



# 3MT COMPETITOR GUIDE



University  
of Regina

Faculty of  
Graduate Studies  
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The Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) is an academic competition developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), Australia for research students. Much of the information in this handbook is drawn from UQ material. A special thank you to UQ for making their 3MT® resources available to universities across the world.



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# OVERVIEW

**What is 3MT®?** 3MT® is an internationally recognized competition for thesis-based graduate students in which participants present their scholarly and creative activity and its wider impact in 3 minutes or less. The challenge is to present complex research in an accessible and compelling way with the assistance of only one static slide.

3MT® offers an exciting and thought-provoking opportunity for graduate students, pushing them to consolidate their ideas and crystalize their research discoveries. 3MT® provides graduate students with an opportunity to refine skills that can be transferred after graduation to diverse career paths. Distilling research into a clear form, without over-simplifying or making it overly-complex, and highlighting the wider implications of the research are important skills to carry into post-graduate employment and public service.

The 3MT® Finale is open to the public and advertised within the community, which enables students to showcase their work across disciplines within the university and to the broader public. This is a unique opportunity to communicate the innovative and significant research undertaken by graduate students.

**History of 3MT®** Created in 2008 by Dr. Alan Lawson at the University of Queensland, Australia, the 3MT® competition celebrates exciting and innovative graduate student research while promoting communication, public speaking, and storytelling skills. Today, more than 600 universities and institutions in 65 countries host annual 3MT® competitions, including some that are conducted entirely online. Since 2016, the winner from the U of R 3MT® gets a chance to participate in the Western Regional competition before competing in the nation-wide competition, Canada's 3MT® hosted by the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS).





# WHY PARTICIPATE?

## **Build oral communication skills - learn how to explain complex work in simple terms**

Participating in 3MT develops academic, presentation and research communication skills, while developing research candidates' ability to effectively explain their research in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

## **Meet other researchers to exchange ideas and collaborate**

3MT provides a valuable opportunity for graduate candidates to come together, get to know one another and talk about their research. It also provides a supportive environment in which schools, institutes and universities can provide presentation skills training.

## **Platform to tell a wide audience about your research**

3MT winners may go on to represent their university at national and international 3MT competitions which provides an excellent networking and professional development opportunity. Previous 3MT finalists have benefited from invitations to a variety of other networking events following their participation in the competition.





# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Full-time Master's or PhD students registered in thesis-based programs and in good standing are eligible to participate.
- Graduate students in course-based programs, visiting students, exchange students, and students on leave are not eligible to participate.
- Graduate students at any stage of their program are eligible to participate.
- Graduate students who have convocated are not eligible to participate.
- Graduate students who have already defended their thesis but have not yet convocated are eligible to participate.
- Presentations must be based on the primary research the graduate student has conducted in their graduate program.
- Graduate students should conduct their presentation in English.
- Graduate students must present in person, agree to be photographed and digitally recorded, and allow any recordings to be made public.
- Graduate students who have participated in a previous 3MT Competition may participate again, provided you did not win and will be presenting new information (new project or a fresh presentation).



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# STAGING & PERFORMANCE RULES



- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted.
- PowerPoint slide should be created using an aspect ratio of 16:9
- 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) is permitted
- No additional props are permitted (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment)
- Presentations are limited to three minutes maximum; competitors exceeding three minutes are disqualified
- Presentations are to be delivered in regular prose (e.g. no poems, slam poetry, raps, songs, or spoken word presentations)
- Presentations must commence from and remain on the stage
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter initiates either movement or speech
- The Judging Panel will consist of 3-5 judges of diverse backgrounds. The decision of the judging panel is final



# JUDGING CRITERIA

The competitors will be judged based on the following criteria:

## ● Comprehension & Content

- Clarity in conveying the purpose and significance of the research (the why and what).
- Clearly described the presenter's role, research design/strategy, and process (the how).
- Clearly communicated the results, conclusions, and/or potential impact of the research (the so what), with appropriate attention to research integrity. Note: Research integrity is very important. Results, conclusions and potential outcomes should be realistic in respect to where the research is and what it may lead to.
- The slide was well-defined and enhanced the presentation, supporting understanding and reinforcing key points.

## ● Engagement & Communication

- Spoke clearly and confidently, with strong voice projection and pacing.
- Used language appropriate for a non-specialist audience, explaining technical terms as needed (jargon-free).
- Showed enthusiasm, capturing and maintaining the audience's attention throughout the presentation.
- Avoided oversimplifying or over-generalizing the research.





# PRIZES

The following are the prizes for the winners of the 3MT®

- First Prize - \$1,500
- Second Prize - \$1,000
- Third Prize - \$500
- People's Choice Award - \$500

# COMPETITION ADVANCEMENT

- The Winner from the University of Regina 3MT® competition will advance to participate in the Western Regional 3MT® competition.
- At the Western Regional 3MT, the top two (2) finalists as ranked by the judges will advance to the National 3MT® competition.
- Winner of the People's Choice award shall not advance further to the Regionals, 3MT® competition unless selected by the judges as winner.



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# CONFIDENTIALITY & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CONSIDERATIONS

Students must understand that the presentation of their research in a 3MT setting will be publicly accessible and in the public. Thus, all the contestants will be provided an **official release form** prior to their presentation. The presentation of the research, will not affect any pre-existing rights following the competition except as stated below:

- Due to the nature of the competition, judges, reviewers, staff or the audience will not be asked to sign non-disclosure statements.
- If your research is being/has been conducted under contract with an outside sponsor, please discuss the related contractual terms of confidentiality and intellectual property with your supervisor before participating in this competition.
- All public sessions of the competition, including but not limited to oral presentations, open to the public at large; any and all of these public sessions may be broadcast to interested persons through media which may include the internet.
- Any data or information discussed or presented in public sessions should be considered in the public domain.
- If your research includes confidential or culturally sensitive material, we advise that you discuss your competition entry with your supervisor.
- FGSR, in coordinating the 3MT® Competition, may take photographs, videotapes and/or audiotapes of the presentations or copy material prepared for use in presentations at the 3MT® for promotional purposes.





# TIPS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## ● Speaking Tips

- First draft would likely be more than 3 minutes. You will be able to shrink it after a few drafts
- You may start with a statistic or story that encapsulates your main research problem
- Write speaking text in sections – Helps with memorizing
- Use simple words
- Avoid acronyms and jargons

## ● Presentation Tips - Prepare

- Practice, practice, practice
- Present to as many people as possible - ask for feedback
- Pace yourself
- Tone variation is helpful
- Go to venue and practice there (or a similar space)
- Let your emotions mirror your words
- Record yourself and play it back, over and over
- Keep your slide simple
- Show your passion for your research

## ● Presentation Tips - Present

- It is okay to feel anxious – Chances are everyone else will be anxious too
- If you forget a word or phrase, don't worry. Keep going
- Look into the eyes of your audience and the judges when speaking





## ● Tips for Engaging with your Audience

- Think about your communication style - how do you communicate with others?
- What kind of story does your research tell?
- Try to stay at the 10,000 feet level - don't get caught up in the weeds!
- If you can, use a *hook*

## ● How to Convey the Importance of Your Work to Others

- People will believe your work is important if you believe that it is important!
- Showing passion and creativity in your presentation can convey significance and grasp attention
- Place emphasis on your take-home message
- Practice with your intonations, body language, and positioning.
- Synchronizing these aspects can compel your audience

### Additional Resources can be found:

- For the Western Regional 3MT® competition – [Western Regionals 3MT](#)
- For the National 3MT® competition - [CAGS - National 3MT competition](#)
- General information about 3MT - [University of Queensland 3MT](#)







# SHARE YOUR RESEARCH WITH THE WORLD

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