**Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Academy**

**Overview**

**Continuing Teams**

**School Year 2016-2017**

***DIRECTIONS:*** *The Program Information and Application are both contained within this document. Please read through the Background, Overview, and Logistics before completing online application.*

**FY2017 UDL Academy Program Information**

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)/Office of Tiered System of Supports (OTSS) is committed to building districts’ capacity to provide high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students within the framework of the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

OTSS will be offering three professional development academies to support districts in implementing the academic and non-academic core components of a tiered system of supports. Each professional development academy will be a multi-year, multi-cohort training series that includes face-to-face sessions, coaching, and on-site job-embedded support for school-based teams of administrators and educators.

Academies for the 2016-2017 school year will be offered in the following areas:

* Academic Tiered System of Supports – Literacy;
* Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS); and
* Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

The application for the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Academy is included below. Information regarding participation in the PBIS and Academic Tiered System of Supports Academies will be available later this summer. For questions regarding these upcoming academies, please contact mtss@doe.mass.edu.

## OVERVIEW

ESE, in partnership with CAST, is seeking returning teams from participating district (i.e., teams that participated in the MTSS UDL Academy during the 2015-2016 school year) beginning in September 2016 through September 2017. CAST is a non-Profit educational research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals through UDL. The UDL Academy is designed to support the implementation of UDL at the classroom, school, and district levels using a blended professional learning approach.

UDL is a framework for guiding the design of curriculum, programs, and materials. The UDL implementation process involves clearly defined goals, ongoing measures of progress relative to the goals, and flexible methods and resources that support the UDL Phases. UDL helps educators by suggesting flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that empower educators to address learner variability in today’s classrooms while maintaining high achievement standards for all students.

The goal of the UDL Academy is to build capacity at the school and district levels to impact real change in educator practice and support high achievement for all learners. The UDL Academy will promote the structures, processes, resources, and collaboration needed for implementation of UDL. CAST staff will work with teams of school and district leaders to shape the learning environment so that it addresses the variability of all learners, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concepts and skills being taught.

The design of the academy supports learning about UDL, engaging in an iterative process of trying out UDL, collecting and analyzing data, reflecting about the application of UDL and working in teams to address common needs and actions. The UDL Academy is a multi-year professional learning program for school-based teams that are committed to using a team approach to impact educator effectiveness and agree to actively participate in the key components of the UDL Academy. The design of the UDL Academy supports learning about UDL, engaging in an iterative process of trying out UDL in practice, collecting and analyzing data, reflecting about application of UDL, and working in teams that identify and address common needs and actions

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Academy**

**Information and Application**

**School Year 2016-2017**

## LOGISTICS

**School-based teams** of MA educators will be provided with professional customized learning opportunities that build capacity at a school level in the implementation and roll out of UDL as a systemic framework for educational decision-making and improving outcomes for all learners. The focus of this work is on improving outcomes for all learners by systematically applying the UDL guidelines to lessons and examining data at regular intervals to assess effectiveness of Implementation the UDL Phases of Implementation.

**UDL Academy Phases of Implementation**

* Pre-phase: Entering into UDL Implementation
* Phase 1: Preparing for UDL Implementation
* Phase 2: Applying UDL to Classroom Practices
* Phase 3: Scaling UDL to the School
* Phase 4: Scaling UDL to the District

Over the course of the academy, participants will work on aligning UDL with other school initiatives, teach others in the school about UDL and engage in with colleagues in an iterative process of trying out UDL in practice, collecting and analyzing data, and reflecting about the application of UDL. In school-based teams, educators will work to identify and address common needs and actions, working quickly through Phase 1 and focusing on phases Phase 2 and Phase 3 (see Table).

This Academy provides opportunities for learning deeply about UDL, teaching others about UDL, and applying UDL in their own settings. Teams will be supported both onsite and remotely and by a CAST UDL Implementation Specialist (coach). The CAST approach to implementation is a systematic approach that requires a commitment of time, resources, and supports to ensure that educators understand and apply UDL as a framework for addressing the varied needs of all learners and to ensure that UDL can be used across the school to systematically improve teaching and learning.

As the needs of schools vary, CAST’s Implementation Specialist works with each school-based team as the team determines how to learn more deeply about UDL through face-to-face learning opportunities, online courses, and site visits. Further, the Implementation Specialist supports the team to spread best UDL practices to other educators throughout the school, to align UDL with other initiatives, and to try out UDL with multiple educators across the school. Ultimately, the team can decide how to go through the experience together. However, teams are required to meet at least every two weeks for 60-90 minutes with their CAST Implementation Specialist throughout the year as capacity is built.

**2016-2017**

* Identify the school-based team that agrees to fully participate in the UDL Academy. Teams need to include a building administrator, two –three classroom teachers, and special educator. School-based teams should not exceed 8 members and should include at least 50% returning members. Please contact CAST if your school based team would like to return with fewer than half of the 2015-2016 team.
* Complete the application and District Readiness protocol.

*Phase 1*: Preparing for UDL Implementation – Teams have the opportunity to dig deeply into aspects of UDL through a *two-day face-to-face workshop* or *online learning experiences* or site visits

During this phase of implementation, teams will

* Confirm roles and responsibilities of the team.
* Dig deeply into UDL as a framework to understand UDL in practice

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Academy**

**Information and Application**

**School Year 2016-2017**

*Phase 2***:** Applying UDL to Classroom Practice and Phase 3: Scale UDL in the School

 During this phase,

* The team will go through a series of specific steps in your classroom to try out specific UDL Guidelines
* The team will assess if and how lessons are being infused with the UDL Guidelines
* The team will determine if and how the lessons infused with UDL impact student learning
* The team will consider what worked and what did not work as UDL is infused into lessons by using protocols to explore and understand student and teacher data
* The team will determine a model for spreading UDL to other educators into the school
* The UDL Team determines other staff in the school that can enter into Phase 1 and 2 of the UDL Implementation process.
* The team develops an action plan based on the structures in their particular schools and models of other schools’ successful implementation to scale to the school.
* The experienced UDL Team and the new team work together to engage in components of Phase 1 and 2.

## PARTICIPANT BENEFIT

Participants will:

* Understand and be able to teach components of Universal Design for Learning
* Apply the UDL Guidelines to instructional practices
* Collect and analyze data as a way to measure progress
* Engage in discussions with colleagues and CAST staff throughout the UDL Implementation process
* Build individual and team capacity to integrate UDL into their practices
* Develop an actionable plan for integrating UDL into other initiatives and school practices
* Receive support throughout the Academy from CAST staff
* Have access to CAST developed resources that will be used to integrate UDL into educator practices throughout the school, including tools for implementation and lesson development as well as material to support facilitators.