

## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed bids will be received in the Office of the Director of Procurement Services, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5003, Bond Hall, Room 214, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, until **Monday, July 24, 2023, 2:00 p.m.** for the purchase of the following:

**RFP 23-37 Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Detection Software**  
**RFx: 3160005977**

Detailed specifications may be secured from the above office upon request or our website <https://www.usm.edu/procurement-contract-services/current-bids-and-sole-source-notices.php>

Right is hereby reserved to reject any or all bids.

Steve Ballew  
Director of Procurement and Contract Services  
The University of Southern Mississippi

Publish 2 times and charge to The University of Southern Mississippi:

6/23/2023

6/30/2023

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
PROCUREMENT SERVICES  
118 COLLEGE DRIVE  
#5003  
HATTIESBURG, MS 39406-0001**

**GENERAL TERMS, CONDITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIDS/PROPOSALS**

- 1.) Failure to examine any drawings, specifications, and instructions will be at bidder's risk.
- 2.) Samples of items when called for must be furnished free of expense and if not destroyed in testing, will, upon request, be returned at the bidder's expense. Request for the return of samples must be made within ten (10) days following opening bids. Each individual sample must be labeled with bidder's name and manufacturer's brand name and number.
- 3.) As a public entity of the state, we use sealed bidding to ensure "fair and open competition" to ensure no one in the buying organization can influence the bidding process or steer the selection of a particular company by sharing competitive bid information during the solicitation process. Generally, all bids must remain sealed until they are opened publicly at the time stated in the notice—advance disclosure of the terms of a bid may be cause for rejection of said bid. Bidders should never send advanced copies of a sealed bid via email or screenshots of electronic bids. Bidders must submit sealed bids to be opened at the time and place stated in the solicitation for the public opening of bids and must not be revealed to the buyer before that time. Bids must be signed and sealed with bidder's name and address on the outside of the envelope, and the date and time of the bid opening and the bid file number shown in the lower-left corner of the packages, envelopes, express mailing labels, boxes, etc.
- 4.) At least one (1) signed original and one (1) signed copy of the bid **MUST** be provided. The University **requires** a portable electronic virus/malware free copy (thumb drive) of the bid response from the responding Vendor to be included in the bid response package. If an electronic copy is not included, the University reserves the right to request an electronic copy of the **exact** bid response prior to review of the bid.
- 5.) For your bid to be considered, it must be received, and time stamped in our office by 2:00 P.M. of the bid opening date. It is the responsibility of the vendor to ensure their bid is received within the appointed time. If your bid package is not received in Bond Hall, Room 214, by 2:00 P.M. of the bid opening date, it will not be considered.
  - a. If you are delivering your bid, you need to hand carry the bid package to: The University of Southern Mississippi  
Procurement Services (RFP #)  
Bond Hall, Room 214  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

b. If you are mailing your bid package via U.S. Postal Service, mail to: The University of Southern Mississippi

Procurement Services (RFP #)  
118 College Drive #5003  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

c. If you are express mailing your bid package via Federal Express or UPS, or any other delivery service which requires the use of a physical address, deliver to:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Receiving Department  
2609 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

- 6.) Bids or proposals shall not be modified, corrected, altered, or amended after the specified closing time and the opening of such bids, unless otherwise noted in the request for bids or proposals.
- 7.) The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informality in bids, and unless otherwise specified by the bidders, to accept any items on the bid. If the bidder fails to state the time within which bids must be accepted, it is understood and agreed that The University of Southern Mississippi shall have 90 days to accept. The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to make an award to this bid on an all or none basis, or on a line-by-line basis, whichever serves the best interest of The University of Southern Mississippi.
- 8.) Contracts and purchases will be made or entered into with the lowest, responsible bidder meeting specifications.
- 9.) A written purchase order or contract award mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful bidder within the time of acceptance specified in the Invitation for Bid results in a binding contract without further action by either party. The contract shall not be assignable by the vendor in whole or in part without the written consent of The University of Southern Mississippi.
- 10.) Unless written exception is provided in the bid response, the winning Vendor agrees to be bound by the USM Terms and Conditions, which are incorporated herein, and may be found at <https://www.usm.edu/procurement-contract-services/usm-terms-and-conditions.php>.
- 11.) Respondents are required to comply with all applicable local, State and Federal laws, codes, ordinances, and regulations in the provision of the materials required.
- 12.) Respondents must comply with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) data protection regarding State, Federal, and University regulations and policies.
- 13.) Legal Provisions to Which USM Cannot Agree

- a. Any provisions disclaiming implied warranties shall be null and void. See Mississippi Code Annotated Sections 11-7-18 and 75-2-719(4). The Vendor shall not disclaim the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose.
  - b. Any limitation of liability for claims related to the following items:
    - i. Infringement issues;
    - ii. Bodily injury;
    - iii. Death;
    - iv. Physical damage to tangible personal and/or real property; and/or the intentional and willful misconduct or negligent acts of the Vendor and/or Vendor's employees or subcontractors.
  - c. Any requirements that the University pay interest, except for those in conjunction with USM's standard payment terms of Net 45 days. Payments made beyond 45 days are subject to late fees and interest.
  - d. Any terms and conditions in the purchase contract that conflict with the laws of the State of Mississippi. Any such instances shall require a revision of the terms and conditions to ensure compliance with Mississippi state law.
  - e. Any provision requiring USM to pay attorney's fees, prejudgment interest or costs associated with any legal action to or for the Vendor, except that which are ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 14.) Bid files can only be examined during normal working hours by interested parties, but only after the official award has been made.
- 15.) If purchase orders or contracts are canceled because of the awarded vendor's failure to perform or request for price increase, that vendor shall be removed from our bidders' list for a period of 24 months.
- 16.) No addendum will be issued within a period of two (2) working days prior to the time and date set for the bid opening. Should it become necessary to issue an addendum within the two-day period prior to the bid opening, the bid date will be reset giving bidders ample time to answer the addendum.
- 17.) Alternate bids, unless specifically requested or allowed, will not be considered.
- 18.) Bid openings will be conducted open to the public. However, they will serve only to open the bids. No discussion will be held with any vendor as to the quality or provisions of the specifications, and no award will be made either stated or implied at the bid opening. After the close of the bid opening meeting, the bids will be considered to be in the evaluation process and will not be available for review by bidders. Proposal openings are not required to be open to the public; however, the resulting award is open for public inspection.
- 19.) Prices quoted shall be firm for the term of the contract or for the stated time of acceptance.
- 20.) The bidder understands that The University of Southern Mississippi is an equal opportunity employer and, therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, or any other such discrimination; and the bidder,

by signing this bid, agrees during the term of agreement that the bidder will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of products or services.

21.) Bidders must upon request of The University of Southern Mississippi furnish satisfactory evidence of their ability to furnish products or services in accordance with the terms and conditions of these specifications. The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to make the final determination as to the bidder's ability.

22.) Questions or problems arising from bid procedures should be directed to the Buyer listed on the solicitation at:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
118 College Drive #5003  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
Phone: (601) 266-4131  
[Bids@usm.edu](mailto:Bids@usm.edu)

23.) All items must equal or exceed the specifications listed. The absence of detail specifications or the omission of detail description shall be recognized as meaning that only the best commercial practices are to prevail, and that only first quality materials and workmanship are to be used.

24.) It is the intent of the specifications to obtain a product that will adequately meet the needs of the user while promoting the greatest extent of competition that is practicable. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder to review the entire Invitation to Bid packet and to notify The University of Southern Mississippi if the Specifications, Instructions, General, or Special Conditions are formulated in a manner which would unnecessarily restrict competition.

25.) It shall be incumbent upon the bidders to understand the specifications. Any requests for clarifications shall be in writing and shall be submitted to our Procurement Services office at least seven (7) business days prior to the time and date set for the bid opening, unless otherwise noted in the bid or proposal specifications.

26.) The minimum specifications are used to set a standard and in no case are used with the intention of discriminating against any manufacturer. Bidders should note the name and the manufacturer and model number of the product they propose to furnish and submit descriptive literature.

27.) Trade names, brand names, and/or manufacturer's information used in these specifications are for the purpose of establishing a level of quality, unless otherwise noted. Bids on products from other qualified manufacturers are acceptable, provided they are demonstrated as equal to those specified in construction, design, and suitability. Each bidder shall submit with his bid a complete brochure with pictures on each item and shall point out specifically any deviations from the specified items. Failure to do so may disqualify any bid. Please bid as specified or an approved equal.

- 28.) A copy of the manufacturer's standard guarantee/warranty shall accompany and become a part of this bid.
- 29.) There are no federal or state laws that prohibit bidders from submitting a bid lower than a price or bid given to the U.S. Government. Bidders may bid lower than U.S. Government contract price without any liability as The University of Southern Mississippi is exempt from the provisions of the Robinson-Patman Act and other related laws. In addition, the U.S. Government has no provisions in any of its purchasing arrangements with bidders whereby a lower price to The University of Southern Mississippi must automatically be given to the U.S. Government.
- 30.) All invoices, unless noted otherwise, are to be billed to:
- The University of Southern Mississippi  
IT Invoices  
118 College Drive #5181  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
[ITInvoices@usm.edu](mailto:ITInvoices@usm.edu)
- 31.) All equipment bids shall be of current production and of the latest design and construction.
- 32.) Where all, or part(s), of the bid is requested on a unit price basis, both the unit prices and the extension of the unit prices constitute a basis of determining the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. In cases of error in the extension of price, the unit price will govern.
- 33.) Should the University close due to inclement weather conditions, or any other unforeseen events on the bid opening date, sealed solicitations will open the following business day at the same time and location.
- 34.) The University reserves the right to solicit Best and Final Offers (BAFOs) from Vendors, principally in situations in which proposal costs eclipse available funding, or the University believes none of the competing proposals presents a Best Value (lowest and best proposal) opportunity. Because of the time and expense incurred by both the Vendor community and the University, BAFOs are not routinely conducted. Vendors should offer their best pricing with the initial solicitation. Situations warranting solicitation of a BAFO will be considered an exceptional practice for any procurement. Vendors that remain in a competitive range within an evaluation may be requested to tender Best and Final Offers, at the sole discretion of the University. All such Vendors will be provided an equal opportunity to respond with a Best and Final Offer under a procedure to be defined by the University that encompasses the specific, refined needs of a project, as part of the BAFO solicitation. The University may re-evaluate and amend the original project specifications should it be deemed necessary in order to improve the opportunity for attaining Best Value scenarios from among the remaining competing Vendors. All BAFO proceedings will be uniformly conducted, in writing, and be subject to solicitation by the University and receipt

from the Vendors under a precise schedule.

- 35.) As an alternative to traditional sealed bids in envelopes, the University of Southern Mississippi is capable of receiving electronic bid responses. While this option is available, it is not required, and we ask that all potential respondents keep in mind that with any electronic system there could be delays or glitches with the submission process; therefore the University highly encourages traditional sealed bids which are either mailed or submitted in person. Should a vendor choose to submit their response electronically, please follow the instructions below using the following website:  
[https://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract\\_bid\\_search/Home/Sell](https://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract_bid_search/Home/Sell). On this site you will find helpful links to procurement opportunities, as well as a link to supplier registration. If not already registered in this system, potential bidders will first need to click on 'Supplier Registration' and follow the steps outlined (a one-time process). Once registered, they can return to the original website and click on 'Procurement Opportunities' where they can either search by keyword for the bid they desire to respond to or leave the search box blank and click 'Search' for a listing of all current bids and proposals for the various State of Mississippi offices.

**AA/EOE/ADA**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN**  
**MISSISSIPPI**®

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Detection Software**

REQUEST FOR BIDS

June 19, 2023



## **A. Introduction / Objectives**

The University of Southern Mississippi seeks a Similarity Checking and Plagiarism Detection Solution which meets the following functionalities and requirements:

- LMS (Canvas) Integration.
- Comparison Database that includes web pages and scholarly articles.
- Evidence of, or capacity to build, a repository that compares results against a student paper database.
- Ability to detect AI-generated material (ChatGPT, etc.).
- Flexibility in scale and/or user configuration options to meet unique instructional needs.
- Tutorials for analyzing and understanding reports.
- Students/submitters maintain copyright of written work.
- Those submitting proposals should be prepared to provide a campus demo if requested.
- Feedback and grading features.
- Tutorials regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and ethics.
- Evidence of adherence to U.S. and international intellectual property rights (IPR) laws and agreements.
- The vendor must provide phone, email and web support at no additional cost. Coverage must be available during working hours Monday through Friday, 8 to 5 Central time.
- Provide a 3-year fixed price contract, payable annually.

We currently use Turnitin Feedback Studio. We are not dissatisfied with this solution. The Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services requires us to periodically rebid to seek the best solution at the best price.

Turnitin Feedback studio and its Canvas integration are used to produce similarity checks on academic work submitted to the University. Instructors have the ability to upload papers for similarity checking individually, or to enable course functionalities which provide access to students to upload their own work prior to submission.

We are looking for a solution which provides this ability both in Canvas and as a stand-alone application.

Major objectives:

- Provide instructors the ability to upload documents for similarity checking both in Canvas courses and as a stand-alone application.
- Provide instructors with the ability to grant registered students in their courses the ability to upload papers for similarity checking.
- Maintain a comparison database which includes previous work submitted to the University.
- Provide the ability to compare submitted work to scholarly articles and internet sources.

- Provide a process for comparing submissions without permanently archiving them to the comparison databases.
- Provide feedback and grading features.
- Provide a process for removal of papers from the database at the request of an administrator designated by the University of Southern Mississippi.
- Provide a means to lock or delete the end user accounts of individuals when their affiliations with the University are terminated.
- Provide end users with the ability to submit their own support requests.

## **B. Instructions to Vendors**

The Request for Bids coversheet must be included in all sealed proposals for this bid.

Each bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing on the outside the name "Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Detection Software," the name of the Vendor, the Vendor address, and the notification of opening on the specified date on the coversheet.

Vendors must submit all questions regarding this proposal no later than 5:00 pm C.D.T. on seven (7) calendar days prior to bid opening, to Bids@usm.edu. The University will respond no later than 5 pm C.D.T. five (5) calendar days prior to bid opening. Extensions to the proposal due date will only occur if deemed necessary by the University to allow Vendors sufficient time to review the responses.

## **C. Payment**

The currency used for payment of costs will be in United States dollars.

The University requests to be invoiced annually for software maintenance.

During implementation the University cannot be invoiced in advance of services not rendered. Therefore, the university prefers to be billed in installments based upon mutually agreed upon project implementation milestones completed.

State law requires that the University receive an **original invoice** from the Vendor and that payment of the invoice is processed **within 45 days of receipt** (Miss Code 31-7-305). The invoice should be on the Vendor's letterhead and/or include an original Vendor representative signature.

USM may choose to use a VISA® Purchasing Card for invoice payments in place of a check to pay for purchases from this solicitation. Unless exception is noted in the bid response, the bidder, by submitting a response agrees, to accept the VISA® Purchasing Card as an acceptable form of payment and may not add additional service fees/handling charges to purchases made with the VISA® Purchasing Card.

## **D. Length of Agreement**

The University is seeking to set a 3-year technology standard with the award of this

proposal. Please include pricing in bid response. The system will need to be live no later than October 9, 2023, to provide seamless service from the end of the existing Turnitin agreement.

**E. References:** Respondents *SHOULD* provide a minimum of three (3) customer references, including contact information, that have implemented the proposed solution and/or services in the last 12 months; preferably from higher education institutions.

**F. Legibility and Organization:** Proposals *MUST* be written in English, legible, and appropriately structured. Each page needs to be numbered sequentially.

**G. Right to Use Proposals in Future Projects**

The State reserves the right to evaluate the awarded proposal from this RFP, including all products and services proposed therein, along with the resulting contractual terms, for possible use in future projects if (a) it is deemed to be in the best interest of the State to do so; and (b) the Vendor is willing to extend a cost less than or equal to that specified in the awarded proposal and resulting contract. A decision concerning the utilization of a Vendor’s proposal for future projects is solely at the discretion of the State and requires the agreement of the proposing Vendor. The State’s decision to reuse an awarded proposal will be based upon such criteria as: (1) the customer’s business requirements; (2) elapsed time since the award of the original project; and/or (3) research on changes in the Vendor, market, and technical environments since the initial award.

**H. Pre-Payments with Pro-Rata Refund**

State law (Section 31-7-305 of the Mississippi Code Ann.) authorizes the issuance of payment after receipt of the invoice and receipt, inspection, and approval of the goods and/or services. The intent is that goods and services must be received, inspected, and accepted prior to payment. Pursuant to this requirement, where pre-payment has been authorized, all pre-payment contracts will require the following statement in the Termination section: “Upon termination of this Agreement by Licensee or by Licensor, Licensor shall issue Licensee a refund of a proportionate share (based on the number of days in the term year before and after the termination) of the Annual Fees paid with respect to that term year.”

**I. Criteria for Award**

The Vendor selected for an award will be the Vendor whose proposal, as presented in the response to this RFP, is the most advantageous. The university is not bound to accept the lowest priced proposal if that proposal is not in the best interest of the university as determined by the Evaluation Committee and iTech Department based on the table below:

Description	Possible Points
Cost	40
Requirements	50
Implementation Schedule	10
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

Consideration may also be given to any additional information and comments if they should increase the benefits to the university. Upon completion of the initial review and evaluation of the proposals submitted, selected Vendors may be invited to participate in oral presentations.

Travel expenses must not be billed separately. Proposal must consider the cost of any travel expenses.

**J. *Cloud Hosted Services***

The winning Vendor to a cloud hosted solution proposed must allow the University to comply with the “Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, Security Services Division, State of Mississippi Enterprise Cloud Offsite Internet Hosting Security Policy.” A copy of this policy can be provided to a designated contact for any Vendor that has completed an Intent to Bid from the University website.

Any contract awarded for a cloud hosted solution will be required to complete a [HECVAT\(Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Tool\) lite](#) and [State Non-Public Data Security Terms and Conditions](#)

**K. *Bid Specifications***

The Vendor response must respond to each requirement in the specifications and functions listed in Appendix A.

The Excel spreadsheet must be included in the submitted response. Responses must be submitted in the same order and should include the requirement identifier listed so responses can be easily compared. Southern Miss has no obligation to locate or acknowledge any information in the proposal that is not presented according to these instructions.

**L. *Additional Requirements***

The University acknowledges that the specifications within this RFP may not be exhaustive. Rather, they reflect the known requirements that must be met by the proposed system. Vendors must specify what additional components may be needed and are proposed to complete each configuration.

If applicable, in the event there is an incumbent vendor, the cost of converting the existing system to a new system will be required in the analysis of final costs.