Competition Overview

Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland (UQ). PhD students have three minutes to present a compelling oration on their thesis and its significance. 3MT challenges students to consolidate their ideas and research discoveries so they can be presented concisely to a non-specialist audience.

Since 2008, enthusiasm for the 3MT concept has developed rapidly and 3MT competitions are now held in over 600 universities and institutions across 65 countries worldwide.
Competition History

2008 - 3MT developed by The University of Queensland (UQ)
2010 - Inaugural Trans-Tasman 3MT held at UQ
2013 - Universitas21 held first U21 Virtual 3MT
2016 - University of Queensland held first Asia-Pacific 3MT

UMD Success in the U21 Virtual 3MT Competition

2014 – Amy Marquardt, Materials Science and Engineering  (First Prize and People’s Choice)
2015 – Carly Muletz Wolz, Biological Sciences   (People’s Choice)
2017 – Sammy Ramsey, Entomology    (First Prize and People’s Choice)
• A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted (no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description, 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 movement or speech.
• The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.
3MT 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 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?
University of Maryland
3MT Competition

First-Round College-Level
• 5 college-level competitions:
  – CMNS
  – ENGR
  – ARHU-BSOS
  – AGNR-BMGT-PLCY-SPHL
  – ARCH-EDUC-INFO-JOUR
• Each college-level competition can advance up to 4 students to compete as Semi-Finalists in the Final-Round.
• College-Level prizes will be determined at the college level.

Final-Round Campus-Level
• Up to 20 Semi-Finalists will compete in the Final Round.
• An interdisciplinary panel will name up to six Campus-Level winners.
• Campus-level winners will receive a $1000 prize and professional production of their 3MT presentation.

Full Details: gradschool.umd.edu/funding/student-fellowships-awards/umd-three-minute-thesis-competition