

Access and Participation Statement 2018

1. Overview and Strategic Mission statement:

- This Access and Participation Statement reflects the strategic aims outlined in Strategy for 2017-20¹ for Montessori Centre International to support a growing global community of students who can make a vital impact on the lives of children and their families. MCI sets out to offer a transformative learning experience to all who have the potential to benefit from training that is academically, personally and professionally challenging.
- Strand 3 of the Strategy for 2017 – 20 document addresses the widening of participation to MCI training to ensure Montessori education had the widest possible reach, including those who may be disadvantaged or deterred from entering higher education due to affordability or their economic circumstances.
- To achieve these strategic objectives, MCI operates a range of activities and initiatives to support and guide students at all stages of the student life cycle; prior to application, during the application process, during their studies and after completion. We believe that these activities and initiatives should be available to all and are therefore committed to an **inclusive** widening of participation to MCI provision, founded on a culture that recognises mutual respect and individuality.

2. Recruitment and Admissions:

- MCI courses are designed to benefit students with potential, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, or sexual orientation. Selection for entry is based on consideration of merit, motivation for study and the potential to benefit from the course of study.
- Recruitment and admissions policies set out to facilitate admissions and eliminate any form of discrimination regardless of an applicant's economic or social background.
- A range of recruitment activities are carried out throughout the year to reach a wide range of applicants, including Skills London careers event and the Nursery World show.
- MCI is proactive in extending outreach to selected FE Colleges, schools and careers events, with an aim to raise the aspirations of those who may not have considered studying in higher education.
- Applicants are invited to open events at the college or virtually via webinar every month, during these events student finance and bursary schemes are discussed to encourage all students but especially those from low-income families and underrepresented groups.

¹ Strategy for 2017 – 2020: A statement of intent for the development of Montessori St Nicholas Charity (MSN)

3. **Financial Support:**

- MCI aims to attract students with the greatest potential and would not want financial considerations to deter suitable applicants.
- MCI obtains, on an annual basis, designation for its Higher Education courses to ensure continued access to student loans. Tuition fees are set at a cost comparable, or in some cases lower, than Foundation Degrees available within the university sector.
- For students who are not eligible for student loans, the Montessori St Nicholas charity (MSN) supports a BIRTS bursary scheme to reduce the financial burden of tuition fees for applicants who present both financial need and merit during the application process. Bursaries are considered and awarded in July and March each year in advance of each new intake of students.
- Financial support packages are communicated in a timely, clear and accessible manner, so that financial considerations do not deter applicants.
- MCI recognises that circumstances change and that students may face challenges that prevent them from continuing with their course of study. In response to this, a hardship fund has been made available for students who encounter unexpected financial difficulty during their course of study, where it puts the completion of their studies under threat.

4. **Positive Action to promote a better gender balance:**

- Positive action is being taken to address the underrepresentation of male students on MCI courses, this includes:
 - a film promoting men in Montessori
 - using images of male students on promotional and marketing materials
 - the introduction of a BIRTS bursary for male applicants.

5. **Student Support:**

- MCI has a deeply-held commitment to student support, this is available to all students irrespective of background, but the MCI approach to student support is particularly effective for those who might have lower expectations of success in higher education.
- As a small institution, MCI is able to provide continual and personalised guidance to students through the duration of study. Students are offered assistance to ensure that their programme of study is sustainable and identify any on-going concerns that may prevent students from successfully completing their studies.
- Individualised support packages for students with disabilities and special educational needs are offered, including peer to peer tutoring, one-to-one tutorials and reasonable adjustments for assessment.
- MCI is conscious of its responsibilities to the holistic well-being and mental health of its students and recognises the importance of managing the well-being of students during their course of study. MCI provides access to various levels of student support, including counselling, with various mechanisms in place to help identify where there might be a particular need.

6. **Blended Learning:**

- MCI promotes flexible modes of learning combining online and classroom based study. Courses can be studied full-time or part-time and students can choose the balance of online and classroom based face to face study.

7. **Progression Opportunities:**

- MCI has developed a range of progression opportunities, including Level 3 to Level 4 and linking Further Education training to Higher Education through accreditation for prior learning and agreements with awarding organisations. This offers greater access to students with non-traditional educational backgrounds.