

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS  
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2013 05:22 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	35
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	11
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	8
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
<b>Total</b>	100	79

# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development - 9: 84.411C

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

##### General:

The applicant has designed an exciting, novel approach to improve social and academic outcomes for a very hard to reach population: children with intellectual disabilities and autism. Entitled the Think College Transition Model, this model will serve to improve teacher and student capabilities in an easy to approach method.

Reader's Score: 0

## Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

##### Strengths:

The applicant has designed an exciting, novel approach to improve social and academic outcomes for a very hard to reach population: children with intellectual disabilities and autism. Entitled the Think College Transition Model, its formation resulted from the lack of empirical research of the:

- efficacy and/or outcomes of inclusive transition practices for students with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A);
- poor transition outcomes and future employment for students with this diagnosis
- the preponderance of segregated educational opportunities for this population of ID/A students; and
- poor vocational and employment outcomes.

This model proposes to address these factors through a plan to increased inclusion opportunities at the high school level as well as engage ID/A in a dual enrollment transition classroom in post-secondary colleges where students with Intellectual disabilities and autism participate in college courses with typically developing peers (pg. 2,3,4).

This model supports a range of factors contributing to positive outcomes, including self- determination, independent living, increased employment and higher pay, and increased opportunities for independent living (4-5)

It also enhances and extends the current knowledge base regarding dual enrollment of students with disabilities in high school and college simultaneously. It will improve student outcomes related to higher education and employment (pg. 4).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score:** 35

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

**Strengths:**

The quality of the design is excellent. The applicant demonstrates the importance placed on the design by articulating clearly stated goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines for achieving project success in a well-designed implementation plan (p.). The plan was perfectly aligned with absolute priority number 4, subpart (b). To achieve the program overarching goal "to improve student academic achievement and post-school outcomes", the applicant developed initial, intermediate and terminal goals presented in chart and narrative form. Regularly scheduled in person and remote meetings are incorporated into each phase of the plan.

Applicants will be enrolled in two and four year colleges, with a prescribed course of study. Due to the nature and severity of students with ID/A, maintaining enrollment may be difficult. To encourage sustainability, the applicant has built in incentives, such as stipends, employability, etc.

In addition, the applicant has identified potential risks to project success and strategies to offset those risks including, but not limited to:

- Lack of model fidelity
- Risk of low student participation and;
- lack of professional parent knowledge (pg. 9-12).

**Weaknesses:**

None Noted

**Reader's Score:** 25

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

**(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The management plan was extensive and detailed in design, including goals, objectives, staff responsibilities, timelines, milestones annual performance targets and metrics, which are measurable. Key personnel have confirmed their commitment to the project as evident in the letters of support. Regularly scheduled weekly, monthly and quarterly meetings with avenues for evaluating project status, as well as mechanisms for disseminating information was included.

**Weaknesses:**

Historical and current research demonstrates that parent involvement has always been essential to the success of students with disabilities. However, in a review of the key personnel, the applicant did not consider including parents or parental involvement in any aspect of the project activities which may impact student access.

**Reader's Score: 11**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.**

**Strengths:**

Among other components of the application, quality of the management plan is considered a strength. Based upon a review of the qualifications of the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator and Project Coordinator it is evident a strong, experienced team will support the project implementation. Each have experiences working with the targeted population, higher education for people with ID, post school transition, special education, quantitative research and international trainings (pg. 21-23)

**Weaknesses:**

While the key personnel are highly qualified and committed to the project success, the limited amount of time designated to the implementation of project activities may mitigate project success. Additionally, the applicant did not provide evidence that the Independent Evaluator had professional experiences or knowledge base in designing an evaluation appropriate for this project.

**Reader's Score: 8**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

### Strengths:

Scored by another reviewer.

### Weaknesses:

Scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/12/2013 05:22 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2013 04:58 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	35
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	11
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	8
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
<b>Total</b>	100	79

# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development - 9: 84.411C

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

##### General:

Reader's Score:

### Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

##### Strengths:

The applicant proposes a Think College Transition (TCT) Model in partnership with local colleges for youth with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A). This project would support the development, refinement and research on the TCT Model which is an inclusive dual enrollment transition model for youth with ID/A that will result in increased academic achievement and student growth in higher education, employment and self-determination skills (p. 2).

The project will contribute to the advancement of theory and knowledge in the field of transition services for youth with ID/A by developing refining and researching an evidence-based, inclusive transition model that incorporate the principals of dual enrollment for transitioning youth ages 18-21.

The project model builds on dual enrollment, a practice that allows high school students to simultaneously be enrolled in high school and college. The project will advance knowledge and practice in the fields of higher and special education by developing a transition model that is fully inclusive and reflecting both current federal guidance and evidenced-based transition practices (p. 3).

The project will improve outcomes achieved by other practices through increasing students' access to inclusive education environments as students would be accessing instruction in typical college classes (for audit/credit) with peers without disabilities (p. 4).

The TCT Model would provide access to paid and unpaid internships, as well as paid employment during students college based program, potentially leading to greater employment outcomes once they exit the K-12 system (p. 5).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 35**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

**1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.**

**(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).**

**(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.**

**Strengths:**

The project proposes that the project will result in improved outcomes for transitioning students ages 18-21 with ID/A resulting from participation in an inclusive dual enrollment transition initiative (p. 6).

The project has five goals and relevant objectives that focus on a strong management team, create a TCT Model for student with ID/A reflecting the Higher Education Opportunities Act, implement the TCT model with students with ID/A in Boston Public Schools, and gather and use quantitative and qualitative data from multiple perspectives to identify the impact of the TCT Model on student transition outcomes (pp 7-13).

The project goals and objectives are concise, relevant, and coherent in their alignment with each goal and the overall focus of the project

The project identifies potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate the risks. Low student participation and attrition will be addressed through stipends and use of statistical methods that account for small sample size (p. 13).

Staff turnover will be addressed by ongoing technical assistance needs assessments, personnel training and technical assistance evaluation (p. 13).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics**

that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a comprehensive project management plan, responsible personnel, milestones and timelines (14-18).

Metrics have been identified that the applicant will use to monitor how and if the project is achieving its goals which includes metrics for management structure and dissemination, creating the Think College Transition Model, implementing the Think College Transition Model, and collecting data to analyze the results (p. 19).

The project has identified key partners whose participation is critical to the project's success such as Boston Public Schools, Roxbury Community College and the University of Massachusetts Boston (p. 13).

The applicant will also be working with the Massachusetts Advocates for Children whose focus is on special education and legal services (p. 22).

**Weaknesses:**

To strengthen the management plan parent advocacy groups are a needed component to participate in an advisory council or in some capacity as oversight for services and education for transition aged youth with ID/A.

**Reader's Score:** 11

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

**Strengths:**

The Principal Investigator has 23 years' experience working with transitioning youth and adults with I/DD. She has served as Pi or Co-PI on six postsecondary education grant for students with ID over the last 13 years (p. 21).

The Co-PI has over 30 years' experience working with people with disabilities, their families, and secondary and postsecondary faculty and professionals. She is an internationally known expert on higher education options for people with ID (p. 21).

The Evaluation Coordinator has worked in special education for over 25 years with a focus on evaluation and Teaching and Technical Assistance on transition of students with ID/A from high school to adult life (p. 21).

The Project Coordinator is a postsecondary education and training specialist which is seen as a strength as this project will be provided training and technical assistance (Appendix).

**Weaknesses:**

The total FTE for key project staff (PI, Co-PI, Evaluation Coordinator and Project Coordinator) equals approximately 1.95 FTE. This doesn't appear to be very high considering the amount of work that the project is proposing and the amount of work that each of these positions will be performing per the Project Management Plan.

The Independent Evaluator does not appear to have the experience to evaluate a project of this size and scope.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

**Strengths:**

This section was scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:** 0

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/12/2013 04:58 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2013 05:23 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	35
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	12
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	8
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
<b>Total</b>	100	80

# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development - 9: 84.411C

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

### Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

#### Strengths:

This project seeks to provide employment and college training for young adults with intellectual disabilities and Autism. This is a high need population so there is potential for a large contribution of the project. Dual enrollment will be expanded to include this population via a fully inclusive transition model. The applicant cites appropriate literature that indicates a need for more research on inclusive opportunities for these particular populations.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 35

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application

**includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.**

**Strengths:**

This project adequately addresses absolute priority number 4, subpart b. The project is organized around clear and comprehensive goals. These are well aligned tot he activities of the project. A detailed plan is in place for implementation of these goals, including a logic model. Potential risks and mitigating strategies are explicitly described.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.**

**(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project s long-term success.**

**(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

An explicit management plan, organized by objective, effectively articulates project milestones, persons responsible, and timelines. This plan ensures that the project should meet its goals. Clear and measurable performance targets are provided with accompanying metrics. The Knowledge to Action framework should provide continuous improvement to the project. Key partners are committed to the project as evidenced by letters of support.

**Weaknesses:**

This project would be strengthened by the inclusion of parents or advocacy groups in the feedback loop or as key partners/stakeholders.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.**

**Strengths:**

Project staff are highly qualified for this project and have extensive experience in the field and with grants.

**Weaknesses:**

There is a concern about the qualifications of the independent evaluator. His vita does not show any extensive experience in evaluation for a grant of this magnitude.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

**Strengths:**

Comments provided by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

Comments provided by another reviewer.

**Reader's Score:** 0

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/12/2013 05:23 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2013 11:55 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	0
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	0
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	11
<b>Total</b>	100	11

# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development - 9: 84.411C

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

### Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

Strengths:

scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

**Strengths:**

scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

**Strengths:**

scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score: 0**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

### 1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

#### Strengths:

The applicant has developed annual performance targets that include measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation, which will help the applicant determine whether the project is on track to meet its goals; examples of thresholds include: 160 Core Management Team meetings with 90% attendance, 90% participation in TTA needs assessment, and 20 Fidelity checks conducted (p. 19).

The applicant describes appropriate methods to assess Goal 4 of the evaluation plan--student outcomes--by gathering and generating data such as number and type of college courses accessed, courses completed, internship and employment status, the pre/post Learning and Study Strategies Inventory-High School Version, and student goal attainment (p. 23).

The applicant describes a credible analysis plan for examining treatment effects on student outcomes, including use of a matched-pairs pre-post randomized control design with multilevel latent growth curve modeling to examine differences between the experimental and control groups (p. 24) and hierarchical multiple regression to determine the extent to which number of months of enrollment and program completion predict student outcomes (p. 25).

The applicant uses a priori power analyses to demonstrate that the proposed sample size of 120 is sufficient for capturing the minimum detectable effect size of .26 for match-pairs t-tests and .323 for a 2-factor analysis of variance (p.24), indicating that its decision to include 120 students is a reasonable sample size for detecting program impacts.

The evaluation includes studies of compliance fidelity and competence fidelity (p. 25). The applicant proposes a formal procedure for evaluating whether the project is on track to meet its goals by administering the Getting to Outcomes methodology every 6 months to ensure that the project is on track regarding understanding of the purposes and goals of the project, status of project implementation, and status of achievement of project goals. This will enable the project to systematically review data for purposes of continuous improvement, including the documentation of progress and fidelity of program implementation, and to provide a mechanism for data driven decision-making (p. 25).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant describes four goals of the evaluation, but does not explicitly list the key research questions to be addressed by the project evaluation (pp. 22-23).

Although the applicant explains the randomization process, the applicant does not explain how the initial pool of students will be selected (pp. 10-11, 24).

Development of the Think College Transition (TCT) Model is a key component of the project; however, although the applicant intends to use the Delphi method to confirm the essential model components, the applicant does not incorporate in the evaluation plan use of this data or any other data on TCT Model components such as services from education coaches, accommodations from the college disability services office, or work with peer mentors that might be important mediating factors related to student outcomes (pp. 9-11).

Although the applicant intends to measure compliance fidelity and competence fidelity (p. 25) of the treatment group, the applicant does not mention similar measures for the control group to ensure that the control sample is not engaged in activities similar to those of the treatment group.

**Reader's Score:** 11

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/12/2013 11:55 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2013 11:20 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	0
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	0
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	11
<b>Total</b>	100	11

# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development - 9: 84.411C

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: University of Massachusetts Boston (U411C130149)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

**General:**

Scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

**Strengths:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

Scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

**Strengths:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

**Strengths:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

**Strengths:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

Scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score: 0**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

### Strengths:

The objectives of this program are to provide special education students with the increased academic achievement and adult skills necessary for higher education or a career. The key evaluation questions align with assessing if these objectives are met.

The sample sizes are sufficient for a minimum detectable effect size.

There is a complete logic model with inputs, activities, outputs, and short range and long range outcomes.

The proposed statistical analysis will be Multilevel Latent Growth Curve Modeling (ML-LGM) which is a longitudinal analysis technique. The students will likely have different growth curves and ML-LGM provides a way to analyze the observed differences between the treatment and control groups that can be attributed to the program.

It is important to maintain as many of the of the sample as possible and not lose participants through attrition. The project proposes to use numerous methods such as providing stipends to mitigate attrition.

The funds (12.9%) allocated for evaluation should be ample.

The fidelity of the implementation of the program will be assessed to measure and assure that the treatment services are being delivered completely and in the proscribed way.

### Weaknesses:

The research questions are not well articulated. The logic model lists increased student achievement as a goal, but there is no discussion or listing of what measures will be used in which subject areas.

There are many challenges to do random assignment to treatment and control groups in education. There was no discussion, or acknowledgement, of the procedures that are required., such as, are just some students, but not all, in a classroom going to be in the treatment sample. If so, how will the logistics of delivering the treatment be implemented to just some of the students in the class. A quasi-random assignment should be considered where entire classes, or schools or school systems are selected to be the treatment and control groups..

The project proposes to randomly select 60 students for the treatment group and 60 students for the control group (p24), however, they do not provide any discussion of from where or how these students will be "selected".

Reader's Score: 11

---

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2013 11:20 AM