

Three Minute Thesis (3MT) 2026

3MT competition rules

1. Presentations are limited to three minutes, and competitors exceeding three minutes are disqualified.
2. Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs).
3. Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through speech.
4. A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted (no slide transitions, animations or "movement") and is to be presented from the beginning of the oration.
5. No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.
6. No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment) are permitted.
7. All Heats are judged by a panel of three, who will provide feedback on the quality of the presentations.
8. No feedback will be provided during the Final, but feedback may be requested from the organisers after the event.
9. The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

3MT judging criteria

At every level of the competition, each competitor will be assessed on the judging criteria listed below. Each criterion is equally weighted.

Comprehension and content

- Presentation provided clear motivation, background, and significance to the research question.
- Presentation clearly described the research strategy/design and the results/findings of the research.
- Presentation clearly described the conclusions, outcomes and impact of the research.

Engagement and communication

- The oration was delivered clearly, and the language was appropriate for a non-specialist audience.
- The PowerPoint slide was well-defined and enhanced the presentation.
- The presenter conveyed enthusiasm for their research and captured and maintained the audience's attention.

3MT competition structure

1. The University of Auckland 3MT competition consists of two rounds: the first being the in-person Faculty Heats and online Open Heat, and the second being the University of Auckland 3MT Final.
2. On-campus participants must normally compete in their in-person Faculty Heat.
3. Cross-faculty entrants must compete in the Heat organised by the faculty of their main supervisor.
4. The online Open Heat is for those whose faculties have not organised a Faculty Heat, those who are registered as off-campus candidates, and those who have exceptional circumstances.
5. Only one winner and one runner-up will be selected for each Faculty Heat and the Open Heat. A draw is not permitted.
6. In Faculty Heats with 10 or more participants, the winner and the runner-up will qualify for the in-person University of Auckland 3MT Final.
7. In Faculty Heats with fewer than 10 participants, the winner will qualify for the in-person University of Auckland 3MT Final.
8. In the online Open Heat, the winner will qualify for the in-person University of Auckland 3MT Final.
9. The organisers reserve their right to add in additional wild card entries for the in-person University of Auckland 3MT Final.
10. At the University of Auckland 3MT Final, prizes will be awarded to the winner, the runner-up and the people's choice.

3MT entry terms and conditions

1. All currently enrolled doctoral candidates are eligible to compete in the University of Auckland 3MT competition. This includes doctoral candidates whose thesis is under examination by the date of their first presentation.
2. Finalists will be required to agree to media exposure (including social media) for their presentation and research.
3. Finalists accept that the Final may be filmed and made available to view on the University of Auckland website and other platforms and social media channels associated with the University. Recordings may also be used for the purpose of training and workshops.
4. The winner will compete in the Asia-Pacific Virtual 3MT Competition and the U21 Virtual 3MT Competition. If the winner is unavailable for those events, or if they have not yet been confirmed, the runner-up may be invited to represent the University instead.
5. While all currently enrolled doctoral candidates are eligible to compete in the University of Auckland 3MT competition, candidates who compete in international 3MT competitions must have successfully passed their confirmation milestone by the date of their first presentation.