

**INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI
ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
(IMAC)**

**ACCREDITATION
HANDBOOK**

July 9, 1996
As Amended and Revised
October 4, 2012

IMAC (The Council) provides this basic *Accreditation Handbook* as general reference information and introduction to the Council and its accreditation activities. The Handbook is provided to programs and other interested persons who inquire with the Council or its review committees as an initial basis to proceed with Council accreditation.

International Montessori Accreditation Council (IMAC)
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Silver Spring, MD 20910
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IMAC ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ACCREDITATION

The agency *International Montessori Accreditation Council* (referred to as "Council" or simple "IMAC") is a private agency for the voluntary, non-governmental accreditation of educational programs for the preparation of Montessori teachers. This accreditation is provided within an umbrella structure of collaboration among various associated organizations, committees and other bodies which cooperate together according to specified accreditation standards, procedures and practices.

The Council's purpose is generally to improve the quality of Montessori teacher education programs by: (1) creating goals and standards for program improvement; (2) providing recognition for programs which meet specified standards; (3) assisting prospective students, employers and other interested persons in the identification of acceptable educational programs; (4) providing a more unified and dignified presentation of Montessori education to the world; and (5) offering a basis for the fair and impartial determination of eligibility for government financial assistance to accredited programs.

Programs seeking accreditation must comply with specified Council standards, Essentials and Criteria, which provide the basis for all Council review and recognition procedures and practices. These standards are employed by the Council in the completion of a series of steps in the accreditation process, which include a formal self-study, on-site evaluation visit and final accreditation decision by the Council's advisory committee. Based on the program's compliance with the Essentials and Criteria, the program is eventually granted formal "accredited" status with the Council.

The Statement of Basic Accreditation Procedures sets forth the Council's basic operating function in the accreditation process. Accreditation documents, policies and practices contained in this Statement have been adapted from those employed by the *Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation* (CAHEA), which has a long history of developing procedures for accreditation under the *American Medical Association* (AMA). The Council acknowledges with grateful appreciation the important contribution of CAHEA in the development of IMAC. Operation of Council accreditation is conducted in harmony with the two other basic Council documents: (1) *Essentials and Criteria*, the Council's accreditation standards and (2) *Articles of Association*, The Council's legal governing instrument.

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ORGANIZATION

1. *General*

The Council conducts its accreditation in collaboration with various interrelated organizations and committees. A Council *Accreditation Handbook* with application form and general information is sent to those making inquiries with the Council. The applicant for accreditation must then respond by formally applying to the Council for this purpose, at which time the accreditation process is initiated. The Council then refers the program's application to the pertinent review committee to initiate the program's formal self-study and other evaluation procedures.

The review committee provides the applicant with its own written standards and procedures, which are contained essentially in a General Orientation Guide. The review committee then communicates directly with the program throughout the accreditation process of self-study and on-site evaluation visit. Following the on-site visit, the review committee recommends action for accreditation to the Council's advisory committee, which considers the matter for final decision. Each of the elements of the Council is briefly summarized below with reference to the organizational chart on page 4.

2. *The Council:*

The Council consists of: (a) Advisory Committee; (b) Board of Directors; and (c) Program Delegates. The Council as a whole serves as the essential umbrella agency to coordinate and manage all accreditation policies and procedures.

(a) Advisory Committee: The Advisory Committee is the final authority with respect to accreditation actions of the Council. This committee consists of public members from outside the field of Montessori education who are selected by the Board of Directors. The Advisory Committee functions as an autonomous Council body to finally review both the recommendations of the review committees and the process by which they were reached.

(b) Board of Directors: The Board of Directors has full authority to manage and direct the general business and affairs of the Council consistent with and under the provisions and qualifications stated in the "Articles of Association". The Board of Directors consists of individual representatives designated by each of the collaborating organizations and a specified voting representation from the body of Program Delegates. Significant duties of the Board of Directors include:

- (1) Assess and collect Council fees;
- (2) Approve and publish Council information;
- (3) Delegate authority by appointment of committees and designation of officers;

- (4) Interpret, enforce and implement the Articles of Association;
- (5) Select members of Advisory Committee;
- (6) Review Council policies and procedures to improve the operation and efficiency of accreditation activity.

(c) Program Delegates: The body of Program Delegates consists of individual representatives of all those sponsoring institutions which conduct programs holding current accredited status with the Council. These representatives are entitled to one vote each on all matters which properly come before the Program Delegates.

3. Collaborating Organizations:

Collaborating organizations are qualified national or international Montessori organizations which participate in Council accreditation procedures through their appointed review committees. Specific duties of a collaborating organization include:

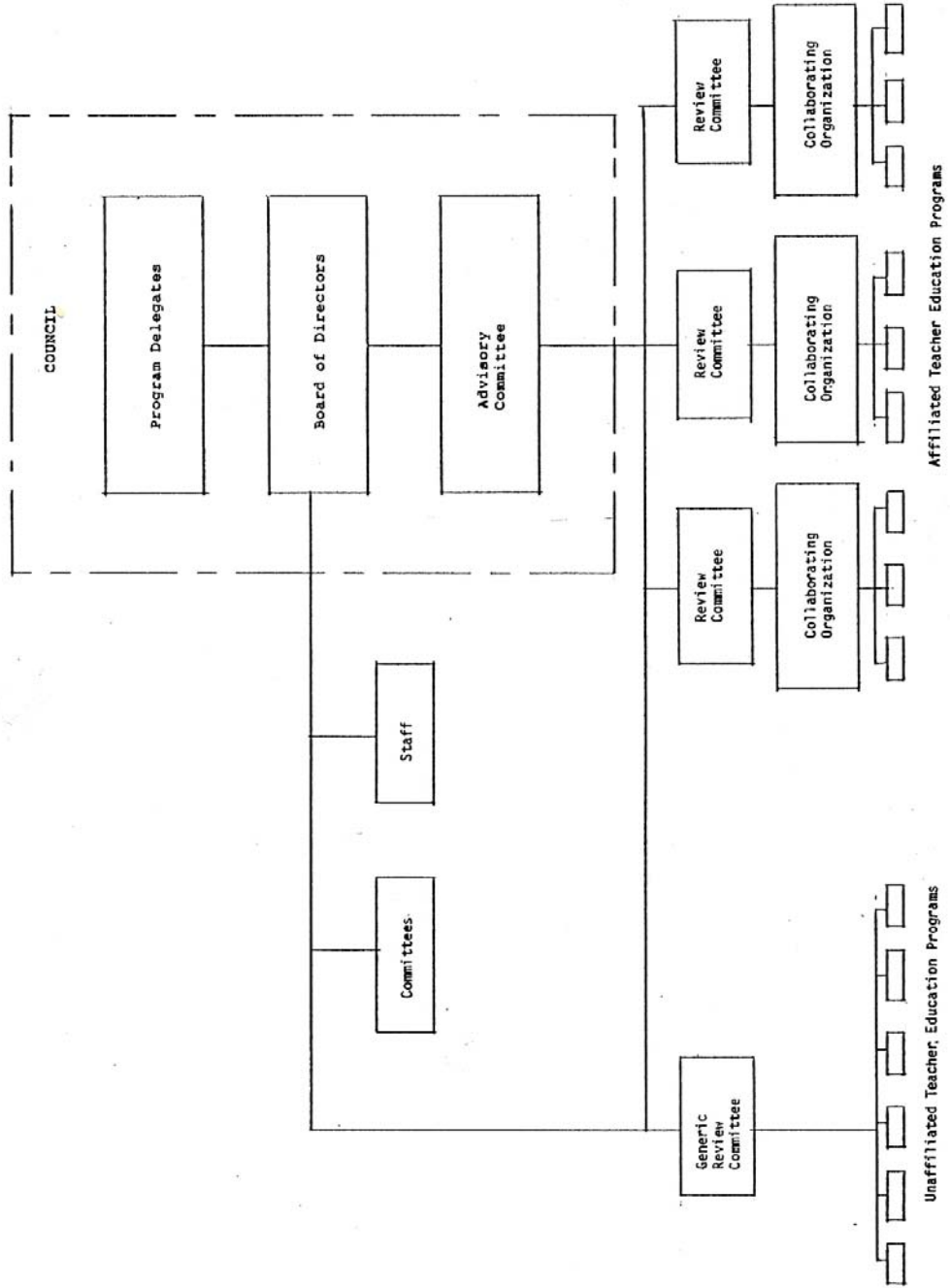
- (a) Designates its representative to serve on the Council Board of Directors;
- (b) Appoints qualified personnel to its review committee and assures regularly scheduled meetings;
- (c) Adopts accreditation standards, Essentials and specific Criteria, to evaluate its affiliated Montessori teacher education programs.

4. Review Committees:

Review committees are vested with the responsibility and authority to evaluate programs after the sponsoring institution of an applicant program has requested accreditation review. These committees evaluate the applicant programs for compliance with their specific standards and criteria primarily by analyzing *Self-Study Reports* and sending well-qualified representative teams to conduct follow up on-site visits to verify data provided on these reports. After carefully considering all relevant materials in this review process, they develop an accreditation recommendation for the Council's Advisory Committee.

Members of review committees are appointed by their respective collaborating organizations. A separate *Generic Review Committee* is established by the Council's Board of Directors to evaluate programs independent and unaffiliated with any collaborating organization.

Organizational Chart of Council



Summary of Steps to Accreditation

1. Inquiry

When the Council receives an formal inquiry about its accreditation from a Montessori teacher education program or other interested person, it promptly sends out the Council's *Accreditation Handbook* and application form.

2. Application for Accreditation

The inquiring program submits to the Council a completed application form and application fee for the Council's accreditation review. The application fee is non-refundable and does not guarantee favorable review or final accreditation status. The application must indicate the specific review committee whose standards and procedures will be applied.

3. Council Response

The Council staff refers the program's application to the designated review committee for its further action and procedures. The Council then directly informs the program of this referral, and the specific contact information to communicate directly with the designated review committee.

4. Review Committee Response

The designated review committee provides the program with its own particular **Essentials and Criteria** and related **Guidelines** that may apply. The committee also provides information about its accreditation review procedures in a document such as General Orientation Guide. The program also receives from the committee specific guidance and instructions for preparing the program's *Self-Study Report*.

5. Self-Study Report

The program's Self-Study Report is a documented written account of the program's own evaluation and description of the program's goals and operation as specifically referenced to measure compliance with the specific **Essentials and Criteria**. The review committee sets forth its own particular form and manner of presenting this information. The program completes this report and returns it to the review committee, which then evaluates it for completeness and potential for eventual accreditation. Based on a favorable examination of the Self-Study Report, the review committee schedules an on-site evaluation team visit.

6. On-Site Evaluation Team Visit

Based on preliminary acceptance of the Self-study report, the review committee designates an on-site evaluation team of volunteers who are knowledgeable about education and Montessori teaching. This team then uses the Self-study Report to measure the program's actual compliance with the applicable Essentials and Criteria. Using a format specified by the review committee, the evaluation team visits the program on-site and prepares a written Site Visit Report based on its evaluation of the program. The on-site team then submits this Site Visit Report to the review committee and to the program under evaluation.

7. Program Response

The program then has a specified period of time to submit written comment and correction of factual errors or conclusions in the Site-Visit Report to the review committee. The written response, if any, is then added to the report, with copies sent by the review committee to the on-site evaluation team for further comments.

8. Review Committee Action

Considering the program's application, Self-Study Report, the Site Visit Report and other related documentation, the review committee formulates an accreditation recommendation and refers it to the Council.

9. Council Accreditation

The Council's Advisory Committee examines the recommendation of the review committee for consistency and clarity in relation to the applicable **Essentials and Criteria**. The review committee's recommendation may be accepted, modified or referred back to the review committee with instructions for further consideration. Council staff sends a formal notice of accreditation action taken by the Advisory Committee to the chief executive officer of the sponsoring institution and to the program director.

REVIEW COMMITTEES

Review committees are organized by the Council's collaborating organization. They conduct specific self-study and site visit procedures to measure a program's compliance with the applicable **Essentials and Criteria** and related **Guidelines** (if any). The **Essentials** are those minimum standards that all review committees use to examine, survey, and evaluate programs for accreditation. **Criteria** are requirements set on programs for accreditation by the specific review committee to define, complement and clarify the **Essentials**. The **Guidelines** are explanatory statements, examples or illustrations which clarify how the **Essentials and Criteria** are interpreted.

Programs seeking accreditation in affiliation with one of the Council's collaborating organizations must use that organization's designated review committee for purposes of Council accreditation. Programs seeking an unaffiliated accreditation status with the Council use the Council's own *Generic Review Committee*. The program's selection of a specific review committee is made on the application form for accreditation which is initially submitted to the Council. Contact the particular review committee for information and details concerning the specific standards, policies and procedures they employ in their accreditation activities:

IMS Review Committee

c/o Aaron Evans
IMS
9525 Georgia Ave. #200
Silver Spring, MD 20910
USA

Generic Review Committee

c/o Lee Havis
9525 Georgia Ave. #200
Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA
Tel. (301) 589-1127

Appendix A

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

A. Guidelines for Advertising Accreditation Status

1. Policy Statement

The Council encourages all institutions sponsoring Council accredited programs, or individuals acting on their behalf, to follow guidelines that assure accuracy in advertising or otherwise announcing the accredited status of such programs.

- Citations regarding accreditation status must clearly be accurate and limited to the accredited program.
- Statement should not be made about possible accreditation status not yet conferred by the accrediting body.
- Statements concerning accreditation should not be the focal point in an advertisement.
- Singular citation by full title, initials, or acronyms should not be made either to the pertinent collaborating Montessori organization or to its review committee as the accrediting agency. If either entity is cited, it must be in conjunction with the Council, with either full titles, initials, or acronyms

Institutions offering Montessori teacher education programs accredited by the Council in cooperation with the respective review committees may use any of the following statements or closely similar statements, in catalog announcements, descriptive or promotional information, and advertising.

(Name of program) is accredited by:

- the agency International Montessori Accreditation Council, in cooperation with the (review committee name, and initials or acronym).
- the agency International Montessori Accreditation Council
- the agency International Montessori Accreditation Council in cooperation with (collaborating organization's name, initials or acronym).

B. Duration of Accreditation and Conducting Accreditation Reviews at Reasonable Intervals

1. Policy Statement

The Council:

- Requires review committees to determine an appropriate maximum accreditation period within the five-year limit established by the Council and to request review and sanction by the Council.
- Requires review committees to conduct accreditation reviews at reasonable intervals and to schedule the site visit reasonably close to the end of the period indicated in the Council notification letter.

2. Duration of Recognition

The Council has established five years as the maximum duration of accreditation and one year as the recommended minimum duration of accreditation. It is the mutual responsibility of review committees and program directors (or their institutional administrators) to arrange for self-study submittals and site visits in a manner that is timely and within the existing period of recognition.

The length of Council accreditation is expressed in years rather than with a specific termination date in order to allow for flexibility in completing the program review and determining an accreditation status. The one-year minimum is recommended to provide assurance of due process. The document *Classification of Accreditation Action* should be consulted for specific information on intervals of accreditation corresponding with specific categories.

Each accreditation status is formally granted by the Council and continues until another accreditation is conferred through the appropriate established procedure, following due process. Review committees may extend a resurvey day for a given program to accommodate a joint survey.

3. Procedures

Each review committee determines a desired time limit for the maximum duration of accreditation for each educational program area for which it has responsibility.

The maximum limit may be any duration of five or fewer years and should be responsive to such factors as the age of the review committee and that of the program; the evolving nature of the program curriculum or the level of training, and costs to sponsoring institution and review committee.

C. Fees for Accreditation Services

1. Policy Statements

The Council:

- Requires accredited and applicant programs to pay reasonable fees for the financial support of the regular Council operation.
- Allows review committees to charge reasonable fees to cover costs incurred in support of their accreditation services and in connection with site visit (site visitors serve without substantial fee or honoraria).
- Offers advice and consultation to review committees regarding their proposed and existing expenditures and charges for accreditation services to encourage their cost-effective and efficient operation and procedures.
- Requires review committees to submit a financial statement of their expenses and income to the Council each year.

2. Fees to the Council

Fees are assessed by the Council to support its continuing regular operation. Such ordinary expenses as staff salaries, office expenses, rent, telephone, travel, postage and publication are within the bounds of such Council activity for which fees are provided to meet. In addition, direct accreditation services provided by the Council's Generic Review Committee must be included within the Council's financial management procedures.

3. Application Fee

An application fee for program accreditation is set by the Council and required of programs for payment with submittal of the application form. This fee is intended generally to meet the Council's expenses in providing pertinent publications, communication and other Council support to complete the initial application process. The Council may also assess applicant programs additional amounts as may be required by the Council to meet reasonable further costs incurred in the application process. The costs will be assessed by the Council only upon prior notice and consultation with the applicant program. Accreditation services and site visit conducted under the Council's Generic Review Committee are expenses which are charged to the applicant program separately from the application fee and shall not exceed the minimum reasonable costs necessary for these services.

4. Annual Program Accreditation Fee

Accredited programs pay to the Council an annual accreditation fee which is submitted with their annual report. The amount of this fee is determined by consensus of the Board according to the number of units related to tuition income from the recent past year of program operation. A minimum annual fee (1 unit) is set to assure a reasonably equitable distribution of financial support amount all accredited programs. The value of this unit shall reflect the reasonable minimal requirements for effective Council operation; provided that this value may be altered only upon consensus of the Board; or otherwise by majority vote only within the limits of inflation or deflation as determined by the consumer price index or some other reasonably accurate measure of economic variation.

| Tuition Income | Units |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Under \$10,000 | 1 |
| " \$20,000 | 2 |
| " \$30,000 | 3 |
| " \$40,000 | 4 |
| " \$60,000 | 5 |
| " \$80,000 | 6 |
| " \$100,000 | 7 |
| " \$120,000 | 8 |
| " \$140,000 | 9 |
| Over \$140,000 | 10 |

Programs on first becoming accredited are required to pay an annual accreditation fee for that financial year based on the proportion of the year remaining after the program has become accredited, and the normal annual accreditation fee thereafter; but so that the first annual accreditation fee shall in any case be not less than one half of the full accreditation fee in that year.

D. Annual Report

ANNUAL REPORT

()
Name of Program Telephone

()
Name of Sponsoring Institution Telephone

Mail to: _____
Street City State Country Zip Code

()
Program Director Title Telephone

Street City State Country Zip Code

Tuition received during Last Fiscal Year:

(from _____ to _____): _____

Number of students presently enrolled in the program: _____

Payment Due to IMAC (enclose with this report): _____

Significant Changes in Program Operation:

Describe any significant changes in appointment of principal program personnel, affiliates, curriculum and other factors having a major or potentially substantial impact upon the character or quality of the program with respect to the program's compliance with applicable accreditation standards; i.e., **Essential, Criteria** and **Guidelines**. (Use other side or separate sheet; provide pertinent documents as necessary) If no changes, so indicate below.

Any significant changes in program operation during last fiscal year?: Yes (explain on other side or on separate sheet; provide documents) No

The signatures below certify that the information contained in this Annual Report is a true, accurate and complete description of the program and sponsoring institution with respect to the information requested.

Program Director

Title

Signature

Date

Authorized official of Sponsoring Institution

Title

Signature

Date

Appendix B

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS OF PROGRAMS ACCREDITED BY THE COUNCIL

1. Introduction

The Council recognizes the importance of balancing individual needs and interests with the interests of all parties concerned in the operation of Montessori teacher education programs. The Council acknowledges that as circumstances change, the current **Essentials and Criteria** may become inconsistent with this balance and that future reviews and revisions of the **Essentials and Criteria** may be needed to maintain a proper balance in the accreditation process.

The following statement of institutional rights and responsibilities complements the Recommended Format for Essentials and Criteria.

2. General Rights

The Council and the review committees are committed to the idea that sponsoring institutions of programs accredited by the Council have fundamental rights which complement their responsibilities. The sponsoring institution has the right to expect:

- (a) that the Council and its cooperating review committees will conduct their business fairly, with proper regard for the sponsoring institution's freedoms, objectives and rights.
- (b) that the accreditation standards and guidelines will be appropriate and reasonable. This right includes the expectations that accreditation standards and review processes will be published and reasonably accessible for review and that the standards will be appropriate and applied consistently over time and among applicable programs, thereby demonstrating their reliability and validity.
- (c) that on-site evaluation team members will be qualified and prepared for the assigned review of the designated program, that they will be sensitive to the program's unique environment as well as to that of its institutional sponsor, and that they will respect the confidentiality of the information which is obtained.
- (d) that there will be timely communication and notice of accreditation actions.
- (e) that the accreditation process will be conducted in a cost-effective manner; that documented descriptions and analyses of the program as a whole and in its various parts will be kept to the minimum necessary; that the site visit itself will not be prolonged; that requests for coordinated and consolidated on-site reviews will be accommodated whenever possible; and that accreditation fees and charges will be reasonable.

3. Specific Rights and Responsibilities

In addition, there are specific rights of the sponsoring institution of a Council-accredited program. These rights complement the responsibilities that are stated and implied in the Essentials and Criteria. Identified below are amplifications on selected responsibilities from among those stated in the Council's Essentials and Criteria.

(a) Sponsorship. The sponsoring institution has the right to take the following actions without approval from a review committee or the Council:

- (1) to define and establish its own organizational and administrative structure and management.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to inform the review committee and the Council of changes in appointment of principal program personnel, affiliates, curriculum, and other factors having a major or potentially substantial impact upon the character and quality of the program.

- (2) to select and to change affiliates.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility for assuring quality, availability of resources, supervisory accountability for and integrity in the education conducted within its affiliates.

- (3) to determine the format and content of contractual agreements in accord with the policies of the institutions involved in the contract.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to describe clearly in writing its own obligations and those of its affiliate(s) regarding program administration, curriculum, instruction, supervision and the like.

(b) Resources. The sponsoring institution has the right

- (1) to provide and manage its physical resources in accord with its overall requirements and policies.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to insure that the resources and facilities required for effective learning and educational experience are adequate for the needs of the number of students enrolled.

- (2) to choose its own financial practices, including those for raising and allocating funds, and for budgeting, accounting and auditing.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to insure that there are sufficient funds to sustain the quality of the program until commitments to currently matriculated students are satisfied.

- (3) to assess qualifications, hire, promote, grant tenure, assign duties, and apportion the time for program administrators, faculty and support staff in accord with its own policies.

The sponsoring institution has the right to monitor; and provide opportunities for the continuing competence of its faculty by the most appropriate and feasible means at its disposal.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to monitor and promote the continuing competence of its faculty and to assure that members are knowledgeable and effective in teaching the assigned subjects.

- (4) to identify and hire individuals to assume the responsibilities of each designated administrative position.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to select individuals who are qualified, as demonstrated by significant competence in or potential for competent administration.

(c) Students. The sponsoring institution has the right

- (1) to establish admission requirements and to select students in accord with its policies.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to formulate policies for admission and acceptance of students that are consistent with the accreditation standards. It is also responsible for publishing admission requirements and selecting students in a fair and equitable manner.

- (2) to determine the manner in which it maintains permanent student records.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to retain official records for each student so that documentation of the student's attendance and performance is available if needed by the graduate or external agencies in later years.

(d) Fair Practices. The sponsoring institution has the right to determine the manner in which it observes and satisfies the fair practice requirements of accredited programs.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to accurately reflect in its advertising and other statements about the program what it offers; to observe non-discriminatory practices in student and faculty recruitment, matriculation, and promotion; to provide adequate safeguards for the health and safety of students, faculty and children which may be associated with the students' learning activities; to limit program requirements to educational experiences; and to provide all faculty and applicants with published statements of policies and processes which are fair and reasonable to students and to faculty.

(e) Self-Study. The sponsoring institution has the right to define its own means of conducting on-going self-evaluation.

The sponsoring institution has a responsibility to prepare the Self-Study Report in a mutually acceptable format. The self-study process should address outcomes.

Appendix C

ESSENTIALS AND CRITERIA

FOR ACCREDITATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE PREPARATION OF MONTESSORI TEACHERS

Adopted by the Agency

International Montessori Accreditation Council
9525 Georgia Ave. #200
Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA
Tel. (301) 589-1127

Introduction

Essentials are the minimum standards for accrediting educational programs that prepare individuals to enter the profession of Montessori teaching recognized by the agency *International Montessori Accreditation Council*. The extent to which a program complies with these standards determines its accreditation status. The Essentials therefore include all basic requirements for which an accredited program is held accountable. In this document, Essentials are printed in **bold-faced type** in outline form.

The Council's Essentials are the basic accreditation standards to be used for the development and self-evaluation of Montessori teacher education programs. Site visit teams assist in evaluating a program's compliance with the **Essentials**. Lists of accredited programs are published for the information of students, employers and the public.

Criteria are additional standards employed by review committees. They are identified by each collaborating organization for use by their review committees in the accreditation process. They generally define specific ways their affiliated program must meet the **Essentials**. The Generic Review Committee also has specific **Criteria** that are identified by the Council. These criteria are applied to unaffiliated programs seeking this particular avenue of accreditation.

Criteria may be stated in mandatory terms to the extent that they are complementary and not inconsistent with the quotation of an Essential standard. They are used by all constituents involved in the particular review committee's accreditation process.

Guidelines may be established and employed by each review committee to provide examples of how general statements in the Essentials or Criteria may be interpreted. Guidelines are considered illustrative rather than mandatory; they are intended to assist programs in complying with the Essentials and Criteria. Because Guidelines are illustrative rather than mandatory, they are stated in permissive terms, as indicated in the auxiliary verbs "should", "may", and "could". It is possible to have "shall", "must" and "will" in the Guidelines if they are within the quotation of an Essential or Criteria.

Criteria are included in this Accreditation Handbook in ordinary face type. They are indicated here only as suggestions for use and adoption by the various review committees. Specific Criteria and Guidelines for the Generic Review Committee are based on these suggestions for use with programs seeking accreditation outside of affiliation with a specific collaborating organization.

Description of a Montessori Teacher

A Montessori teacher is one whose being with children effectively supports and nurtures the children's normal growth and development. Such normality of growth and development is based on the observations and discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori as reported in her various pertinent writings and publications since 1907. Montessori teaching broadly reflects an adult function of observing children with freedom in a prepared environment.

Criteria might include:

Qualities of a Normal Child:

Precociously intelligent
Eager for Knowledge
Spontaneous self-discipline
Profound concentration
Social Sentiments of help and sympathy for others
Instinct towards Independence
Joy in goal-directed activity
Continuous and happy work
Attachment to Reality
Prudence

Qualities of a Montessori Teacher:

Skilled in Observation
Patience
Humility
Calmness
Faith in Normality
Well-acquainted with self-educational didactic material
Imagination
Power of Silence

I. Sponsorship

- A. The sponsoring institution must be clearly identified and described in writing. In programs provided by two or more institutions, responsibility of the sponsoring institution of each affiliate for program administration, instruction, supervision, and so forth, must be clearly described in written documents, such as an affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding.**

Criteria might include: Requirement for provision of specific written documentation, such as copy of official legal operating instrument, bylaws, institutional recognition by private or public agencies. Specification of major components of documentation, including provision for periodic review.

B. Accredited educational programs may be established by a lawful institution or person whose purpose includes the operation of Montessori teacher education.

Criteria might include: Specified postsecondary scope of operation, institutional recognition/accreditation, arrangement with specific institutional entities, such as specified colleges, schools or other organization.

C. Accreditation is granted to the sponsoring institution that assumes primary responsibility for curriculum planning and selection of program content; appoints program faculty; coordinates instruction; receives and processes applications for admission; and grants or authorizes the issuance of the certificate or diploma documenting completion of the program. The sponsoring institution shall be responsible for providing assurance that all activities assigned to students are educationally consistent with the purpose of the program.

Criteria might include: Requirements for clearly defined goals and objectives which are reasonably related and consistent with program purpose.

II. Resources

A. General Resources:

Resources must be adequate to support the number of students admitted to the program to achieve the stated objectives of the curriculum.

Criteria might include: Factors to be considered in ascertaining a desirable student capacity, such as type and amount of equipment and space; variety and type of instruction and procedures; and the availability of instructors and other supervisory personnel.

B. Personnel

1. Administration

The program must be operated within an administrative structure which effectively assures that institutional practices and policies are consistent with the program's stated purpose and objectives.

Criteria might include: Statement defining function and responsibility for all pertinent aspects of institutional administration (e.g., organizational chart).

2. Program Officials

The program must have a program director who shall be responsible for the organization, administration, periodic review, continued development, and general effectiveness of the program.

Criteria might include: Statements that adequate clerical and other administrative support staff should be available; statement that program director shall have sufficient pertinent business and educational experience, knowledge and skill to perform assigned responsibility; suggestion that institutions have written job description/requirements for program director and other administrative officials.

3. Instructional Staff

Faculty members must be knowledgeable and effective in teaching the assigned subject.

Criteria might include: Statement of specific skills and qualifications (e.g., mature, professional attitude, responsible, specific experience, academic preparation).

4. Professional Development

Programs shall demonstrate encouragement of continued professional growth to provide assurance that program faculty and officials can fulfill the responsibilities delineated in the Essentials and Criteria.

Criteria might include: An indication of the kinds of continued education and other opportunities that could assist program officials/faculty in maintaining and upgrading their professional and instructional abilities.

C. Financial Resources

Financial resources shall be assured to fulfill obligations to enrolled students.

Criteria might include: A written financial statement or budget shall be periodically prepared and provided giving a clear and accurate picture of the program's financial status. The financial records should be kept in such a form that the economic status of the sponsoring institution may be readily determined.

D. Physical Resources

Adequate facilities, equipment and learning resources shall be provided.

Criteria might include: Instructional aids, reference and demonstration materials must be provided when required by the types of learning experiences delineated in the curriculum. Adequate instructional space shall be provided for program which hold on-site academic and/or practice sessions including an actual model classroom which exemplifies suitable physical conditions for the child age range(s) of the program. Office space for program personnel provides adequately for storing records and materials, preparing instructional materials, consultation with students and in general enabling program personnel to function effectively and efficiently. All spaces are maintained in good repair, are clean and attractive, with adequate lighting, ventilation, power and water supplies, waste disposal, and furnishings. If the space used by the program is provided on a lease, the lease specifies how space requirements are met and responsibility is assigned.

III. Curriculum

Instruction must follow a plan consistent with a body of knowledge based on the observations and discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori as reported in her various pertinent writings and publications since 1907 which documents:

- A. Learning experiences and subject matter sequencing which develops the competencies of a Montessori teacher.**
- B. Clearly written learning objectives and competencies to be achieved consistent with being a Montessori teacher.**
- C. Periodic evaluation of students to assess knowledge, progress and skill in the competencies delineated in the program objectives consistent with the description of a Montessori teacher.**

Criteria might include: Statement that the sponsoring institution must present learning experiences through specific time frames, format or methodology; a minimum length for the program, or its specific components; informing the sponsoring institution that the credential, diploma or certificate documenting completion of the program should be consistent with awards given for other similar programs; guidance regarding keeping records of curricula, program syllabi, evaluation procedures, practice teaching content and schedules, etc.; references to advance placement and credit for prior education and/or experience.

IV. Students

A. Program Description

Students shall be provided with a clear description of the program and its content, including learning goals, program objectives, required competencies, and other educational assignments.

B. Admission Policies and Procedures

Admission of students shall be made in accordance with the clearly defined and published practices of the sponsoring institution. Any specific academic and technical standards required for admission to the program shall be clearly defined and published.

Criteria might include: Requirement that program officials are responsible for establishing a procedure for determining that the applicants' or students' physical health, communication skills and basic intellectual capacity is sufficient to reasonably assure their satisfactory completion of all program requirements and to function as an effective Montessori teacher.

C. Evaluation

Criteria for successful completion of each segment of the curriculum and for graduation shall be given in advance to each student. Evaluation systems shall reasonably relate to the objectives and competencies described in the curriculum and include an on-going program of evaluation of outputs consistent with such objectives and competencies. Such evaluation shall be employed frequently enough to provide both students and program officials with timely indication of the student's progress and to serve as a reliable indicator of the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum design.

Criteria might include: An indication that a document of completion (e.g., certificate, diploma, credential, etc.) shall be issued to students only when all program requirements have been fully met. The document of completion shall specify the name of the issuing institution, date document issued, name of recipient, brief description of program content completed and any other material facts to distinguish and otherwise identify the document.

D. Guidance

Student guidance shall be available to include assisting students in understanding and observing program policies and practices.

Criteria might include: Informing students of procedures for resolving grievances and unfavorable evaluations. Requirement that grievance procedures and policies are equitable, comprehensive and offer timely resolution.

V. Operational Policies

A. Fair Practices

- 1. Announcements and advertising must accurately reflect the program offered.**
- 2. Student recruitment and admission practices and faculty recruitment and employment practices shall be non-discriminatory with respect to race, color, creed, sex, age or national origin.**
- 3. Program certification, academic credit and costs to the student shall be accurately stated and published and made known to all applicants.**
- 4. Policies and processes for student withdrawal, dismissal, retention, attendance and refunds of tuition and fees, shall be published and made known to all applicants.**

Criteria might include: Published material and recruiting personnel make only justifiable and provable claims regarding the nature of the program, occupational placement, advancement, salaries and other financial benefits relevant to Montessori teaching and applicable career fields; program statements support a commitment to integrity and ethical practices on the part of all participants; policies and procedures by which students may perform practical service work while enrolled in the program must be published and made known to all concerned; requirement that attendance and absences are recorded, minimum levels defined and that policies for make-up work are reasonable and published and have a direct relationship to content missed; suggestions for retention policy may be specifically stated; e.g., repeated failure to complete required assignments and attend classroom instructional periods of time, failure to meet minimum attendance requirements, failure to make tuition payments when due; systems of grading or evaluation of progress are clearly defined and communicated; guidance about what might be included in printed program material; e.g., purpose/objectives of the sponsoring institution, general certificate requirements, name, address and telephone number, if any, of the sponsoring institution, brief description of the curriculum and schedule, names and academic background of the faculty, tuition and fees, admission procedures and requirements, name of owner or governing body of sponsoring institution, and any other material facts about the sponsoring institution and program as are likely to affect the decision of students to enroll; requirement that status with the Council and other agencies is appropriately published.

B. Student Records

Satisfactory records shall be maintained for student admission, participation and evaluation. Evidence of program completion by graduates shall be maintained by the sponsoring institution for a reasonable period of time after graduation.

Criteria might include: Program should provide for permanence of retaining student completion documents and related evidence of participation in the event that the program and/or sponsoring institution shall discontinue operation.

VI. Program Evaluation

A. The program must have a continuing system for periodically and systematically reviewing the effectiveness of the program including a formal self-study.

B. The results of program evaluation must be appropriately reflected in review of the curriculum and other elements of the program with appropriate revision.

Criteria might include: A recommendation that program evaluation should include a continuing system for internal and external curriculum validation, including evaluation by current and former students; follow-up studies of alumni, such as employment and examination performance; and input from various groups, such as admission, curriculum and advisory committees.

MAINTAINING AND ADMINISTERING ACCREDITATION

A. Program/Sponsoring Institution Responsibilities

1. *Applying for Accreditation*

The accreditation review process conducted by the agency *International Montessori Accreditation Council* can be initiated only at the written request of the chief executive officer or an officially designated representative of the sponsoring institution.

This process is initiated by requesting an application form from and returning it to:

International Montessori Accreditation Council
9525 Georgia Ave. #200
Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA
Tel. (301) 589-1127

Review committees may request additional application materials prior to guiding the program through completion of a self-study and preparation of a Self-Study Report.

A program or sponsoring institution may at any time prior to the final accreditation action withdraw its request for initial or continuing accreditation.

2. *Administrative Requirements for Maintaining Accreditation*

Programs are required to comply with administrative requirements for maintaining accreditation, which include:

- (a) Submitting the Self-Study Report or a required progress report within a reasonable period of time, as determined by the review committee.
- (b) Agreeing to a reasonable site visit date before the end of the period for which accreditation was awarded.
- (c) Informing the review committee within a reasonable period of time of changes in program personnel as required by the **Essentials and Criteria**.
- (d) Paying Council and review committee accreditation fees within a reasonable period of time, as determined by the Council or review committee.
- (e) Completing and returning by the established deadline the Annual Report provided by the Council.

Failure to meet these administrative requirements for maintaining accreditation may lead to being placed on Administrative Probation and ultimately to having accreditation withdrawn.

B. Council/Review Committee Responsibilities

1. Administering the Accreditation Review Process

At the written request of the chief executive officer or an officially designated representative of the sponsoring institution of the program, the Council and the appropriate review committee examine the program to assess compliance with the **Essentials and Criteria**.

The accreditation review process includes a site visit. If the performance of a site visit team is unacceptable, the sponsoring institution may request a second site visit.

Before the review committee forwards its recommendation to the Council, the sponsoring institution is given an opportunity to comment on the report of the site visit team and to correct factual errors.

Prior to recommending **Probationary Accreditation** to the Council, the review committee provides the sponsoring institution with an opportunity to respond to the cited deficiencies. Review committee reconsideration of a recommendation for **Probationary Accreditation** is made on the basis of conditions existing when the review committee arrived at its accreditation recommendation to the Council and on subsequent documented evidence of corrected deficiencies.

Council assignments of **Probationary Accreditation**, including those following review committee reconsideration, are final and are not eligible for further appeal.

2. Withholding or Withdrawing Accreditation

Prior to recommending **Accreditation Withheld** or **Accreditation Withdrawn** to the Council, the review committee provides the sponsoring institution with an opportunity to request reconsideration. Council decisions to withhold or withdraw accreditation are final unless appealed to the Council. A copy of the Council's Appeals Procedures for **Accreditation Withheld** or **Withdrawn** is included in the letter notifying the sponsoring institution of one of these actions.

When accreditation is withdrawn, the appropriate official is provided with a clear statement of each deficiency and is informed that application for accreditation as a new applicant may be made whenever the program is believed to be in substantial compliance with the **Essentials and Criteria**.

All students successfully completing a program granted any accreditation category at any point during their enrollment as students are regarded as graduates of a Council-accredited program.

3. Inactive Programs

The sponsoring institution may request inactive status for a program that has no enrolled students for up to two years. Such programs must continue to pay annual fees to the Council. After being inactive for two years, the program will be considered as discontinued, and accreditation may be withdrawn.

Appendix D

Application for Initial or Continuing Accreditation

This application is a request that the Council and the appropriate program review committee begin the process of accreditation review of the applicant program. Refer to the Council's *Accreditation Handbook* for process summary and other general information.

The Council's accreditation is initiated only at the request of the institution sponsoring the Montessori teacher education program, and must be signed by the institution's chief executive officer. This accreditation provides peer review of the program's educational content and operation, which is based on the Council's recognized educational standards called **Essential and Criteria**. These standards have been adopted by appropriate collaborating organizations, review committees, and the Council.

Once the program is accredited by the Council, some of the following information will be printed in the annual publication of the Council Directory. ***Please type or print information.***

Sponsoring Institution

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| | | | | |
|--------|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Name | Telephone | | | |
| Street | City | State | Zip Code | Country |

Program Information

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| | | | | |
|--------|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Name | Telephone | | | |
| Street | City | State | Zip Code | Country |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Type/Level of program(s) | Montessori Affiliation (intended/actual) |
| Length of program (e.g., months) | Certification granted |

Month and year program first accepted students or intends to accept students

| | |
|-------|------|
| Month | Year |
|-------|------|

Review Committee

(State Selection for Council Accreditation)

Generic Review Committee

IMS Review Committee

Sponsoring Institution Officials

Chief executive officer (print)

Title

Signature authorizing this application

Mailing Address (if different from sponsoring institution's address)

Program Officials

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Program Director

Title

Telephone

Please return the completed Application Form
with application fee of \$600 (payable to "IMAC") to:

International Montessori Accreditation Council

9525 Georgia Ave. #200

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Tel. (301) 589-1127

havis@imsmontessori.org