

**Mississippi State University  
Request for Proposals (RFP) 25-03  
Faculty Activity and Reporting Database**

ISSUE DATE: January 6, 2025

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 **February 4, 2025 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](mailto: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 25-03. 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](http://www.msstate.edu).

## **2. INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL ON RFP**

The Mississippi State University Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (OIRE) seeks a web-based application system that will enable the university community to log their activities in terms of teaching, research, and service in a manner that the same data could be used for multiple purposes. This would streamline our reporting efforts for annual evaluation, promotion and tenure, profile of scholarly outcomes, reports for specialized accreditation, and other similar university uses.

The system should be flexible and customizable in a way that allows OIRE to monitor ongoing work and maintain compliance. If needed, it should be possible to add or change screens and fields to accommodate the data faculty choose to track. In order to reflect the priorities of faculty, the system should allow faculty to organize data based on its relevance to teaching, research, or service, and the structure and labeling of screens should help prevent duplication of activities being tracked. The system should also facilitate faculty tracking their activities in preparation for annual review processes and promotion and tenure processes. The system must be able to convert existing faculty records housed in an web-based software.

MSU faculty should be the owner of their own accounts and maintain data according to their own preferences and needs. In addition, the system should allow the university to designate individuals to monitor and access content on behalf of MSU faculty. Being able to give different permissions to individuals, such as department heads or deans, would allow for easy departmental tracking of activities. Since non-tenure track faculty, staff, and graduate students could benefit from tracking activities such as publications and presentations, the system should also be able to have users beyond tenure-track faculty.

While faculty may need to manually enter some information about publications and research, the system should be flexible so as to minimize data entry and allow features such as importing from ORCID, Google Scholar, and other research databases, as well as to import from CVs or other existing documents. The system should have the ability to connect to Banner to alleviate the need to enter information already digitally stored by MSU. It should also be possible for the

university to use web services to retrieve data from our current data ecosystem and to publish content from the system to our web sites.

### **3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED**

#### **a) Continuity and Availability**

- The system should have a system recovery program with policies for nightly back ups and restoration and recovery of data within 24 hours of an outage or request.

#### **b) Security and Access Control**

- System must be secure and meet all local, state and federal data security standards.
- Provide applicable certifications such as SOC2 documentation.
- Provide a statement stating whether your company is compliant with FERPA, GLBA, NACH and Red Flag Regulation requirements.
- Provide product interfaces that are compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA and provide VPAT if available.
- The company should provide a completed Higher Education Cloud Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) (lite version available at: <https://www.ren-isac.net/public-resources/hecvat.html>).
- If the system supports two-factor authentication, then please describe the solution options.
- The system supports single sign-on (CAS, Shibboleth, or SAML). If the system does authentication, it must not use or provide default credentials.
- The system should allow for granular control of access to profile data and workflows based on the user (full access, limited access, and view only access).
- The system should allow user accounts regardless of the type of employee.
- The system should allow the administrator to assign security roles to other users.
- The system should provide logging of user management, administrative activity, and user activity.
- The system should allow the university administrator to view user data on system use (log ins, uploads, etc.).
- The company should provide applicable certifications such as SOC2 documentation.
- The system must be secure and meet all local, state, and federal data security standards.

#### **c) Interface/Accessibility**

- The system should allow faculty to enter data via a web browser.
- The system should allow bulk import of data from spreadsheets in .csv format.
- The solution must allow faculty to upload supporting documentation to activity fields in typical formats (CSV, Word, PDF, JPEG, etc.)
- Application Program Interface (API) should be made available to MSU to allow for in-house programming of data interchange to and from third party applications.
- The system interfaces must be compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA.

- The system should be usable across common web browsers (Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, etc.).

**d) Data**

- The system should allow for data field customization within activity types.
- The system should be able to include HR-related data such as user education, date of hire, rank, etc.
- The system should allow users to track activities in the areas of teaching, research and creative activity, and service.
- The system should be able to lock certain fields from modification by users other than an administrator.
- The system should capture and store profile information in searchable data fields customized and defined by MSU.
- The system should convert existing records housed in a web-based software.

**e) Functions**

- The system should be able to manage faculty approval processes such as promotion and tenure and annual reviews.
- The solution must allow for changes in university structure (college, department, etc.)
- The system should include customizable workflows for routing faculty information for reviews and approval.
- The system should allow workflow steps to be flagged as under review or in the process of being reviewed.
- The system should display workflow tasks as they are completed.
- The system should provide the ability to define automatic trigger alerts for notifications in the review and approval workflow process.
- The system should trigger alerts or task notifications to appropriate reviewers/approvers as faculty evaluation documentation progress through designated workflows.
- The system should allow viewers from outside the university (e.g., external reviewers in the promotion and tenure process) to engage in the workflow.
- 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 should be easily downloadable by any user with required authorization.
- The system should allow for users to track reports and requests, monitor progress, and stay up-to-date on compliance and reporting requirements.

**f) Reporting**

- Reports should be provided in multiple formats. Most reports, if not all, should be viewable on screen with options to download in Excel, PDF, CSV, Word (.doc/.rtf), or API access.
- The system should be able to isolate monitoring/reporting by multiple factors for individualized monitoring as well as aggregating and summarizing monitoring activities.
- The system should allow faculty to create reports such as CVs/resumes, publication lists, etc. from data stored within the system.
- The system should allow for the generation of accreditation reports (ABET, AACSB, etc.).
- The system should allow for the creation of customized reports.
- The system should allow customizable reporting to query faculty profile information by department, college/division, etc.
- The system should allow data to be exported in a non-proprietary data format.
- The system will have the ability to notify faculty of upcoming deadlines for review of profile content and will send reminders to specified users.
- The system should be able to display reminder alerts in the system and trigger them to users via email.

**g) University Website**

- The system should allow users to select which information in the system populates the university website profile.
- The solution should be able to populate web profiles with faculty data stored in the solution.
- The system should be able to populate web profiles with users and integrate with MSU websites.

**h) Documentation/Training**

- The vendor should provide installation, setup, and configuration training.
- The vendor should provide system training via a train-the-trainer approach where the vendor will train OIRE staff who will then train partners.
- Vendor should provide end-user documentation prior to final implementation in the form of physical manuals, a list of online resources, frequently asked questions or any combination of agreed-upon formats.

**i) Support**

- The vendor should provide post-implementation support and a clear path to obtaining support in accordance with service levels agreed upon during finalization of the contract.

- The system should allow for the submission of work requests to modify data fields, data entry screens/panels, custom reports, etc.

#### 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](mailto:jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu).

All inquiries should be marked “URGENT INQUIRY. MSU RFP 25-03”

#### 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.

<b>RFP Posted</b>	<b>January 6, 2025</b>
<b>Questions from Vendors Due</b>	<b>January 22, 2025</b>
<b>MSU Q&amp;A Response Due</b>	<b>January 29, 2025</b>
<b>Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.</b>	<b>February 4, 2025</b>
<b>Award Date (Estimated)</b>	<b>April 1, 2025</b>
<b>Contract Effective Date (Estimated)</b>	<b>June 1, 2025</b>

#### 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)
- Itemized costs for the different units within the university
- 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 – 20 pts
- Operation Plan/Ease of Use/Services Offered – 50 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 February 4, 2025**. 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 five (5) year contract, estimated to begin June 1, 2025.

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. DISCLOSURE OF PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Proposals will be kept confidential until evaluations and award are completed by MSU. At that time, all proposals and documents pertaining to the proposals will be open to the public, except for material that is clearly marked proprietary or confidential.

IMPORTANT! The offeror/proposer should mark any and all pages of the proposal considered to be proprietary information which may remain confidential in accordance with Mississippi Code Annotated 25-61-9 and 79-23 1 (1972, as amended). Each page of the proposal that the proposer considers trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information should be on a different color paper than non-confidential pages and be marked in the upper right hand corner with the word "CONFIDENTIAL."

Failure to clearly identify trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information will result in that information being released subject to a public records request.

## 16. 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](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: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_