



What is 3MT™?

Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) is a research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland in Australia in 2008. The premise of the competition is to develop academic, presentation, and research communication skills. It supports the development of students' capacities to effectively explain their research in language appropriate to an intelligent but non-specialist audience. Graduate students have three minutes to present compelling orations on their thesis or dissertation topics and their significance. 3MT™ is not an exercise in “watering down” research but forces students to consolidate their ideas and concisely explain their research discoveries.

Visit the [3MT™ website \(https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/\)](https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/) to watch videos of award-winning presentations from a variety of universities.

Benefits of Participation

Some benefits of participating in a 3MT™ Competition include:

- Strengthen presentation skills and public speaking
- Enhance ability to communicate your research
- Practice and feedback for Thesis or Dissertation defense
- Networking opportunity
- Build your CV/Resume
- Recognition & prizes

3MT™ at VSU

The 3MT™ Competition will be held during the Graduate Student Symposium on April 9, 2021. In consultation with their Faculty Mentor, students can compete in the Poster Presentation or the 3MT™ Presentation or both. Students competing in the 3MT™ Presentation will submit their video files to the Graduate School by March 22, 2021. Students and Faculty Mentors will be notified by March 26, 2021, if his/her 3MT™ proposal has been selected for the competition.

Eligibility

Doctoral, Specialists and Master's students currently enrolled (full or part-time status) are eligible to compete. Doctoral students will be judged separately from the Specialists and Masters students.

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 maximum of 3 minutes. Presenters exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- The project must include specific objectives or investigative questions and how you will support your conclusion.
- 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 judging panel is final.

Judging Criteria

Comprehension & 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 & Communication

- Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
- Was the presenter careful not to trivialize or generalize 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?

Symposium Committee Members

Dr. Becky da Cruz, Ernest Smith, Dr. David Nelson, Dr. Keith Lee, Dr. Anne Price, Dr. Grazyna Walczak, Dr. Meagan Arrastia Chisholm, Jessica Cid (Graduate Assistant) and Kennise Wilcox (Graduate School Student Worker). Should you have any questions about the 3MT™ Presentations, please email Ernest Smith at ernsmith@valdosta.edu

Regional 3MT™ Competition

The Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) usually sponsors a 3MT competition at their Annual Meeting. One student from each member institution is eligible to compete if s/he competed in their local competition. See: <http://www.csgs.org/3mt/> for more information.

Examples of 3MT™ Competitions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0K9iYUBCG_o for individual winner.

and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnJoLaxD-xA> for a full competition.

10 Hints for Improving Presentations for the Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) Competition

By Danielle Fischer

1. Forget everything you know about giving scientific presentations: You must tailor your talk to your audience (“an intelligent but non-specialized audience”). Don’t introduce yourself, don’t acknowledge your lab members or funding bodies and don’t show data! We really don’t care about the intricacies of your results. Your audience for this presentation wants to know the bigger picture. By all means, explain what you’re doing, but leave out the detail, thanks!
2. Start your talk by introducing your little pocket of research in the grander scheme of things, thinking about why this topic would be of interest to any person off the street (e.g. does this help with finding a cure for cancer? Will it solve global warming? Will it help our understanding of the universe?). Even if your little bit of research is a far stretch from curing cancer, for example, it is important to make it relevant to your audience, so that they will be bothered to listen in the first place.
3. Carefully think about what you should include on your PowerPoint slide. Only include things that are relevant and ensure that any images you use are of good quality (don’t use images with watermarks – they are copyright protected). Don’t overcrowd your slide as this looks unprofessional and confusing, and avoid distractions like super brightly colored backgrounds.
4. Analogies are great, but make sure your analogy is something that everyone will be able to identify with, otherwise it’ll just end up complicating the matter further. Keep it simple.
5. Speak in an engaging manner. If you don’t sound like you’re interested in the topic, why would we be? Most people aren’t very confident when they do public speaking, but you need to get over yourself and fake it until you make it! It’s only 3 minutes of your life!
6. I hate to say it, but physical appearance does matter – but only so far as to ensure that you don’t wear anything distracting, otherwise people will focus on that instead of your talk.
7. Body language is really important. Keep in mind if your hands are flailing around, as this can distract your audience. Don’t stand behind the safety of your lectern staring into the computer, praying for the three minutes to pass! Get out and about, engage with your audience, look each of them in the eye (but don’t stare at just one person the whole talk – this is a pet hate of mine!). And smile!
8. Finish your talk by summing up what you do in the greater scheme of things. How will your research contribute to the grander goal?
9. Now practice, practice, practice! Practice on your lab friends, practice on your grandmother. And get feedback and advice. If both parties can understand it and are interested in it, you’re on to a good thing.
10. Make sure you use your time, but don’t go over it. Your audience is there because they want to hear about what you do. Inspire them, and enjoy the opportunity you have been given to share your research with people... Have fun and good luck



The Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) is an academic competition developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), Australia for research students.