

College/School 3MT Preliminary Competition Guidelines

About the 3-Minute Thesis Competition

The 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) is an academic research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland, Australia, for graduate research students. This competition challenges graduate students to present their research topic and its significance in three minutes and using just one slide. The 3MT competition develops academic, presentation, and research communication skills, as well as supports the development of graduate students' capacity to succinctly communicate their research to a non-specialist audience.

For more information about the 3MT international organization and competition, please visit <http://threeminutethesis.org/>.

Eligibility Requirements and Special Considerations

Eligibility requirements:

- Students must be enrolled in a doctoral program for a minimum of 1 credit hour and 1) have completed two semesters of their program, or 2) reached doctoral candidacy. Note that in either case the student's research must be at a stage where findings, conclusions and broad impact can be addressed. Note that colleges/schools may choose to include master's level students in their competition, with no restrictions, but must select a doctoral student to advance to the Grand Finale.
- Students must be in good academic standing within their program.
- Students must obtain permission from their academic advisor or committee chair to enter the 3MT competition.
- Students must obtain permission from any research collaborators if the research they plan to present incorporates the ideas or work of others.

Special considerations (before students enter the 3MT Competition):

- Students' presentation should take into account any intellectual property issues. (If research content is embargoed or sensitive, the presentation will need to be structured to avoid compromising any future research or any other sensitive information.)
- All final presentations will be open to the public and published online.
- The 3MT grand finale event on Thursday, April 7, 2016, will be photographed and videotaped. By entering the contest, students must agree to allow the WVU Office of Graduate Education and Life to use the resulting photographs and/or video in publicity surrounding the contest and/or in other contexts, such as websites, promotional materials, etc.

Why Enter the 3MT Competition?

The competition challenges doctoral students to present their research and share its significance to their professional field in just three minutes. Each presentation should address the following questions:

- What are you researching?
- Why are you researching this topic?
- What are the values or outcomes of your research?

Through this competition, doctoral students will gain valuable experience in discussing and communicating effectively to a wide variety of audiences, both academic and non-academic.

Students' ability to present and communicate their academic research in a concise way to a non-specialist is a crucial skill to have. Having such skills "in their back pockets" may help them with job interviews, networking at conferences, presenting research to venture capitalists, or grant funding agencies. Additionally, entering the 3MT competition may enhance their online reputation, and CV or resume.

College/School Competition Procedures

- Each participating college/school must hold preliminary competitions during the spring 2016 semester and submit the college/school finalist's name to OGEL no later than March 18, 2016 in order to compete in the 3MT Grand Finale.
- Each college/school preliminary competition must have 3 or 5 judges.
- Colleges/schools are strongly encouraged to select first, second, and third place winners; the college/school must select one doctoral student to advance to the WVU 3MT Grand Finale competition on Thursday, April 7, 2016.
- Participants must abide by the international 3MT rules and judging criteria, and use the 3MT Competition Judging Rubric (see attached rubric).

Judging Criteria

Judges will rate each presentation in the following categories:

Comprehension

- Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background to the research question being addressed and its significance?
- Did the presentation clearly describe the key results of the research including conclusions and outcomes (or expected outcomes)?
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?

Engagement

- Did the presentation make the audience want to know more?
- Was the presenter careful not to over-generalize their research?
- Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their research?
- Did the presenter capture and maintain the audience's attention?

Communication

- Was the research topic, including key results, significance, and outcomes, communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
- Did the speaker avoid scientific jargon, explain terminology, and provide adequate background information to illustrate points?
- Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact, and vocal range; maintain a steady pace; and have a confident stance?
- Did the presenter spend adequate time on each element of the presentation - or did they elaborate too long on one aspect or rush the presentation?
- Did the PowerPoint slide enhance the presentation - was it clear, legible, and concise?

College/School Competition Suggested Prizes*

First Place	Colleges/schools may give awards (e.g., cash awards, gift cards, etc.) to winners of their preliminary competitions. Note that suggested amounts for cash prizes range between \$500 and \$100 for the first place winner, and so on for the second and third place winners. (Award values may differ by the college/school size, or college/school may choose not to provide cash prizes.)
Second Place	
Third Place	
People's Choice *	

* The People's Choice category is optional for those colleges/school that choose to offer awards.

3MT Competition Rules for Students

- A single, static PowerPoint slide is permitted. No slide transitions, animations, or 'movements' of any kind are allowed. The slide is to be presented from the beginning of and throughout the presentation.
- 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; competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified. OGEL has three timers that can be borrowed for preliminary competitions. Please contact OGEL at GradEd@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-7173 for more information.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g., no poems, raps, or songs).
- Presentations will begin when a presenter starts their presentation through either movement or speech.
- The decision of the judge's panel is final.

WVU 3MT Competition Grand Finale Information

Important Dates	
College/School Selections	Friday, March 18, 2016
3MT Live Finale	Thursday, April 7, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. in the Gluck Theatre, Mountainlair

Grand Finale Prizes

- First place prize: \$2,000
- Second place prize: \$1,000
- Third place prize: \$500
- People's Choice prize: \$250 *(All audience members who attend the final competition will be invited to cast a single vote using the [Polleverywhere](#) mobile device software. The audience will be asked to use their mobile phones to select the candidate who they believe best communicated their area of research to the audience. (In the event that the People's Choice Award is one of the first through third place winners, the cash prize will be added to their corresponding prize.)*

Prizes are awarded to students as a "cash prize." Note that all prizes will be disbursed in check form without any obligation for future work or service. The IRS may consider these prizes "taxable income."

Questions about the WVU 3MT Competition

Please view these helpful websites about the 3MT process that may answer your questions:

How to prepare for the 3MT competition - <https://prezi.com/jwhwydfzqxo/how-to-talk-about-your-thesis-in-3-minutes/>

Scholarly article about 3MT competitions in the United States - <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/40572/title/Science-Speak/>

Examples of 3MT Finalist videos - <http://threeminutethesis.org/3mt-showcase>

If you have any other questions, please contact the Office of Graduate Education and Life at GradEd@mail.wvu.edu.

JUDGE'S NAME: _____

3MT® Competition Judging Rubric

Participant's Name: _____

3MT® Title: _____

With “0” representing “not at all” and “5” “completely,” please evaluate each participant’s presentation according to the following criteria:

I. Comprehension

	0	1	2	3	4	5
The presentation clearly explained the research project and helped me understand it.						
The presenter stated the method and objectives of the research, and addressed the data, texts, and/or primary and secondary materials being used as evidence.						
The presenter was able to clearly articulate the significance of the research in accessible terms.						
Organization was manifest throughout the presentation: a statement of purpose was clear from the outset; ideas logically built on each other; accessible examples were provided throughout; there was a storyline to the presentation as a whole.						

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II. Engagement

	0	1	2	3	4	5
The presentation stimulated my interest in the research and made me want to learn more.						
The research was presented as significant and						

Wilford Laurier University (2013). 3MT Competition Judging Rubric. Retrieved from https://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/54001/3MT_Judging_Rubric.pdf

purposeful and not trivialized or ‘dumbed down.’						
The presenter demonstrated enthusiasm for the research.						
The presenter made a point of capturing and engaging audience attention throughout the presentation.						

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III. Communication

	0	1	2	3	4	5
The presenter explained the research in jargon-free language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.						
Key terms were defined and background information was provided where useful.						
The presenter spoke at an even pace; various aspects of the presentation were allotted sufficient time.						
The presenter looked at the audience, spoke audibly and clearly, and appeared comfortable and confident. Where applicable, the single PowerPoint slide was legible, concise and enhanced the presentation.						

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Total /60