

## About 3MT

3MT is an academic competition that challenges researchers to deliver a compelling spoken presentation on their research topic and its significance in just three minutes. It started at the University of Queensland and competitions take place at institutions around the world each year.



## Eligibility

- Active Master/PhD candidates who have successfully passed their confirmation milestone (including candidates whose thesis is under submission) by the date of their first presentation are eligible to participate.

## Rules

- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted. No slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are allowed. The slide is to be presented from the beginning of the oration.
- No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.
- No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment) are permitted.
- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (eg. no poems, raps or songs).
- Presentations are to commence from the stage.
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through either movement or speech.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

## Judging Criteria

The following criteria will guide the judges' decisions. Each criterion is equally weighted and has an emphasis on audience.

### **Comprehension and content**

- Presentation provided clear background and significance to the research question
- Presentation clearly described the research strategy/design and the results/findings of the research
- Presentation clearly described the conclusions, outcomes and impact of the research

#### **Engagement and communication**

- The oration was delivered clearly, and the language was appropriate for a non-specialist audience
- The PowerPoint slide was well-defined and enhanced the presentation
- The presenter conveyed enthusiasm for their research and captured and maintained the audience's attention

## Preparing your 3MT presentation

Even the world's best public speakers prepare before important presentations. To assist you with your preparations, please find a few suggestions below that will help you in writing your presentation, creating your slide and practising your verbal presentation.

## Drafting your 3MT

### **Write for your audience**

The judges will look for evidence that you can explain your research to a non-specialist audience. You may like to:

- avoid jargon and academic language
- explain concepts and people important to your research - you may know all about Professor Smith's theories but your audience may not
- highlight the outcomes of your research, and the desired outcome
- imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field
- convey your excitement and enthusiasm for your subject

### **Tell a story**

- You may like to present your 3MT as a narrative, with a beginning, middle and end.
- It's not easy to condense your research into three minutes, so you may find it easier to break your presentation down into smaller sections.
- Try writing an opener to catch the attention of the audience, then highlight your different points, and finally have a summary to restate the importance of your work.

### **Have a clear outcome in mind**

- Know what you want your audience to take away from your presentation.
- Try to leave the audience with an understanding of what you're doing, why it is important, and what you hope to achieve.

### Revise

- Proof your 3MT presentation by reading it aloud, firstly to yourself and then to an audience of friends and family.
- Ask for feedback.
- Ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is about and why it is important.

## Creating your 3MT slide

### Rules

Before you start work on your slide, you should take the following rules into account:

- one single static PowerPoint slide is permitted;
- no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are permitted;
- your slide is to be presented from the beginning of your oration; and
- no additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.

### Suggestions

You may like to consider some of the following suggestions:

- **Less is more:** text and complicated graphics can distract your audience – you don't want them to read your slide instead of listening to your 3MT.
- **Personal touches:** personal touches can allow your audience to understand the impact of your research.
- **Creativity drives interest:** do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your oration.
- **Work your message:** think about how your slide might be able to assist with the format and delivery of your presentation – is there a metaphor that helps explain your research?
- An engaging visual presentation can make or break any oration, so make sure your slide is **legible, clear and concise**.

## Practising your 3MT presentation

**Practice, practice, practice**

Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and sometimes a little nervousness can even be beneficial to your overall speech. Nonetheless, it is important to practice so you can present with confidence and clarity. Practicing will also help you gauge the timing of your 3MT so that you keep within the time limit.

### **Vocal range**

- Speak clearly and use variety in your voice (fast/slow, loud/soft).
- Do not rush - find your rhythm.
- Remember to pause at key points as it gives the audience time to think about what you are saying.

### **Body language**

- Stand straight and confidently.
- Hold your head up and make eye contact.
- Never turn your back to the audience.
- Practise how you will use your hands and move around the stage. It is okay to move around energetically if that is your personality, however it is also appropriate for a 3MT presentation to be delivered from a single spot on stage.
- Do not make the common mistakes of rolling back and forth on your heels, pacing for no reason or playing with your hair as these habits are distracting for the audience.

### **Record yourself**

- Record and listen to your presentation to hear where you pause, speak too quickly or get it just right.
- Then work on your weaknesses and exploit your strengths.

### **Look to the stars!**

- Watch your role models such as academics, politicians and journalists, and break down their strengths and weaknesses.
- Analyse how they engage with their audience.
- Visit [the Queensland 3MT website](#), the [Vitae 3MT webpages](#) or search YouTube to view presentations from previous 3MT finalists.

### **Dress**

- While there is no dress code, if you are unsure of how to dress you may like to dress for a job interview or an important meeting. It is important that you feel comfortable so you can focus on your presentation.
- If you are presenting on a stage that has a wooden floor, be aware of the noise your footwear might make.
- Do not wear a costume of any kind as this is against the rules (as is the use of props).

## **Further resources**

There are many resources available online for further help. Useful ones might include:

[Presenting your research effectively and with confidence](#) - By previous 3MT finalists (Taylor & Francis resource)

[How a competition changed my academic life](#) - By Jamie Khoo, 2018 UK People's Choice winner

[Is it worth doing the three minute thesis?](#) - By Mary Woessner, Victoria University

[How to win the 3 minute thesis](#) - By Dr Inger Mewburn (aka @thesiswhisperer)

[Making the most of your 3 minutes](#) - Simon Clews, University of Melbourne

[Talk nerdy to me](#) - Melissa Marshall's TED talk

[Vitae's 3MT webpages](#)

*These guidance pages are part of the University of Queensland's [official 3MT competitor resources](#)*

Source: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/researcherdev/threeminthesis/preparing3mt>