

**Mississippi State University
Request for Proposals (RFP) 22-41
University Virtual Assistant (Chatbot Platform)**

ISSUE DATE: February 22, 2022

ISSUING AGENCY: Office of Procurement and Contracts

Mississippi State University
610 McArthur Hall
245 Barr Avenue
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Sealed Proposals, subject to the conditions made a part hereof, will be **received March 11, 2022 at 2:00 PM in the MSU Office of Procurement and Contracts, same address above**, for furnishing services and potentially, optional services as described herein.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Indicate firm name, and RFP number on the front of each sealed proposal envelope or package.

All inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to:

Jennifer Mayfield
Office of Procurement and Contracts, (Same address above)
jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu
662-325-2550

Any addendum associated with this RFP will be posted at <http://www.procurement.msstate.edu/procurement/bids/index.php> located under RFP 22-41. It is the respondent's responsibility to assure that all addenda have been reviewed and if applicable, signed and returned.

1. UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW

Mississippi State University (MSU) is a comprehensive land grant university of 21,500+ students and approximately 5,000 faculty and staff. The main campus is located adjacent to the community of Starkville in northeast Mississippi, with a remote campus located in Meridian with an enrollment of around 700 students. Additionally, the university operates several remote agricultural experiment stations and has an Extension office located in each of the eighty-two Mississippi counties.

Additional information about MSU can be found at our website www.msstate.edu.

2. INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL ON RFP

Mississippi State University is seeking a vendor to provide a Virtual Assistant (Chatbot Platform) that simulates, and processes written human conversation allowing students to interact with the University as if they were communicating with a real staff member. The Chatbot needs to be designed as a virtual assistant to answer queries students generally ask related to services provided by the University including but not limited to Admissions, Financial Aid, Academics, Registration, Records, Counseling and Student Development. The Chatbot also needs to include a Live Chat escalation component for a live agent at the University to assist a student when the AI answer is not sufficient or when a student requires live service.

General minimum requirements are as follows:

- Have a proven platform designed for Higher Education.
- Have a web-base that allows remote access
- 24/7 AI Chatbot capabilities
- Live Chat Handoff capabilities to switch conversations to a live agent
- Ability to customize Live Chat hours by department
- Integration with Slate CRM
- Calendar integration with Office 365
- Provide Live Chat licensing capability to be utilized by various campus support offices with various permissions
- Be compatible with Mississippi State University current technology and adhere to strict data security standards.

The Chatbot solution needs to provide a virtual assistant to communicate with students on all aspects of services provided by Mississippi State University, creating a virtual "one-stop-shop" for student queries. The Chatbot solution will provide students with instant help 24/7 on general topics related to Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid and more. Students who require assistance from a live agent will have the option to connect with an agent during regular office

hours or leave a message for an agent to reply if it is during non-office hours. It is preferred that this solution would be accessible from our public website (www.msstate.edu) as well as specific department subdomains (online.msstate.edu, career.msstate.edu/, grad.msstate.edu/)

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

a) Technical Requirements

Platform/System – minimum technical requirements:

- Integration with Slate CRM for Lead Capture
- Calendar integration with Office 365. Advanced routing rules, Visitor may select meeting time based off availability. Calendar appointments automatically created and emailed to both parties.
- Technical User application capability to be operated on mobile, PC's, and Mac devices.
- Live Chat capabilities with seamless handoff from chatbot. Customizable notifications, away messages, and fallback options during off hours. Chat transcripts, advanced routing rules, and internal note options. Mobile App capabilities.
- Targeted chatbot communication based off visitor's location (URL, demographics, geography, website behavior).
- Customized for institution branding (name, avatar, colors).
- Customized content flows, questions, answers and links.
- Ability to use with multiple departments, integrations and inboxes seamlessly
- Provide applicable certifications such as SOC2 documentation.
- System must be secure and meet all local, state and federal data security standards.
- Provide a statement stating whether your company is compliant with FERPA, GLBA, NACH and Red Flag Regulation requirements.
- Provide a completed Higher Education Cloud Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) (lite version available at: <https://www.ren-isac.net/public-resources/hecvat.html>).
- Does the system support two-factor authentication? If so, describe solution options.
- System interfaces are compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA and provide VPAT if available.
- GDPR and Privacy Compliance
- Support single sign-on (CAS, Shibboleth, or SAML). Please specify which one.

b) Users

User permissions and accesses to various system functions must be role based with users allowed in multiple roles. Role-based permissions govern each user's rights to add, edit, and view information within the system. There must be capability to accommodate tiered access based on roles.

c) Reporting/Forms, Custom Fields, Files

- Reporting and analytics must be available for review.
- Customizable dashboards for users
- Ability for visitors to provide feedback on conversations
- The system must have the ability to create custom fields by select users and system administrators
- The bidder should explain in detail the reporting function of the system.
- Capability to isolate monitoring/reporting by multiple factors for individualized monitoring as well as aggregating and summarizing monitoring activities.

d) Functions

The system must use a tiered structure that allows authorized users to access data and reports for analysis or approval, while allowing any user to be able to submit documents. The system will need to be able to allow authorized users to monitor and approve/deny requests and offer commentary or feedback that is viewable by the requestee.

Documents and files submitted through the application must be easily downloadable by any user with required authorization. The system will allow for users to track reports and requests, monitor progress, and stay up-to-date on compliance and reporting requirements.

e) System Maintenance and Support

Mississippi State University requests the bidder to provide installation, setup, and user training. Regular reporting and analytics analysis. Conversation mapping and building of the chatbot intelligence. Bidder provides unlimited strategic and technical support with a dedicated client specialist.

Bidders shall provide details on licensing requirements and all ongoing expenses for maintenance and support.

4. INQUIRIES ABOUT RFP

Prospective respondents may make written inquiries concerning this request for proposal to obtain clarification of requirements. **Questions should be submitted either via a Word document or plainly typed in the email itself.** Responses to these inquiries may be made by addendum to the Request for Proposal (RFP). Please send your inquiries to Jennifer Mayfield via electronic mail at jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu

All inquiries should be marked “URGENT INQUIRY. MSU RFP 22-41”

5. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

a) Issuing Office

This RFP is issued by the following office:

Office of Procurement and Contracts
Mississippi State University
245 Barr Avenue, 610 McArthur Hall
Mississippi State, MS 39762

b) Schedule of Critical Dates

The following dates are for planning purposes only unless otherwise stated in this RFP progress towards their completion is at the sole discretion of the university.

RFP Posted	February 22, 2022
Questions from Vendors Due	March 1, 2022
MSU Q&A Response Due	March 4, 2022
Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.	March 11, 2022
Award Date (Estimated)	April 1, 2022
Contract Effective Date (Estimated)	July 1, 2022

6. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

This is a two-step RFP process. The technical proposals and the cost proposals are to be submitted in separate sealed envelopes. Indicate firm name, RFP# and word “Technical Proposal” on the front of the sealed technical proposal envelope or package. Indicate the firm name, RFP# and the word “Cost Proposal” on the front of the sealed proposal envelope or package.

At a minimum, the following items should be included in the contents of the Technical Proposal:

- Cover letter, indicating the scope of the proposal. The letter should include an overview of the services being offered. The letter should include a statement of exceptions to any of the terms and conditions outlined in this RFP. (Cover letter should be no more than 3 pages in length.)

- Corporate Structure and Credentials
 - Number of years of experience
 - Staffing levels and support proposed
 - Examples of similar previous work.
- Operations and Ability To Perform
 - Provide operation plan. This should include, but not be limited to, acknowledgement and agreement with all requirements as well as explanations, where applicable, of the intended plan to achieve the requirements.
 - Describe how services will be provided to MSU.

At a minimum, the following items should be included in the contents of the Cost Proposal:

- Fees for initial purchase of software/items/service (including all preparation, installation, rollout, training and first year maintenance and support)
- Annual Maintenance Costs after initial purchase.

7. DISCUSSIONS/EVALUATION CRITERIA/AWARD PROCESS

MSU reserves the right to conduct discussions with any or all respondents, or to make an award of a contract without such discussions based only on evaluation of the written proposals. MSU reserves the right to contact and interview anyone connected with any past or present projects with which the respondent has been associated. MSU likewise reserves the right to designate a review committee to evaluate the proposals according to the criteria set forth under this section. MSU may make a written determination showing the basis upon which the award was made and such determination shall be included in the procurement file.

MSU reserves the right to award this contract in whole or in part depending on what is in the best interest of MSU with MSU being the sole judge thereof.

The evaluation factors set forth in this section are described as follows:

- The Vendor's ability to deliver an application meeting the overall objective and functions described in the RFP
- Competitive fees
- Availability and access technical support
- Vendor's experience with similar systems
- Compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations
- The committee may invite finalists for interviews and/or presentations

Failure to attend a requested interview presentation before the committee may result in a proposal not being considered.

Upon award of contract(s), successful respondent(s) will be asked to provide a transition plan and timeline and obtain MSU's input and concurrence before moving forward.

Proposals will be scored based on the following weights (100 points total):

- Corporate Structure/Years of Experience/References – 25 pts
- Operation Plan/Ease of Use/Services Offered – 45 pts
- Fees – 30 pts.

8. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals shall be submitted in two packages (envelopes or boxes) as set forth in Section 7. Please make sure that the RFP number is clearly visible on the outside of the package.

Technical Proposal – One (1) original and one (1) electronic copy (of the complete technical proposal in one pdf file on a flash drive) of parts 7(b)(i) (Cover Letter), 7(b)(ii) (Corporate Structure and Credentials), and 7(b)(iii) (Operations and Ability to Perform) should be sealed in a package with “Technical Proposal” in the lower left hand corner. Each submitted package should be a complete copy. The original shall be marked on the first page “Original”.

Cost Proposal – One (1) original and one (1) electronic copy (of the complete cost proposal in one pdf file on a flash drive). Should be sealed in a package with “Cost Proposal” in the lower left-hand corner. Each submitted package should be a complete copy. The original shall be marked on the first page “Original”.

The proposal package must be received on or before **2:00 p.m. on March 11, 2022**. It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the proposal package arrives in the Procurement and Contracts office on-time. The proposal package should be delivered or sent by mail to:

**Office of Procurement and Contracts
Mississippi State University
610 McArthur Hall
245 Barr Avenue
Mississippi State, MS 39762**

Your response must include the signature page included in this RFP (See Appendix A) and contain the signature of an authorized representative of the respondent's organization. The signature on the “Original” signature page should be in blue ink

MSU reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received and to accept any portion of a proposal or all items bid if deemed in the best interest of the University to do so.

Proposals received after the stated due date and time will be returned unopened. Submission via facsimile or other electronic means will not be accepted.

9. PCI COMPLIANCE ISSUES (IF APPLICABLE)

The vendor must provide a PCI compliant processing environment using one of the approved options below. If the vendor is unable to fully adhere to one of these options, the proposal will be removed from consideration.

- **Option 1** – Integrate with MSU’s existing third-party solution (NelNet Business Solutions – Commerce Manager), because all hardware, software and back end processing have been vetted and credit/debit card payments are automatically posted to Banner.
- **Option 2** – Use alternative third-party solution. Use a different MSU Merchant ID but same bank account.
 - Work with members of MSU’s PCI Council and third-party PCI Compliance consultant to review business needs and proposed solution.
 - Ensure card transactions processed by university personnel are performed using a PCI-validated point to point encrypted (P2PE) solution. The solution must be listed on the PCI council’s website (<https://www.pcisecuritystandards.org>), must not be expired, and devices to be used with the solution must have a PIN transaction security (PTS) expiration date at least 3 years past the date of installation.
 - Obtain the following solution information
 - Attestation of compliance (AoC) from all parties involved in handling or that affect the security of cardholder data.
 - Verify that all devices have a current PTS certification and have an expiration date at least 3 years past the installation date of the solution.
 - Obtain a data flow diagram showing where payment card data will be introduced to the proposed solution and all steps/hops it will take until payment information is delivered to the merchant processing bank. This will determine all of the service providers that must provide an AoC.
 - Require specific reporting requirements and interfaces to support Banner integration and automatic posting of credit/debit card payments to the ERP. The exact file layout will be provided upon request.
- **Option 3** – Use alternative third-party solution. Use vendor’s Merchant ID.
 - Work with members of MSU’s PCI Council and third-party PCI Compliance consultant to review the solution.

- Ensure card transactions processed by university personnel are performed using a PCI-validated point to point encrypted (P2PE) solution. The solution must be listed on the PCI council's website (<https://www.pcisecuritystandards.org>), must not be expired, and devices to be used with the solution must have a PIN transaction security (PTS) expiration date at least 3 years past the date of installation.
- Obtain the following solution information
- Attestation of compliance (AoC) from all parties involved in handling or that affect the security of cardholder data.
- Verify that all devices have a current PTS certification and have an expiration date at least 3 years past the installation date of the solution.
- Obtain a data flow diagram showing where payment card data will be introduced to the proposed solution and all steps/hops it will take until payment information is delivered to the merchant processing bank. This will determine all of the service providers that must provide an AoC.
- Payments due MSU will be remitted on a predetermined basis, net of all applicable fees and merchant discounts. Banner integration not required.

10. TWO-PHASE, BEST AND FINAL OFFER

If the initial proposals do not provide MSU with a clear and convincing solution, or if MSU feels it is appropriate to offer the potential providers an opportunity to submit revised proposals, MSU reserves the right to use a two-phase approach and/or invite Best and Final Offers (BAFO). Based on the information obtained through the proposal submittals (Phase-One), MSU may choose a specific business model, and potential providers may be asked to submit revised proposals based upon that specific model.

The evaluation committee may develop, for distribution to the top-ranked firms, refined written terms with specific information on what is being requested as a result of information obtained through initial RFP submittal process. Proposers may be asked to reduce cost or provide additional clarification to specific sections of the RFP. Selected proposers are not required to submit a BAFO and may submit a written response notifying the solicitation evaluation committee that their response remains as originally submitted.

11. TERM OF CONTRACT

It is MSU's intention to enter into a three (3) year contract, estimated to begin July 1, 2022.

MSU reserves the right to terminate this agreement with thirty (30) days-notice, by the Director of Procurement and Contracts via certified mail to the address listed on the signature page of this RFP (See Appendix A) if any of the terms of the proposal and/or contract are violated.

In the event the contractor fails to carry out and comply with any of the conditions and agreements to be performed under the specifications, MSU will notify the contractor, in writing, of such failure or default. In the event the necessary corrective action has not been completed within a ten (10) day period, the contractor must submit, in writing, why such corrective action has not been performed. The University reserves the right to determine whether or not such noncompliance may be construed as a failure of performance of the contractor.

Termination of contract by contractor without cause can only occur with at least one-hundred and twenty (120) days-notice prior to the proposed termination of the contract.

In the event MSU employs attorneys or incurs other expenses it considers necessary to protect or enforce its rights under this contract, the contractor agrees to pay the attorney's fees and expenses so incurred by MSU.

12. ACCEPTANCE TIME

Proposal shall be valid for one-hundred and eighty (180) days following the proposal due date.

13. RFP CANCELLATION

This RFP in no manner obligates MSU to the eventual purchase of any services described, implied or which may be proposed until confirmed by a written contract. Progress towards this end is solely at the discretion of MSU and may be terminated without penalty or obligations at any time prior to the signing of a contract. MSU reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time, for any reason, and to reject any or all proposals or any parts thereof.

14. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR CLAUSE

The contractor shall acknowledge that an independent contractor relationship is established and that the employees of the contractor are not, nor shall they be deemed employees of MSU and that employees of MSU are not, nor shall they be deemed employees of the contractor.

15. OTHER CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Award Terms: This contract shall be awarded at the discretion of the University based on the capabilities and overall reputation of the Supplier, as well as the cost. Acceptance shall be confirmed by the issuance of a contract from the University.

Standard Contract: The awarded contractor(s) will be expected to enter into a contract that is in substantial compliance with MSU's standard contract http://www.procurement.msstate.edu/pdf/standard_rfp_contract.pdf. Proposal should include any desired changes to the standard contract. It should be noted that there are many clauses which the MSU cannot change (see Standard Addendum

<http://www.procurement.msstate.edu/contracts/standardaddendum.pdf>) Significant changes to the standard contract may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The Procurement Process: The following is a general description of the process by which a firm will be selected to fulfill this Request for Proposal.

- Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to prospective suppliers.
- A deadline for written questions is set.
- Proposals will be received as set forth in Section 8.
- Unsigned proposals will not be considered.
- All proposals must be received by MSU no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP.
- At that date and time, the package containing the proposals from each responding firm will be opened publicly and the name of each respondent will be announced.
- Proposal evaluation: The University will review each proposal.
- At their option, the evaluators may request oral presentations or discussions for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in the proposal
- Respondents are cautioned that this is a request for proposals, not a request to contract, and the MSU reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all proposals when such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of the University.
- The proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth in Section 7.

APPENDIX A: SIGNATURE PAGE

Provide information requested, affix signature and return this page with your proposal:

Name of Firm: _____

Complete Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

APPENDIX B – Q&A FROM PREVIOUS RFP

Mississippi State University
RFP 22-16
University Virtual Assistant – Chatbox Platform

Questions and Answers

February 11, 2022

See below the questions asked and answered for RFP 22-16. Some questions were intentionally deleted as we felt the information was not required to respond to this RFP. If the answer is “ITS Question” that information will be discussed, if necessary, with the winning vendor.

1. Do you have preference on using any specific platform for development of chatbot solution?
 - a. **No**

2. In the interest of efficiency and lowering our Corporate carbon footprint, would MSU consider accepting the bid response as an electronic submission?
 - a. **No, legally we have to have a hard copy of the RFP.**

3. Does MSU currently have any version of a chat bot?
 - a. **Yes**

4. In addition to mobile, PC's, and Mac, are you interested in Voice Assistants, IVR/Telephony, and/or Social Media channels?
 - a. **No**

5. Conversational AI requires conversation design, creation, iteration, and publishing. Does MSU want this process to be IT driven or Business team driven?
 - a. **Unsure**

6. To what degree does MSU wish to be involved in the integrations, development, design etc. of the chatbot?
 - a. **Consultation, review, approvals of all deliverables.**

7. Higher Education Cloud Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) (lite version available at: <https://www.ren-isac.net/public-resources/hecvat.html>). Is this document required at bid submission or can it be provided at contract award?
 - a. **With the bid, it can be on a flash drive and included with the Technical Response**
8. Are you using any live chat program/chatbot currently?
 - a. **Yes**
9. Apart from Web, on what channels will the proposed chatbot be available like Teams, etc.?
 - a. **Web Only**
10. Is there a requirement/ mandate for this proposed Chatbot to have Speech recognition capabilities?
 - a. **Yes**
11. Is there a preference of deploying the chatbot program on cloud or on premise?
 - a. **No preference**
12. What's the current technology stack of MSU? Do you have any existing Azure subscription in place, if Espire proposes to develop the chatbot on Azure platform?
 - a. **Yes, we have an existing Azure subscription in place.**
13. What kind of User queries is the bot expected to handle? Please share a high-level estimate of the number of standard questions proposed Chatbot would be expected to answer.
 - a. **The chatbot should be able to handle any number of questions related to our website content. 1000's of possibilities.**
14. Kindly confirm the total users, concurrent users, and the number of users who are going to use the chatbot.
 - a. **Number of interactions is unknown. Total agents are unknown, but expect 20+**
15. What are the required language capabilities that the bot should support?
 - a. **English**
16. Can you elaborate on the desired use cases for the integrations with Slate CRM?
 - a. **Lead generation of prospective students.**

17. Are there existing APIs available for the proposed Chatbot to interact and exchange data with Slate CRM?
 - a. **Yes**

18. Please confirm the list and details of the systems and data sources that the chatbot is required to integrate with, apart from Slate CRM and Outlook/O365.
 - a. **Possibility of integration with Ellucian Banner.**

19. Are Students required to authenticate themselves in order to access certain information during the conversation with the Chatbot?
 - a. **Possible, We would prefer students SSO into certain information.**

20. Is it mandatory to have single sign on implemented using either of these three- CAS, Shibboleth, or SAML? Are you open to using Azure AD or OAuth for single sign on?
 - a. **Yes Additionally, if there is any addition cost for SSO, please specify.**

21. With respect to this statement- "Provide Live Chat licensing capability to be utilized by various campus support offices with various permissions", please elaborate on what type of licensing requirements are being sought.
 - a. **Chatbot should have the ability to use live chat to answer question in real time.**

22. With respect to PCI compliance section, is there a requirement for Chatbot to handle online payment requests as well?
 - a. **No**

23. Do you have a preference for a custom-built solution versus a domain-specific product offering?
 - a. **Depends on the scope.**

24. What do you mean by "Bidder Provide unlimited strategic and technical support with a dedicated client specialist"?
 - a. **Bidder provides strategic and technical support throughout the life of the contract with a single client specialist.**

25. What type of support MSU required for this application L1, L2, L3? What are the SLAs expected for different Priority incidents?
 - a. **Vendors should give us their "out of the box" support for L1, L2, and L3 support tiers.**

26. Is there any geographical and time constraints to provide support for developed application?
a. Support should be available 8-5 CST Monday – Friday
27. Are you looking for a ready product or customized solution using major platform like Google dialogflow , Microsoft bot framework , Amazon Lex, Botpress or Rasa?
a. Unknown
28. Does the solution require any PI or HIPAA compliance?
a. ITS Question
29. Do the users need to be authenticated before chatbot opens up or should login details should be captured from login page?
a. No, no login to use bot.
30. Should new user registration be allowed and capture or this chatbot only for existing users?
a. No
31. Do you need a mobile app developed or is responsive mobile friendly chatbot okay?
a. Responsive
32. Under Scope, please elaborate "Integration with Slate CRM for Lead Capture" with respect to functionalities required. What integrations are needed with CRM? Are these only pull requests?
a. Integration into Slate for new prospect records.
33. Under Scope, please elaborate "Technical User application capability to be operated on mobile, PC's, and Mac devices"
a. Bot should work all listed.
34. Do you have existing Mobile App? **No** If yes, do you want the Chatbot to be integrated with it? if no, do you want a separate Mobile App with Chatbot alone?
a. No
35. Do you have Azure subscription?
a. ITS Question

36. Please share the O365 license types assigned to internal users. Count of total active O365 licenses?

a. ITS Question

37. Do you have PowerBI licenses?

a. Not relevant

38. What would be the tentative count of unique non-authenticated monthly users who will access the bot?

a. Unknown

39. Which authentication Identity Provider is implemented? E.g. Azure AD, On-premise AD or any other

a. ITS Question

40. If any other Identity Provider is implemented, do that support two-factor authentication?

a. ITS Question

41. Are only prospective students and exiting students will be using the chat bot or there will be more different user roles who will be accessing the bot?

a. Additional roles are possible.

42. Do prospective students have any credentials for accessing your website or are they anonymous user?

a. Anonymous

43. Do you need a chat bot for internal staff apart from confirmed students (for authenticated users)?

a. No

44. Where the BOT needs to be deployed to for Authenticated users (internal staff or confirmed students)? Does it need to be deployed on some website or Teams?

a. Website

45. Are you using any ERP, content management system, learning management system that needs to be integrated with the chat bot?

a. Not currently.

46. Is live agent handoff required for prospective students (non-authenticated) on public facing website?
a. **Yes**
47. Does university have any existing Live agent hub? If yes, please share the details. If no, is there any preference to any Live agent tool?
a. **No preference**
48. Will university deploy its support staff to provide support for requests which will be escalated to human agent from bot?
a. **Yes**
49. Do you want bot to support multiple languages?
a. **No**
50. Is university looking for subscription based Chatbot product?
a. **No**
51. Is university fine with custom developed solution as per their requirements?
a. **Yes**
52. University wants to host the solution on their environment (Azure, AWS, GCP) or they are fine with hosting the solution on provider's environment?
a. **ITS Question**
53. Do you have FAQs and other content ready for ingestion to the Chatbot database or you want the offeror to develop it for you?
a. **Yes**
54. Can you share the Budget Range for this engagement? - 0-100K, 100-200K, 200-300K, >300K?
a. **We do not give out this information**
55. As per section 9 PCI Compliance- Please confirm if there is a payment integration needed with the chatbot requirement.
a. **No, this section can be ignored.**
56. What languages should the chatbot support? Only English?
a. **English currently**

57. Should the chatbot be available on other channels in addition to your public website and specific departments subdomains? (E.g. on Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, SMS, etc)
- a. **No**
58. What types of analytics/dashboards are most important for you?
- a. **Usage, new prospects, question monitoring.**
59. What specific tiers of role-based access are you interested in?
- a. **Users/Admins.**
60. We understand that Virtual Assistant will be rolled out for assistance of prospective students. MSU is requested to share insights on the number of prospective students. What numbers of prospective students are expected to use the chatbot?
- a. **Unknown.**
61. We understand you want to deploy the chatbot on university website and said sub-domains and not on any other channel(s) or mobile applications, if any. Is our understanding correct?
- a. **yes**
62. Any approximate number of FAQs that you are looking to cover as part of the solution. An FAQ is a static/short-tail Q&A and does not rely on any back end/3rd party system to render a relevant response to a bot user.
- a. **Unknown.**
63. Kindly provide us with an approximate number of transactional/conversational use-cases (featuring integration with a back-end system) that you are looking to cover as part of the solution. If possible, pair it with a brief description of each of those use-cases.
- a. **Number of interactions is unknown.**
64. For system integration, we understand that the requisite REST/JSON and/or APIs along with their documentation would be made available to us. Is our understanding correct?
- a. **ITS Question**
65. We understand that chatbot would be text-based only and there is no voice requirement. Is our understanding correct?
- a. **Correct**

66. Request you to kindly elaborate on following point: Section 3a Description Ability to use with multiple departments, integrations and inboxes seamlessly
- a. **Multiple users are across multiple departments while providing integrations with no issues.**
67. Does MSU need a multi-lingual bot working in different languages? If yes, please specify the languages.
- a. **No**
68. Please update on the number of environments. Do we consider 3 environments which is DEV, UAT, and PROD? Please correct if otherwise.
- a. **ITS Question**
69. Please let us know the preference to deploy the solution, would it be on-premises or on-cloud?
- a. **On Cloud**
70. Which is the Live Agent software being used currently?
- a. **Built into current virtual assistant.**
71. How many agents are expected to support/need access to the chatbot?
- a. **20+ agents**
72. How many end-users do you anticipate using the chatbot?
- a. **Unknown**
73. Do you have a systems administrator in place to lead the project with whom we would during implementation?
- a. **Yes**
74. Will there be MSU resources available during implementation?
- a. **Possibly**
75. Is there a knowledge base of articles (i.e. frequently asked questions) currently in existence?
- a. **Possible**
76. Are you interested in a Cloud Hosted solution?
- a. **yes**

77. If Cloud Hosted - what is the proposed budget for the initial implementation of the solution, both for year over year SaaS annual license subscriptions, and for implementation services?
a. not providing
78. What back-end systems are required to integrate with the Chatbot?
a. Slate CRM, Microsoft 365
79. What is the integration method for each back-end solution? REST/Wed Services/CTI/other
a. ITS question
80. Are your back-end systems premise or cloud?
a. ITS question
81. What are you trying to achieve, is this the first step in implementing Digital Transformation for Mississippi State?
a. Better ability to answer prospective and current student questions.
82. What are the biggest challenges you are trying to solve?
a. N/A
83. Are there other methods used to contact the Mississippi State?
a. Yes
84. What are the success metrics? (NPR, CES, surveys)
a. N/A
85. What is the method used to measure successful call/chat completion?
a. N/A
86. When would the system to be live?
a. July 2022
87. Are there any driving factors defining this timeline?
a. Current contract
88. Will you require more than one language?
a. Not required.
89. Is social media being used as a channel for registration?
a. Registration for what?

90. Describe security requirements, authentication methods, Two Factor, Multifactor authentication.
- a. **ITS question**
91. Where is data stored NAS/SAN/S3/Other?
- a. **ITS question**
92. Describe encryption requirements?
- a. **ITS question**
93. How many teams and agents will be handling escalation from the chatbot to a live person?
- a. **20+**
94. What are success metrics of your current bot?
- a. **N/A**
95. What channels do you currently support with your teams (voice, email, live-chat, sms, Facebook, Twitter)?
- a. **Voice, Email**
96. Would we be able to mark "Proprietary/Confidential " any place in the response proposals to restrict the public limitations? E.g., the customer reference details and a few cores product details.
- a. **No, as a public institution we are required to hand over documents if we get a public records request. You will be given an opportunity to obtain a legal injunction if needed when we contact you to alert you of the request.**
97. We see a Chat option on your website (<https://ask.library.msstate.edu/>). Is it expected that the AI chatbot transfer the chat to this system, if so , we assume we get integration support? Or is it expected that we provide a separate live chat system?
- a. **No, that domain is not part of the project.**
98. If we have to give the Live chat, how many agents shall manage the live chat system?
- a. **20+ users**
99. Can we get more specific details on this statement "Be compatible with Mississippi State University current technology and adhere to strict data security standards....." What technologies should we be adhered to?
- a. **ITS question**

100. What are the use cases for Office 365 integration?
 - a. **Calendar integration for meeting request.**

101. Can we get more details on the following statement " The system must have the ability to create custom fields by select users and system administrators "?
 - a. **Allow specific users to create fields if needed for data records.**