FIFO Policy
The Office of Sponsored Programs will handle proposals submitted for review, approval and submission to external funding agencies on a “first in, first out” (FIFO) basis, regardless of deadline date.

Four-day Guarantee
All grant proposals that arrive at OSP four or more business days ahead of the sponsor’s submission deadline with correct and appropriate documentation (or if such documentation is provided in a timely manner during the review), will be guaranteed review and approval before the deadline. If the proposal is not received at least four days before the sponsor deadline, OSP cannot guarantee that the proposal will be submitted on time. Due to the typical nature of negotiations on contractual agreement, however, a four-day guarantee often is not possible for contract proposals.

NUgrant Proposal Routing Procedure
All proposals to external sponsors, paper or electronic, must be reviewed and approved by the investigator’s department chair, dean or director (and sometimes other department chairs or deans and center directors) and OSP prior to submission. This review is accomplished by routing the proposal, along with appropriate documents such as budgets, abstracts, etc., through NUgrant (http://nugrant.unl.edu), UNL’s electronic research administration system.

- In cases where a UNL researcher proposes to collaborate with another entity as a subawardee of that entity, proposals must follow the same routing process.
- Any pre-proposals that are required to provide a detailed budget and/or cost share commitments of any kind also must be routed through NUgrant.

Review and approval by departments, centers and colleges prior to submission to OSP normally takes a few days. The proposal is considered finalized only after these approvals have been secured. The four-day guarantee begins when OSP receives notification from NUgrant that the routing is complete AND receives from the investigator any required supplemental information that might not have been included in the NUgrant routing. Once a proposal is reviewed and approved by OSP, OSP will submit the proposal to the sponsor unless OSP has approved other arrangements for submittal.

Procedure for Submitting Electronic Applications
Because electronic submissions are subject to barriers that may not occur with traditional paper-based submissions, OSP strives to submit all electronic proposals well in advance of sponsor deadlines. Therefore, OSP requires submission of electronic proposals four days before the published deadline.
Electronic Proposals Submitted by OSP. The investigator must follow the required NUgrant routing process, and the complete electronic version of a proposal to be submitted via Grants.gov, FastLane or any other electronic method must be released to OSP for submission no later than four business days prior to the deadline day. Submission cannot be guaranteed for any electronic applications that are released to OSP with fewer than four full business days for review. Electronic applications, once they are released to OSP, also are subject to the first-in first-out policy unless changes and/or corrections are required.

Additional changes to an electronic proposal are NOT permitted after it is released to OSP, unless requested by OSP. OSP staff are unable to scan files, convert text to PDF files or perform other large-scale proposal corrections. Investigators should build sufficient lead time into their timelines to complete these tasks prior to releasing the proposal to OSP.

Electronic Proposals Submitted by the Investigator. Proposals to sponsors requiring an e-mail submission should be submitted from OSP. The investigator will be copied on the submission. However, if the sponsor absolutely requires e-mail submission from the investigator, the investigator should contact OSP for guidance. Electronic applications submitted by investigators must be routed through NUgrant as outlined above. After obtaining appropriate university approvals, including final approval by OSP, the investigator may then follow the sponsor's submission procedure; the OSP pre-award coordinator must be copied on the submission. If any final changes in the proposal are needed, the new version must be reviewed and approved by OSP prior to submission.

Late NUgrant Routing
If a proposal deadline is fewer than four days away, and the NUgrant routing hasn’t been initiated, there is a chance the proposal will not be reviewed and approved in time for submission. In this unlikely situation, the investigator should begin the routing process immediately, then contact every individual, department, center and college identified in the NUgrant routes to make everyone aware that a proposal is coming that requires their immediate approval. If OSP is processing only a few proposals at the time, it is possible the proposal can be reviewed and approved before the submission deadline. However, under the FIFO policy, the proposal cannot be moved to the top for OSP review. It will be reviewed only after all other proposals received earlier have been reviewed.

FIFO Waiver Policy
In the extremely rare case in which it might not be possible for a proposal to be submitted to OSP four days before the sponsor’s submission deadline, the investigator may officially request that the FIFO policy be waived. This request must be endorsed by the investigator’s department chair and college dean and the Office of Research before OSP can move the proposal ahead of others. To obtain this approval, the investigator should e-mail a request to the appropriate department chair and college dean with a copy to Mike Zeleny (mzeleny1@unl.edu) explaining why the proposal couldn’t be submitted four days in advance of the deadline and describing the reasons it should be moved ahead of other proposals submitted earlier to OSP. OSP must receive approval of the request from all three parties prior to reviewing the proposal.