

**Mississippi State University
Request for Proposals (RFP) 22-14
Online Proctoring Solution**

ISSUE DATE: January 20, 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 **February 15, 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 22-14. 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 solicits proposals from qualified companies for an online proctoring solution for the 2023 Academic year. It is estimated that there will be a total of 100,000 exams given to up to 10,000 students during this time frame. Our goal is to evaluate online proctoring solutions to assure that MSU will have a proctoring solution that is state-of-the-art in terms of assuring the highest level of academic integrity at a reasonable cost. The university wants to ensure the academic integrity of online and hybrid assessments matches those offered in a traditional classroom setting.

MSU seeks a secure and flexible online proctoring solution for use during online examinations to ensure that student identity is verified, that students have complied with testing requirements, and the solution monitors and reports testing irregularities.

The University seeks a cost effective, convenient, and customizable solution. The online proctoring service should have the capability of an automated or live authentication solution, and live proctored exam sessions with trained and certified proctors. The service should allow the flexibility for faculty to select the level of online test security and to customize the test environment to meet desired exam specifications.

The proctoring solution has to be one that students and faculty can understand and use easily. It must be a solution that faculty have faith in as having a very high probability of detecting academic dishonesty during the examination process. MSU incorporates synchronous and asynchronous learning via the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). The proctoring solution must be compatible with Canvas as the LMS Platform. It must allow all exams in a course to be set in the same time frame on the same day, and it must be cost-effective. Preference is given to solutions that automate evaluation of student behaviors to identify cheating, rather than using live proctors.

The term of the initial contract shall be one year from date of contract execution or through one complete academic year. With the consent of the contractor, MSU reserves the right to extend or renew the contract for three (3) additional one-year terms, or parts thereof.

This solution should:

- Work with our existing Learning Management System (Canvas) and provide secure planning, tracking and reporting of online exams,
- Respondent's product will be a comprehensive Proctoring management system,
- To meet the critical implementation and conversion timeline components,
- Must provide a secure authentication method for students, faculty and staff by utilizing single sign-on (CAS, Shibboleth, or SAML) Please specify which one,
- Identify and describe in detail any additional hardware required for students and/or faculty to use the solution,
- Support a variety of client operating systems, the supported client operating systems for both faculty, student, and administrative usage,
- Support embedded objects and media as part of the exam proctoring process,
- Block copy-paste options,
- Freeze the screen of the candidate's device, thus blocking students from accessing other applications or switching windows while taking a test,
- Have the ability to whitelist sites that are allowed during an exam,
- Utilize video streaming and desktop sharing,
- Have the ability to record sessions (video, audio),
- Have the ability to store recorded sessions, the system policies around recorded exam sessions including retention of recordings and who beyond the student and the instructor would have access,
- Be able to accommodate the student's limited connectivity,
- Be able to notify administrators if suspicious activity is identified,
- Be able to provide for multiple proctored exams to occur simultaneously,
- Provide identify verification of the student.
- 24/7/365 availability of help materials and technical support available to students and faculty before, during, and after tests.
- Proctors and technical support staff should be fluent in English and reside within the United States.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUIRED

- **Technical Requirements**

Platform/System – should support a minimum of:

- Vendor must provide in detail; how does the system receive and provide information to Canvas LMS used by the University.
- Provide information on the data elements that the University will need to provide as a part of the interface/data feed.

- Provide a list of all the testing publishers/vendors for which your product is compatible, such as McGraw Hill, Pearson, etc.
- Clearly articulate any and all hardware, software, Wi-Fi, internet, and other related requirements or offerings or specific restrictions.
- Outline all proctoring options you offer, such as live and/or automated proctoring, lockdown browser, automated or manual review, etc.
- Outline all security features, including tester identification and incident report protocol.
- Describe cheating prevention measures such as browser/application suppression, double monitor identification, etc.
- Describe how your product/company addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and common issues associated with facial recognition software.
- Describe how your solution is designed to reduce anxiety for users while being monitored.
- Describe your administrator interface and reporting options for admins, faculty, and student users.
- How does your solution restrict the student being assessed to only the LMS website during the assessment event?
- How does your system prevent students from accessing test banks on websites such as Chegg, Coursehero, Quizlet, etc.
- How does your system detect and report if a student is using another device such as a cell phone or tablet outside the view of the webcam?
- Does your system provide technology that will automatically remove illicit test content from third party websites before student's take an assessment? Please describe:
- Does your system provide the ability for the instructor to allow the student to access specific websites/URLs during the exam?
- Please outline the process to submit and retrieve test information.
- Detail all costs associated with the purchase and usage of your product, including but not limited to implementation costs, annual fee, timing of payments (i.e. monthly, units paid in advance, etc.), minimum purchase, cost structure (i.e. cost per student, cost per test, cost per testing hour), etc.
- Describe any limitations to support or schedule high demand/peak time for Mid-terms and final exams.
- Describe maintenance and support options, including patching, minor and major fixes and when additional fees and costs are required for additional development.
- Describe support models including the options to contact support and Service Level Agreements.

- Does the solution have the ability to create a video log of the student's exam session and if so, how soon will the video be available for review by the instructor?
- Describe the retention period that would allow instructors or admins to reproduce evidence of incidents of academic integrity during or after the course is completed.
- Describe how your system makes it easy for the instructor to find evidence of potential alleged dishonesty.
- Identify any client software that needs to be installed, as well the process to fully uninstall it
- Describe how the session is terminated for the end user when the proctor session is complete and how can they validate that the recording and access to the webcam has also terminated successfully.
- Describe your system's ability to detect/record audio as well as to detect specific keywords or phrases the student may be using to gain assistance from a mobile device or digital assistant.
- Describe how your system could detect that an incident or violation of academic integrity is about to take place, but then potentially prevent the violation from happening.
- Does your system provide 24/7 on-demand proctoring services, or will students be required to schedule their exam time with a proctor?
- How does your system secure faculty exam content?
- What proctoring options are available to an instructor and how do they manage those options? Can the instructor set custom guidelines for the student and proctor for each exam?
- Describe in detail your 24 x 7 technical support to faculty, administration and students.
- Can you provide metrics that show the effectiveness of your support team including response times and customer satisfaction surveys?
- What is the escalation process for more complex support issues?
- 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

- **Users**

Currently MSU provides authorization via username and password (including two factor authentication) to online courses.

1. The service will affectively separate authentication i.e. validating that the individual using the login is the person who is tied to the authorization. Vendors should disclose what system they use to determine or maintain authorization of an individual's login in a manner that ensures that all data is FERPA compliant and is compliant with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

Vendors should identify if this service is provided as:

- Software-only
- Software as a Service (SaaS)
- Hosted
- Hybrid

Response should include descriptions of:

- How identity administration and provisioning will integrate with the universities existing password and credential management
 - How it manages group and role management
 - How it provides authorization reporting
2. Vendor must provide information on levels or types of authentication and security available for use with online exams as well as the availability of live proctors.
 3. Vendor must outline how authentication and security levels can be selected or customized per class or exam by the faculty member.

- **Reporting/Forms, Custom Fields, Files**

- Reporting and analytics should be available for review.
- 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.

- **Functions**

Secure and flexible online proctoring solution for use during online examinations to ensure that student identity is verified, that students have complied with testing requirements, and the solution monitors and reports testing irregularities.

- **System Maintenance and Support**

1. Provide a detailed process flow for how MSU would resolve a performance related issue/incident (i.e. slow response) related to the solution. Include levels of escalation and indicate third party entities being engaged (ISO or Hosting facilities). Also provide average response times.
2. The proposed solution will keep up with new releases of browsers (mobile, PC, or Mac), operating systems.
3. The proposed solution securely removes temporary files, cookies, etc. in local workstations at the end of each session.
4. Describe in detail the standard technical support Service Level Agreement for the proposed solution.
5. Describe in detail, your annual release schedule and any planned enhancements associated for the proposed solution.
6. Describe the various technical support provided for the service, including the following: a) days and hours of operation (using Central Time zone)
7. Methods of interaction (phone, fax, email, web-enabled knowledgebase, etc.)
 - a) any limits in the use of a service program
 - b) service/support standards. Include the Vendor's service/support level agreements(s) and mission statement
 - c) identification of the individuals, who will act as contacts for the University

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 22-14"

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	January 20, 2022
Questions from Vendors Due	January 28, 2022
MSU Q&A Response Due	February 4, 2022
Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m.	February 15, 2022
Award Date (Estimated)	March 15, 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.
- Describe what differentiates your company and product from your competitors?
- Provide 3 to 5 references, including contact information for similar sized colleges or universities using the proposed solution.
- Provide details of any past or pending litigation, or claims filed, against your firm that may affect your performance under a contract.

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 – 20 pts
- Operation Plan/Ease of Use/Services Offered – 40 pts
- Fees – 40 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 15, 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 one (1) year contract, estimated to begin July 1, 2022. MSU reserves the right to extend or renew the contract for three (3) additional one-year terms, or parts thereof.

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 (Include in Technical Proposal)

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: _____