



2020 Handbook

For Higher Degree by Research Candidates



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Graduate School

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Event Overview

About 3MT

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students. Developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), the exercise cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills.

The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

History

2008: The first 3MT competition was held at UQ with 160 Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates competing.

2009: The 3MT competition was promoted to other Australian and New Zealand universities and enthusiasm for the concept grew.

2010: A multi-national event was developed, and the Inaugural Trans-Tasman 3MT competition was held at UQ in 2010.

2013: The first annual Universitas 21 (U21) 3MT competition was held with several universities from around the world competing in a virtual competition.

2016: The Trans-Tasman 3MT competition expanded to include universities from South-East and North Asia regions. The competition has been renamed the Asia-Pacific 3MT competition and is hosted annually by UQ.

Now: 3MT is held in over 900 universities across more than 80 countries worldwide. In 2019, 307 HDR students competed in the UQ 3MT Competition.

Why Participate?

During your PhD there is a strong focus on the production of your thesis. The ability to communicate the importance of your research project and articulate your findings is very valuable. The Three Minute Thesis competition provides you with the opportunity to:

- Communicate your ideas effectively to the wider community;
- Describe your research findings to a non-specialist audience;
- Crystallise your thoughts about your thesis;
- Increase your profile within the UQ research community, staff and wider community; and
- Network with other HDR students.

To compete in the 2020 UQ 3MT Competition, please complete the registration form in Student Hub. Your School/Institute 3MT Event Coordinator will then contact you to confirm your participation and provide additional details about your School's 3MT heat.

It is strongly encouraged that candidates participate in the 3MT heats in-person, however we understand that this may not be possible for some. It is therefore up to the discretion of each School/Institute event coordinator as to whether virtual participation can be accommodated. All competitors must attend Faculty Finals, Wildcard, the UQ Final and the Asia-Pacific Competition in-person.

Key Dates – 2020

Please ensure that you review the below important key dates:

Date	Item
1 April	3MT Information Session for HDR Candidates 10:00am - 11:00am Seminar Room, Graduate School (62)
7 August	All School/Institute/Faculty 3MT competitions to be completed
27 August	UQ 3MT Wildcard Competition
16 Sept	UQ 3MT Final
1 October	Asia-Pacific 3MT Competition

Event Overview

Prizes

Prizes are an important incentive for HDR candidates entering the competition.

Prizes can vary at the discretion of your School or Faculty.

School/Institute Heats

- School/Institutes are welcome to provide prizes to participants

Faculty/Combined Institute Final

- School/Institutes are welcome to provide prizes to participants
- Winner progresses to UQ Final
- People's Choice progresses to Wildcard Final

Wildcard Competition

- No prize is provided for this event
- Winner advances to UQ 3MT Final

UQ 3MT Final

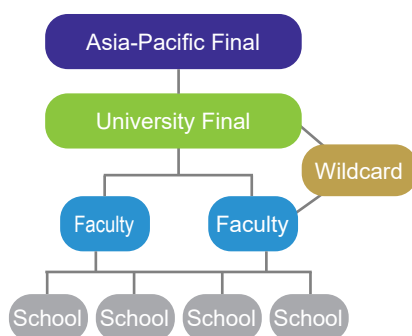
- First Prize: \$5000 research travel grant
- Runner-Up: \$2000 research travel grant
- People's Choice: \$1000 research travel grant
- Winner to represent UQ at the Asia-Pacific 3MT Final
- Winner to represent UQ at the U21 virtual competition

Asia-Pacific 3MT Final

- First Prize: \$5000 research travel grant
- Runner-Up: \$2000 research travel grant
- People's Choice: \$1000 research travel grant

Progression

The following chart outlines the progression of competitors throughout the competition.



Please Note:

The winner of each heat or final is expected to represent their school/faculty/university at the next stage of the competition. If the winner is unable to attend the final, the runner-up will proceed to the next round of the competition in their place.

Wildcard Competition

The Wildcard Competition is where the People's Choice winner (audience voted) from each Faculty and Combined Institute Final is given the chance to compete in a Wildcard Competition hosted by the Graduate School. The winner of the Wildcard Competition is offered the opportunity to compete in the UQ 3MT Final. (If the faculty winner was also the people's choice, the runner-up proceeds to the Wildcard Competition).

U21 Final

The Universitas 21 (U21) network of universities coordinates a virtual 3MT competition open only to U21 member universities. Each participating member will hold their own internal 3MT competitions to select a local winner who will then be put forward for the U21 final, to be judged by an international panel consisting of industry and academic professionals.

The local competitions will challenge the students to present face-to-face, and additionally the virtual final will hone skills associated from being filmed for an international audience, receiving international peer review, and gaining skills surrounding the presentation of their research to a wider audience.

Asia-Pacific Competition

The Asia-Pacific 3MT competition, hosted by UQ in Brisbane, Australia, is open to Universities in Australia, New Zealand, South-East and North-East Asia.

The winner of the UQ 3MT Final will progress to represent UQ at the Asia-Pacific Competition.

The Asia-Pacific 3MT competition is proudly sponsored by Springer Nature, one of the world's leading global research, educational and professional publishers, home to an array of respected and trusted brands providing quality content through a range of innovative products and services. Springer Nature is the world's largest academic book publisher, publisher of the world's most influential journals, and a pioneer in the field of open research.

SPRINGER NATURE

Competition Guidelines

Eligibility

Active PhD and Professional Doctorate (Research) 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 in 3MT competitions at all levels, including the Asia-Pacific 3MT competition. Graduates are not eligible.

UQ Specific Eligibility

MPhil and pre-confirmation PhD and Professional Doctorate candidates who are active in program will still be eligible to participate in the UQ 3MT competition up to Faculty/Institute finals but cannot advance to the UQ 3MT Final.

Please Note:

Students enrolled in any of the following programs are not eligible for the Asia-Pacific 3MT competition:

- Professional Doctorate (Research) (program composed of at least 2/3 research) funded via the Research Training Program;
- Masters (Mphil and coursework);
- Professional Doctorate (coursework)

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 (e.g. 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

At every level of the competition each competitor will be assessed on the judging criteria listed below.

Please Note:

Each criterion is equally weighted and has an emphasis on audience.

Comprehension and Content

- Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background and significance to the research question being addressed while explaining terminology and avoiding jargon?
- Did the presentation clearly describe the impact and/or results of the research, including conclusions and outcomes?
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
- Was the thesis topic, research significance, results/impact and outcomes communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
- Did the presenter spend adequate time on each element of their presentation - or did they elaborate for too long on one aspect or was the presentation rushed?

Engagement and Communication

- Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
- Was the presenter careful not to trivialise or generalise their research?
- Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their research?
- Did the presenter capture and maintain their audience's attention?
- Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, and have a confident stance?
- Did the PowerPoint slide enhance the presentation - was it clear, legible, and concise?

Three Minute Countdown

A three minute timer can be helpful for candidates when presenting. This timer can be displayed for the competitor on a laptop (Power Point) or tablet device (Timer App).

A countdown timer is recommended as it will assist in familiarising competitors with the format should they progress to compete in the UQ or Asia-Pacific 3MT competition whereby a table device (Timer App) will be used. Visual cues (such as raising a visible yellow card) to illustrate a 30 second warning, and ringing a bell at the final three minute mark may also be useful for competitors. You may discuss the use of these with your Event Coordinators.

Please Note:

A warning signal will not be used at the UQ Final or Asia-Pacific Final.

3MT Preparation

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 presentation.

3MT Writing

Write for your audience

One of the judging criteria looks for evidence that you can explain your research to a non-specialist audience. To do this 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 impact it will have
- Imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field; and
- Do not dumb down or devalue your research, what you are doing is exciting and you should convey enthusiasm for your subject.

Tell a story

You may like to present your 3MT like a story, with a beginning, middle and an 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 their attention, 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. Ideally, you would like the audience to leave with an understanding of what you're doing, why it is important and what you hope to achieve.

What not to do

Do not write your presentation like an academic paper. Try to use shorter words, shorter sentences and shorter paragraphs. You can use humour, however be careful not to dumb down your presentation.

Revise

Proof your 3MT presentation by reading it aloud, to yourself and to an audience of friends and family. This allows you to not only check your style, but it will allow you to receive critical feedback. Ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is and why it is important.

3MT Slide

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

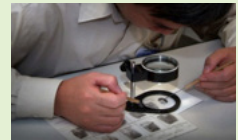
- a single static PowerPoint slide is permitted;
- no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are permitted;
- your slide is to be presented from the beginning of your oration; and
- no additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.

An engaging visual presentation can make or break any oration, so you want your slide to be legible, clear and concise. 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 rather than listen to your 3MT.

Suspects, Science and CSI
Slide: Matthew Thompson, 2011



Personal touches

Personal touches can allow your audience to understand the impact of your research.

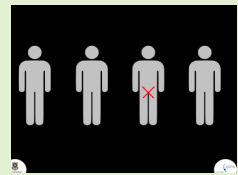
Ocker or Oriental? Asian Australians and the Denial of National Identity
Slide: Michael Thai, 2013



Creativity drives interest

You do not have to have a slide, so do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your spoken oration.

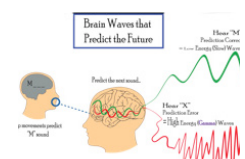
The Fourth Man
Slide: Ryan Stafford, 2011



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?

Brain Waves that Predict the Future
Slide: Tim Paris, 2012



3MT Preparation



3MT Presentation

Practice, practice, practice

Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and 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.

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 3MT website to view presentations by 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.
- Do not wear a costume of any kind as this is against the rules (as are any props).

Practice using a microphone

While each School/Institute or Faculty competition may vary, at the UQ Final you will have a lapel microphone. If you haven't used a microphone before, instructions will be provided.

Further Information

Further Information

If you have any queries about 3MT please visit the 3MT Website or contact the UQ Graduate School.

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www.threeminutethesis.org

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