



2021 Johns Hopkins University Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Student Handbook

Created by The University of Queensland
<http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/three-minute-thesis>

Modified for Johns Hopkins University by JHM PDCO

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Event Overview

What is it?

The Three Minute Thesis competition celebrates the exciting academic work conducted by doctoral students. Developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), the exercise cultivates students' academic, presentation, and professional communication skills.

The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their dissertation in three minutes, in a language appropriate to an intelligent, but non-expert audience.

History

The first 3MT competition was held at UQ in 2008. Since then, the popularity of the competition has increased and 3MT competitions are now held in over 600 universities across more than 65 countries worldwide.

The Johns Hopkins Medicine Professional Development and Career Office hosted the first JHU 3MT competition in 2016 in the School of Medicine. The competition opened to the entire JHU community in 2017 and the event continues to grow every year. In 2019, doctoral students from the Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Public Health, Education, Engineering, and Arts & Sciences competed in the Final Competition. Videos of JHU finalists from the past years can be found on our website:

<https://pdco.med.jhmi.edu/3mt/>.

Why participate?

During your doctoral studies, there is a strong focus on the production of your dissertation. The ability to communicate the importance of your project and articulate your findings is very valuable. Three Minute Thesis provides you with the opportunity to:

- communicate your ideas effectively to the wider community
- describe your findings to a non-specialist audience
- crystalize your thoughts about your dissertation.
- increase your profile within the JHU community and wider professional communities
- network with other JHU students, faculty, and leadership

Key Dates, 2021

3MT Info Session & Workshop	February 11
Practice Rounds	February 22 & 25
Registration & Preliminary video submission closes	March 3, 11:59PM ET
Finalists Announced	March 12
JHU 3MT Final Competition	March 25, 4 – 5:30PM ET
CGS Regional Competition	April 9

Prizes

Students who qualify for the JHU 3MT Final Competition are eligible for the following cash prizes:

- 1st Place: \$1000
- 2nd Place: \$500
- 3rd Place: \$250
- People's Choice: \$250
- Alumni Choice Award: \$250 (sponsored by the JHU Alumni Association)
- Remaining finalists will receive \$100

All finalists: professional recording of your talk to be published online.

Competition Guidelines

Eligibility

All currently enrolled JHU doctoral students are eligible*. We encourage students from all disciplines to participate! Students who have not yet had their degree conferred are eligible to compete**. Past competitors may compete again.

** 2021 3MT Competition: All doctoral students who graduated in 2020 are eligible to compete due to the cancellation of the 2020 3MT Competition. Participants must present talks covering work that was done during their dissertation and cannot include work completed post-graduation.*

*** Eligibility rules for the Council of Graduate School's Three Minute Thesis competition may differ.*

Rules

Official rules and judging criteria are adapted from the [3MT website](https://3mt.org/):

- Students must present a talk on their dissertation work.
- 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 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;
- A single static slide is permitted in the presentation (no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description). This can be visible continuously, or 'cut to' (as many times as you like) for a maximum of 1 minute.

Alternatively, the slide may be submitted via email if not included in the video 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.

Please note: competitors **will not** be judged on video/recording quality or editing capabilities. Judging will focus on the presentation, ability to communicate research to a non-specialist audience, and 3MT PowerPoint slide.

Judging Criteria

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

Comprehension and 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? (for early-stage students: predicted impact/results)
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
- Was the thesis topic, 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 topic?

- Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their topic?
- 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?

3MT Preparation

Even the world's best public speakers prepare before important presentations. To assist you with your preparations, please find a few suggestions below that will help you in writing your presentation, creating your slide and practicing your presentation.

The PDCO offers in-person 3MT workshops, practice rounds, and one-on-one coaching on both the East Baltimore and Homewood campuses in the weeks leading up to the competition. We highly encourage competitors to attend these sessions. In the past, students that attend workshops were more likely to make it to the final competition and win.

3MT Content

3MT is an oral presentation, but it can be helpful to write out your talk beforehand to make sure your talk is clear, concise, and free of jargon. Memorization of your talk is not required as palm cards and/or speech notes are acceptable; however, this option may detract from the delivery of the 3MT and is not recommended.

Write for your audience

One of the judging criteria looks for evidence that you can explain your dissertation to a non-specialist audience. To do this you may like to:

- Avoid jargon and academic language
- Explain concepts and people important to your topic - you may know all about Professor Smith's theories but your audience may not
- Highlight the outcomes (actual or predicted) of your research, and the impact it will have
- Imagine that you are explaining your dissertation to a close friend or fellow student from another field
- Do not dumb down or devalue your work, 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 dissertation 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 dumb down your presentation. Using numbers to quantify importance can be impactful but be mindful of including too much data.

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 Slide

Before you start work on your slide, you should take the following rules into account:

- a single static PowerPoint slide is permitted. Size: 16:9
- no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are permitted
- your slide is to be presented from the beginning of your oration
- 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.

Your name and 3MT title do not need to be included on your slide.

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 talk.

Suspects, Science and CSISlide: Matthew Thompson, 2011



Personal touches

Personal touches can allow your audience to understand the impact of your research.

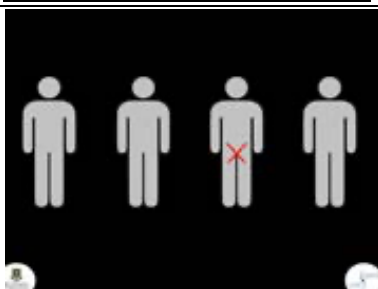
Ocker or Oriental? Asian Australians and the Denial of National Identity Slide: Michael Thai, 2013



Creativity drives interest

You do not have to have a slide, so do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your spoken oration.

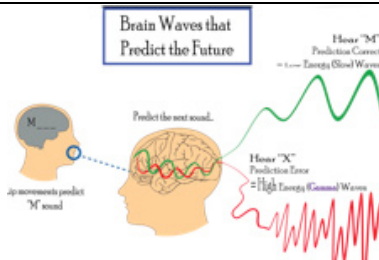
The Fourth Man Slide: Ryan Stafford, 2011



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



3MT Presentation

Practice, practice, practice

Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and a little nervousness can even be beneficial to your overall speech. Nonetheless, 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 move around the stage. It is okay to move around energetically if that is your personality, however it is also appropriate for a 3MT presentation to

be delivered from a single spot on stage.

- Do not make the common mistakes of rolling back and forth on your heels or pacing for no reason as these habits are distracting for the audience.

Record yourself

Record and listen to your presentation to hear where you pause, speak too quickly or get it just right. Then, work on your weaknesses and exploit your strengths.

Look to the stars!

Watch your role models such as academics, politicians, and journalists, and break down their strengths and weaknesses. Analyze how they engage with their audience. Visit the 3MT website to view presentations by previous 3MT finalists: <https://pdco.med.jhmi.edu/3mt/>

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).

Contact Information

The Johns Hopkins University Three Minute Thesis Competition is organized by the JHM Professional Development and Career Office (PDCCO) in partnership with the Homewood PHutures Office.

For questions about the JHU 3MT competition, please contact Kate Bradford at kate.bradford@jhu.edu.