



# **Teacher Certification Programs**

*Adult Learner Handbook*

**2026**

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## **Welcome to the Center for Guided Montessori Studies**

We are pleased to welcome you as an Adult Learner to our program. As you prepare to become a Montessori teacher, you will have many opportunities to learn about children, 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 Center for Guided Montessori Studies (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 Center for Guided Montessori Studies faculty of experienced Montessori instructors is here to assist you at every step of this learning adventure, throughout your on-going study and your practicum. 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 with children in the Montessori prepared environment.

## **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](mailto:ellynl@cgms.edu)

### **Admissions Coordinator**

Heather Fuller, 1-888-344-7897  
[hfuller@cgms.edu](mailto:hfuller@cgms.edu)

### **Business Office**

#### **Marc Seldin, Director of Operations**

9560 Strickland Road  
Suite 103-127, Raleigh, NC 27615  
[mseldin@cgms.edu](mailto:mseldin@cgms.edu)

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

Anita Blalock  
[ablalock@cgms.edu](mailto:ablalock@cgms.edu)

### **Technical Support**

Kyle Gagliardo & Germaine DiJohn  
[support@cgms.edu](mailto:support@cgms.edu)

### **Director of Education**

Kitty Bravo, 352-210-0472  
[kbravo@cgms.edu](mailto:kbravo@cgms.edu)

### **Infant Toddler Level Director**

Elaine Glier, 540-272-7715  
[eglier@cgms.edu](mailto:eglier@cgms.edu)

### **Early Childhood Level Director**

Lori Karmazin, 918-284-6474  
[lkarmazin@cgms.edu](mailto:lkarmazin@cgms.edu)

### **Elementary Level Director**

Anya Bartlett 443-473-7925  
[abartlett@cgms.edu](mailto:abartlett@cgms.edu)

### **Secondary Level Director**

Lisa Rill, 410-913-6810  
[lrill@cgms.edu](mailto:lrill@cgms.edu)

### **Leadership Course Director**

Martha Carver, 815-245-9051  
[mcarver@cgms.edu](mailto:mcarver@cgms.edu)

## **Communication**

Clear and frequent communication is crucial 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 cannot support our Adult Learners and keep them informed about course matters if we cannot reach them. Email is the primary means of communication outside of the Moodle forums. Please ensure that the CGMS staff always have 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, or text. 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 put on administrative leave, probation, or expelled.

## **Our Commitment to Ethics, Equity and Responsibility**

The Center for Guided Montessori Studies 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 offers comprehensive blended 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 credential programs 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), Secondary (ages 12-18).

CGMS offers Full and Associate level certification programs at all levels except the Educational Leadership Certification Program, which only offers Full certification. Full Certification programs consist of 3 phases: distance learning phase, residency phase, and practicum phase. The Associate Certification requires the distance learning and practicum phase but does not require the onsite residency session.

A brief description of each phase is described below:

**Distance Learning Phase:** 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 classroom 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 nine-month (full school year) practicum in an approved Montessori classroom serving children for the developmental level of the certification one is seeking. The practicum phase takes place during the distance learning phase with online work continuing concurrently. The practicum phase must take place in an environment that meets standards for Montessori best practices, including multi-age groupings, a full complement of Montessori curriculum materials, and guidance that is aligned with Montessori philosophy. The hours required for the practicum phase vary by level. Please see the appropriate course catalog for the number of required practicum hours for your level.

**Residency Phase:** Full Certification Programs require attendance at one or two summer residency sessions, depending on the course level (check level course catalog for details). Attendance at a residency session before one begins the practicum phase is expected. The residency session provides opportunities for additional instruction, supervised lesson practice and material making. The emphasis on classroom leadership skills helps prepare learners for the practicum, providing tools for successfully translating Montessori theory and methods into daily classroom practice.

\*Adult Learners needing to enroll in the Associate Certification program must receive approval by the Level Director. The Associate program is not recommended for Adult Learners who will be doing a self-directed practicum (leading a classroom while in training) and/or learners with no previous Montessori experience. The residency phase is very important in these situations, as it provides a foundation for beginning the practicum phase. Also keep in mind that only the Full Certification programs are eligible for MACTE accreditation.

## **Affiliation and Accreditation**

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

The CGMS Infant-Toddler, Early Childhood, and Elementary I-II, Elementary I, Elementary II, Secondary Full Certification and Montessori Leadership programs 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 Credential 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

<http://www.MACTE.org/>

## **CGMS Faculty Roles**

The CGMS Faculty is made up of experienced Montessori educators who are dedicated to guiding and supporting the development of Adult Learners seeking to understand Montessori theory and practice. 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 and lesson 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 and master Montessori educators.



**Video Presenters** worked closely with the lead video instructors to present lessons, sometimes with children in their own classroom.

**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 IGs 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 they are there to guide and 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, the IGs are able to share knowledge and practical tools based on their own personal work with children.

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 sessions 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.

**Field Consultants (FC)** work with Adult Learners during the practicum phase. Each learner will be assigned an FC who will observe and evaluate the learner's progress at least 3 times in person, during the practicum. Field Consultants are experienced Montessori educators with whom we contract to provide interns support and mentorship and to provide us with feedback on the intern's progress in applying Montessori practices.

**Self-Directed Practicum Advisor (PA)** Adult Learners who are doing a self-directed practicum will be assigned a PA who will provide ongoing support through video conferencing, phone, and email communication. This will be in addition to one's regular Field Consultant, but in some instances, may be the same person. The monthly PA meetings are mandatory for self-directed interns. The PA will send monthly reports to the IG and Level Director so that everyone can work in partnership to support success during the practicum.

**Coach (CO)** CGMS self-directed learners will receive continuous support from their online instructors and a practicum advisor; however, this cannot substitute for a full-time Supervising Teacher who works directly with the Adult Learner on a daily basis. Our extensive experience in training Montessori educators has highlighted the necessity of regular and consistent one-on-one mentorship. Therefore, we require the practicum

school to provide a mentor who holds a Montessori credential and has experience at the same level as the interning teacher as part of the support plan. If the school does not have a qualified teacher onsite, they may find one independently, or we can offer an additional coaching plan to address this need. If the school is unable to secure a mentor, CGMS can provide a coach for further support. The coach will meet regularly with the intern and conduct at least one classroom observation each month

**Residency Instructors** present course topics and provide instruction at the residency sessions that are mandatory for the Full Certification programs. Many of our Residency Instructors are also IGs, Field Consultants, and some are Video Instructors.

All are experienced Montessori educators. Generally, there will be two instructors present throughout each residency session. Instructors will often present in more than one curriculum area, as well as Montessori Philosophy and Classroom Leadership topics, thus providing the example of the Montessori Teacher/Guide as the “Informed Generalist.” One instructor takes the lead role for a specific period in the day or for a full day. They prepare the plan for that area and are the main presenter. Often another instructor is present to assist the lead instructor. The assistant instructor presents lessons as directed by the lead and helps supervise practice sessions and facilitate small group activities. Having assisted and/or led in a variety of areas, our instructors are prepared to work in any of our residency sessions as needed.

## **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 residency enrollment at a specific site. We hold to a 1:20 maximum instructor to Adult Learner ratio (may include Assistant Instructors), but generally the ratio will be closer to 1:12.

## **Admission Policy**

CGMS welcomes applications from all candidates interested in pursuing careers as Montessori educators. The CGMS learning community is enriched by the diversity of the human population, and, therefore, enrolls Adult Learners without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, marital status, 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 in the teaching profession in general, and in Montessori education specifically, requires a unique combination of abilities and skills. Montessori teachers 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 this teacher education

program and their career as a Montessori educator.

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 working with children and Montessori education.

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 a [TOEFL](#) score of at least 75 as well as complete an additional Admission Interview, and/or begin the program on probationary status to allow both the Adult Learner and CGMS to assess if the program is a good match for the learners English language skills.
- Applicant experiences, essays, personal interview, and recommendations must all demonstrate a commitment to mastering the values and methods of the Montessori curriculum.
- 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. Infant- Toddler and Early Childhood candidates who do not possess a bachelor's degree and are accepted in the program are eligible for the Full Certification program. Elementary and Secondary candidates who do not possess a bachelor's degree and are accepted in the program are only eligible for a Provisional Credential.
- Applicants must submit a signed tuition agreement and pay the application fee.
- Applicants must own or have constant access to a computer with a 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 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 Head of School, Supervising Teacher, Mentor, and the Field Consultant.

## **Attendance Policy**

**Distance Learning:** While attendance cannot be recorded in the same manner as in a traditional residence course, Adult Learners are expected to spend approximately 10 – 15 hours per week on CGMS course work. The online course management system, Moodle, records all learner activity. This provides a definitive record of course participation.

**Please be aware, however, that logging in is not sufficient to demonstrate attendance. Adult Learners must establish a record of participation and completion of all assignments.**

Adult Learners will be required to participate in weekly online discussions and participate in weekly Live Class meetings via video conferencing. The Instructional Guide will track the record of course participation and will be able to assess time spent on 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 in writing, who will help create a plan for making up missed work. Completion of all online assignments is required for a learner to receive a credential. 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.

**Residency Phase Attendance:** Full attendance is required at summer residency sessions. There is a 80-hour residency requirement for Infant-Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I standalone, and Elementary II standalone programs. The EL I-II program requires 160 hours, and the Secondary I-II program requires 120 hours. Both EL I-II and Secondary hours are divided between two summers. Should an absence during the residency phase be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances, arrangements must be made with both the Presenters 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 after-hours practice sessions, assignments, or attendance for the required makeup hours in another session.

**Practicum Attendance:** The Adult Learner must complete the required practicum hours. Please see your level's Course Catalog for the number of required hours for your program. Supervising Teachers and/or the Head of School at the practicum site will verify regular and responsible attendance. Should unusual absence be necessary due to emergency or illness, the intern is expected to contact the Level 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 practicum year. An extension of the practicum phase may require the assessment of an additional fee.

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

CGMS recognizes that Adult Learners balance professional, personal, and academic responsibilities. However, maintaining steady progress through the weekly coursework is essential for success. The course is designed to be completed *with* a cohort, allowing for discussion, collaboration, and shared reflection. Because of this, assignments and forum participation need to occur within the same time frame as the cohort so that everyone can engage in the collective learning process together. Each module also builds on the previous one. Falling behind can make it difficult to fully understand later topics and to participate meaningfully in the ongoing dialogue of the group.

Adult Learners who fall more than two weeks behind in coursework will receive a notification from their Instructional Guide or Level Director. The sponsoring school (if applicable) will also be informed. A meeting with the Level Director will then be scheduled to discuss the situation and to create an Academic Support Plan outlining a structured path to get back on track.

If the learner continues to fall further behind or fails to meet the agreed-upon milestones in the Academic Support Plan, a cohort change may be required and a fee may be assessed for modules that may need repeating. When a cohort change is required, all outstanding coursework must be completed during a between-cohort extension period, which carries a \$100 per month fee until re-entry into a new active cohort.

Cohort changes are approved by the Level Director and depend on space availability and the learner's demonstrated readiness to re-engage in consistent progress.

## **Course Dates, Holidays, Vacations and Breaks**

Most courses begin four times a year in the autumn, winter, spring, and summer. The Secondary level and Leadership certification programs begin two times per year. Adult Learners are provided with a schedule during the orientation week at the start of a new cohort. The schedule is divided into modules and provides the dates and course topics on

a week-by-week basis.

Each course includes a one-week break between modules and a two-week break in December. Modules falling in June, July, and August include extra weeks to allow for participants to attend residency sessions and take vacation time on a flexible schedule. Makeup weeks are built in.

The Distance Learning virtual classroom/website (Moodle) is always open, allowing Adult Learners the flexibility to work when it is convenient, including weekends and holidays. The weekly Live Class session is the only activity set at a specific time. When a Live class session falls on one of the USA holidays listed below, it will automatically be canceled or rescheduled.

<b>HOLIDAY</b>
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 at Live Class sessions 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.

## **Tuition and Fees for Certification Programs**

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

**Professional Fees - \$450** – nonrefundable \* (These fees provide a 2-year IMC student membership and cover 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)

**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/>

### **Additional Fees**

#### **Early Childhood Overview - \$360**

(Required for Elementary Certification learners who do not already have a recognized Montessori Early Childhood Credential)

#### **Self- Directed Practicum Fee - \$700 minimum fee**

(For learners who **will not** have a certified Supervising Teacher with them daily leading their practicum classroom during their internship.)

This fee covers costs related to additional consultations and support. Interns with no qualified mentor or support available within their school or local community will need a higher level of support from CGMS and may be required to pay more than the minimum \$700 fee. The self-directed internship plan and fees will be agreed upon by the applicant, practicum site administrator and the Course Director and will be put in writing.

If an Alternative Practicum Plan is needed there will be a \$100 initial fee to design the plan. Once the plan is determined, fees for additional coaching and monitoring for this special plan may be required.

**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.

**Residency Fee - for upgrade from the Associate Program only. Current cost may be found at this link:** <https://www.cgms.edu/apply/tuition-and-dates/> This applies to learners registered in the \*Associate Certification program who choose to upgrade to a

Full Certification and attend the residency session at a later time.

**\*Note: Associate Certification is not recommended for Self -Directed interns**

***The residency tuition is already included in Full Certification base tuition. Travel and Lodging are not included***

## **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.
- F. SERVICE FEE (18 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.
- G. SERVICE FEE FOR ELEMENTARY I & II COMBINED PROGRAM ONLY \$600  
(24 Payments) - 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 albums, course handouts, and online and phone



practicum consultations, as well as up to 3 practicum evaluations/ consultations/ during the internship year.

**\*Adult Learners or sponsoring schools will be assessed an additional fee to cover travel expenses for Field Consultants who must travel more than 50 miles (100 miles round trip) to the internship site.**

The Associate Certification tuition covers the distance learning and practicum phases. Additional tuition fees are required for participation in the residency program.

**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 textbooks, as well as supplies necessary for making materials and albums will be the responsibility of the learner. Adult Learners should budget approximately \$400 for this purpose. One may be able to reduce expenses by purchasing used books through online retailers or by utilizing free online books. Resource lists are available at each level's page at [www.cgms.edu](http://www.cgms.edu) or by contacting [adminteam@cgms.edu](mailto:adminteam@cgms.edu).

**Adult Learners or sponsoring schools are responsible for all travel and lodging expenses to the residency session.**

### **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 cancelled, 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](mailto:adminteam@cgms.edu) for the form) OR a signed, scanned letter may be emailed. 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](mailto: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 Business-finance office and we will assist in working out a payment plan.

There is some funding available in the United States offered by the state and/or local communities to assist continuing education for early childhood teachers. Adult Learners are encouraged to check with local early childhood agencies to see if this is available.

## **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](mailto:adminteam@cgms.edu) for this form. This form must be dated and signed by the learner and sent to [adminteam@cgms.edu](mailto: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.

## **Dismissal Procedures**

When serious concerns arise, the Adult Learner will be asked to meet with the Level Director and or the CGMS Director of Education (most likely by video or phone conference), who will advise the learner of the issues in questions. The 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 Director may elect immediate dismissal of the Adult Learner.

If the Adult Learner elects to remain in the program, they will be on probation. An improvement plan will be created by the learner and 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 Director for assessment of progress during the improvement plan/ probationary period. With input from the appropriate faculty members and/or Supervising Teacher, the 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 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 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

the Director of Education will provide guidance and support to resolve the problems, with the goal being for the Adult Learner to be 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 new 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. 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 valuable information available on the internet related to Montessori and our course assignments.

Adult Learners may review these materials as resources, but assignments must be their own work, in their own words. 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 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 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 Level Director and/or the Director of Education, legal counsel for CGMS, one course instructor appointed by the Director, and an Adult Learner from another CGMS cohort or a CGMS graduate.
3. The Director of Education will chair the meeting; if the Director is involved in the dispute, a faculty member mutually acceptable to the 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, The International Montessori Council (IMC) and/or MACTE.
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 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 grievances 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 Directors and appropriate faculty and 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 up to date 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 Director of Education or Level Director 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. We will do our best to make accommodations for learners with disabilities or other learning challenges, as our goal is to support each learner's unique needs. Please keep in mind, however, that we also maintain a commitment to every learner attaining the MACTE competencies and as such, accommodations must enable the learner to access course content and develop the knowledge and skills needed to meet those competencies. 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](mailto: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, offers many virtual and in-person professional development opportunities.. As IMC student members, CGMS Adult Learners can

participate at a discounted member rate. 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 for 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](mailto:support@cgms.edu) **Immediately contact the above email if you receive an error – system down alert when attempting to get to 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](mailto:support@cgms.edu)

## **Description of Typical Course Assignments**

**Albums** Course Albums are an important resource for all levels. Early Childhood and Elementary will receive digital albums for each curriculum area. There will be assignments requiring additions to the albums and adult learners are expected to use their albums for practicing lessons. Infant-Toddler and Secondary learners will compile albums from course handouts and notes. Please see your level course catalog for more information specific to your level's album requirements.

**Online Discussions** Applying critical thinking skills to analyze and discuss course content are essential for developing true and lasting knowledge of the subject. Instructors and fellow learners will pose questions relating to lectures and follow up reading. Adult Learners will be evaluated on their participation in these discussions, both on the quality and frequency of contributions.

**Reading and Written Assignments** There will be specific reading assignments with accompanying written work for each course component. These assignments are designed to enhance the objectives of each course as well as develop the competencies of the successful Montessori guide. This will include written answers to discussion questions, formal written essays, and lesson plans.

**Journals** Reflection is an important part of being a Montessori educator. Adult Learners will respond to Journal forum prompts, asking learners to reflect on specific philosophical questions, as well as one's experience, growth, and transformation. Adult Learners are also encouraged to keep a personal journal throughout the course (that can be handwritten, digital, audio or video journaling) and will be asked periodically to share insights gained from the journaling process during online group discussions.

**Projects and Experiential Assignments** Individual and group projects will be assigned throughout the course. Projects will include material making, curriculum design, designing original lessons, and preparation of parent presentations. Experiential assignments ask learners to engage in an activity that will help make the course topics more meaningful. Examples of this type of assignment include analyzing how an activity meets the needs of children, trying a specific activity with children, and interviews of teachers, parents, children, administrators, and instructional leaders. Generally, experiential assignments will only require submission of a brief summary shared online in a discussion forum.

**Observation Assignments** Throughout the course Adult Learners will be provided observation assignments that will include observations in other classrooms, video observations, and observations in one's own practicum environment. These assignments will encourage focused observation related to the various curriculum components, provide experience with specific observation techniques, and assist learners in learning the art of following the child.

**Practice with Montessori Lessons** Adult Learners will need to spend a significant amount of time practicing the lesson presentations for each of the areas of curriculum. This will naturally look different according to your level of certification. With practice, the learner will become more comfortable with the material, gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the lessons and their potential to meet the needs of children, and develop the proficiency needed for presenting these lessons in the classroom with children, as well as on exams. Adult Learners will be required to practice independently on each exercise, first without children, and as one gains more confidence in the presentations, with children. Learners should also seek guidance from one's assigned Supervising Teacher or mentor by demonstrating lessons to them and asking to be shown lessons for which they feel they need further assistance. Learners will document their practice through the filming of periodic video presentations of specifically assigned lessons, by live class presentations and by keeping a practice log. Learners will receive instructor and peer feedback on presentations with the goal of learning from one's own successes and challenges as well as learning from one's peers. Practice time will also take place during the residency sessions.

**Practicum Assignments and Evaluations** During the practicum year, Adult Learners will be responsible for a variety of practicum assignments which provide an opportunity to expand one's understanding of course topics and develop specific skills as a Montessori guide. Please see your level course catalog for more details.

Learners will also receive periodic formal evaluations from their assigned practicum advisor and/or Field Consultant representing CGMS. Formal CGMS intern evaluations may be conducted by video or in person depending on the intern's location.

### **Examinations: Oral and Written**

Written Exams will consist of short answer and essay questions on Montessori theory and philosophy as it relates to key Montessori principles, child development, and the curriculum areas for your specific level.

The Oral/Practicum Exams will require Adult Learners to present randomly selected lessons from each curriculum area, explain their rationale, and make connections to the other subject areas. These exams will be completed in a live video conference. The

Secondary Capstone project and presentation replaces the oral exams.

## **Guidelines for Participation in Online Discussions**

An important component of the CGMS distance learning environment are the on-line discussions with one's cohort of fellow learners under the guidance of the Instructional Guide. Adult Learner's active participation in, and contribution to, online discussions constitute a significant portion of a participant's proficiency evaluation and are based on the following.

1. The frequency and regularity of participation in and contributions to weekly cohort discussions. The ratio of questions (inquiry) to ideas (input). Effective Montessori teachers strike a balance between observation-based assessment and lesson presentation. 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.
2. The use of active or reflective listening practices. Posing questions that can help you better understand and empathize with the speaker.
3. Supporting one's ideas and opinions with a well-articulated rationale. Citing evidence from empirical research 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.
4. A demonstrated willingness to consider and test new ideas and alternative approaches. Dr. Montessori was a systematic and bold experimenter.
5. Being prepared for the discussion of the topic at hand, by completion of assigned readings, reflective writings, observations, interviews, and video viewings.
6. Ability to empathize with the needs of fellow learners by being nonjudgmental, helpful, and supportive.
7. 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 the views of others 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 breakout groups for partners 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 for 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 generally 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 shared 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.
4. Your camera should be on during any live class.

5. Take notes on instructions for procedures, assignments, or reminders.
6. Please put yourself on mute when you're not speaking in order to reduce background noise interfering with our discussion. Earbuds or headsets are optional but may enhance the experience. Please do not consume food or alcoholic beverages during our Live Classes.
7. 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).

## **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.
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 IMC and MACTE Competencies.
3. Practicum evaluations by Field Consultants, Supervising Teacher, Mentor Teachers, or the Head of School, 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 proficiency with the IMC and MACTE competencies.
4. Practicum Portfolios/Journals will be assessed monthly noting completion and progress toward developing competency.
5. Final Written Exams will include essay questions designed to provide evidence of understanding of the course topics and the ability to integrate and apply these topics to practical classroom situations.
6. Oral Exams will be assessed by the IG and graded as Pass or Retest. The IG will provide feedback as well.

Note: When retesting is required for written or oral exams, the Adult Learner will be given time to review and then have an opportunity to take new exams. Instructors will provide additional guidance when needed. Our goal is for learners to have an opportunity to review and further develop knowledge and skills so they can be successful in the course.

Grades for assignments and exams are posted online on Moodle where only appropriate faculty and the learner can access and view their own grade. The grade will include comments so that the learner can see their 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 their practicum school will be evaluated in person and/or by video. The learners will receive a copy of the evaluation form. The Field Consultant will meet with the learner either in person or by video conferencing to discuss the evaluation, provide support and set goals for continuing development.

CGMS requires a high level of proficiency in all areas of study leading to clear evidence of proficiency in the IMC and MACTE competencies. Competencies for each level are provided in the Course Catalog for that level. 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 them 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 Montessori career. Evaluation of assignments is considered to be 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 they have successfully completed the course requirements, enabling CGMS to recommend the Adult Learner for graduation and certification as a Montessori Teacher or School Leader.

## **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. Modules will often cover more than one curriculum area, each for a few weeks. This enables Adult Learners to gain knowledge across the curriculum focusing initially on early work and progressing

to more advanced work in all areas as the course progresses.

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 and assignments will be tracked and assessed, and feedback will be provided on an ongoing basis. Please see the specific grading procedures and/or rubrics in your level Course Catalog.

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 lectures and lesson videos is required for passing each module. Adult Learners are encouraged to take notes as per their learning style or needs. Keep in mind that videos will remain available to graduates even after completion of the course so taking in-depth notes may not be necessary, nor practical from a time management perspective. Adult Learners also need to plan time in the classroom to practice lessons using the lesson videos and albums as a resource. Practice should initially be completed without children before beginning to give lessons to children. Practice is essential!
- Participation in Discussion Forums and Journal Forums 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.
- Participation in weekly live classes.

Adult Learners who fall behind with weekly work and assignments will be contacted by the IG and provided support in making a catch-up plan. If the Adult Learner continues to fall behind or fails to meet weekly course expectations, the Level Director will contact the learner and require a phone or video conferencing meeting to determine if the learner can continue with the cohort, needs to move to another cohort, take a Leave of Absence, or withdraw from the program. Both the IGs and the Level Directors are committed to supporting learners with suggestions for organizational and time management strategies. Our goal is for each learner to have success in the course, but ultimately, one's own consistent effort and commitment to learning is the determining factor for one's success.

## 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 10-15 hours per week to CGMS studies should have no difficulty completing their coursework within the required time frame. However, CGMS does provide an additional one month grace period at the end of the scheduled online work. During this grace period, Adult Learners are able to make revisions to submitted work and schedule exams 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 Level Director will assess the remaining work to be completed and work with the Adult Learner to develop a course completion plan. Extension plans are developed based on the Adult Learner putting in 10-15 hours a week towards completion. Extensions should rarely extend beyond 3 months. 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 must file for extension and have a completion plan in place before the last day of the one-month grace period of the course.

Adult Learners who are unable to work for a given month during the extension period will need to file for a Leave of Absence until ready to be actively working towards the 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 Award of Credentials

Course Completion information must be submitted to the CGMS office before the end of the last module. This online form must be received before a credential 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 credential. The Level Director will 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 Credential (Montessori Leadership Credential, Montessori Associate Teaching Credential or Montessori Teaching Credential) from the International Montessori Council. Full Certification graduates of CGMS Teacher Education programs will have the MACTE seal affixed to their credential.

For documents mailed outside the U.S., there will be a \$50 fee. Adult Learners and/or schools may combine documents in a mailed package to a single address.

### **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 teacher education 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, Field Consultants, Directors, or CGMS administrative staff. Adult Learners are expected to communicate with all faculty members, staff, and fellow learners with respect.
5. RIGHTS. It is the responsibility of the Adult Learner to initiate grievance/problem-solving procedures to the Level Director or Educational 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, theory papers, projects, material making, completion of albums, and oral and written exams.
  - Practicum assignments and requirements, such as observations, record keeping and planning, and student teaching.

7. FINAL EVALUATIONS. The Adult Learner must satisfactorily complete written and oral evaluations for both academic and practicum phases.
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.

*The vision of the teacher should be at once precise like that of the scientist, and spiritual like that of the saint. The preparation for science and the preparation for sanctity should form a new soul, for the attitude of the teacher should be at once positive, scientific and spiritual.*

*Positive and scientific, because she has an exact task to perform, and it is necessary that she should put herself into immediate relation with the truth by means of rigorous observation...*

*Spiritual, because it is to man that his powers of observation are to be applied, and because the characteristics of the creature who is to be his particular subject of observation are spiritual.*

*Dr. Maria Montessori, 'The Advanced Montessori Method - I', Clio Press Ltd, 107*

## 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](mailto:admissions@cgms.edu)