



# THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

December 22, 2021

## ADDENDUM 1 TO RFP 22-22

This addendum provides answers to questions submitted by prospective bidders. The University's answers are shown in **BLUE**.

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Deidre Edwards, Buyer

1. It is understood that you are commissioning the process by which secondary data will be collected about the marketplace in terms of competitors and the need for programs. Tested creative concepts and a marketing plan will be provided in the second phase. Is there an expectation and associated budget to assume primary market research is to be conducted as well? Primary research would be defined as qualitative discussions and quantitative surveys with prospective students, current students, faculty and staff. **We are open to recommendations from the marketing firm regarding to need to conduct primary research.**
2. Is the intent of the bid to work with a provider who can provide BOTH the specific market-oriented data through the lens of a creative brief and the recruitment marketing and communications plan or would you consider a different provider for each of them? **The purpose (intent) of this Request for Proposal is to solicit information for services to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for academic programs offered by The University of Southern Mississippi's Coastal Operations which will result in increased undergraduate and graduate student enrollment.**
3. Item #6 under general terms, conditions, and instructions lets us know that this is an option, but I wanted to see if you had any insight into the intent of the bid? **The purpose (intent) of this Request for Proposal is to solicit information for services to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for academic programs offered by The University of Southern Mississippi's Coastal Operations which will result in increased undergraduate and graduate student enrollment.**
4. Is the intention that the technical and creative brief phase include creative concepts (ie examples of what marketing materials might look like) in addition to audience insights and market information? **The plan will need to answer fundamental questions of: Who? What? How? And When? Then, the plan will be used by the University's Communications Team to develop creative concepts through web/digital, print, and event display components. Recommendations for developing a digital marketing strategy will be expected to be a**

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significant portion of the proposal with the necessary metrics to measure the short-and-long term success of the marketing plan for diverse program offerings.

5. Are you expecting primary audience research (focus groups or surveys) to be part of the work plan? We are open to recommendations from the marketing firm regarding to need to conduct formal concept testing as it relates to testing the market. However, the creative concept design will be developed by University Communications in subsequent work after the plan is developed.
6. How is recruitment for these programs currently handled? Has this changed recently? Recruiting has largely depending on recruitment from local markets like high schools, community colleges, and general public from within Mississippi. Some targeted locations (like Houston, Texas, Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans, Louisiana) have helped recruit students, but there has not been a specific strategy connecting specific academic programs to potential audiences of similar interest.
7. Are student search activities (i.e. name buys) currently underway? Is this managed internally, or through a vendor? Some name buys (like ACT scores) are underway but not integrated into an overall strategy connected with academic programs. We are open to recommendations from the marketing firm regarding to need to better develop student search strategies.
8. Does USM Coastal Operations have its own marketing team? Or is a central USM marketing function used? USM has a central University Communications (UC) team who is responsible for university-wide communications. Some targeted marketing of academic programs to push information out to the general public. Colleges within the university have traditionally been responsible for targeted marketing, but not as a central marketing function. There is a need to organize a better, well-organized strategy for the academic programs hosted through Coastal Operations.
9. Is there a budget for this project? There are resources (financial and additional staffing) being allocated to support this work.
10. Is there a defined annual marketing budget for these programs? An annual marketing budget has not previously been dedicated for this purpose. However, there is a commitment to resourcing (financial and staffing) this function moving forward.
11. Is the estimated timeframe for phase 1 flexible? Especially if we are still able to complete phase 2 by the estimated date? Yes.
12. Who are the key stakeholders for this initiative? External stakeholders include, but not limited to, prospective students (high school students, community college students, and adults), parents, teachers, and counselors. Internal stakeholders include, but not limited to, USM Coastal Leadership, faculty, and recruiters.

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