



# Handbook

## For Participating Universities



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

UQ Graduate School

# Contents



<b>Event Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
About 3MT	3
History	3
Why Participate?	3
The Symposium	3
Prizes	3
Progression	3
<b>Competition Rules and Guidelines</b>	<b>4</b>
Eligibility	4
Guidelines	4
Rules	4
Judging Criteria	5
Judging Panel	5
Three Minute Countdown	5
<b>Resources &amp; More Information</b>	<b>6</b>

# Event Overview

## About 3MT

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

The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

## History

The first 3MT competition was held at UQ in 2008 with 160 Research Higher Degree students competing. In 2009 and 2010 the 3MT competition was promoted to other Australian and New Zealand universities and enthusiasm for the concept grew. Due to its adoption in numerous universities, a multi-national event was developed, and the Inaugural Trans-Tasman 3MT competition was held at UQ in 2010.

Since 2011 the popularity of the competition has increased and 3MT competitions are now held in over 200 universities across more than 18 countries worldwide.

In November 2013, the first Universitas 21 (U21) 3MT competition was held with several universities from around the world competing in a virtual competition.

2016 brings an expansion of the Trans-Tasman 3MT competition to include a select number of Asian universities. The competition has now been renamed to the Asia-Pacific 3MT competition.

## Why participate?

### Skills development for research candidates

The exercise 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.

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

## McDonnell International Scholars Academy 8th International Symposium

The symposium will bring together 35 premier partner universities united in addressing the world's most critical problems of the 21st century. Workshops featuring ongoing research and how McDonnell Academy partner institutions can foster the collaborative efforts required to address forces significantly impacting our world. The overarching theme of the symposium, "Forces Reshaping the World", and three thematic areas, **Big Data & Emerging Technologies, Unlocking Human Potential, and Our Planet at Risk**, provide concepts to stimulate conversations amongst faculty and students across disciplines.

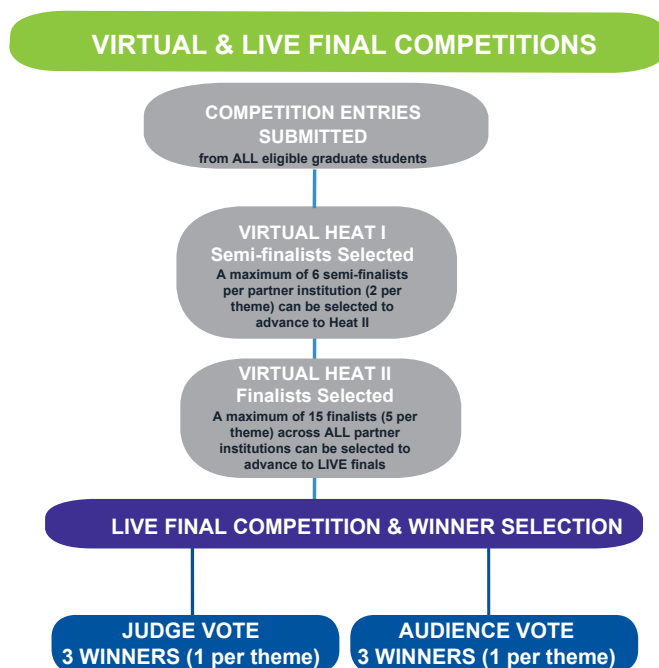
Adapted for the Symposium, 3MT competition entries should be focused around one of the three themes above.

## Participation Support for Finalists & Prizes

Students from partner institutions selected as finalists following the initial virtual semi-final competition will be awarded up to \$2,000 (USD) to cover airfare and lodging expenses while in St. Louis to attend the symposium and present in the live 3MT competition. Judge-selected winners will receive a prize of \$1,000 (USD); winners chosen by the audience will receive a prize of \$500 (USD). \*Prizes are subject to U.S. tax withholding.

## Progression

The following chart outlines the progression of competitors throughout the competition.





# Competition Rules and Guidelines

## Eligibility

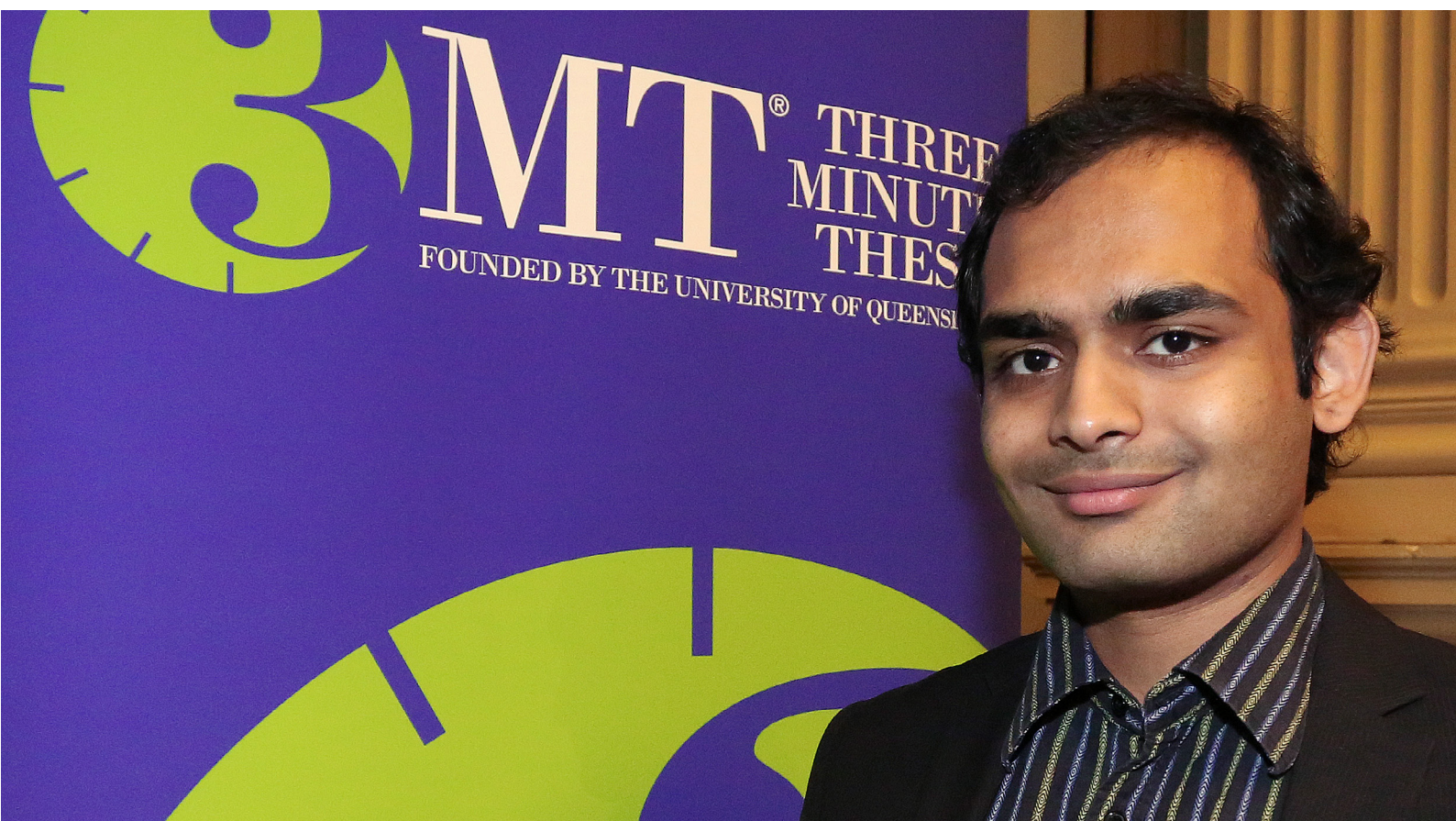
All graduate students (PhD and Master's) at McDonnell Academy partner universities who will be enrolled in a full-time graduate program at the time of entry in to the competition *and* at the time of the symposium in October 2020 are eligible to participate. Students must present 3MTs on any of the three thematic areas **Big Data & Emerging Technologies, Unlocking Human Potential, and Our Planet at Risk.**

## Guidelines, General Selection Process and Competition Timeline

- Each partner university should promote the 3MT competition within their respective university.
- Interested and eligible students must submit an entry using the specified form on the symposium website. Entries must include a 3-minute video and one static slide. All rules and presentation requirements (listed in the next column) must be met. Presentations not meeting the requirements are subject to disqualification.
- **The entry period begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on May 15, 2020 at 11:59pm CST.**
- To select semi-finalists and finalists, two virtual heats will be conducted and adjudicated by separate panels of judges. During Heat I, a max of 6 semi-finalists per partner institution (2 per thematic area) will be chosen. Semi-finalists will advance to Heat II where 15 finalists across all partners will be selected (up to five (5) per theme). **Finalists will be announced by midnight (CST) on July 15, 2020.**
- **Finalists will compete live at the Symposium during designated times on October 10th.** 3 winning presentations will be selected by judging panels; 3 "People's Choice" winners will be selected by audience vote.

## Rules (for entry submissions and live presentations)

- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes; presentations exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- The 3-minute audio (speaking) must be continuous - no edits, breaks etc.
- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted. 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/or video files) are permitted.
- No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment) are permitted.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs) in English.
- Presentations are to commence from the stage; presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through either movement or speech.
- The decision of the adjudicating panels are final.
- No feedback is given to students on presentations.



# Competition Rules and Guidelines

## Judging Criteria

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

Please note: Each criterion is equally weighted and has an emphasis on audience.

### Comprehension and Content

- 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?
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
- Was the thesis topic, key results and research 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 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 trivialise 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?

## Selecting the Judging Panel

To provide every entrant with a similar experience, the UQ Graduate School recommends considering the following when composing your judging panel.

- Include three to five judges on panels;
- Balance your judging panel by age, gender, academic/professional positions, and discipline;
- Consider including a marketing/communications staff member; and while judges should declare any conflict of interest, they should still vote on each 3MT presenter's oration, even if the presenter is from their discipline.

## Three Minute Countdown

The UQ Graduate School recommends implementing a three minute countdown timer which is helpful for candidates when presenting in live competitions. This can simply be displayed for the competitor on a laptop (Power Point) or tablet device (Timer App).

Please note: The countdown timer is not compulsory and we recommend asking each competitor if they would like to use it or not.

We recommend adopting the countdown timer as it will assist in familiarising competitors with the format should they go on to compete in the national or international competitions whereby a table device (Timer App) may be used. Students may also like a visual cue (such as raising a visible yellow card in the air) to illustrate a 30 second warning, and ringing a bell at the final three minute mark.



# Resources

If your institution would like to brand and promote the competition at your university, UQ has developed a number of resources which can be downloaded from the 3MT Website and include:

**Event management resources:**

- Award Certificates
- Budget
- Judging Sheets
- Order of Proceedings
- Participant Contact Details Spreadsheet
- People's Choice Ballot
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Promotional PowerPoint Slide
- 3MT Logos (Jpeg, EPS)
- 3MT Participant Registration Email
- 3MT Attendance Invitation Email
- Judging Panel Information
- Reserved Seating Template

**Promotional resources:**

- 3MT Logos / Description
- 3MT Branding Guidelines / Media Release

## More Information

If you have any general queries about 3MT please contact the UQ Graduate School.  
Phone +61 7 3346 0510  
[www.threeminutethesis.org](http://www.threeminutethesis.org)  
[3MT@uq.edu.au](mailto:3MT@uq.edu.au)

## More Information About the 8th International Symposium 3MT Competition

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## DIRECT LINKS TO COMPETITOR RESOURCES

- [3MT Competitor Guide](#)
- [Watch 3MT Presentations](#)



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