

**Mississippi State University
Request for Proposals (RFP) 24-88
Electronic Research Administration System**

ISSUE DATE: September 30, 2024

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 October 22, **2024 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:

Jay Rester
Office of Procurement and Contracts, (Same address above)
jrester@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 24-88. 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

A Carnegie Foundation R1-Very High Research Activity Doctoral University, Mississippi State University, is ranked among the National Science Foundation's top 100 research institutions. As the Magnolia State's leading research university, MSU's research expenditures totaled over \$300 million in FY 2022, accounting for more than half of the total in research and development expenditures reported by all Mississippi institutions. This research activity is playing an ever-increasing role in Mississippi's overall economic development efforts. MSU is a recognized leader in a number of disciplines, and well known for innovative partnerships, real-world impact, and offering undergraduate and graduate students unique research opportunities.

MSU is accepting competitive proposals from qualified companies to provide a single Cloud Research Administration System to support the following Office of Research and Economic Development offices which encompasses:

- **Office of Research Development:** Supports individual and institutional efforts to attract external funding through development of quality, competitive proposals, strategic collaboration, and providing expert support to increase impact, foster professional growth, and build capacity of researchers to expand MSU's funding portfolio.
- **Office of Sponsored Projects:** Oversees sponsored projects for grants, contracts, and other sponsored agreements. Coordinating interaction between the University, research faculty, and sponsors by providing services such as proposal review, agreement negotiation, and award acceptance.
- **Office of Research Compliance and Security (ORC&S):** Provides support and training in regulatory requirements for the conduct of scientific research for University faculty members, researchers, students. To that end, ORC&S oversees programs in human research protections, animal care and use, financial conflict of interest, responsible conduct of research, and biological safety and includes the following ethics review committees:

- Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB)
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- Conflict of Interest Review Committee (CIRC)
- Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
- **Office of Laboratory Animal Resources (OLAR):** Provides veterinary care and animal husbandry resources for all animals required in biomedical research, teaching, and testing programs at MSU. The OLAR animal care and use program is accredited by AAALAC International, is registered by the USDA, and maintains Animal Welfare Assurance with the Public Health Service. Services also provided by the OLAR include vendor selection, animal daily care, observations, quarantine, testing, animal health and environmental surveillance, animal model selection, and investigator training.

Additionally, OLAR assists with the provision of adequate animal holding facilities and the provision of technical services and facilities for surgical research, post-operative care, and necropsy.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

The overall objective for a new eRA system is to provide a single electronic solution for creation and submission of proposals, and for management of awards, subawards, and a variety of contracts from receipt/set-up through project close out, research compliance & oversight, tech transfer & commercialization, and fund management. MSU is seeking to leverage a new eRA system to maximize operating efficiency and to accommodate continued growth and complexity of its Sponsored Projects portfolio. The solution will allow electronic management of several processes, workflows, and approvals that are critical for the daily operations of Sponsored Projects Administration. These processes would include Sponsored Project Proposals, Award Management, Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Conflict of Interest (COI) and Animal Facilities Management. The new eRA system should also be capable of managing Internal Research projects, both Funded and Unfunded. The system will eliminate duplicate data entry by allowing automatic flow of data within its own modules and between other interfaced University systems, thus eliminating the need to maintain manual processes.

High Level Features and Functions

- Research Opportunities: Provides on-line access to extramural funding opportunities.
- Proposal Management: Includes creation, submission, tracking, and reporting of research proposals., including creation and approval of budgets.
- Grant Contracts Management: Includes creation, negotiation, and execution of grant awards and subawards, and post-award modifications to those agreements.

- Financial Management: Tracks the award status, approved budgets, and expenditures for billing, reporting process and completing the closeout process for research projects. Fully integrates with our ERP
- Compliance Management: Ensures compliance with regulations, policies, and guidelines set by funding agencies and institutions. Includes subrecipient risk assessment and subrecipient monitoring.
- Reporting: Generates reports on research activities, financial status, and other relevant information.
- Collaboration: Facilitates collaboration among researchers, sponsors, and administrators.
- Grant Tracking: Keeps track of grant submissions, awards, and funding information.
- Document Management: Provides secure storage and retrieval of important documents, including grant proposals, budgets, and contracts.
- Workflow Management: Automates and streamlines research administration processes, including proposal submission, review, and award management.
- Analytics and Dashboards: Provides insights and data visualization for decision-making and performance evaluation.
- Outside Interest Reporting: A report of an individual's personal, professional, commercial, and/or financial activities, interests, or relationships with an entity/organization external to the University.
- Robust user profiles whose data can be used to populate common data fields when creating records in the vendor's SaaS system. Integrations such as leveraging existing University system data (Human Resources); ORCID; CITI; etc.
- Functional user dashboards to manage records and data across all products in the vendor's SaaS system installed by the University.
- Ability to access raw data within the system, including the ability to manipulate that data, either via direct database access or through provided APIs.

Detailed Features and Functional Requirements

Provision of a cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) system for eRA management for the University to include functions required by the University to fully administer a robust research administration system, including, but not limited to:

- Online access to a searchable database of extramural funding opportunities available to institutions of higher education (IHEs) with ability to save and filter searches and transmit email notifications for opportunities of interest.
- Proposal development capability, including:
 - o Ability for university investigators to create proposals
 - o Build detailed budgets
 - o Request and collect letters of intent/commitment from outside collaborators

- Attach relevant documents and electronically route completed proposals for internal workflow approvals
- Ability for the University to collect proposal-related compliance information and key personnel certifications
- Ability to send action, reminder or follow-up notifications via email
- System-to-system proposal submission capability to Grants.gov. with initial error identification.
- Proposal tracking capability, including:
 - Ability to monitor proposal submissions for follow-up or other issues
 - Obtain appropriate electronic internal approvals
 - Track conflict of interest disclosure statuses
 - Track proposal statistics such as proposal success rate, and number of funded and non-funded proposals
- Award tracking capability, including:
 - Ability to create records to document funded proposals
 - Track negotiation statuses of award terms and conditions
 - Obtain appropriate electronic internal approvals
 - Evidence formal award acceptance
 - Issue award notices to internal personnel
 - Track award statistics
- Project account tracking capability, including:
 - The ability for users (e.g., investigators and fiscal administrators) to view their internal and external funding portfolio
 - View their budget against expenses and encumbrances
 - Monitor cost sharing commitments
 - Create, save, edit, and share projections scenarios
 - Monitor fund burn rate and report on the progress of spending down funds
- Subaward tracking capability, including:
 - Ability to create records to document University-issued subawards
 - Relate the subaward records to University (prime) awards
 - Track negotiation statuses of subaward terms and conditions
 - Obtain appropriate electronic internal approvals
 - Issue subaward notices to internal personnel, and track subaward statistics
 - Easily engage sub awardees during the proposal process
 - Tools to monitor subrecipients
- Subrecipient data collection capability, including:
 - Ability to capture data from subrecipients as may be required by federal and other laws or regulations, or prime sponsor terms and conditions;
 - Capture data required for subaward preparation; to capture data required to conduct subrecipient risk assessments; and to track compliance issues.

- Unfunded agreement tracking capability, including:
 - o Ability to create records to document unfunded agreements
 - o Track negotiation statuses of award terms and conditions
 - o Evidence full execution of the agreements
 - o Issue award notices to internal personnel
- Conflict of interest (COI) tracking capability, including:
 - o Ability to collect COI information and Significant Financial Interest (SFI) disclosures on an annual basis as required by law and University policies
 - o Link disclosures to applicable proposal and award records
 - o Upload relevant documents including COI management plans
 - o Track completion of required training
 - o Send automated reminders to COI reporters/reviewers
 - o Manage submitted disclosures through a user (admin) dashboard that shows analyses and summaries of data
- Conflict of commitment (COC) tracking capability, including ability to collect outside employment and COC information as required by law and University policies.
- Export control data collection capability, including:
 - o Ability to track export-controlled items in use by the University under extramural awards
 - o Track export licenses
 - o Monitor parties of concern
- Human subjects protocol and Institutional Review Board (IRB) capability, including:
 - o Ability for University investigators to create and submit human subject protocols electronically
 - o Access and review protocols online
 - o Schedule, track and document meetings (e.g., via minutes)
 - o Track completion of required training
 - o Link protocols to applicable proposal and award records
 - o Ability to compare submissions that required modifications during the review process
 - o Store, maintain, and make changes to on-screen, fillable checklists for reviewers
 - o Forms, letters, and notification templates that can be modified by IRB office staff without the assistance of vendor support
 - o Ability to report on metrics including, but not limited to turnaround times, submission volume levels, workload reporting, and studies involving vulnerable populations
- Allow IRB (Institutional Review Board) admins to correct/update application data. Admins can also override the review flow of the Active Unapproved applications.
- Enable and require an IRB application when the user lists human subjects involved in the proposal.

- Facilitate tracking and reporting of adverse events, protocol deviations, amendments, and unanticipated problems.
- Provide an interactive dashboard, where IRB committee members post the comments specific to the application they received, and the PI can view the comments and take action before the full committee review.
- An all-inclusive and fully integrated animal research suite that includes:
 - o IACUC protocol management
 - o Training documentation
 - o Animal ordering
 - o Animal census tracking
 - o Billing
 - o Veterinary records and animal health reporting
 - o Husbandry scheduling
- A mobile view for actions such as (but not limited to), viewing medical records, submitting health reports, conducting census, responding to reviewer comments, etc.
- The solution must include a comprehensive reporting tool able to produce and sort reports by a variety of fields, especially animal use location reports, reports needed for AAALAC program descriptions, PHS Assurance, and USDA Registration, and animal usage.
- The solution for animal welfare must allow for the following integrations:
 - o Financial system (import account information and export a GL compatible with MSU's ERP – Ellucian Banner 9.x and Ellucian Banner SaaS.
 - o Training system(s) (import completed courses into a user's profile and appear within IACUC protocols as researcher's are assigned)
- Must allow PIs to delegate users (i.e. lab staff) to work on their behalf.
- The solution must allow IACUC staff to manage and maintain a centrally-managed list of species-specific standard procedures, vet drugs, locations, etc.
- The solution must allow management staff to create meeting materials that are available within the system, including but not limited to:
 - o Assign reviewers/committee members
 - o Non-protocol related meeting topics and attachments.
 - o Electronic meeting agenda for reviewers/committee members
- The solution must integrate with the IBC solution to link IBC agents to the IACUC protocol and view the approval status and entire IBC protocol document within the IACUC protocol.
- The solution must be integrated with the vivarium modules to track animal usage (debits and credits) when amendments are approved, animals are ordered, animal order exceptions are recorded, and animals are weaned.
- The solution must allow for census to be completed in rooms without internet access.

- The solution must allow staff to view and export reports for room capacity and census data.
- The solution must allow the ability to schedule regularly occurring tasks at the cage, rack, room, area, or facility level.
- The solution must allow users to create individual and/or cage-based animal medical records which are integrated with the IACUC module.
- The solution must allow unique identifiers be added for animals, such as tattoo/tag #, USDA #, animal name, etc. All identifiers should be searchable.
- The solution must allow vet staff to recover costs for services provided within a treatment.
- The solution must allow for the tracking of treatments, surgeries, and procedures.
- The solution must accommodate recording of vitals during an anesthetic event, timestamping each entry.
- Biological safety protocol and Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) capability, including:
 - o Ability for to create and submit biosafety protocols electronically
 - o Access and review protocols online
 - o Schedule, track and document meetings (e.g., via minutes)
 - o Track completion of required training
- Technology transfer capabilities, including:
 - o Ability to create, submit and track invention disclosures electronically
 - o Document correspondence (e.g., emails)
 - o Track public disclosures and publications
 - o Trademark registrations, patents and other intellectual property assets
 - o Track licensing or other agreements; to track and report on SBIR/STTR and/or related funding
 - o Track and manage invention disclosures, related expenses, revenue and distributions
 - o Generate invoices
 - o Manage statutory deadlines for intellectual property and required reporting
 - o Manage relationships with University and non-University contacts
 - o Create marketing summaries for online posting
 - o Track startup company progress; and to transmit email notifications.

Reporting

- Reporting capabilities, including ability to generate reports for all of the above within user-specified periods
- Create customized reports based on data crossing subject matter areas in the system
- Create and save customized reports to run on an as-needed basis
- Save and download created reports into Excel and PDF formats

- Common reports currently generated by the University include but are not limited to:
 - o Periodic (quarterly, annual, ad hoc) number and dollar amount of proposals and awards
 - o Proposal and award statistics by sponsor
- Please provide any other additional reporting tools offered by your company to encompass all aforementioned aspects of Pre/Post-Award and compliance research activities.

Technical and Integration Requirements

- Direct integration or data transfer capability with the University's Ellucian Banner 9.x financial management system.
- Direct integration or data transfer capability with the University's Identity Management System (IMS).
- Direct integration or data transfer capability with the University's Ellucian Banner 9.x human resources system.
- Permission-based access by user or role to be maintained by the University, including ability to view or hide specific modules, sections and data fields within a record.
- Provide online access to at least one testing instance, which is a mirror of the production system.
- Assist the University, as requested, with testing of the vendor's software to ensure that software setup will accommodate the University's business processes and practices.
- Assist the University with set-up of a single sign-on (SSO) integration for the vendor's software.
- Ability to make modifications to individual modules or data fields where deemed necessary to accommodate regulatory requirements and the University's business practices, for example, the ability to rename fields, add fields, rearrange placement of fields, change a field's "required" status, make certain fields visible only to certain permission levels, or remove/hide fields.
- Ability to send email notifications directly from the vendor's SaaS system (e.g., action, reminders or follow-up notifications), and ability to create custom email notification templates.
- Provision of detailed user documentation (e.g., module specific manuals) for vendor's software.
- Provision of training for vendor's software.
- ADA compliant at the current level described by federal and state statutes.
- All data transmitted through, or processed and stored in the Contractor's SaaS system, shall be by secure means and shall be encrypted.
- Contractor shall treat the data as confidential and shall implement appropriate measures designed to ensure the confidentiality of the data, including, but not limited to,

restricting access to only personnel who require access to install and maintain vendor's SaaS system on behalf of the University.

- Contractor must have policies in place to secure data from unauthorized access and to address breaches.
- Contractor shall maintain the data on secure servers located within the United States, and maintain network security sufficient to protect the data, and in conformance with generally recognized industry standards and best practices, including, but not limited to:
 - Maintaining patched environments with appropriate security updates;
 - Conducting regular (two or more annually) third-party vulnerability assessments.
- All network paths for the data including, but not limited to, storage and backup, shall be contained within the United States.
- Contractor shall maintain and regularly update its software such that applications remain secure from vulnerabilities identified in updates, upgrades, and bug fixes.
- SaaS/Cloud based system
- Web Browsers: A web browser such as Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Safari is needed to access the software.
- Operating System: The cloud-based software may be compatible with multiple operating systems, such as Windows, Mac, and Linux.
- Device Compatibility: The software should be compatible with different devices such as desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.
- Security: The cloud-based software should have proper security measures in place, such as encryption, secure data storage, and access controls to ensure data privacy and protection.
- Scalability: The software should be scalable to accommodate growing needs and increasing user numbers.
- Can you integrate Single Sign-On by Active Directory, LDAP, SAML, CAS or Shibboleth?
- Please provide details pertaining to your experience with integrations specific to Ellucian Banner.
- Must integrate with Cayuse Proposals S2S and PIVOT, CITI; ORCID

Support and Accessibility

- Please send a copy of your Master Services Agreement/Subscription Agreement
- Please send a copy of your VPAT form(s) for accessibility
- Please send a copy of the HECVAT form for security
- Do you have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for support resolution?
- What is the percent uptime that you SLA?
- What is your Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan?
- What is the process for implementing upgrades, new features, etc.?
- What support is available to our end users once your system is live? Do you provide an end user Learning Management System (LMS) Platform? If so, please describe.

Third-Party Consultative Services and Change Management

The University maintains the right to include a Third Party consultant or conduct efforts in-house related to the services described herein. Please describe your approach and experience working as part of a consulting team and/or your experience in assisting the University with change management throughout implementation of your solutions(s).

Vendor responses should include a detailed implementation work plan complete with a timeline and major milestones. Proposals should include implementation services for the duration of the implementation until full acceptance of the software. It is intended that the Vendor's implementation team will work with local functional and technical teams throughout the implementation and testing stages of the new eRA system.

Once the RFP process is complete, Mississippi State reserves the right to either:

1. Invite selected vendors to MSU for demonstrations,
2. Negotiate final contracts with vendors of choice, OR
3. Award the RFP based solely on RFP responses.

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 Jay Rester via electronic mail at jrester@procurement.msstate.edu.

All inquiries should be marked "URGENT INQUIRY. MSU RFP 24-88"

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	September 30, 2024
Questions from Vendors Due	October 10, 2024
MSU Q&A Response Due	October 15, 2024
Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.	October 22, 2024
Award Date (Estimated)	November 29, 2024
Contract Effective Date (Estimated)	December 16, 2024

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:

- Completion of all required responses contained within this RFP in the correct format as requested.
- Ability to meet the indicated services in accordance with the specifications set out in this RFP.
- Vendor viability and experience with universities.
- Scores and responses to questions asked both during interviews, demonstrations and submitted materials.
- Cost analysis/return on investment.

- Feedback from submitted references (last 24 months).

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):

- Capabilities and Detailed Approach – 50 pts
- Years of Experience – 25 pts
- Prices/Fees – 25 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 October 22, 2024**. 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 December 16, 2024.

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. 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.

17. Security and Compliance

- 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 a completed Higher Education Cloud Vendor Assessment Tool (HECVAT) (lite version available at: <https://www.ren-isac.net/public-resources/hecvat.html>).
- Provide product interfaces that are compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA and provide VPAT if available.
- Does the system support two-factor authentication? If so, describe solution options.
- Does your system support single sign-on (CAS, Shibboleth, or SAML)?

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: _____