



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

118 College Drive #5166 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5000 | Fax: 601.266.5148 | usm.edu/admissions

August 3, 2016

To whom it may concern;

The Office of Admissions is requesting that VisitDays be recognized as a sole source service provider and that their services be approved for purchase for use in the scheduling of campus visits, academic appointments, and reporting of campus visit data.

Six months ago, the Office of Admissions began a review process of our current campus tour process. During the process, we surveyed students and families regarding many elements of the campus tour, including the scheduling portion of the tour process. Many families indicated frustration with our current process including the length of the form, difficulty with confirmation emails, and additional attempts to contact families regarding campus visits. As a result of this feedback, and the general consensus in our office that the scheduling process was also unnecessarily complicated for our staff, we sought to identify scheduling software that would streamline and automate the campus visit scheduling process. We identified VisitDays as the best option for a number of reasons.

Currently, VisitDays performs many functions for which no other product or source of service exists. VisitDays offers a scheduling platform specifically designed for coordinating campus visits in a higher education setting. No other scheduling software that we identified was tailored so precisely for higher education. The features they offer that we have been unable to find with any other service provider include:

- An analytics module that allows us to track every visitor that schedules with the Office of Admissions beginning the moment they schedule, through their visit, and any cancellations and/or rescheduling processes. Through this module, we can run reports and data for campus tour show rates and assess feedback regarding visits through the campus visit survey.
- Full integration with the new Admissions' CRM Hobson's Radius. VisitDays provides us with the option to create automated text messages, emails, videos, and webinars that can be integrated into the communication plan for prospective students via Hobson's Radius. It also provides the ability to directly import campus visit data into Hobson's Radius in an effort to use that data to recruit prospective students most effectively.
- A scheduling module that allows us the freedom to change our daily visit offerings at any time without the need to submit changes through USM's iTech Department and to personalize the information related to each visit including background information on the admissions counselor, tour guide, and department each student will meet with during their campus visit.
- High School visit technology that will allow admissions counselors to collect information directly from prospective students during private visits to high schools, college fairs, and other recruiting events hosted by the Office of Admissions. This information is collected through a text code that the student may use to complete an inquiry form and then directly submit to the Office of



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Admissions. We can then import this information to Hobson's Radius using the integration processes offered by VisitDays.

Based on our research, VisitDays is the only scheduling platform that provides all of these services in one central location with the level of utility required to be beneficial to the Office of Admissions. While other providers, like Time Trade, Appointment Plus, and E-Z Appointment, might have offered one or two similar services, they did not offer all of them, and none that we identified offered the analytics module, integration options for Hobson's Radius, or the data collecting services summarized above.

These services will be crucial in the coming months for the Office of Admissions, as we seek to meet new business objectives in the Office of Admissions. We hope to increase our overall visit numbers and the quality of the visit for all prospective students. These services will be vital as we strive to increase overall enrollment so that the university will have a healthy budget regardless of national trends of decreasing high school graduation and college enrollment. We believe VisitDays will help with this process by improving and simplifying the scheduling and communication processes both with the visiting student and with our colleagues across campus.

Currently, VisitDays is the sole provider of these services. They do not allow the redistribution of their services through any resellers.

As the contract summarizes, the yearly price for a three-year contract is \$12,150.00 per year. For two years we would pay \$13,500.00 per year. For one year, we would pay 15,000.00 for the full year. We would like to pursue a three year contract with VisitDays because of the overall savings and the utility of their services. We would also likely opt to renew the contract at the end of the initial three year term.

Regarding the use of or connection to the State's infrastructure, I believe that the cross-over would be minimal. VisitDays is an external site that would be linked to our webpage so all scheduling would take place outside of the current university webpage. We do not require payment of any kind currently for the campus tour and related events. We would likely require some access through the VPN network, but again, as it is a third-party site, we do not know if that would actually be required.

For the reasons outlined above, we believe that VisitDays should be designated as a sole source provider.

Sincerely,

Katie McBride

Assistant Director of the Campus Tour Experience
Office of Admissions
University of Southern Mississippi