



THREE MINUTE THESIS (3MT)

Virtual 3MT Competition 2021 – Student Handbook

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About 3MT

What is the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition?

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students.

Developed by the University of Queensland in 2008, the 3MT competition quickly grew in popularity, and 3MT competitions are now held in over 900 universities across 80 countries worldwide. The University of Adelaide is one of around 50 universities from across Australia, New Zealand, and Asia participating in the Asia-Pacific 3MT competition.

The competition asks you to communicate your research and its significance to a non-specialist audience in three minutes, using a single PowerPoint slide. [Find out more.](#)



Eligibility and participation requirements

All active HDR students are allowed to register and participate in the 3MT competition. However, **only PhD students who have successfully completed their Major Review prior to the 16 July 2021** are eligible to progress to compete in the University Final.

NOTE: Students who have submitted their thesis, but not yet graduated, are eligible to participate. Students who have already graduated are not eligible.

Why should you participate?

3MT is a chance for you to practice research communication to a non-specialist audience, which is an important skill as a researcher. Although you may be more accustomed to presenting your work to your peers and other specialists in your field at conferences and seminars, it's important to develop and practice the skill of communicating to a non-specialist audience.

Throughout your career you may use this skill to:

- Secure funding opportunities: funding providers are often not experts in your field and require you to persuasively explain the impact of your research in plain language
- Create collaboration opportunities: you are more likely to entice potential collaborators from diverse fields if you can effectively communicate your research using language they can understand.

In addition, participation in the 3MT will:

- Help crystalise the purpose of your research in your own mind;
- Re-motivate you;
- Increase your profile within the University of Adelaide and the wider research community;
- Allow you to network with other HDR students



Virtual 3MT Competition

As was the case in 2020, The University of Queensland (founder of 3MT) has made the decision that the 2021 Asia-Pacific Three Minute Thesis Competition will be delivered in a **virtual format** (video submission).

Students will **pre-record their 3MT presentation as a video**, ensuring that they adhere to the Virtual 3MT Rules and Recording guidelines. Together with the 3MT slide and title, the video will be submitted for consideration by the judges.

All submitted 3MT videos will be displayed on the University of Adelaide **3MT website** for viewing and judging.

A virtual 3MT competition will continue to allow HDR candidates to participate in 3MT, hone their communication skills, receive peer review, and gain skills surrounding the presentation of their research to a wider audience. This virtual method will also ensure participants are not disadvantaged due to technical issues during a presentation.

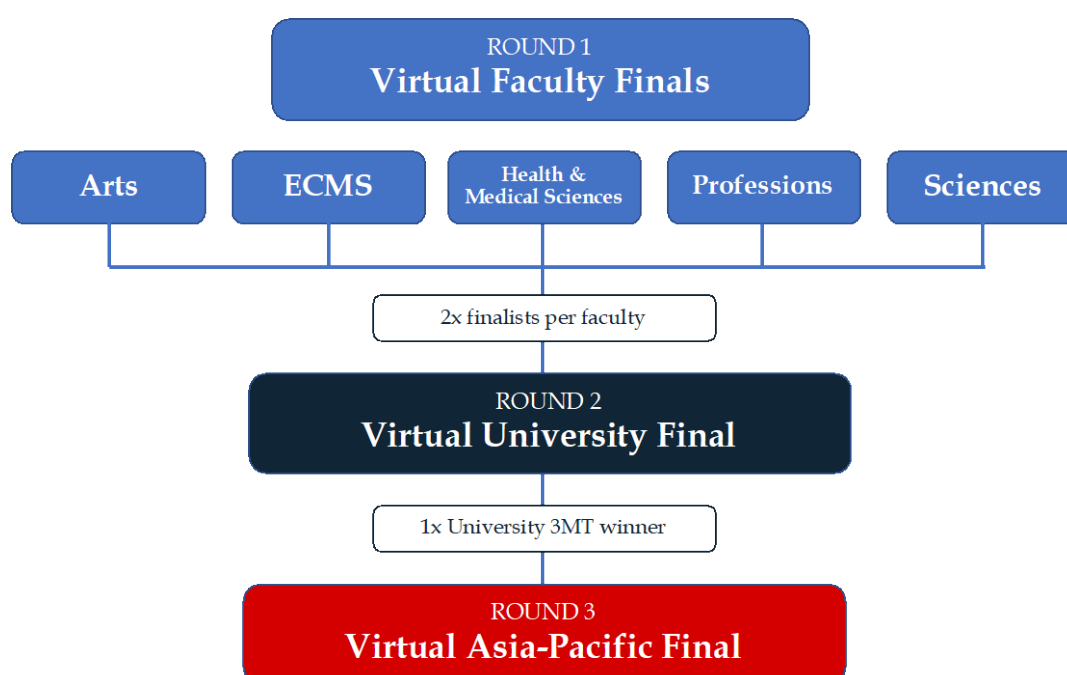
Structure

The Virtual 3MT competition will consist of three major judging rounds:

- Faculty (may include a possible School round, depending on Faculty preference)
- University
- Asia-Pacific (National).

Note: As per the [Eligibility](#) requirements, all registered students will be able to participate in the Virtual 3MT Faculty round. However, only PhD students who have successfully completed their Major Review prior to the video submission deadline, will be eligible to progress as a faculty finalist to the Virtual 3MT University Final.

The following chart details the progression pathway through the competition:



Note: The winner of each heat or final is expected to represent their school/faculty/university at the next stage of the competition. If the winner does not wish to proceed with submitting a video, the runner-up video will proceed to the next round of the competition in their place.

Competition process

To compete in the Virtual 3MT Competition, all participants will follow the process outlined below:

Register

Eligible HDR students **register** to participate in the 3MT competition via the [Enter the 3MT](#) page on the 3MT website.

Plan & prepare

Competitors **plan and prepare** their 3MT, guided by the Virtual 3MT **Judging Criteria**, ensuring they adhere to the Virtual 3MT **Rules**.

Record

Competitors **record** a video of themselves delivering the 3MT presentation with a mobile/recording device. Video can be edited to include 3MT slide, if desired.

Upload

Once their 3MT video is finalised, competitors **upload** the video to Vimeo, an online video sharing platform.

Submit

Competitors **submit** their 3MT to their Faculty Coordinator via the Virtual 3MT Submission Form by the deadline: **Friday 16 July 2021, 5:00pm**.

Please note: After each competition round, finalists have the option to either submit their current presentation or rerecord and submit a new presentation for entry into the next round.

Key Dates

Date	Action
3 May 2021	Registrations open
12 May 2021	3MT Information Session
16 June 2021	Training by Hugh Kearns, <i>'Preparing for the 3MT: Everything you need to know'</i>
18 June 2021	Registrations close
16 July 2021	Deadline to submit 3MT (video + slide)
26 July – 23 August 2021	Virtual Faculty 3MT final round
14 September 2021	Virtual University of Adelaide 3MT final
20 October 2021	Virtual Asia-Pacific 3MT final

Participation in the Virtual 3MT Competition

Register for 3MT

Complete the online registration form to [Enter the 3MT](#) before the registration period closes on 18 June 2021.

Preparing your 3MT

To participate in the 3MT, all students should prepare:

- 3MT title
- 3MT PowerPoint slide
- 3 minute presentation
- 3MT Title slide containing your details

Rules and requirements

Competitors must ensure that their 3MT adheres to and meets all requirements of the [Virtual 3MT Rules](#) and the [Virtual 3MT Judging Criteria](#).

Training

All competitors are strongly encouraged to attend the 3MT CaRST training: **Preparing for the 3MT:**

Everything you need to know

Presented by Hugh Kearns, 16 June 2021

[Register here](#).

Preparation tips

When preparing their 3MT, we encourage students to:

- Write a script for your presentation, ensuring it is well structured.
- Use language that is listener-friendly, and stories that people can relate to – no academic jargon!
- Pretend you are describing your research to an educated and interested friend or parent.
- Add a little humour to keep it entertaining.
- Capture the audience's attention from the beginning
- Practice – a lot!

Note on confidentiality: Remember, this is a public presentation - only include information about your research that you can share! If you're unsure about sharing something, check with your supervisor.

Need some inspiration?

- Watch University of Adelaide [past finalists](#) online
- Watch [previous 3MT finalists](#) from around the world
- Example pre-recorded 3MT videos can be found on the [U21 3MT](#) webpage.

Recording the 3MT

All participants will **pre-record their 3MT presentation and submit this video** for consideration by the judges.

Students are encouraged to view **example pre-recorded 3MT video** presentations via the [U21 3MT](#) website.

Please note: Video should be of **you** physically delivering the presentation (standing ideally), not your static 3MT PPT slide with an audio recording. Options:



Guide for competitors

To ensure consistency for all competitors, the University of Queensland (home of 3MT) have prepared a [Virtual 3MT Competitors Guide](#), which should be used to guide in preparing and recording the 3MT. It includes tips for:

- Preparing your PPT slide and writing your speech
- Delivering your 3MT speech effectively
- Selecting a recording device/program
- Setting up to record and filming at home
- Editing your video to include your 3MT slide

Recording technology options

Students can record their presentation using any available recording or mobile device (e.g. camera or handheld video recorder, phone camera, etc). Options:

Windows - Camera App or Windows Movie Maker

Mac - QuickTime or iMovie

Online - Zoom (See guide for recording via [Zoom meeting](#)).

Editing videos

If desired, videos can be edited to include your:

- **Title slide.** Displayed at the beginning of the video.
- **Your 3MT slide.** There are two options for this:
 1. Full-screen slide - displayed at start of video, or 'cut to' for **max 1 min.** during presentation
 2. Small version of slide - displayed continuously during video, in top right corner **or** right side.

(See Virtual 3MT [rules and recording](#) for additional info.)

Any program can be used to edit videos. If you do not have access to one, you may consider online editing using Kapwing. More info [here](#).

Please note: Editing the slide in is **optional** and competitors will not be scored negatively if this step is not completed. Slides will also be submitted via email, and will be added to 3MT website with the video for judging .

Uploading your 3MT

Once the 3MT has been pre-recorded, students must upload it to [Vimeo](#). Vimeo is a professional online video sharing platform, and users can create an account for free.

Please note: As per the rules, all 3MT videos must be submitted via Vimeo. Files submitted in other formats *will not* be accepted.

After the video has been uploaded, competitors will provide the Vimeo URL to share their video to the faculty for judging.

Instructions for [uploading your 3MT to Vimeo](#) via computer or smart phone are included in the UQ Virtual 3MT Competitors Guide.

Submitting your 3MT

Prior to the video submission deadline, all registered participants must submit their 3MT (title, video and PPT slide) to their faculty.

Relevant details must be provided via the **Virtual 3MT Submission Form**, which must be emailed to your [Faculty Coordinator](#).

Within this form, you will provide:

- ☐ Your personal details
- ☐ **Title** of your 3MT
- ☐ The **URL** to access your 3MT video on Vimeo.
- ☐ Your static **3MT PPT slide**
- ☐ A 3MT **Title slide** containing your details

NOTE: Slides should be provided regardless of whether they are edited into the video.

The video submission deadline for all participants is **Friday 16 July 2021 5:00pm**. Any videos submitted after this cannot be accepted for judging.

How/where will 3MT videos be shared?

After it has been submitted, the 3MT video and PPT slide will be added to the University's 3MT website.

Here, your 3MT will be available to be viewed by your Faculty, the judging panel, University staff/students, and the general public.

Virtual 3MT judging

All submitted 3MTs will be shared on the University's 3MT website for viewing by staff/students and Faculty judges.

The faculty judging period will commence on **Monday 26 July 2021**, and all student videos will be reviewed against the Virtual 3MT Judging Criteria.

Each faculty will determine 2x winners to progress as finalists to compete in the University Final round.

About Faculty judging

Each faculty will manage their judging differently. If a Faculty has a large number of 3MT participants, they may choose to hold a School judging round first.

Please wait to receive further information and guidance from your [Faculty Coordinator](#) in due course.

Virtual University 3MT final - Ten (10) student videos will be submitted from across the University (2 per faculty) for judging in a University round. At the conclusion of the Research Tuesdays 3MT Final event (14 September 2021), the judging panel will announce a University 3MT winner.

Virtual Asia-Pacific 3MT Final – the video of our University winner will be submitted to represent the University of Adelaide at the National Final event.

Please note: After each judging round, finalists have the option to either submit their current presentation or rerecord and submit a new presentation for entry into the next round. The video should be **updated** via Vimeo, and instructions to do so are available in the [UQ competitor guide](#).

Prizes

Virtual Faculty prizes

Prizes awarded within faculty competitions will be at the discretion of each faculty. Your Faculty Coordinator will provide further details.

Virtual University Final prizes

Three prizes are awarded in the University of Adelaide 3MT Final round:

- **Winner** - \$2000 travel grant, and flights and accommodation to participate in the Asia-Pacific final

- **People's Choice Award** - \$1000 travel grant
- **Student's Choice Award** - \$250 voucher

Virtual Asia-Pacific Final prizes

Three prizes will be awarded in the Asia-Pacific National 3MT Final round:

- **Winner** - \$5000 research travel grant
- **Runner-up** - \$2000 research travel grant
- **People's choice**: \$1000 research travel grant



Virtual 3MT Rules & Recording Requirements

At all levels, competitors must abide by the following Virtual 3MT Competition rules:

- 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 a 3MT title slide;*
 - 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 1 minute or submitted via email if not included in the 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 Vimeo link provided to Faculty Coordinators). Files sent in other formats will not be accepted.
- Entries submitted for Virtual University of Adelaide 3MT Final are to be submitted by the Faculty Coordinator. Competitors should not submit their videos directly to the AGC or 3MT.

Please note: *Editing of videos to include a 3MT title slide and 3MT PowerPoint slide are **optional** and will not be scored negatively if this step is not completed.

Please note: How each school/institute promotes and engages with their cohort/audience is at their own discretion (be as creative as you like). The decision to host a live or virtual event also sits with the School/Institute or Faculty

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.

Virtual 3MT Judging Criteria

At each round, competitors are assessed by a panel of judges using the following criteria:

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?

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.

Preparation

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.

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 dumb down or 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 dumb down your presentation.

Revise

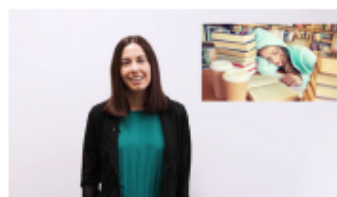
Proof your 3MT presentation by reading it aloud, to yourself and to an audience of friends and family. This allows you to not only check your style, but it will allow

you to receive critical feedback. Ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is and why it is important.

3MT 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;
- 3MT PowerPoint slide location in recording (top right corner/right side/cut to). The slide can be visible continuously, or 'cut to' (as many times as you like) for a maximum of 1 minute or submitted via email if not included in the presentation.
- no additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.



Consider the following:

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.

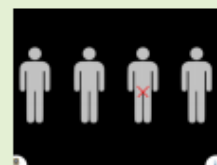
Ocker or Oriental? Asian Australians and the Denial of National Identity
Slide: Michael Thai, 2013



Creativity drives interest

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.

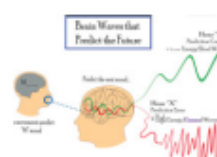
The Fourth Man
Slide: Ryan Stafford, 2011



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



Tips for success

Writing your script

When planning what to include in your 3MT, remember it is a summary of your research: you won't be able to include a lot of detail. It should focus more on the 'big picture' and the impact and importance of your research. Your presentation will be more effective if you can tell it as a story, and you may want to consider the following structure:

Beginning - Here you set up the background of your research and communicate the 'big picture'. Why are you doing what you're doing? What is the problem you are trying to solve? It will help if you can relate this to your audience. How does the problem affect the general public? You may consider making it topical, using a case study or telling a story in order to relate to the audience. Is there an emotional angle or any humour you can introduce? Evoking feelings/laughter is an effective way to engage the audience.

Middle - Provide some information about your methodology and results. What are you doing? How are you solving the problem? Don't dumb down or devalue your research, assume the audience are just as intelligent as you are, but haven't had the time or opportunity to do the research yet. Provide enough detail but avoid technical terms, or if really necessary, define them first. Analogies can be useful here to help explain any technical methodology.

End - Finish your presentation by describing your results. What have you achieved? What is the impact of your research? How will your findings impact the world, the public, your audience? Consider creating a circular structure by referencing aspects of the story you told at the beginning of the presentation.

What NOT to do

- Introduce yourself, acknowledge other group members or acknowledge funding sources (this is not a conference talk)
- Use your thesis title as your 3MT title. Like the presentation, the 3MT title should be in plain language. It needs to be catchy but still informative, like a newspaper headline.
- Include too much. Aim for 250-350 words for your first draft, then refine once you have timed it.

- Present any confidential information. Check with your supervisor if you're unsure about what information you're allowed to present to the public.

Virtual 3MT Competitor guide

For support while preparing and recording your 3MT, see the [Virtual 3MT Competitor Guide](#) produced by UQ.

Preparing your slide

You are allowed a single PowerPoint slide during your presentation, however no animations, sound or movement are permitted. Your slide should be simple and support, not distract from, your presentation. Consider these tips:

- Don't have too much detail – you shouldn't need to point to any part of your slide
- Limit any text to reduce audience distraction.
- Less is more: don't crowd your slide
- Ensure any images are of high quality
- Carefully check spelling and grammar

Rehearsing and 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.
- Practise 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, pacing for no reason or playing with your hair 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. Analyse how they engage with their audience. Visit the 3MT website to view presentations by previous 3MT finalists.

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. No costumes or props!

Practice using a microphone

While each School/Institute or Faculty competition may vary, at the Final you will have a lapel microphone. If you haven't used a mic before, instructions will be provided.

Other resources

As well as attending official training sessions, check out the following resources for more tips:

- Check out Nancy Duarte's TED talk [Idea's Worth Spreading](#) about the common structure of great talks.
- Read [The Unbreakable Laws of Storytelling](#) by Carmine Gallo which outlines the common elements of ideas that spread.
- See this advice from Toastmasters on [gestures and body language](#).
- Use the [Readability Test Tool](#) to make sure you have removed any jargon from your presentation.

Other Important Information

Faculty Coordinators

Faculty	Coordinators
Arts	Saskia Leinius & Jane Wright
ECMS	Stella Ho
Health & Medical Sciences	Dr Kelly Birch & Debbie Wellington
Professions	Hadassah Knowles
Sciences	Kelly Banwell

Training sessions

When you participate in the 3MT competition, you will be supported by the University. It is recommended that you attend the following training opportunities:

3MT Information Sessions

12 May 2021

This session will introduce you to the rules of the competition. [Register here](#).

Preparing for the 3MT: Everything you need to know

16 June 2021

Presented by Hugh Kearns (ThinkWell) this workshop will cover everything you need to know about the competition, and tips for preparing your 3MT.

[Register here](#).

Faculty training

Your faculty may offer additional opportunities. Get in touch with your faculty coordinator to learn more.

3MT and CaRST credit

Participation in the 3MT competition will earn you 5 credits in **Domain D** of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (Engagement influence and impact). These credits take into account preparation and training. Finalists will earn additional hours.

FAQs

- **Do I have to submit my 3MT as a video?**

Yes, in 2021 all 3MT presentations must be submitted as a pre-recorded video via Vimeo. There will be no live presentations.

- **How do I register?**

Register to participate via the [University of Adelaide 3MT website](#). Registrations close 18 June 2021.

- **Can I claim CaRST credit?**

Yes! Participation will earn you **5 credits** in **Domain D** (Engagement influence and impact). These credits take into account preparation and training. Finalists will earn additional hours.

- **Is there a dress code?**

There is no dress code. If you are unsure of how to dress, you may like to dress as you would for a job interview or an important meeting. Do not wear a costume of any kind as this is against the rules.

- **Am I allowed to enter the 3MT multiple years?**

Yes. As long as you are eligible to participate!

- **What size should my 3MT PowerPoint slide be?**

Please prepare a widescreen (16:9) slide, as the slide will also be submitted with your virtual 3MT video.

- **How do I register?**

Enter the competition online at <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/3mt/enter-the-3mt>

- **How do I know if my registration was successful?**

You will receive a confirmation email following your registration.

- **Can I use palm cards or notes during my presentation?**

Yes, palm cards and/or speech notes are acceptable, however this option may detract from the delivery of the 3MT and so is not recommended.

- **Can I quote from a poem or song as part of my presentation?**

Yes, spoken quotes can be included from a poem or song if it is relevant to your thesis topic, however they should be very limited. Poetry and song lyrics are not permitted to be used to present the entire 3MT. See more info in the rules.