

Mississippi State University
Request for Proposals (RFP) 2025032

Questions and Answers

November 20, 2025

See below the questions asked and answered for RFP 2025032 and use this information to respond accordingly.

1. Ad Astra is your current Classroom and Event scheduling software. Based on the technical requirements, this RFP looks to be geared towards Event management rather than Classroom scheduling. Can you advise if this RFP is to replace how the current Registrar office schedules academic classes/sections?
 - a. This RFP will replace the current software in our Registrar's office.
2. Which departments / teams will leverage the CRM?
 - a. Registrar's Office & Events Management will be users. Departments across campus will be viewers.
3. Are you open to a phased implementation? If so, what order do you anticipate onboarding the departments / teams that will leverage the CRM?
 - a. Academics and Events need to be live at the same time because of shared space.
4. Can you provide a detailed description of your current IT environment and any existing systems that need to be integrated?
 - a. On Registrar side, Banner and CLSS need to integrate.
5. What are the critical success factors for this project?
 - a. Quick and seamless implementation, easy to train campus partners, a system that does not overbook, final exam period ability to alter, reporting
6. Has a budget been allocated for this project? Can you share funding sources, and budget amounts?
 - a. We do not share budget information
7. Are there any constraints or limitations we should consider when proposing a solution?
 - a. N/A

8. What internal resources will be available to support the implementation?
 - a. Resources from functional departments such as the Office of the Registrar and Event Services, as well as technical resources from Information Technology Services are available to support the implementation, integration, and testing.
9. Are there institutional Milestones or Software renewal deadlines that are driving your timeline? If so, can you please provide additional details?
 - a. Current contract ends Summer 2026 so need to be up and running by then
10. In the process of researching potential solutions and/or preparing this RFP, has the team engaged in conversations and/or seen demos of any specific products? If so, can you share a list?
 - a. N/A
11. Has your team conducted a strategy engagement inclusive of defining current and future state business process diagrams? If so, will this information be shared with the selected partner?
 - a. No
12. Is there an existing Data Governance process/committee in place?
 - a. Mississippi State University is in the process of re-launching its Information Technology Governance Committee.
13. Can you describe any IPAAS (Integration Platform as a Service) or ETL (Extract Transform Load) tools that are available for this project?
 - a. The EIS Applications & Integrations team within ITS can assist with data loads and API integrations. Our architecture makes use of WSO2 and Ellucian Ethos to support integrations.
14. Does your institution have a data lake? If so, please specify the underlying technology. Are you considering an approach that leverages the data lake to meet the reporting needs specified in this RFP?
 - a. We do not, currently.
15. Are you open to a solution built on a Platform as a Service tool, which would provide best in class utilities for many of the desired features (e.g. data security and management, workflows and automations, and intuitive UI/UX)? This will provide the ability for your team to be flexible and responsive with future needs but would require modification during implementation to meet the specific functional requirements.
 - a. Yes, we are interested in exploring this solution. While our ERP/SIS is hosted on-prem currently, we want this integration to be done with a future SaaS migration in mind. IPaaS might be a good way to do this.

16. How many staff users will need to manage / administrator the solution?
- a. N/A
17. How many staff or faculty will need to access the solution (e.g. participate in a workflow)?
- a. N/A
18. How many students, if any, will need to access the solution, and how often? This will allow us to determine the appropriate licensing model.
- a. N/A
19. We often find it in our customer's best interest to have separate contracts with our firm as the implementation partner and vendors that provide software as a service. For the purposes of this RFP, if our proposed solution is selected, can multiple contracts be awarded?
- a. Yes, if we also agree separate contracts are needed.
20. What existing systems (e.g., CourseLeaf CLSS, Cowbell Connect, Campus Labs, QuickBooks) need to be integrated with the new scheduling tool?
- a. CLSS, Cowbell Connect, possibly others for Events
21. Are there any specific technical requirements or constraints for these integrations, such as preferred APIs or protocols?
- a. We support standard integration patterns such as those involving RESTful APIs and messaging queues. File-based integrations are also a secondary/supplemental option.
22. How many users will need access to the system, and do you plan to delegate access in some form for distributed administration?
- a. We are interested in distributed administration for access, as part of an overall evolution towards that model across the enterprise.
23. What are the primary scheduling needs for both academic and non-academic events?
- a. N/A
24. Will you need to sell tickets? If so do you need to manage refunds, coupons or other ticket based tracking or monetization?
- a. N/A
25. How should the system handle conflict detection and resolution for room bookings?
- a. It should prevent double-booking but preferably allow admins a way to override approved double-books

26. What types of events and resources (e.g., audiovisual equipment, staging, tents, disability support equipment) need to be managed through the system?
- a. N/A
27. Are there specific workflows or processes for coordinating these resources?
- a. N/A
28. Who owns sections/times and room assignments (CLSS/Banner vs new system)? Confirm system-of-record, one-way vs two-way sync, and where mid-term changes are initiated.
- a. Banner is the system-of-record. Two-way sync is needed. Where mid-term changes are initiated depends on the nature of the change. Currently, location changes are made in the scheduling software. Any other changes (days, times, enroll cap, etc) are made in Banner or CLSS)
29. Front end & calendars: Should vendor provide the self-service portal or embed in a campus portal?
- a. We may be interested in a self-service portal
30. Which service categories (AV/Facilities/Catering/Security) live in the system vs existing work-order tools? Should student org events stay in Cowbell/Campus Labs or move to the new system?
- a. N/A
31. What types of reports are required, and how customizable do they need to be?
- a. For registrar: Room usage reports – seat fill, meeting patterns, etc.
32. Are there specific data visualization needs for monitoring and analyzing scheduling data?
- a. Heat maps and bar graphs are definitely useful but anything that helps with historical data to inform true need is desired
33. What manual processes are currently in place that the new system should automate?
- a. Hopefully an optimization process can automate academic class assignments.
34. Are there specific documentation or approval workflows that need to be streamlined?
- a. N/A
35. What are the expectations for ongoing maintenance and support, including product updates and hotfixes?
- a. Expectations are primarily based on notification of changes/downtime, and the availability of a test environment to test such changes.
36. Are there any specific training requirements for staff, such as a train-the-trainer approach?
- a. For Registrar, train-the-trainer is fine.

37. What is the budget allocated for the initial purchase, installation, and first year of maintenance and support?
- a. See question number six.
38. What are the expected ongoing annual maintenance costs after the first year?
- a. That's what we need you to tell us
39. What is the desired timeline for the implementation, including key milestones and deadlines?
- a. Live by Summer 2026
40. Are there any specific compliance requirements, such as PCI compliance for payment processing?
- a. PCI compliance is applicable for payments (FERPA, HIPAA, GDPR apply)
41. How flexible does the system need to be in terms of customization for different departments or user groups?
- a. Needs to be branded to MSU
42. Are there any specific features or functionalities that are critical to the success of the implementation?
- a. For Registrar: seamless, real-time integration with Banner, optimization, room utilization reports & visual tools, integration with CLSS, final exam scheduling tools.
43. Does your team have existing reporting tools that are currently being leveraged? If so, please list applicable tools in consideration for this project.
- a. N/A