Why must I submit my proposal to OSP for processing at least four days before the sponsor’s deadline?
OSP processes an average of 1800 proposals per year. When a proposal arrives at OSP less than four days before the submission deadline, the OSP grants coordinator has only a small amount of time to review the budget and attached documentation. Because of time constraints and our commitment to processing proposals in a timely manner, we often have set aside proposals that arrive with a greater lead time and concentrated on those that arrive on, or only one day before, the sponsor’s deadline date. This practice has hurt OSP’s ability to effectively communicate with faculty and staff during common deadline periods. Additionally, other services like processing awards, filing extensions, requesting amendments and re-budgeting must be set aside in order to focus on last-minute proposals. The four-day “window” gives OSP sufficient time to review proposals for budgetary, compliance and compatibility issues before submitting them to the sponsor.

Why has OSP implemented the FIFO Policy?
Proposals are fundamental to sponsored funding and the highest priority for the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP). To ensure that the proposal review and approval process is fair and equitable to all faculty investigators across campus, OSP has instituted a first-in first-out (FIFO) policy, regardless of deadline date.

When should I begin a record in NUgrant?
OSP strongly recommends that you place a record in NUgrant with a valid due date as soon as you identify an opportunity to which you will apply. Routing does not have to start at this time. The record remains in ‘preparation stage’ and can be changed or altered as new information becomes available. When you place the record in NUgrant, you help OSP better plan for high proposal volume at any particular time.

How can I know if the proposal routing is complete?
The review and approval process by departments, centers and colleges prior to submission to OSP normally takes a few days. Once you approve the proposal in NUgrant, you should track the status of the proposal to ensure that it is approved by the appropriate co-investigators, departments, centers and colleges. The proposal is considered finalized only after these approvals have been secured.

If I contact OSP to let you know I have started a proposal routing, does the four-day guarantee clock begin?
No -- under the FIFO policy, the four-day business guarantee begins when OSP receives notification from NUgrant that the routing is complete AND receives from you any required supplemental information that might not have been included in the NUgrant routing. – NOT
when you approve the proposal at the beginning of the Nugrant routing or if you e-mail OSP to let us know a proposal is routing.

**Why do electronic applications require extra processing time?**

Electronic submissions are subject to barriers that may not occur with traditional paper-based submissions. Therefore, OSP must adopt a fairly strict policy for such applications. Some funding agencies that utilize an electronic application process are not aware of UNL’s policies and may ask investigators to follow a submission procedure that bypasses the required university approval process. To protect the interests of UNL faculty and staff who submit proposals, as well as the interests of the university, on-line or other electronic (including e-mail) versions of proposals must be routed and processed through NUgrant.

Electronic applications **must** be released to OSP for submission no later than four business days prior to the deadline day. This timeframe provides an opportunity for OSP to review the submission to ensure that it contains necessary files, to repair corrupted files, and to overcome any Internet service interruptions that may otherwise result in failure to get the proposal submitted to the sponsor on time. This larger window for submission will help OSP staff avoid sponsor overload on deadline days and will provide extra time in the face of problems beyond OSP’s control.

**Why can’t I submit a proposal on my own to a funding agency?**

On occasion, an agency may ask you to send a proposal electronically directly to the agency. In some cases, funding agencies still require an "official" copy, signed by the authorized organizational representative (OSP), to be sent later. If you submit a proposal prior to any university review and approval, the proposal is not considered an authorized application.

**How can OSP guarantee proposal review and approval in four business days?**

Sponsored programs administration is a team effort by investigators, grants coordinators, department and college administrators and OSP staff. OSP’s review process is flexible and responsive to the volume of proposals. Each OSP pre-award staff member is assigned to specific colleges and departments within UNL. When OSP receives a high volume of proposals in one particular area, the workload can be redistributed among other OSP staff to ensure review and approval of proposals within four business days. However, this four-day guarantee for proposals is contingent upon the principal investigator or a designated contact person being available and responsive to questions from OSP staff and submission of additional documentation in a timely manner.

Currently four staff members are dedicated to reviewing proposals. Once a proposal is reviewed, the OSP pre-award coordinator will submit it and update the NUgrant status to “submitted.” However, during the review period, it is critical that the investigator or other contact person respond as soon as possible to the pre-award coordinator’s questions, should any arise. If responses to questions or additional documentation requested by OSP are not received within a few hours, it may not be possible to process your proposal within four business days.
How will I be notified that a proposal was not received in time and whether or not the proposal will be/was submitted?

NUgrant will record both the date the routing is completed and the due date. If fewer than four days remain before the sponsor’s deadline, OSP cannot guarantee on-time submission. In this case, everyone on the routing will receive an automated e-mail message that the proposal was submitted to OSP with fewer than the required four days before the deadline, and it will be processed in accordance with the FIFO policy. This message will serve as a warning that it is possible the proposal may not be processed in time. A follow-up note will let everyone know if OSP did or did not have time to process the late-arriving proposal.