Contact Page of this handbook).

Leadership Practicum Requirements and Practicum Evaluation

A nine-month 750-hour practicum is required for the School Leadership Program. Adult learners must be working in a school leadership/administrative position in school committed to full implementation of Montessori philosophy and best practice. The adult learner will generally be in a full-time administrative position in which they can get experience with the nine elements of Montessori School Leadership.

Alternative Practicum Plans may be considered for someone in a part-time administrative position or someone not currently in a paid administrative position. The alternative plan must include consistent administrative experience either in a voluntary role or part-time paid role in a Montessori school. In such situations, the practicum may extend beyond nine months to assure completion of the required 750 hours and to allow time for practical experience in all nine elements of Montessori School Leadership.

The nine-month practicum schedule will vary depending on the start date of the course, with it typically beginning in the third course module. There will be monthly practicum assignments focusing on practical experience of the nine elements leading toward the development of the IMC Leadership Competencies. A menu of assignment options will enable adult learners to customize their practicum experience based on school type and specific needs of the school and the learner.

A digital **Practicum Portfolio** will be used to document one's experience during the leadership practicum. The portfolio posts will include practicum assignments as well as personal reflections about the day-to-day experiences in one's leadership role. The practicum portfolio will be reviewed and assessed monthly by the Instructional Guide and Practicum Advisor. There will also be a digital **Observation Portfolio** to upload the two classroom observations a month.

Each adult learner will be assigned a Practicum Advisor (PA). During the practicum phase, the PA will meet with adult learners in a video conference for a minimum of one hour a month to provide guidance and support both related to practicum assignments and one's experience with the nine elements. The first meeting with the PA will take place at the end of the first module. This meeting will serve as an introduction and an opportunity for the PA to gain an understanding of the learner's specific practicum situation and needs.

Please keep in mind that while the Practicum Advisor is available to support you during your practicum, there is a limit to the time that can be provided as part of the course contract. Should the learner or the school need additional support, CGMS will be happy to assist in finding an appropriate school consultant.

The PA will provide ongoing assessment of the learner's progress throughout the practicum. The PA will submit monthly Practicum Support Reports documenting the

monthly communication, noting successes and challenges and goals set by the learner and PA. The PA will also complete two virtual Practicum Evaluations during the practicum phase. These evaluations will require virtual observations of specific experiences related to the nine elements and the leadership competencies, followed by video conferencing for further discussion and goal setting. A Practicum Evaluation will be submitted to the learner, Instructional Guide, Leadership Course Director (s) and will become part of the adult learner's file.

One onsite Practicum Evaluation must be completed at the practicum school. This will be done by either the PA or another qualified Practicum Advisor who will spend an entire day with the adult learner observing and providing feedback about progress. **The adult learner is responsible for covering travel, lodging, and food expenses for this onsite practicum visit.**

The main goal of the monthly PA meetings and the three practicum evaluations are to provide guidance and set goals to aid the learner in their development as a Montessori Leader. By the final evaluation, it is expected there will be observable evidence indicating the learner has made satisfactory progress in developing the IMC Leadership Competencies. Satisfactory practicum evaluations along with successful completion of all practicum assignments will result in passing the practicum phase.

Course Completion and Extensions

Adult learners are expected to complete all coursework and exams within the scheduled duration of the course. Learners who are organized and consistently devote approximately 10 hours per week to CGMS studies should have no difficulty completing their coursework within the required time frame. CGMS may, at its discretion, allow learners up to one additional month of time to complete scheduled course components without an additional fee.

Any adult learner who is unable to complete all course requirements within the allotted period will need to file a Course Extension. If the Adult Learner is school sponsored, the Head of School will be informed of the need for an extension and will need to sign the Course Extension Form as well. The minimum fee for an extension is \$100 per month. The IG and Course Director will assess the remaining work to be completed and work with the adult learner to develop a course completion plan. The extension fee will take into consideration the additional costs for use of the Moodle, instructor support and grading time, and administrative expenses related to the completion plan. Adult learners who are unable to work for a given month during the extension period, will need to file a Leave of Absence until ready to be actively working towards your plan of completion. This needs to be done prior to the month of your planned inactivity to avoid the extension fee. **Simply being absent and not turning in any work for a month or more does not release you from the monthly extension charges.**

Adult learners who do not complete work within the approved extension period will need to submit a request for re-enrollment. All course requirements must be completed within two years of the end of all scheduled online work for your cohort. Adult learners wishing to complete the course after this two-year period will need to re-enroll and may be required to retake some or all of the academic coursework and/ or repeat all or a portion of the practicum. Additional fees will be assessed.

Graduation Requirements and Certificate Award

A Course Completion form must be submitted to the CGMS office before the end of the last module. This form must be received before a certificate will be awarded and sent to the adult learner. This form provides the office with a current address and the name you want on your certificate. The Course Director will use this same form to verify completion of all course requirements.

CGMS graduates who successfully complete all coursework, exams, and practicum requirements will receive a copy of their CGMS transcripts and receive a Montessori School Leadership Credential from the International Montessori Council.

Responsibilities of the CGMS Adult Learner

1. KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRAM POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS. The adult learner is responsible for awareness of all policies and requirements of the school leadership program.
2. PAYMENT. Schools/learners must satisfy their financial obligations to the program. Transcripts and Certificates will only be available for adult learners who have met all tuition obligations.
3. PRACTICUM SITE AGREEMENT. The adult learner must fulfill all duties and obligations listed in the agreement with the practicum site.
4. COMMUNICATION. It is the responsibility of the adult learner to notify the Course Director if opportunities for learning in the specified areas are not being provided at the practicum site. Adult learners are also expected to check email frequently and respond in a timely manner to any communications from instructors, practicum advisors, field consultants, directors, or CGMS administrative staff.
5. RIGHTS. It is the responsibility of the adult learner to initiate grievance/problem-solving procedures to the Course Director in situations that warrant it.
6. COMPLETION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS. The adult learner must fulfill all course requirements, including but not limited to:

- Academic assignments and requirements, such as participation in online discussions, projects, practicum portfolio, and written exams.
 - Practicum assignments and requirements, including meetings with Practicum Advisor.
7. FINAL EVALUATIONS. The adult learner must satisfactorily complete written exams and successfully pass the final practicum evaluation.
 8. TIME LIMIT. Adult learners are expected to complete all course requirements (academic and practicum) within the scheduled cycle for their cohort. Adult learners who do not complete all requirements at that time may request an extension. Re-enrollment will be necessary if learners do not complete work by the end of the extension. All requirements must be completed within 2 years of the completion of cohort online studies. After this time, adult learners will not get full credit for previous work. They will be required to complete the unfinished original coursework and complete additional review or retake some courses. An additional fee will be assessed on a case by case basis, reflecting the amount of coursework needed.

Appendix A. Statement of Honor



Adult Learner Statement of Honor

**This form may be completed online at the following link:
Statement of Honor Response and ID Upload
A legible copy of your photo ID may be securely uploaded at
the end of the form.**

The digital form contains the information below.

Adult Learner Name: _____

I hereby verify that I am the participant enrolled and accepted in The Center for Guided Montessori Studies teacher certification program. I submit the photo identification as proof of identity. I agree that I will personally complete all distance learning assignments and course work and will not allow anyone access to my CGMS account or the course site without permission from CGMS administration.

I have received and read the Center for Guided Montessori Studies Adult Learner Handbook and Course Catalog. I understand the policies and procedures explained in the handbook and agree to abide by them to the best of my ability.

Adult Learner Signature

Date

Adult Learner Printed Name

Date

Please sign this form, and submit with a legible copy of a Legal Photo ID such as a Driver's License or Passport. The photo must be clear. Submit by email or mail if not utilizing the digital form.

Scan and email to: admissions@cgms.edu