Independent external consultants retained by the Board shall evaluate proposals for new graduate programs unless waived by the Executive Director. The Board shall receive copies of all consultants’ reports.

1. **Selection of Consultants**
   
   A. The university requesting the new graduate program shall compile a list of at least five (5) potential consultants and provide the list to the System Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or his/her designee. The CAO shall recommend consultants to the Board; the Board may delegate the selection of consultants to the Executive Director.
   
   B. At least one consultant shall review a proposed master’s level program; at least two consultants shall review a proposed doctoral program.

2. **Agreements, Fees, and Expenses**
   
   A. The CAO or his/her designee shall inform consultants of evaluation expectations and required reports. Each consultant shall execute a written consulting agreement.
   
   B. The university proposing the program shall pay consultant fees and expenses.

3. **The Evaluation Process**
   
   A. The CAO or his/her designee, in cooperation with the university, shall provide each consultant with materials related to the proposed program.
   
   B. The CAO or his/her designee shall arrange a visit to the university so that the consultant(s) may conduct interviews and examine facilities and equipment. At least one member of the Board staff shall accompany the consultant(s) during the visit to the university.
   
   C. The Board staff present during a campus visit shall participate in an exit interview with the consultant(s).
D. Consultants shall meet with university staff at multiple levels of authority, including faculty proposed to teach in the new program, department and/or college leadership (e.g., dean(s), department head, program director, etc.) and university leadership (president, provost, dean(s), etc.).

E. The CAO or his/her designee shall arrange to receive a final written report from consultants within thirty days. The CAO or his/her designee may request an executive summary of major findings prior to thirty days as needed. Consultants may prepare individual reports or a joint report that clearly indicates any differences in opinion.

F. The CAO, upon receipt of the written report(s), shall provide a copy to the president of the university.

4. The University Response

A. The university may prepare a formal written response to recommendations made by the consultant(s).

B. The university shall submit a revised proposal request if the consultant(s) recommend(s) significant changes in the program.

C. The university’s response may include requests for new courses recommended by the consultant(s).

5. Waiving the External Review

A. The Executive Director may waive the external review in instances where the requesting university has a preexisting closely related program or specialization and/or where the proposed new graduate program has limited curricular additions or modifications.