



2021 VIRTUAL UPM 3MT COMPETITION GUIDELINES

ABOUT 3MT

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students. Developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), 3MT cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills.

The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three (3) minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

HISTORY

The idea for 3MT came about at a time when the state of Queensland was suffering severe drought. To conserve water, residents were encouraged to time their showers, and many people had a three (3) minute egg timer fixed to the wall in their bathroom. The Dean of the Graduate School, Emeritus Professor Alan Lawson, put two and two together and the idea for the 3MT competition was born.

NOTABLE PAST WINNERS FROM MALAYSIA

Yasmin Mustapha Kamil; Asia-Pacific Winner & People's Choice 2018, Universiti Putra Malaysia: 'Dengue Detective'

Ashwin Charles Benedict; Asia-Pacific Winner 2017; Universiti Malaysia Pahang: 'Catalyzing Change: Light at the end of the Tunnel'

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Skills Development for Research Candidates

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.

Building Research Culture in Universities

3MT provides a valuable opportunity for HDR candidates to come together (live or virtually), 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.

Building External Relations for the University

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.

2021 VIRTUAL UPM 3MT COMPETITION SCHEDULING

Level	Date	Venue / Platform	Remarks
Faculty/School/Institute	17 March 2021 – 5 April 2021	Pre-recorded live streaming	Deadline Faculty/School/Institute submission to SGS (7 April 2021)
University Heats University Final	15 April 2021 22 April 2021	Pre-recorded live streaming	Deadline UPM submission to IIUM (3 May 2021)
National	9 June 2021	Pre-recorded live streaming	
International	27 September 2021 – 20 October 2021	Pre-recorded live streaming	University registration closes (30 July 2021)

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Eligibility

- Active PhD candidates (study status 'CONTINUE') at Universiti Putra Malaysia are eligible to participate.
- Eligibility only applies to semester three (3) students onwards.
- Students who have graduated or with a study status of 'COMPLETED' and 'THESIS SUBMITTED' are not allowed to participate.

Prizes

- Prizes will be determined by the Faculty/School/Institute for Faculty/School/Institute level.
- The judges' decision is final and no appeals will be accepted after the winners are announced.
- The top three (3) finalists from each Faculty/School/Institute will compete at the university heats for places in the final competition which will be organized by the School of Graduate Studies.

Rules

Modifications to the 3MT rules have been made to accommodate the new virtual format:

- Presentations are limited to three (3) minutes and competitors exceeding three (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 a 3MT title slide (at beginning).
 - Contain a 3MT PowerPoint slide (top right corner/right side/cut to).

- 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 one (1) minute.
- The three (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 Vimeo link provided to Event Coordinators). Files sent in other formats will not be accepted.
- Entries submitted for final adjudication to the University level are to be submitted from the Faculty/School/Institute 3MT Event Coordinator. Competitors should not submit their videos directly to the School of Graduate Studies.

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

Please note: After each competition round competitors have the option to either submit their current presentation or re-record and submit a new presentation for entry into the next round.

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 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?
- 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 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?

Judging Panel

To provide every entrant with a similar experience, it is recommended that the following be taken into consideration when composing the judging panel.

- Include three (3) to five (5) judges on your virtual panel;
- Balance your judging panel by age, gender, academic/professional positions, and discipline;
- Consider including a marketing/communications 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.

Virtual 3MT Preparation – Competitors

Even the world's best presenters prepare before important presentations. To assist your competitors with their preparations, please find below suggestions that will help them in writing their presentation, creating their slide, as well as practising, recording and submitting their presentation.

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 humour, 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; 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

Before you record your presentation is it 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.
- Practise 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 hand-held 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 programmes which you might like to consider include:
 - Zoom

3MT Recording - Video Examples

Examples of virtual 3MT video recordings are below:

- [Video - 3MT PowerPoint slide top right](#)
- [Video - 3MT PowerPoint slide](#)

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.



Facing away from window



Facing window

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.

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 aeroplanes, lawns mowers and cars. Consider filming during a quiet time of 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.

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 aeroplane 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

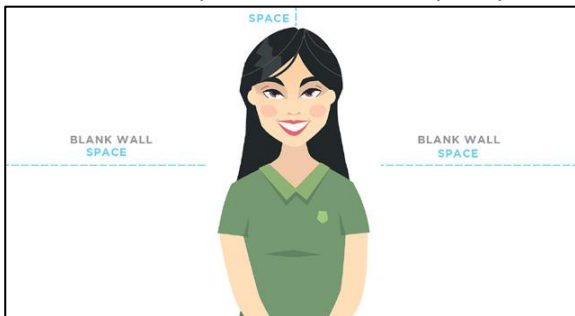
Ensure phones and tablets are turned onto their side so the video is filmed horizontally not vertically. This is to ensure the finished video is the correct shape and size when uploaded to Vimeo.

Eye line

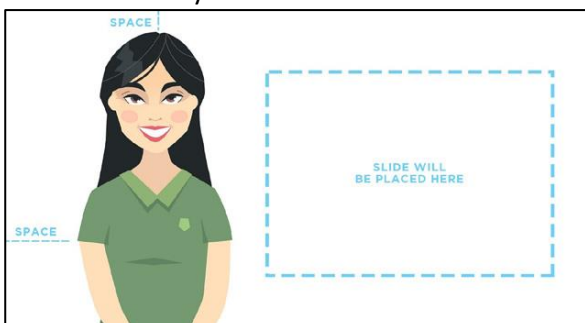
To ensure your eye line is correct, the tripod or surface where your recording device is placed, should be high enough so that the camera lens is in line with your eye level. Try to avoid the camera lens having to either point up or down towards you.

Framing - Two Options

Set up your shot so you are in the centre of the frame, not being cut off at the top and so you can be seen from the waist up. Ensure there is equal space and just the blank wall background on either side of you.



Set up your shot so you are to the left of the centre of the frame without being cut off at the top and so you can be seen from the waist up. The right 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.

Video Editing

- Go to website - <https://www.kapwing.com> (or any video editing platform you are familiar with, Kapwing is a suggestion only)
- Create an account by signing in with Google or Facebook
- Go to My Workspace - click new project - click start with studio
- Click start with blank canvas
- Rename Studio Draft (top of page) - Name - 3MT Title
- Click add scene - left hand side to show 2 blank scenes
- Adjust output size (16:9 - widescreen) - right hand side

Scene 1

- Highlight scene - click upload - insert 3MT Identifying Details as a JPEG
- Fill in the PowerPoint with your details and save a copy as a JPEG for uploading - does not upload PowerPoint.

Scene 2

- Highlight scene - click upload - insert 3MT Video file or URL link
- Highlight scene - click upload image - insert 3MT PowerPoint slide - highlight 3MT PowerPoint slide - click lock ratio - adjust size and place in top right hand corner / or on right hand side
- Save a copy of your 3MT PowerPoint slide as a JPEG for uploading - does not upload PowerPoint
- Save draft and review
- Publish
- Copy link and upload your final presentation to Vimeo - The Vimeo link to your video is the link you will submit to your 3MT Event Coordinator along with your 3MT PowerPoint slide so the judging panel can view and assess your presentation.

Uploading to Vimeo - Computer

- Ensure your completed video has been copied to your desktop or laptop device from your phone or tablet
- Create your own personal Vimeo account and log in at vimeo.com. Click 'log in' on the left of the top toolbar
- Hover over the blue 'New Video' button in the top right and select 'upload' from the drop down menu.
- Either drag and drop your file for upload or manually select your file by clicking 'or choose files'. The upload should begin automatically.
- Ensure the privacy setting is set to 'Anyone can see this video'.
- Ensure the setting 'People can add to collections' is switched on.
- Give your video a title: Name_3MT Title
- In your video description please place the following:
 - 2021 Asia-Pacific 3MT Competition
 - Name:
 - University:
 - 3MT Title:
- The Vimeo link to your video is the link you will submit to your 3MT Event Coordinator along with your 3MT title slide and 3MT PowerPoint slide so the judging panel can view and assess your presentation.

Uploading to Vimeo - Smart Phone

- Download and install the Vimeo app.
- Create your own personal Vimeo account and log in via the blue log in button. If you already have an account, click the blue log in button and enter your existing details.
- Click on the 'upload' button in the bottom right-hand corner and select your video from the camera roll.
- Trim the length of your video, or choose 'skip'.
- Ensure the privacy setting is set to 'Anyone can see this video'.
- Ensure the setting 'People can add to collections' is switched on.
- Give your video a title: Name_3MT Title
- In your video description please place the following:
 - 2021 Asia-Pacific 3MT Competition
 - Name:
 - University:
 - 3MT Title:
- The Vimeo link to your video is the link you will submit to your 3MT Event Coordinator along with your 83MT title slide and 3MT PowerPoint slide so the judging panel can view and assess your presentation.

Updating Video

Vimeo allows you to replace a video with an updated file so the original link remains the same.

If you need to update your submission, update your video at the existing Vimeo link. Do not upload a new video from scratch, as this will create a new link and will be difficult for organisers to track.

Please note: only done using a computer or tablet.

- Log in to your Vimeo account on an internet browser (do not use the app).
- Navigate to the video by selecting "videos" on the left hand side menu.
- Click on the video to open the video's settings.
- Scroll to the bottom of the settings options on the left-hand side of the screen.
- At the bottom of the scroll bar, click the blue button "replace video".
- Navigate to and select the new video file on your device.

- Watch the progress of the new upload at the bottom left-hand side corner of your screen. Do not close the browser window until this is complete.
- Watch the updated video through to ensure the new video has replaced the old version. This can sometimes take time to process.

Further Information

If you have any queries about 3MT please contact:

- The respective Office of the Deputy Dean (Graduate Studies) or Deputy Director for the Faculty/School/Institute level 3MT competition.
- The School of Graduate Studies at sgs_putrasarjana@upm.edu.my for university-level 3MT competition.

References

- <https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/>
- Virtual 3MT Handbook 2021 – Participating Universities (The University of Queensland, Australia)