

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION CHAPTER 103D, HRS**

The Chief Procurement Officer, University of Hawai'i, is in the process of reviewing the request from
Office of the President (Department/Campus)
for exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, for the following goods and services:
EdSights AI-powered chatbot student success platform.

Vendor/Contractor: EdSights, Inc.
(If known)
Address: 228 Park Avenue S PMB 90809
New York, New York 10003-1502

Term of Contract: (If known)	From: To be determined	To: To be determined	Cost: \$2,000,000.00 over five years (est.)
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Direct any inquiries to: Department: Office of the President Contact Name/Title: Kim Siegenthaler, Senior Advisor Address: 2444 Dole Street, Bachman 201 Honolulu, Hawaii 96822	Phone Number: (808) 956-8207 Fax Number: (808) 956-5286
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Date Posted: April 28, 2025

Submit written objections to this notice to issue an exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, within seven (7) calendar days from the date posted to:

Office of Procurement Management
1400 Lower Campus Road, Room 15
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
email: OPM@hawaii.edu

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER 103D, HRS

To: Kalbert Young **Date:** _____
Chief Procurement Officer, University of Hawai'i

Via: Office of Procurement Management

From: Kim Siegenthaler, Office of the President
(Campus & Department/Program)

Vendor/Contractor: EdSights

Estimated Amount: Estimated \$2 million

Term of Contract, if applicable: 5 years

Pursuant to University Administrative Procedure 8.220, and consistent with Hawaii Revised Statutes §103D-102(b)(4) and Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 3-120, the department requests a procurement exemption to purchase the following (attach additional sheets if necessary):

1. Description of the goods or services:

EdSights AI-powered chatbot collects information directly from students to identify and address the underlying issues students face in real-time by automatically checking in with students in a personalized manner every 7-14 days. It proactively uncovers risk in belonging, wellness, finances, and academic engagement and automatically connects students to targeted campus resources unique to their barriers. This information will help staff prioritize high-impact outreach while uncovering institutional persistence trends.

2. Explain in detail, why it is not practicable or not advantageous for the University to procure by standard competitive means when multiple sources are available, or by other standard methods of source selection:

See Attached

3. Explain in detail, the process that will be or was utilized in selecting the vendor/contractor:

See Attached

4. Provide a description of the department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempt procurement:

See Attached

5. Provide a list of department personnel, by position title, who will be involved in the approval process and administration of the contract:

Kim Siegenthaler, Senior Advisor
Blanche Fountain, Fiscal Manager, Budget and Finance
Garret Yoshimi, VP for Information Technology & CIO, Information Technology Services
Kalbert Young, VP for Budget and Finance & CFO, Chief Procurement Officer

6. Direct questions to: _____ Email Address: _____

Certification: I certify that the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Kim Siegenthaler

Full Name of Principal Investigator, Department
Head, or Administrator

Kim Siegenthaler Digitally signed by Kim Siegenthaler
Date: 2025.04.17 15:18:24 -10'00'

Signature Date

Blanche Fountain

Full Name of Fiscal Administrator

Blanche Fountain Digitally signed by Blanche Fountain
Date: 2025.04.17 17:14:13 -10'00'

Signature Date

APPROVED:

Garret T. Yoshimi

Full Name of Vice President or Chancellor

Garret T. Yoshimi Digitally signed by Garret T. Yoshimi
Date: 2025.04.17 17:18:55 -10'00'

Signature Date

FOR OPM USE ONLY

OPM COMMENTS:

APPROVED DENIED

Sarah Allen Digitally signed by Sarah Allen
Date: 2025.05.06 12:41:48 -10'00'
CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

05/06/25
DATE

Attachment to Form 138, for EdSights license

2. Explain in detail why it is not practicable or not advantageous for the University to procure by standard competitive means when multiple sources are available, or by other standard methods of source selection:

President Hensel is launching a university-wide student success initiative designed to eliminate student achievement gaps by creating a common standard of care for all students that gets them on track for graduation, keeps them on track, and intervenes when they get off track. Achieving this ambitious goal requires that faculty, staff, and students at every campus have access to modern technology built for this purpose and that facilitates analytics to support data-informed decision-making.

EdSights is the only student success platform that generates persistence insights for institutions by leveraging conversational AI over text message. Through a proprietary research-based framework EdSights systematically checks in with college students over text and asks research-based questions about their college experience. EdSights is the only vendor in higher education capable of analyzing those interactions in real-time and producing persistence insights.

No other chatbot or SMS vendor analyzes chat interactions and generates the following data:

1. **Student Risk Levels:** Persistence risk predictions for each student based on their interactions with the AI. Risk levels are calculated using a predictive model that leverages millions of student responses and persistence outcomes to predict the likelihood of persistence for each student. A 2023 randomized controlled trial found that students labeled by EdSights as “high risk” were twice as likely to not persist. The risk profile (seen in Figure 1) that the AI updates with each conversation allows the framework to adapt communication and prioritize different check-ins and interventions with each student based on previous interactions. This unique approach ensures that every student receives the most personalized support.
2. **Auto-generated student outreach lists:** while engaging with students and connecting them to resources, EdSights generates prioritized short lists of students who would benefit from staff outreach. Utilizing a machine learning model and insights from over 5 million interactions and persistence outcomes, it automatically identifies students where outreach can have the greatest impact. This allows university staff to efficiently prioritize outreach, fostering more scalable and impactful human connections.
3. **Institutional Trends:** EdSights automatically analyzes how persistence risk changes across an infinite number of student attributes that the institution selects (e.g., major, first-gen status). The model identifies cohorts of students at higher risk and pinpoints specific factors driving risk within these groups (e.g., food insecurity, wellness, belonging, academic engagement, etc.). These insights are automatically generated, requiring no staff analysis, enabling institutions to effortlessly monitor their student body and discover trends for making structural improvements and long-term actions.
4. **Auto-Forwarded Crisis Insights:** EdSights is the only technology that automatically escalates time-sensitive language used by students to the appropriate staff member(s) in real time. Incoming messages indicating time-sensitive needs are forwarded to predetermined staff based on the nature of the alert (e.g., mental health or violence). In parallel students are immediately and automatically supplied with an institutionally approved resource for the specific alert type, such as a crisis hotline. While some chatbot vendors may respond to the student with a resource, none have a rule-based forwarding workflow to escalate those conversations to targeted staff. EdSights’ Alerts workflow is one of a kind and ensures earlier intervention and reduction in the volume of crises at our partner institutions.

- 5. Student Voice Score (SVS):** EdSights provides its partners with an industry-first, trademarked system for measuring student sentiment. The Student Voice Score (SVS) provides partners with a simple, yet tangible number that measures student satisfaction. Via the dashboard, schools can measure their SVS over time, compare it to custom benchmarks as well as analyze SVS scores across different sub-populations (e.g., race, gender, major, etc.). Additionally, the SVS dashboard provides an AI-generated summary of the qualitative feedback students provided for things negatively and positively impacting their experience.

Competitors in higher education does not provide EdSights depth of resource the UH is looking for. For instance:

Comparable U.S. Firms in AI-Powered Student Engagement

Ocelot: Ocelot delivers AI-powered chatbots and SMS tools, including its "Campaigns" feature, enabling institutions to send personalized reminders and process guides. While it supports proactive communication and integrates with campus systems, it doesn't emphasize real-time persistence risk modeling or automated crisis escalation akin to EdSights.

Modern Campus Message (formerly Signal Vine): This platform offers AI-driven text messaging with its Virtual Advisor chatbot, facilitating targeted outreach and student support. Although it aids in engagement and retention, it lacks EdSights' depth in predictive analytics and crisis alert mechanisms.

Drips: Drips specializes in AI-powered conversational outreach through SMS and calls, focusing on enrollment and retention. Its strength lies in managing large-scale communications, but it doesn't provide the nuanced risk assessments or institutional trend analyses that EdSights offers.

LivePerson: LivePerson's Conversational AI platform supports automated student interactions across various channels. While it enhances communication efficiency, it doesn't match EdSights' capabilities in persistence risk prediction or personalized intervention strategies.

AtlasRTX provides 24/7 digital assistants for student engagement, aiding in admissions and retention. Despite its real-time support features, it doesn't offer the same level of predictive analytics or crisis response workflows as EdSights.

3. Explain in detail, the process that will be or was utilized in selecting the vendor/contractor:

EdSights is the only AI texting tool built specifically for retention and the only chatbot with a built-in dynamic framework that systematically and proactively collects student data in four key areas: belonging, financial distress, wellness, and student engagement. Uniquely, EdSights retention conversations are initiated by an AI-powered algorithm that is optimized across all of EdSights' institutions. EdSights maintains its position as the only vendor with SMS messaging, AI intuitive communication, and retention analytics and will provide UH with important student data not available from other sources.

EdSights was launched at UHM in August 2023 and has a 95% student opt-in rate. UH Hilo has also recently begun using EdSights chatbot software beginning January of this year.

Given EdSights' demonstrated unique student support services and current use with a large number of UH students, a competitive process would be counterproductive in terms of time to launch and disruption of current support in an environment where improving student retention and graduation rates is imperative.

4. Provide a description of the department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempt procurement:

The department's fiscal management, provided by the UH System fiscal administration function under the VP for Budget and Finance and CFO, provides shared services for UH System offices including the President's Office. Its fiscal manager, Blanche Fountain, will oversee the internal controls and approvals for the procurement. Kim Siegenthaler, Senior Advisor to the President, is the liaison and lead project manager for the University with EdSights. In addition, Garret Yoshimi, the VP for Information Technology and CIO, will assist with oversight of the procurement and successful integration of the software into the University ensuring compliance with policies and process.