**ITS** Mississippi Department of
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Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D., Executive Director

# Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

**To**: Interested Parties

**From**: Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D. [Initial: CPO]

**CC**: ITS Project Number 48834

**Date**: April 15, 2025

**Re**: Sole Source Certification Number 4680 to provide the Turnitin® Software License and Service Application renewal for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB)

**Contact Name**: Vershonda Grindle

**Contact Phone Number**: 601-432-8213

**Contact E-mail Address**: vershonda.grindle@its.ms.gov

## Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 4680 for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), please be advised that ITS intends to award Turnitin LLC as the sole source provider of Turnitin® Software License and Service Application renewal through June 30, 2028, in an amount not to exceed $740,965.00. Please be advised that ITS will determine if additional licenses, enhancements, upgrades, and support are within scope during the certification period and may increase the spending authority accordingly. Should Turnitin LLC change their name during this certification period, then ITS will determine if a recertification is necessary. For an explanation regarding Mississippi state law, policy and procedures for sole source procurements, refer to Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview.

Sole Source Criteria

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exist:

   **Turnitin software fully integrates into MCCB's Canvas Learning Management System to provide a means of analyzing students' written assessment submissions for plagiarism along with originality verification and instructor feedback. Turnitin offers a comprehensive, proprietary search engine with access to a variety of propriety databases, such as previously submitted student papers, subscription-based electronically published content and over 47 billion pages of continuously updated content from the Internet.**

2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services:

   **With Turnitin, community college faculty has access to a feature called GradeMark that allows instructors to provide feedback in a more efficient manner. This service allows the fifteen (15) community colleges to check student work for possible textual matches against Internet-available resources and propriety databases. Revision Assistant allows the student to submit the paper for remarks and allows for revision of the document for submission, with no alternative vendors providing the same patented functionality**

3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and not through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services:

   **Turnitin® Feedback Studio ("Turnitin"), including its associated components, is a single-source product developed and sold by Turnitin, LLC. No other vendor or reseller can offer the product. Turnitin is an item for which competition is precluded due to patent (USPTO 8,296,661). The Vendor's sole source certification letter is included as Attachment A.**

## Schedule

| Task | Date |
| --- | --- |
| First Advertisement Date | 04/15/25 |
| Second Advertisement Date | 04/22/25 |
| Response Deadline From Objectors | 04/30/25 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time |
| Notice of Award/No Award Posted | Not before 05/01/25 |

## Project Details

Purchased in 2009, using then current sole source procedures from iParadigms, now Turnitin, LLC, MMCB uses the Turnitin Software to detect plagiarism in students' work. Instructors have full access to the findings of the review. In August 2019, ITS began issuing Notice of Intents to Certify as Sole Source for the Turnitin Software Licenses and has not received any objections. MCCB's current subscription expires June 30, 2025 and has spent approximately $2,283,102.68 to date.

## Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the Turnitin® Software License and Service Application renewal should not be certified as a sole source should provide information in the following format for the state to use in determining whether or not to proceed with awarding the Sole Source contract to Turnitin LLC.

    1.1    Interested Party Information

        1.1.1   Contact Name, Phone Number and email address

        1.1.2   Company Website URL, if applicable

    1.2    Objection to Sole Source Certification

        1.2.1   Interested parties must present specific objections to the Sole Source certification using the criteria listed above.

1.2.2   A statement regarding the Interested Party's capabilities as related to this Sole Source Certification Request.

1.3   Comments will be accepted at any time prior to Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Vershonda Grindle at vershonda.grindle@its.ms.gov or at the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, 3771 Eastwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39211. Responses may be delivered by hand, via regular mail, overnight delivery, e-mail or by fax.  Fax number is (601) 713-6380.  ITS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAYS IN THE DELIVERY OF RESPONSES. It is solely the responsibility of the Interested Parties that responses reach ITS on time. Interested Parties may contact Vershonda Grindle to verify the receipt of their Responses. Responses received after the deadline will be rejected.

1.4   Interested Party responses should include the following information:

> **SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO**
> **Sole Source Certification No. 4680-48834**
> **Accepted until April 30, 2025 @ 3:00 p.m.,**
> **ATTENTION:  Vershonda Grindle**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Vershonda Grindle at (601)432-8213 or via email at vershonda.grindle@its.ms.gov.


Attachment A:  Vendor Correspondence
Attachment B:  Sole Source Procurement Overview

Attachment A

![turnitin logo]

December 9, 2024

The Mississippi Community College Board

Turnitin® Feedback Studio ("Turnitin"), including its associated components, is a single-source product developed and sold by Turnitin, LLC, based in Oakland, CA. Our product is a unique service that is not offered by any other vendor or reseller in a similar format. The product may be procured only from Turnitin, LLC, at the address listed below. Turnitin is an item for which competition is precluded due to patent (SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR FACILITATING ORIGINALITY ANALYSIS - USPTO 8,296,661).

The Turnitin service provides an academic integrity tool that allows institutions to easily determine if students are writing and submitting original work. Utilizing our unique technology, Turnitin searches the Internet, as well as our proprietary databases of student papers and digital texts for sources of potential plagiarism. The service then generates a custom Similarity Report that identifies unoriginal or improperly cited student writing by highlighting matches to sources found on the Internet, in our database of previously submitted papers, and/or in the proprietary databases of subscription-based publication material from content aggregators with whom we have partnered.

To find potential plagiarism, Turnitin has developed its own search technology (in use for over 15 years). Turnitin's proprietary crawler is different from many other solutions that rely on search engines such as Yahoo or Bing's Search API but cannot scale because of cost or request limitations. Our crawler has been built from the start to be horizontally scalable, smart about recrawling, lean on storage, and flexible about what can be done with data. Some of the key features you can expect from our crawler:

- Broad, scalable, focused crawl of the web.
- Prioritized (re)crawl, and how often.
- Persistent, query-friendly store of the crawl frontier allowing for useful, rapid reporting.
- Smart crawling that will avoid junk (ex. crawler traps).
- Crawling non-HTML file types.
- Support for selectively crawling JavaScript-based sites.

Turnitin's patented and proprietary technology compares submitted papers to:

- A database of previously submitted student papers—more than 1.9 billion submissions (as of December 2023)
- A database of subscription-based electronically published content that covers over 170 million articles from mainstream to specialized sources on virtually every popular, business and professional topic, including:
- CrossRef, which includes more than 81,000 journals and over 190 million articles and documents from publishers including: Wiley-Blackwell, Elsevier, American Institute of Physics, IEEE, Cambridge University Press, Taylor and Francis, Springer Nature, Emerald, British Medical Journal and the New England Journal of Medicine.
- 200,000 law reviews from U.S. law schools
- Over 97% of the top 10,000 cited journals in the world (according to SCOPUS data)
- A database of 47 billion pages of continuously-updated content from the publicly accessible Internet
- An archived copy of past web pages no longer available on the Internet.
- Partnership with CORE, the world's largest aggregator of open access papers, giving us access to 135 million records from 12,000 repositories worldwide which, where accessible, are added to our internet database
- Over 85 million links from more than 4,500 open access repositories
- Around 53 million Wikipedia articles provided through directly ingesting content

Turnitin generates a Similarity Report that includes multiple views and features:

- Reports are available within minutes after submission (usually far less than two minutes).
- Direct-source comparisons of matched words to matched documents (highlighted with or without color coding) numbered and aligned side-by-side.
- Pattern-recognition matching of both word-for-word and paraphrased text.
- Ability to exclude matching material within quotes, within the bibliography, or any individual source.
- Option to exclude a template from the Similarity Report.
- Ability to view all underlying matched words that have been obscured by overlapping matches
- Accepted submission formats that generate a Similarity Report include: Microsoft Word®, Microsoft PowerPoint®, WordPerfect®, OpenOffice, Rich Text Format (RTF), HTML, Text, Postscript, PDF, Hangul, Excel, and Google Docs. Turnitin Feedback Studio can accept any file type as an assignment submission.
- Option to refresh a Similarity Report to include matches to any updated content in the database.
- Automatic exclusion of submissions by the same author to the same assignment.
- Ability to exclude assignment templates
- Ability to identify replaced or hidden characters in text as a way of deliberately manipulating text.
- Ability to translate content from non-English languages into English in order to compare to our English language database. Languages include Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Farsi, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hausa, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malay, Maltese, Norwegian Bokmal, Norwegian Nyorsk, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, . Swahili, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

The complete Turnitin solution also includes paperless online grading tools and PeerMark® online peer reviewing tools:

- Turnitin's online grading is a time-saving, paperless alternative to traditional pen and paper grading, making it easy for instructors to give students the valuable, time-sensitive feedback that is so essential for building quality writing skills. Key components include: pre-loaded and customizable marks and comments; voice comments; customizable and shareable rubrics; the ability to associate on-paper comments with rubric criterion, automatic checking of grammar, spelling, mechanics, usage and style using ETS® e-rater® technology.

- PeerMark online peer reviewing gives instructors the ability to create peer review assignments that students use to evaluate and learn from one another's work. Key components include: automatic paper distribution and the option to allow for anonymous reviews.

Additional functionality that is available when licensing the Originality add-on:

- Turnitin's AI writing detection capabilities which can help identify when students may have used AI-generated content from AI writing tools such as ChatGPT and others, in their submissions. The AI writing technology can detect AI-generated content even if it's been modified using an AI paraphrasing tool. If enabled, this feature runs automatically for every submission and is integrated into our Similarity Report workflow.
- Authorship capabilities that provide data and insights to help determine if the submitted work is a student's own original work.
- Access to an additional database (Proquest Dissertations and Theses), for similarity checking.
- Access to tools that will help improve students' writing skills.

Additional functionality that is available when licensing the Paper to Digital add-on:

- AI-powered grouping of like answers for bulk grading.
- Optical character recognition for handwritten assignments to match student work to rosters and group like answers.
- Dynamically update points for previously graded when changing the point value or criteria of the scoring checklist.

Turnitin is accessible via a web-based interface and is hosted in Turnitin's secure data centers.

Turnitin builds in-house integrations using LTI (Learning Tools Interoperability) in order to integrate into most standard course management or learning management systems (LMS) for an optimized experience using Turnitin solutions and an LMS. LMSs we integrate with include Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, Brightspace (formerly "Desire2Learn"), Sakai, and more. These integrations make Turnitin seem like a natural extension of the web application an institution already has in place.

Turnitin is a service of Turnitin, LLC

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Annual subscription fees include unlimited access to free videos and documentation for educators and students to learn how to use Turnitin. If you need additional information about our services, please contact us at 510-764-7600 or visit our website at http://www.turnitin.com.  Thank you for your interest in Turnitin.

Sincerely,

Angela Rhee
Sr. Director Business Affairs
Turnitin, LLC, developers of Turnitin®
Phone: +1-510-764-7600

Attachment B

The acquisition of information technology for all state agencies and institutions of higher learning (IHLs) is within the scope of the ITS law, found in Mississippi Code Section 25-53-1, et seq., and the policies and procedures established in accordance with this statute, found in the ITS Procurement Handbook posted on the ITS website (www.its.ms.gov).

ITS enabling legislation requires that information technology hardware, software and services be acquired in a manner that insures the maximum of competition among all manufacturers and suppliers of such equipment and services. Accordingly, ITS promotes full and open competition through the issuance of open specifications and the objective evaluation of Interested Party proposals to determine the lowest and best offering to meet an agency's or public university's business requirements. True competition protects the integrity and credibility of purchasing in the public sector and is essential in providing best value and adequate contractual protection for the purchasing entity. In certain limited situations, information technology acquisitions may be sole-sourced.

ITS utilizes the provisions of Public Purchasing Law for Sole Source and Emergency procurements of information technology. Mississippi Public Purchasing Law (Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13) specifies that noncompetitive items available from one source only be exempted from bid requirements (sole-sourced). ITS statute, in Section 25-53-5 (p), permits ITS to utilize provisions in Public Purchasing Law or regulations, when applicable.

Per Public Purchasing law, acquisitions must meet the following criteria to be authorized as sole source:

1.      The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exists,

2.      The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services, AND

3.      The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and NOT through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services. The vendor's correspondence regarding this criterion for this project is included as Attachment A.

By policy as documented in the ITS Procurement Handbook, acquisitions of IT services must include the following information to be authorized as sole source:

1.      An explanation about why the amount to be expended is reasonable, and

2.      An explanation regarding the efforts by the purchaser to obtain the best possible price.

For state agencies, approval of all technology purchases with a lifecycle cost of $5,000 or less, including sole source purchases, has been delegated to the agency. The ITS Procurement Limits Policies for Agencies (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook) require a minimum of two competitive written bids or proposals for technology purchases with a lifecycle cost over $5,000 but not over $75,000 (not over $25,000 for projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). Since, for single source items, the procuring agency will be unable to obtain two written bids, ITS must certify all sole source acquisitions of information technology with a lifecycle cost greater than $5,000.

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) or public universities have been delegated the authority to certify sole source procurements up to $250,000 lifecycle cost under the ITS Procurement Limits Policies for IHLs (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook). For the certification of sole source procurements delegated to the CIOs at public universities, the public university must follow ITS' Sole Source Procedure, including advertisement of the intent to award as sole source. Institutions certifying a sole source purchase must ensure the criteria listed above are met and documented in writing by the institution and the Interested Party prior to certifying a product or service as sole source. Sole source documentation must be reviewed and approved by the IHL's CIO for any sole-source certification above $5,000. All sole source documentation should be retained in the public university's procurement file. Sole source requests above $250,000 lifecycle cost require ITS approval.

Other than the delegations outlined above, all sole source technology procurements must be certified by ITS.

ITS thoroughly reviews Sole Source Certification Requests, determining if competing products and/or services exist. If so, ITS conducts a competitive procurement. If ITS' review confirms the sole source, then a Sole Source advertisement is issued, giving other Interested Parties an opportunity to identify competing products and/or services. Based upon the results of the Sole Source advertisement, ITS will either certify the request as a sole source or conduct a competitive procurement.