



# Developing Quality Dissertations in the Sciences: A Graduate Student's Guide to Achieving Excellence

*Barbara E. Lovitts, Ellen L. Wert*

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## **Developing Quality Dissertations in the Sciences: A Graduate Student's Guide to Achieving Excellence**

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This is one of three short booklets designed to be given to graduate students as they begin their studies.

They explain the purposes of the dissertation and the criteria by which it will be assessed. They help students understand the context of their course work; the need to take an active role in shaping their studies; and the importance of thinking ahead about the components of the dissertation and the quality of scholarship they will need to demonstrate.

These booklets are intended to support the dissertation research and writing process by providing faculty and advisors with guidelines for setting clear expectations for student performance, and with a model for helping students produce the desired quality of work.

They encourage dialogue between faculty and students about the quality of the components of their dissertation project. They include rubrics that students can use to self-assess their work and that can aid faculty in providing focused feedback.

Setting explicit targets and benchmarks of excellence of the sort advocated in these booklets will enable departments and universities to respond to demands for accountability with clear criteria for, and evidence of, success; and will raise the overall quality of student performance.

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