# **Proposal for a Third Thesis/Dissertation Template**

The purpose of this report is to present the responses of survey participants about a possible third thesis/dissertation template to meet the needs of certain programs, namely the master’s program in History and the MFA program in English.

This is a summary of the findings from the Thesis/Dissertation Survey sent out to DOGEs, Faculty, and Staff. A total of 99 responses were collected. Only Questions 6 to 8 were analyzed for the purpose of the Graduate Council’s October 2021 Agenda.

Additionally, a separate survey was sent on to current graduate students and recently graduated students. A total of 88 responses were collected from graduate students. 87 students were currently enrolled and one graduated in Summer 2021. Overall, the students’ responses were similar to the responses of DOGEs, faculty, and staff.

*Question 6*

*There are two theses/dissertation templates: (1) The Traditional Template and (2) The Journal Article Template. Does either of these templates meet your graduate program's needs?*

Figure 1 shows the percentage of responses about the existing two templates by both groups.

Figure 1 Percentage of responses about the two existing thesis/dissertation templates

In general, participants who indicated that the templates did not meet their needs fell into one of the three categories:

1. MFA Program in Creative Writing and Environment needed more flexibility because they are more creative.
2. The journal articles in History do not split into chapters because they are analytical narratives.
3. The short-form thesis in History is a single journal article that does not require multiple chapters.

Respondents who were unsure were primarily new to their positions or thought that the style should be dependent on the type of scholarship and discussions with their major professor.

For the list of responses, please look at Appendix A: Respondents’ comments about why the existing two templates don’t meet their needs.

*Question 7*

*Here is a mock-up of the Table of Contents for a possible third template called the Narrative/Creative Template. This third template would be suitable for theses/dissertations that may not require the word “CHAPTER” in the Heading Level 1 and/or use of subheaders. The ADDITIONAL BODY OF THESIS OR SECTION TITLE and beyond can be added as necessary. You can review the draft of the template in full here. Would this third template meet your graduate program's needs?*

Figure 2 shows the percentage of responses about the proposed third template.

Figure 2 Percentage of responses about the proposed third thesis/dissertation template.

The respondents who said “No” or “Not Sure” generally fell into one of the three categories:

1. The third template was not suitable for their program and/or the existing two templates were sufficient.
2. Their programs did not require a thesis or dissertation.
3. They were new to the program or did not have sufficient knowledge to provide an opinion.

For the list of responses, please look at Appendix B: Respondents’ comments about why the proposed third template does not meet their needs.

*Question 8*

*If you would like to recommend a different name for this third template other than Narrative/Creative Template, please enter in the text box, and we will take it into consideration. If not, please leave it blank and move on to the next question.*

Respondents provided suggestions for the naming of the proposed third template that included the following:

* MFA Template
* Creative Scholarship Template
* Journal Article Format 2
* Humanities template
* Non-Chapter
* Research Article
* Journal Essay Article

For a full list of suggestions, see Appendix C: Respondents’ suggestions for the name of the proposed third template.

The comments reflect issues that had previously been discussed by the Thesis/Dissertation Workgroup with the understanding that the title was still not acceptable to some stakeholders even though the template only holds the Graduate College guidelines for general formatting. Below are two main suggestions and the related issues.

**Creative vs Journal:** The MFA is primarily creative while the short theses from the History Department are research-based. Thus, there is a perception that the word “creative” in the name of the template could diminish the reputation of their scholarship.

**Journal Article Templates 1 and 2**: The History Department would prefer for the template to be identified as the second style of Journal Article Template. This would meet their needs but not reflect the MFA program. Furthermore, the Center for Communication Excellence does not have the manpower to update all existing resources, video tutorials, etc. to refer to Journal Article Templates 1 and 2 as opposed to creating new resources to describe the third template with a new name.

Based on the analysis above, here are possible options for the Graduate Council to consider.

1. Approve the third template with the proposed name while recognizing that not everyone will be happy with the decision.
2. Approve the third template but proposed a new name. (Proposed name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
3. Approve the third template but name the template two ways. The first would be the Journal Article Template (Short Version). The second would be the Creative Template. In terms of organization, the CCE would list the Journal Article Template (Short Version) as a subset of the Journal Article Template while the Creative Template would be the official third template for works that don’t meet the Traditional or Journal Article Templates.

## **Appendix A: Respondents’ comments about why the existing two templates don’t meet their needs**

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| **No (Please explain.) (DOGEs, Faculty, and Staff)** |
| I wrote a long note about the need for a creative option, based on my conversation as co-coordinator of the MFA Program in Creative Writing and Environment. But I see the next questions get at this. |
| Some of our students do what the university considers research. The Traditional Template works for this. Many of our MFA thesis students do creative scholarship which often does not fit the defined structure of the Traditional Template. These students don't write 'chapters' and they don't produce academic journal articles. |
| Journal articles in history often take the form of an analytical narrative and should not be divided into chapters |
| We don't have a thesis component. |
| The template for the traditional thesis is fine. The journal article template is entirely inappropriate to the humanities. It should not be broken up into chapters. |
| There is also a LaTeX template that doesn't have separate "traditional" and journal" styles. Why do you assume that people are going to use Word? Thank for you creating what appears to be good LaTeX documentation. Virtually all of our graduate students will use LaTeX. |
| For PhD theses, the "traditional template" works fine. For MA theses, it's more complicated: we have a two-track MA thesis system, depending on how much course work MA students do. They either submit a long-form thesis or a short-form thesis. The long form thesis is divided into chapters and fits the "traditional template." The short-form thesis is written like a scholarly article in the history discipline -- and as such does not fit the "Journal Article Template" as you have it laid out here. Articles in our discipline are typically not laid out in a schematic arrangement of chapters as this template requires. |
| The parts of a journal article in History are supposed to cohere into an analytic whole and are not meant to be read discretely. We develop analytical narratives--pieces that are diminished and fragmented by being chopped up into smaller bits. For most of our students, then, the whole is greater than the parts. In order to meet GC requirements, our students end up having to chop 30-45 page essays into weirdly divided and often nonsensical "chapters". Given how much time they and their mentors spend on trying to craft cohesive, flowing narratives, this requirement becomes a source of deep frustration and actively weakens the work they are trying to accomplish. |
| We use both models, although more students use the three essay (journal article) format |

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| **No (Please explain.) (Students)** |
| I used the formatting templates for my dissertation. |
| These templates are fine, but I'd like to just have a template with a fake example thesis (for example, filled with nonsense words) that I could just draft my thesis in. I'd like to just start writing my thesis in a document that is formatted correctly, but the current templates make that kind of difficult. |
| SysEng is course-work only |
| Yes, and no because depending on what journal I will be submitting to the format needs to be that way. But I think the format will align closely with the template. I am grateful! |
| The Journal article template doesn't match the standard of the field that I am in. |
| I had to submit my thesis 6 times before it got approved, for stupid little formatting issues. And this was a novel for the creative writing program - it didn't have any math or other special formatting requirements. I'm absolutely \*dreading\* having to submit my stats dissertation. It's going to take months to get it approved. |

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| **Not sure (Please explain.) (DOGEs, Faculty, and Staff)** |
| I just started a new position this spring and still learning this portion of items to help grad students. |
| It depends on the type of scholarship a graduate student is doing: research or creative |
| While this would fit for our students that elect to complete a traditional dissertation, I am unsure how the program is expecting students to submit documentation for a creative component. might be a good addition to explore within this site. |
| Do not work with this piece |
| The Journal format is an excellent option, the only area that my students struggle with is General Conclusions section as often they work on diverse projects and trying to pull those together in this section is complicated. It would be great if this was optional. |
| I was only hired in August and am still learning our graduate program. I believe these would meet our needs, but am not positive. |
| I tell students I advise they have to use the university template. Then, if they want to publish sections of the dissertation, they convert the formatting the to journal's conventions. |
| I have not explored how well the journal template fits the journals my work is directed to,. |
| Traditional format would work for some dissertations. The Journal article format is appropriate for some Economics dissertations, but the structure is too restrictive. Economics dissertations often take the form of a collection of essays that resemble journal submissions, but which are not yet submitted and may never be submitted as they appear in the dissertation. |
| Traditional works. Journal Article is problematic... The "Narrative/Creative" template is better (but should NOT be called "Narrative/Creative"). |
| Have not examined them. |
| Students in my program work directly with their major professor and research group on formatting their theses. |

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| **Not sure (Please explain.) (Students)** |
| I haven't started my thesis/ creative component |
| I haven't used these resources yet. |
| Haven't gone to that part yet nd so I didn't go through it carefully |
| Haven't started writing my Thesis. |
| I'm not entirely sure what the requirements are for the layout of my dissertation. I'm currently using the LaTex template. |
| They appear to, but I am not certain what my committee will ultimately expect. They did seem like use resources though. |
| Have thought about how to format, but didn't realize these resources and tools were available. So I cannot speak on if they have worked yet. |
| Not sure of thesis/dissertation needs |
| I have not started this yet as I am a new student. |
| Haven't gotten to a point of using a dissertation template and haven't used these resources |
| I have not started writing yet |
| I am in a creative field and would like to submit a thesis (as opposed to a creative component) but I would like to have more flexibility in what that would mean and be able to have a creative component within the thesis. |
| I need some more years to graduate, so didn't consider these issues yet. |
| I just started this fall and do not have a thesis project started yet |
| I haven't started writing my thesis yet. I'm not sure what the format will look like |
| I have not yet started formatting my chapters |
| I have no idea about the templates. |
| I have not begun my dissertation, so I have not utilized these resources. |
| Not yet writing |

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## **Appendix B: Respondents’ comments about why the proposed third template does not meet their needs**

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| **No (Please explain.) (DOGEs, Faculty, and Staff)** |
| Almost all of our Ph.D and MS theses use the journal article style. The traditional style is flexible enough for the few other cases. There is nothing wrong with this third template, but I don't see it being used in PHYSA. |
| Yes, I think this much more flexible format meets the needs of the MFA Program. (Lily and I worked on this last year, specifically for the creative writing program, though I imagine it would be useful for the graduate programs in Art & Design as well. |
| Not relevant |
| I like the traditional. The one based on articles does not work well. Students view it as a short cut that avoids writing! |
| We generally don't do these kind of theses. |
| The two existing ones are. all that is needed for us, and we encourage the vast majority of students to do the journal paper version. |
| Why would we call this Narrative or Creative? Our students need a unified template (i.e. not broken down into lit review, data, etc. sections) because that is how historians write articles. But we don't write "creative" or "narrative" works. We right research-informed journal articles. |
| We have a practice degree, so no dissertation or thesis is required. |
| This is a journal article format, but by calling it Narrative/Creative, the Graduate College diminishes the research History students do. For our students, it should be labelled Research Article |
| I advise students in the social science traditions and expect their dissertations to conform to those standards. |
| We have students write their theses so that at least one chapter is a paper ready (or nearly ready) for submission to the planned journal. |
| It is not appropriate for the two formats that are employed for dissertations in my department. |
| All of my students have used the Journal article based thesis. |
| In HCI we lean towards the 3-article approach. If you want lengthier reading about this, check out: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KDKED4vmebRVU4kii8lsXMjFzWbX0anynSPrMqC2GD0/edit |
| Sometimes for an MS thesis when there is no manuscript involved. But this is very close to the traditional thesis. So, we use the traditional thesis format in the identified case. |
| This is not useful for a journal article format? Why is this so hard? |
| Not relevant to us, we are fine with chapters. |
| My students would not have a thesis with such a structure |
| other two templates serve the purpose |
| Calling this a Narrative/Creative template would diminish the substantive research that our students put into producing an article-length thesis. It would remove the clear recognition that our students engage in intensive "research" as understood across the disciplines. Historical journal articles do not use chapter-like divisions, either. We craft and write coherent, connected narratives of our research findings. |
| The second template (journal article) is what my students need |
| We require traditional empirical studies formatted in traditional 5 chapter and APA style formats |
| students need to be able to translate their work into journal articles. This is oriented toward a book -- great for philosphy or history or English, but not Economics |
| Chapters are traditional in Math/Applied Math dissertations. |
| Our positivist orientation in the Ivy CoB makes me think we will not see dissertations for which this would be suitable. |
| We do research and very little narrative |
| Incomplete sections for my needs - I prefer the format I am currently using |
| Not necessary for our programs. |
| Our field prefers clear chapters either as a 5 chapter dissertation or as a 3-article format in APA |
| only journal article format is relevant |

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| **No (Please explain.) (Students)** |
| I use the journal style template |
| Must use journal formatting with my dissertation, have multiple scientific papers intended for publication. |
| Not necessary for scientific/biological dissertation. |
| I had trouble distinguishing the chapter contents apart. I already have to revise the Traditional Dissertation Template to match my professor's expectations. I feel like the changes I would have to make to the template would be too substantial for the template to be useful for me. |
| My dissertation fits the Journal Style use-case. |
| No, only because I am doing a traditional thesis rather than a creative component (I know a lot of journalism master's students do creative components, though, so this would probably be helpful for them). |
| A traditional style template is suitable for me. |
| The journal template worked for me |
| N/A. I will not need it because I will be doing a journal-style dissertation. |
| Will use traditional template |
| I believe I need to have the title include Chapter as a requirement per my department. However, I am not 100% sure on this to be honest. |
| Dissertation requires chapter format |
| No, I will be using the Journal Style template (which I am very glad to know exists!!). |
| SysEng is course-work only |
| using journal-based |
| I like the chapters format for my dissertation |
| I plan to use the chapter format for my thesis so something like this wouldn't work. |
| I am in the chem department |
| The Tradtional and Journal Style Templates are exactly what I need for my dissertation. |
| The traditional one is more applicable to sociology/criminal justice. |
| I don't think it would have been an appropriate choice for me with my thesis in my degree program. |
| Because I'm using the Traditional template. |
| I need the "chapter" version, based on the examples of theses i've been shown in my department |
| I prefer the traditional template for my future dissertation. |

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| **Not sure (Please explain.) (DOGEs, Faculty, and Staff)** |
| To my knowledge, we have not used this version |
| I just started a new position this spring and still learning this portion of items to help grad students. |
| I have not had a creative component or narrative thesis student before. I will use the journal template &gt;90% of the time. |
| I know one of our programs (RPC) would like to do a professional portfolio which could entail more of a web design projects so I'm not sure how well this format would work for something like that. |
| this could fit for the creative component, but could be edited to fit better for the creative space |
| we don't generally have people do this kind of work, but things are changing, so it might work |
| Do not work with this piece |
| In some instances, yes, this would be a welcome option. |
| Same as above |
| This may work for some of our creative component programs; I would need to consult with my colleagues to be certain. |
| I cannot tell if this format provides enough detail for the subsections within the literature review for our program. |
| I'm new faculty |
| My area doesn't allow creative works as theses, but other areas do, so I'll defer to their judgment on this matter. |
| We require empirical dissertations |
| The format is better, but please don't call it a "narrative/creative" template. That is condescending, and shows a lack of respect for the intellectual seriousness and integrity of the work historians do. We are not "creative" writers, we are disciplined researchers who rigorously seek out and analyze facts. Our analysis necessarily involves narrative, but is not limited to that. The template in fact reflects the form our peer-reviewed research takes when published in a journal. |
| It is rare to have a graduate student in my discipline use this template, but I can see possibilities for other graduate programs |
| I dont have my students use anything but the journal article format |
| Students in my program work directly with their major professor and research group on formatting their theses. |
| I think the extant templates already address our needs. |
| I would not use it but others in our dept may |
| I can't quite imagine a case where a student would use this one over the others. |
| I would want the DOGE to weigh-in |
| I am not sure whether the third template needs program-specific approval. Therefore I am not sure. |

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| **Not sure (Please explain.) (Students)** |
| I'm not sure if my dissertation could fit this template. |
| Haven't gone to that part yet nd so I didn't go through it carefully |
| I haven't started writing, therefore I do not know. |
| Don't know because I don't know the requirements |
| I do not believe this template would be any better than either of the previous 2 templates for my discipline. |
| Have not gone through the process, but I think it would meet the needs of my dissertation moving forward. |
| As my dissertation fell under the traditional format, it looks like some of the sections are missing from this particular format. |
| I'm not sure if this applies. |
| Did not get my topic already |
| Not sure of thesis/dissertation needs |
| It might help those that use the narrative type of theses but I'm not sure since I don't know what their requirements are. |
| I don't think this template applies to my field of research, but I am not positive. |
| Haven’t started writing yet |
| Might not need to use it. |
| I am not exactly sure what this would be used for. |
| I'm not sure what the benefit of this style would be. I also do not understand who this is targeted to. Therefore, I don't feel comfortable saying yes or no. |
| Probably, not sure yet. |
| just started |
| I’m still working on figuring out what my thesis topic will be so I have not given much thought to actually writing it. |
| I do not believe I fall into the "narrative/creative" section |
| I have not gotten to this point yet and am unsure if this will fit what I need. |
| I think my department requires us to use the journal article format |
| I don't know yet. |

## **Appendix C: Respondents’ suggestions for the name of proposed third template**

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| Perhaps MFA Template? (This would make it clear who the template is designed for perhaps for, though perhaps you are looking for non-scholarly options for other disciplines as well. |
| Creative Scholarship Template |
| Since this would create a new format for a Journal Article, I propose "Journal Article Format 1" and "Journal Article Format 2" |
| Humanities template |
| We have talked about this as a group. There is some opinion that creative minimizes the nature of these projects. Professional/Narrative might be more appropriate for our department. Although creative writing would like theirs to be called a creative component but they don't feel other projects should be called creative. |
| Creative may be confusing in terms of Creative Component...students already have a hard time distinguishing between thesis and cc |
| Journal Article Template 2 (modify the exising one to be called Journal Article Template 1) |
| Non-Chapter |
| Research article |
| Journal Article |
| Journal Essay Article |
| N/A |
| The name seems fine, however providing examples of the types of theses for which this template might be most appropriate would be helpful. |
| Humanities Journal Article Template, or Journal Article Template (Humanities), or Humanities Research Template |
| Research Article |
| "Journal Article Format A" and "Journal Article Format B" - Though history journal articles often take a narrative form, they are still journal articles! Please do not disrespect the work our students do. |
| I think this has equal claim to the title "traditional" format. So why not just have two options for traditional format--Traditional A and Traditional B or something similar? |
| journal article |
| No opinion. |
| Anything with a slash is confusing |
| NA |