



Virtual 3MT Handbook 2021



Event Overview

Virtual 3MT Competition

The Three Minute Thesis (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. 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. The competition offers an exciting and thought-provoking opportunity for graduate students, pushing them to consolidate their ideas and crystalize their research discoveries. Presenting in a 3MT® competition increases the capacity of graduate students to effectively explain their scholarly and creative activity in a clear and concise manner, and in a language appropriate to a general audience.

The competitions are 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. The competition has become a popular research communication initiative in Canada and across the world.

Today, more than 600 universities and institutions in 65 countries host annual 3MT® competitions, including some that are conducted entirely online. The first 3MT® competition to be held in Canada took place at the University of British Columbia in 2011, and in 2014 the first national 3MT® competition was held. University of Regina conducted its first 3MT® in 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®. The latter event takes place in an online setting and is hosted by the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS).

Virtual 3MT Process-Video Submission

- Competitors record and edit their 3MT presentations (using any available recording or mobile device) and upload to the FILR (Guidelines are given in Page 7)
- Judging panel review all videos (mark using 3MT scoring sheets) and discuss judging and final placement of winners – Winner / Runner-up.
- Winners announced on-line and via newsletter/social media.

Virtual Competition Guidelines

Eligibility Criteria

- Full-time Master's or Ph.D. 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 convoked are not eligible to participate.
- Graduate students who have already defended their thesis but have not yet convoked 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.

Rules and Recording

- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through speech (timing does not include the 3MT title slide and commences from when the competitor starts speaking, not the start of the video).
- **Videos must meet the following criteria:**
 - Filmed on the horizontal;
 - Filmed on a plain background;
 - Filmed from a static position;
 - Filmed from one camera angle;
 - Contain your 3MT PowerPoint slide
- A single static slide is required in the presentation (no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description). This must be visible continuously for the entire presentation
- The 3 minute audio must be continuous – no sound edits or breaks.
- No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment and animated backgrounds) are permitted within the recording.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs).
- No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted within the video recording.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.
- Submissions via video format (only video link provided to Event Coordinators). Files sent in other formats will not be accepted.

Judging Criteria

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

Virtual Competition Guidelines

Virtual 3MT Preparation - Competitors

Even the world's best presenters prepare before important presentations. To prepare for the competition, please find below suggestions that may assist you in writing your presentation, creating your slide, as well as practicing, recording, and submitting 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 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 humor, however be careful not to devalue 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 PowerPoint 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; 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

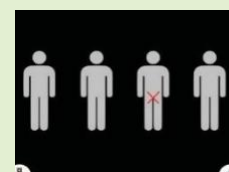


Creativity drives interest

Do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your spoken oration.

The Fourth Man

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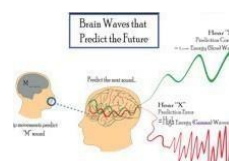


Work your message

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



Virtual Competition Guidelines

3MT Presentation

Practice, practice, practice

Before you record your presentation 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.
- Practice how you will use your hands and ensure your presentation is recorded/delivered from a single position.
- 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.

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).

3MT Recording - Device Options

Recording your presentation can be done using a camera and or handheld video recorder however most phones allow you to record through the camera function and most computers have recording ability (via camera or webcam) using inbuilt programs such as:

Windows

- Camera App
- Windows Movie Maker

Macintosh

- QuickTime
- iMovie

Online programs which you might like to consider include:

- Zoom

3MT Recording - Filming at Home

There are three factors to consider when selecting your location to ensure you are producing the best video possible:

light, sound and background.

Light

Dark environments impact the overall quality of your video because cameras do not perform well in dim lighting.

Ensuring you are well lit guarantees the camera and therefore, your audience, can see you clearly. Look for a room in your home that has lots of natural light. If you are using light from a window, ensure you are facing towards the window so light falls on you directly.

Any additional lighting you can introduce will further improve the quality of your video. Look around your home for desk lamps, torches etc. Watch this tutorial for more information.



Facing away from window



facing window

Sound

When filming video at home, ensure you choose a very quiet environment where you have as much control over the sound as possible. For example, choose a small room where you have the ability to close all doors and windows.

Make sure any noisy electronics in the room such as fans, air conditioners, computers, phones and possibly even your fridge are temporarily turned off. These are much louder in video than you may think and are very distracting to your audience!

Be aware of any audible interruptions you don't have control over such as airplanes, lawns mowers and cars. Consider filming during a quiet time of the day, such as early in the morning when there are likely to be less interruptions. If there are audio interruptions during your recording, do not continue. Wait it out and try again at a later point!

Background

Aim for a clean, plain wall as your background, completely free of visual distractions from the waist up where you will be framing your shot.

Virtual Competition Guidelines

3MT Recording - Setup

Whether you're filming on a phone, tablet or web cam, there are further factors to consider when actually setting up to film your video:

Support

Ensure phones and tablets have enough storage available, are in airplane mode, fully charged and either connected to a tripod or, placed on a stable surface (think creatively - Blu Tack to wall). Your friend cannot offer to be a tripod by holding your phone or iPad for you: Your video needs to be completely stable as movement is very distracting.

Camera orientation

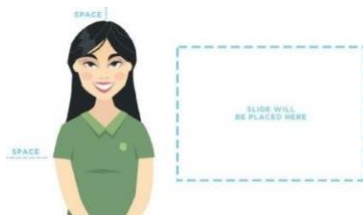
Ensure phones and tablets are turned onto their side so the video is filmed horizontally not vertically. This is to ensure the finished video is the correct shape and size when uploaded to FILR(UoR).

Eyeline

To ensure your eye line is correct, the tripod or surface where your recording device is placed, should be high enough so that the camera lens is in line with your eye level. Try to avoid the camera lens having to either point up or down towards you.

Framing

Set up your shot so you are to the left or right of the center of the frame without being cut off at the top and so you can be seen from the waist up. The right or left side of the video frame should be just the blank wall background, as this is where your slide will be edited in.



Focus

Before you start recording, ensure your device is able to auto focus on you and isn't focusing on anything else around you instead. Be sure to watch your recording back and ensure you remain in the focus the entire duration.

Proximity

Ensure your recording device isn't too far away from you. The microphone on the device should be as close to you as possible to achieve both the desired framing and to ensure the audio is as clear as possible.

Test recording

Complete a short recording of a portion of your talk. Ensure you are speaking at the volume you intend to use for your presentation. Review the test recording to ensure all of the above elements are complete and working.

Presentation tip

Be aware of your eye movement. Maintain eye contact with the camera lens as though they were a person in the audience watching you present live.

Virtual Competition Guidelines

Uploading to FILR U of R - Computer

- Ensure your completed video has been copied to your desktop or laptop device from your phone or tablet
- Upload your final edited version of your 3MT talk to the following FILR using the given link <https://www.uregina.ca/is/common/ur/FILR/index.html>
- Log in using your University of Regina username credentials.
- Go to Access Method → <https://filr.uregina.ca/filr/>
- And create a new file folder named as 3MT UofR and upload the recorded video of your 3MT.
- Give your video a title: Name_3MT Title
- In your video description please place the following:
 - 2021 3MT Competition
 - Name:
 - 3MT Title:

Prizes

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

- First Prize - \$1,500
- Second Prize - \$1,000
- Third Prize - \$500

Competition Advancement

- 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.
- The top four (4) finalists as ranked by the judges from the Western Region 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.