



STATE OF TENNESSEE
 TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # 33201-04526
 AMENDMENT # 3
 FOR ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER STATEWIDE
 SYSTEM**

DATE: April 28, 2026

RFP # 33201-04526 IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **This RFP Schedule of Events updates and confirms scheduled RFP dates. Any event, time, or date containing revised or new text is highlighted.**

EVENT	TIME (central time zone)	DATE
1. RFP Issued		MARCH 20, 2026
2. Disability Accommodation Request Deadline	2:00 p.m.	MARCH 25, 2026
3. Notice of Intent to Respond Deadline	2:00 p.m.	MARCH 27, 2026
4. Written "Questions & Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	APRIL 3, 2026
5. State Response to Written "Questions & Comments"		APRIL 28, 2026
6. Response Deadline	2:00 p.m.	MAY 4, 2026
7. State Completion of Technical Response Evaluations		MAY 11, 2026
8. Product Demonstrations		MAY 18 - 20, 2026
9. State Opening & Scoring of Cost Proposals		MAY 21, 2026
10. Negotiations (Optional)		MAY 26- 28, 2026
11. State Notice of Intent to Award Released <u>and</u> RFP Files Opened for Public Inspection		MAY 29, 2026
12. End of Protest Period	4:30 p.m.	JUNE 5, 2026
13. State sends contract to Contractor for signature		JUNE 9, 2026
14. Contractor Signature Deadline	2:00 p.m.	JUNE 11, 2026

2. **State responses to questions and comments in the table below amend and clarify this RFP.**

Any restatement of RFP text in the Question/Comment column shall NOT be construed as a change in the actual wording of the RFP document.

RFP SECTION	PAGE #	QUESTION / COMMENT	STATE RESPONSE
		1. Is THEC seeking a single unified platform, or is a tightly integrated suite of applications acceptable so long as the student and administrator experience is seamless?	We are seeking either a unified platform or a tightly integrated suite that provides a seamless experience for the users.
		2. Is THEC expecting a largely configurable existing SaaS platform, a custom-built system, or is either approach acceptable?	THEC does not have a preference at this time. We are open to evaluating both configurable SaaS solutions and custom-built systems.
		3. Should the solution perform official credit determinations and degree audits, or provide advisory / planning-level guidance pending institutional confirmation?	The system should perform advisory/planning level guidance pending institutional confirmation utilizing data provided from intuitions.
		4. For prior learning, military credit, credit by examination, and portfolio reviews, is the system expected to make credit-award recommendations only, or also support institutional review and approval workflows?	Yes, we expect the system to make recommendations based on previously awarded credit provided by institutions.
		5. Should dual admissions, dual enrollment, reverse transfer, TTP, and TTP+2 be surfaced as informational resources only, or operationalized as workflow-driven components in the platform?	These will serve as informational resources for students to understand the process and receive relevant information.
		6. How many public colleges and universities are in scope at go-live, and are any private institutions expected to participate?	Yes, we want private institutions to have the option to participate. We have the following public institutions that could be included at go live (24 technical colleges, 13 community colleges, 6 locally governed intuitions, and 11 public four-year institutions).
		7. What systems currently hold the source data for articulation agreements, transfer rules, degree requirements, TTP, TTP+2, reverse transfer, PLA rules, and military credit policies?	There is currently not a system that holds data for articulation agreements, degree requirements, PLA rules and military credit. There is currently a TTP and Reverse Transfer website that holds some information.

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		8. Will THEC provide centralized data feeds, or will the contractor need to integrate separately with each participating institution?	We expect THEC to serve as the centralized data holder; if not, THEC will work with each institution, not the contractor.
		9. What SIS / ERP / degree audit / curriculum systems are currently in use across the participating institutions?	This ranges from Banner, Slate, CRM Recruit, and Degree Works. There could be a few others.
		10. Are there existing APIs, data dictionaries, common data models, or file formats the contractor should be aware of?	No, there are no existing resources of this type
		11. How frequently must institutional data be refreshed, and who is the authoritative source for each data domain?	This will depend on the capacity of the system. At minimum we would prefer the data is refreshed no less than once per quarter. However more refreshed data is preferred. The authoritative source is THEC as the centralized administrator.
		12. Student Information System (SIS) Landscape: The sources mention integration with "institutional data sources where applicable". What is the primary mix of SIS platforms (e.g., Banner, PeopleSoft, Workday) used across the Tennessee public higher education landscape? Will the contractor be required to build bespoke point-to-point integrations for each institution, or will the State provide a centralized data warehouse or middleware solution?	The primary SIS is Banner, but there may be some using People Soft, Jenzabar, and Cams. THEC will be a centralized point.
		13. Legacy Data Volume and Format: Since "initial data migration" is a requirement, what is the estimated volume of historical transfer and articulation data? In what format (e.g., SQL, flat files, or legacy proprietary systems) is this data currently stored, and does it require significant cleansing or normalization before being ingested into the new system.	There is not any current historical data. We would need to determine the format to gather initial data from institutions.
		14. What level of degree-audit fidelity is expected: program-level only, full requirement block logic, exceptions/substitutions, electives,	We are expecting information on undergraduate programs that include degree data, GPA thresholds for

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		residency, GPA thresholds, catalog year, and transfer-specific nuances?	admission purposes only, and general transfer-specific nuances.
		15. Is 'what-if' degree planning expected across multiple institutions and multiple programs simultaneously?	If possible, yes. However, this would require detailed, course-level information indicating which courses are accepted across multiple institutions.
		16. Should the system support institution-specific rule overrides and exceptions, and if so, how should those be governed?	This functionality is not requested at this time.
		17. Does THEC expect common course numbering and credit articulation logic to be centrally managed, institution-managed, or jointly governed?	The expectation is to be centrally managed at THEC.
		18. For reverse transfer, what data-sharing and rule logic is already defined today, and what must the contractor operationalize?	The current system is AcademyOne for the administration of this system. For the purposes of the RFP this would only provide relevant resources and options for early transfers.
		19. Authority and Conflict Resolution: The State requires a "degree audit philosophy" and "rule modeling". In a statewide system, which entity is the system of record for transfer rules? If a community college's TTP curriculum conflicts with a four-year institution's local residency requirements, how should the system technically prioritize or flag these discrepancies?	These should be brought to the attention of the THEC implementation team for resolution.
		20. Audit Ownership: Will institutional administrators have the technical capability to self-manage and update their own transfer rules and exceptions within the platform, or is the contractor expected to manage all rule updates via a centralized support model?	The contractor will be expected to manage all rules updates via a centralized support model.
		21. Will the platform be publicly accessible, authenticated, or both?	Both

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		<p>22. Single Sign-On (SSO) Strategy: The system must provide access for "all designated institutions and users".</p> <p>a. Does the State require a federated identity approach (e.g., SAML, OIDC, or Shibboleth) using existing institutional credentials?</p> <p>b. How will the system handle authentication for "prospective students" or "veterans" who do not yet have an institutional identity?</p>	<p>Access for THEC as the centralized administration will be required; while also having the capability for students to create an account and save their progress.</p> <p>a. No</p> <p>b. This will be determined by the system. The student should have the ability to create their own account not affiliated with an institution.</p>
		<p>23. What student inputs should be supported: transcript/course history entry, test scores, military experience, certifications, work experience, uploaded documents, or institution-fed records?</p>	<p>All items identified in respondent's question shall be supported by the system.</p>
		<p>24. Are there required user roles beyond students and administrators, such as advisors, registrars, evaluators, or state-level analysts?</p>	<p>State-level analysts.</p>
		<p>25. Are there required languages, mobile requirements, or accessibility conformance targets such as WCAG level or VPAT expectations?</p>	<p>We will need the system to be ADA compliant. Please refer to Pro Forma Contract section E.11.</p>
		<p>26. Role-Based Access Control (RBAC): Are there specific predefined roles for State-level versus institutional-level administrators, particularly concerning who can approve or modify statewide articulation agreements?</p>	<p>THEC shall be the only entity with roles that can modify or approve changes in the system.</p>
		<p>27. What standard reports are required at launch?</p>	<p>Standard reports shall include data on the number of agreements, courses, programs, students served, and completed audits. The ability to track how these numbers increase or decrease each year shall also be included.</p>
		<p>28. What export formats are required: CSV, Excel, PDF, API, scheduled file</p>	<p>At this time, CSV, Excel, PDF. We would want the ability to schedule</p>

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		drops, dashboard-only, or something else?	drops/updates or view a dashboard if available.
		29. Who are the intended reporting audiences: THEC administrators, institutional administrators, advisors, students, or all of the above?	All of the above.
		30. Are there required KPIs the State wants tracked, such as transfer pathway usage, credit-award estimates, near-completion indicators, reverse-transfer eligibility, or military/PLA utilization?	Yes, we would like to track usage in each of these areas, along with information on top degree search, credit-award estimates, and any indicators of potential credit loss.
		31. Are there data-retention or audit-log reporting requirements for system actions and user activity?	For audit requirements, please refer to Pro Forma Contract section E.5. and we expect all data to be retained through the duration of the Contract.
		32. Standardized Data Formats: While the system must "generate, export, and deliver reports," the sources note a "clarification gap" regarding exact formats. Does the State require specific technical formats (e.g., JSON, CSV, PDF) or automated data feeds into a State-level Business Intelligence (BI) tool?	At minimum, the system must support CSV and PDF.
		33. Real-Time vs. Batch Processing: Is the "timely" delivery of reports expected to be via a real-time dashboard for state stakeholders, or is periodic batch reporting sufficient?	Support for real-time and periodic batch processing is preferred..
		34. What is the desired go-live date?	There is not a desired go live date. However, we will want to consider peak times for institutions as we gather information.
		35. Does THEC want a phased rollout, a pilot, or full statewide deployment at once?	A piloted/phased rollout.
		36. Are there milestone expectations for discovery, requirements confirmation, integration, testing, training, and production launch?	THEC will identify and work with the awarded respondents on project milestone expectations.

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		37. Will THEC provide a central project governance team and named institutional stakeholders for decision-making and validation?	Yes. Following award and execution of the contract, a point of contact will be provided.
		38. What acceptance criteria will be used for implementation signoff?	This depends on the milestone and the results of testing.
		39. Multi-Tenancy vs. Single Instance: Is the State envisioning a multi-tenant SaaS architecture where all institutions share a single codebase but have logically separated data, or is there a requirement for separate instances for different institutional groups?	This is not something the agency has discussed at this time.
		40. Scalability and Concurrency: What are the expected peak loads for the system, particularly during high-volume registration periods or the transition of high school students to postsecondary programs?	Yes, during registration periods at post-secondary institutions.
		41. Approximately how many administrators, institutional users, and other end users require training?	Less than 10 admins at THEC.
		42. Is train-the-trainer expected, or should the contractor train end users directly?	The expectation is for the contracted respondent to train-the-trainer.
		43. How often are policy, curriculum, articulation, and pathway changes expected, and who approves content updates?	. Changes will be reviewed and approved by THEC.
		44. What turnaround times does THEC expect for bug fixes, usability issues, and content corrections?	Please provide your standard approach or best-practice recommendation in this area.
		45. Does THEC require formal SLAs for support response and resolution times?	Please provide your standard approach or best-practice recommendation in this area.
		46. Are there required support hours, severity definitions, or escalation procedures?	Please provide your standard approach or best-practice recommendation in this area.

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		47. Which institutions are expected to participate in the system? (i.e are both public and private schools in scope). Is participation going to be phased or mandatory?	Public and private can participate (not mandatory). A phased approach is preferred.
		48. Are there existing articulation and transfer technology systems currently in use by the State or its institutions for any of the functional areas described in this RFP, and should the selected vendor plan to migrate data from any such existing systems or assist with any transitions?	No.
RFP Section 5.2.1.5.		49. Could you please clarify the length of time allocated for the product demonstrations?	The length of time for product demonstrations will be provided at the time of scheduling.
RFP Attachment 6.2 – Section C – Item C.5.		50. Can THEC clarify the scope of degree auditing services that it is seeking as part of the response to this RFP?	Yes, we are looking for students to understand the courses taken and how they are accepted and the ability to see remaining courses in a program.
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.5.a.		51. What is the format/volume of the existing transfer/articulation data that needs to be migrated into the new system?	There currently is no existing data. All data for this system will be new.
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.5.a.		52. How many distinct transfer and articulation data sources, across the state, are intended to be connected to the desired articulation & transfer system, and to what extent are these data standardized versus institution-specific?	This number is unknown at this time.
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.5.		53. What are the estimated annual transaction volumes (transcripts evaluated; students served) to inform capacity planning? Please count both provisional and official transcripts when providing the volume estimate.	Since this is the first system of its kind we are not sure the estimate of annual transactions. We would like to track this information annually.
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.7.		54. Please confirm THEC's intended contracting model for third-party software (license procurement):	Licenses procured and held by THEC directly with the Independent Software Vendors (ISV(s)),

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		<p>a. licenses procured and held by THEC directly with the Independent Software Vendors (ISV(s)), or</p> <p>b. licenses procured/held by the Systems Implementation (SI) Offeror</p> <p>For the selected model, please clarify commercial/contractual responsibility for license compliance, renewals, vendor management/escalations, and alignment to support/SLAs during implementation and operations.</p>	
RFP Section 1.1.		55. Does THEC maintain a backend database for articulation data, or should the new system establish the authoritative data source?	No, this new system will need to establish the authoritative source for THEC to maintain.
RFP Section 1.1.		56. Will the State provide access to existing articulation databases, course equivalency tables, and pathway curriculum data for migration?	Yes, for any that exists.
RFP Section 1.1.		57. Does a statewide master course equivalency database exist that includes all public institutions, or does each institution maintain its own equivalency tables independently?	No, each institution maintains its own tables independently.
Pro Forma Contract, Section A.5.		58. Our research indicates TBR institutions use Ellucian Banner with Ethos middleware, and UT System is transitioning to Oracle Student Cloud. Should we plan native integration with both platforms, or does the State prefer a middleware abstraction layer?	We prefer to be the centralized administrator with defined data coming to us.
Pro Forma Contract, Section A.5.		59. Does TBR maintain a centralized Ethos instance, or does each institution have its own deployment with separate integration requirements?	This information is unknown and should not affect how we collect the data.
Pro Forma Contract, Section A.5.		60. Are all TBR institutions now on Banner SSB9, or are some still in transition?	This information is unknown and should not affect how we collect the data.
Pro Forma Contract, Section A.5.		61. Our research indicates Tennessee participates in the NSC Electronic Transcript Exchange for high school transcripts. Does the State expect PESC XML standards for college-to-	No. We expect students to be able to upload their transcripts for articulation-related information.

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		college transcript exchange as well?	
		62. Should the system integrate with the NSC Electronic Transcript Exchange or commercial articulation databases (e.g., Transferology) for out-of-state transfer credit evaluation?	No.
		63. For out-of-state transfer students, how should the system handle course descriptions and equivalency recommendations when the sending institution is not in any Tennessee database?	The same as in-state credit. If previous evaluation of course has not been completed, then the system will need to inform the student and produce information for possible review.
		64. Should the system support international credential evaluation services (e.g., WES, ECE, NACES members)?	Yes, if possible.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d		65. Does THEC currently use or plan to use American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide recommendations as the basis for military credit evaluation?	No.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d		66. Will the system need to upload and parse Joint Services Transcripts (JST) for automated credit mapping?	Yes.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d		67. Given recent Tennessee veterans education legislation (HB 299/SB 295), should the system also track veteran dependent eligibility for tuition waivers and the Helping Heroes Grant?	If possible, yes.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d		68. Does Tennessee have statewide PLA policies the system must enforce, or does each institution maintain its own standards?	Each institution maintains its own standards.
Pro Forma Contract -		69. Does the State have a preference for hosting location (e.g., Tennessee state	THEC, state data center

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Section A.7.b		data center, FedRAMP-authorized cloud, or standard commercial cloud)?	
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.7.b		70. What are the Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) requirements?	Please provide your standard approach or best-practice recommendation in this area.
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.7.b		71. Is geographic redundancy (multi-region hosting) required for disaster recovery?	No.
Pro Forma Contract - Section A.7.b		72. Is StateRAMP certification required, preferred, or not applicable?	Please provide your standard approach or best-practice recommendation in this area.
		73. What specific uptime percentage is considered "sufficient" (e.g., 99.5%, 99.9%)?	Please provide your standard approach or best-practice recommendation in this area.
		74. What are acceptable maintenance windows (e.g., weekends only, after 10 PM CT)?	After hours and/or weekends.
		75. What are the expected peak concurrent user loads during registration periods?	This data is currently unavailable.
		76. What specific FERPA-protected data elements will the system store or process?	Only data entered by the student to create an account, input course history, or upload academic information.
		77. What is the data classification level for student records under Tennessee's information security framework?	THEC classifies student education records as " Confidential/Private " under Tennessee's data classification standards—consistent with requirements in TCA § 49-1-701 et seq. and FERPA. Data in this category includes student educational records, personally identifiable information (PII), and other sensitive data, and is subject to strict access, storage, handling, and retention controls. If your standard data classification model assigns a different level or

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			uses alternative terminology, please describe your approach and how it aligns with state and federal requirements.
		78. The ADA Title II digital accessibility deadline is April 24, 2026. Should the system comply with WCAG 2.1 Level AA or WCAG 2.2 Level AA, and is VPAT documentation required at proposal submission or upon contract award?	WCAB2.1 Level AA. VPAT documentation, if available, may be included with proposal submission to demonstrate the vendor's ability to comply with Contract Section E.11.
		79. What are the data retention requirements for student records and audit trails?	<p>Under the Tennessee Secretary of State's Records Disposition Authorization, statewide student academic records (which include transcripts and related educational data) are considered permanent records, and institutions must preserve them indefinitely.</p> <p>Audit trails will be need to retained for a minimum of five (5) years past the end of the Contract.</p>
		80. Upon contract termination, what is the required timeline and format for data return to the State?	Please provide your standard process, timeline, and format for returning all data upon contract termination. At a minimum, THEC requires that data be delivered in widely accepted, non-proprietary formats that allow for continued use and migration.
		81. What data destruction and certification requirements apply to contractor-held data after transition?	Contractors must destroy THEC data per PRC-approved RDAs , furnish a Certificate of Records Destruction , and sanitize all electronic media per NIST SP 800-88r2 with documented verification and chain-of-custody. Hold records under litigation/audit until released, then destroy using state-approved procedures

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Pro Forma Contract – Section A.4.d.(4)		82. Should the degree audit provide comprehensive tracking comparable to DegreeWorks/uAchieve, or is scope limited to transfer credit evaluation against program requirements?	This will include transfer credit evaluations against equivalency data and program requirements.
Pro Forma Contract – Section A.4.d.(4)		83. Will the system need to interface with existing institutional degree audit systems, or should it operate as a standalone statewide tool?	Standalone statewide tool.
Pro Forma Contract – Section A.4.d.(4)		84. Should the degree audit include “what-if” scenario planning for students considering different majors or transfer destinations?	Only transfer destinations.
		85. Is THEC open to AI/machine learning capabilities for course equivalency recommendations (e.g., suggesting matches for courses not yet in the system), or is strictly rule-based matching preferred?	Potentially; please reference Pro Forma Contract Section E.10. .
		86. If AI-assisted matching is acceptable, should recommendations require human review and approval before becoming official equivalencies?	Yes, please refer to Pro Forma Section E.10.
		87. Will students need to upload transcript PDFs that require OCR/document parsing?	Yes.
		88. What specific reports does THEC require for state-level oversight?	Please refer to the response to question 27.
		89. Should the system support ad hoc report building by institutional administrators, or are predefined reports sufficient?	Preference for both but at minimal ad hoc report building.
		90. What data export formats are required (e.g., CSV, Excel, PDF, API access)?	At this time, CSV, Excel, PDF. We would want the ability to schedule drops/updates or view a dashboard if available.

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		91. What is the estimated number of student users who will access the system annually?	Since this is the first system of its kind we are not sure the estimate of student users annually.
		92. Will students authenticate via institutional credentials, statewide SSO, or standalone accounts?	Standalone accounts.
		93. Should the system support mobile-responsive design, native applications, or both?	Both.
		94. What is the State's target go-live date?	There is not a desired go live date. However we will want to consider peak times for institutions as we gather information.
		95. Is a phased implementation approach acceptable?	Yes.
		96. Will there be a pilot period with a subset of institutions?	If possible, yes.
RFP Attachment 6.4.		97. For respondents whose principals possess relevant technical expertise and prior federal or state contract experience, but whose business entity was established within the past two years, what alternative documentation will the State accept to demonstrate capability?	Please provide your standard approach and best-practice recommendation in this area
RFP Attachment 6.4.		98. Is teaming or subcontracting with established firms acceptable to supplement past performance requirements?	THEC does not encourage teaming or subcontracting to satisfy past performance requirements. If a vendor elects to include a subcontractor, the proposal must fully outline the subcontractor's role, responsibilities, and scope of work, as well as how the prime vendor will ensure oversight, quality, and accountability.
		99. Approximately how many THEC/TBR administrators and institutional end	There will be less than 10 THEC administrators that will require training.

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		users (advisors, registrars) will require training?	
		100. Is a train-the-trainer model acceptable, or does the State expect the Contractor to train all end users directly?	Train-the-Trainer is acceptable.
		101. Can we subcontract for specialized services (e.g., accessibility auditing, penetration testing, UX design)?	Please refer to Pro Forma Section D.7.
		102. Must subcontractors be identified in the proposal, or can they be approved post-award?	They can be approved post-award; however, please do not enter into any subcontracting agreement without THEC's written permission in accordance with Pro Forma Section D.7.
RFP Section 5.2.1.5.		103. How long is each demo session expected to be?	The length of time for product demonstrations will be provided at the time of scheduling.
RFP Section 5.2.1.5.		104. Should respondents demonstrate a working prototype with Tennessee-specific data, or is representative sample data acceptable?	Sample data is acceptable.
RFP Section 5.2.1.5.		105. Will evaluators provide specific scenarios or use cases in advance, or should respondents design their own demonstration flow?	Respondents should provide their own demonstration flow.
		106. For "Annual License for Services," should pricing include unlimited users statewide, or per-institution tiers?	Limited users at the THEC.
		107. For the 60-month term, should Year 1 costs differ from Years 2–5 to account for implementation?	Yes.
		108. May respondents propose optional enhancements beyond base requirements, clearly separated from required pricing?	Yes.
		109. If additional development is requested during the contract term, what is the	We would expect any additional development beyond the requirements in Contract Section

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		process for pricing and approving change orders?	A.6. to require an amendment to the contract.
		110. Is there an estimated or not-to-exceed budget amount for this procurement?	No.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d.		111. What is the scope of dual admissions tracking required—full enrollment lifecycle or informational resources only?	Tracking agreements between institutions to display to prospective students.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d.		112. Should the system track prior dual credit earned before postsecondary matriculation?	Yes.
Pro Forma Contract, Sections A.4.d.		113. Are there existing dual admissions agreements between specific institution pairs that must be represented?	Yes.
		114. Our understanding is that Tennessee's reverse transfer program currently identifies eligible students through institutional degree audits. Should the new system automate eligibility detection and notification?	No.
		115. Should the system integrate with institutional degree audit systems to verify associate degree completion for reverse transfer candidates?	No.
		116. Our research indicates articulation changes require faculty approval and the A&T Council provides statewide coordination. Should the system enforce a specific approval workflow (e.g., faculty proposal → registrar review → A&T Council ratification), or should institutions define their own workflows?	THEC will be responsible for gathering these approvals outside of the system.
		117. Should THEC staff have override authority for statewide policy changes, or must all equivalency updates follow the institutional approval process?	THEC shall have the ability override authority when needed.

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		118. Does THEC use a document management system the contractor should integrate with for transcript storage?	No.
		119. Should uploaded documents be stored within the new system or in an existing enterprise repository?	In the new system.

3. **RFP Amendment Effective Date.** The revisions set forth herein shall be effective upon release. All other terms and conditions of this RFP not expressly amended herein shall remain in full force and effect.