Utilizing Explicit Criteria in Formative and Summative Assessment of Dissertation Quality

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Conventionally, assessment of quality in dissertations is exclusively summative and reliant upon implicit criteria. The presenter at this session for *E-Learn 2011's Best Practices* will detail a shift from such conventional assessment of dissertation quality to a process that utilizes external, explicit criteria grounded in publication standards and implemented by independent reviewers throughout the dissertation development process. The recently enhanced process allows for improved dissertation quality as well as formative and summative assessment as part of the review process. Observations will be discussed in the context of a university that offers multiple doctoral degrees in a distance education, regionally accredited, for-profit environment, where doctoral students and faculty are diverse in academic discipline, research interests, methodology, and professional background, as well as international in their geographic location.