



## **FAU Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Student Handbook**

Created by the University of Queensland (UQ)  
Modified by FAU with permission from UQ

**FAU 3MT® Championship**  
Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Lifelong Learning Society, Boca Raton Campus

### **PRELIMINARY HEATS**

**Wednesday, October 19**

Majestic Palm, Student Union  
Boca Raton campus  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, October 19**

LY 501, Wimberly Library  
Boca Raton campus  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**Thursday, October 20**

Majestic Palm, Student Union  
Boca Raton campus  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Thursday, October 20**

Room PA 101, Dorothy F.  
Schmidt College of Arts and  
Letters, Boca Raton Campus  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**Thursday, October 20**

Room PA 101, Dorothy F. Schmidt  
College of Arts and Letters, Boca  
Raton Campus  
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**Friday, October 21**

Room TBA  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Friday, October 21**

LY 501, Wimberly Library  
Boca Raton campus  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**Thursday, November 3**

Harbor Branch Auditorium, HBOI  
campus  
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

***[fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php](http://fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php)***

## OVERVIEW

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### FAU's Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition

This Fall 2016, FAU's Graduate College will host the University's inaugural Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition. This exciting opportunity is open to any active FAU graduate student in good academic standing with the University. This competition provides all participants with a unique and invaluable professional development experience and competition. Winners are awarded research scholarships and awards up to \$2,500 as well as travel expenses to the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) competition in March 2017.

To learn more or to get involved, email [3mt@fau.edu](mailto:3mt@fau.edu), call 561-297-4740, visit the 3MT website:

[fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php](http://fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php)

### History

The 3MT® competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by graduate 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 language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

The first 3MT® competition was held at the University of Queensland in 2008 with 160 students competing. In 2009 and 2010 the 3MT® competition was promoted to other Australian and New Zealand universities and enthusiasm for the concept grew. Since 2011 the popularity of the competition has increased and 3MT® competitions are now held in over 170 universities across more than 18 countries worldwide.

### FAU Fall 2016 Scholarships & Awards

#### **Preliminary Heats\*:**

Heat Winner: \$1,000

First Runner-up: \$500

Second Runner-up: \$250

People's Choice: \$500

Preliminary heat winner(s) will advance to the championship on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

#### **Championship\*:**

Overall Winner: \$2,500

First Runner-up: \$1,500

Second Runner-up: \$1,000

People's Choice: \$1,500

Championship winner will receive an all-expense paid trip to the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools competition in March 2017

**\*Overall Winner, First Runner-Up, and Second Runner-Up winners are also eligible to win the People's Choice Award for both the Preliminary Heats and the Championship. Additional prizes for preliminary heats and championships are to be announced.**

# COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDELINES

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## Eligibility

FAU graduate students in good academic standing are eligible to participate in 3MT®.

## Judging Criteria

At every level of the competition each competitor will be judged on the judging criteria listed below. Please note that each criterion is equally weighted and has an emphasis on audience.

### Comprehension & 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 & Communication

- Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
- Was the presenter careful not to trivialize or generalize 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?

## Rules

The following rules have been developed for all 3MT® competitions.

- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted (no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description, the slide is to be presented from the beginning of the oration).
- No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.
- No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment) are permitted.
- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs).
- Presentations are to commence from the stage.
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through movement or speech.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

## STUDENT COMPETITORS

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### Apply to Compete

If you are an active FAU graduate student, and would like to compete in FAU's Inaugural competition in the Fall 2016 semester, please apply here: [fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php](http://fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php).

## PREPARING YOUR 3MT® PRESENTATION

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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 creating your slide and preparing your presentation.

### Making the Most of Your 3 Minutes

Summarizing years of intense study into three minutes that will captivate, entertain and educate a non-specialist audience will be challenging but rewarding. Your preparation for 3MT® should be divided into two phases: pre-production and performance. Before you begin this preparation, you may want to consider connecting with colleagues, friends, and faculty members who can support your success and give you feedback. This video, produced by the International 3MT® winner, Amanda Pearce, has some helpful hints: [http://www.cags.ca/3mt\\_howto.php#.V590UPkrKUK](http://www.cags.ca/3mt_howto.php#.V590UPkrKUK)

Below are some additional tips from The University of Queensland (UQ):

### Writing your 3MT®

#### 1. 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 consider:

- 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.
- Imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field; and
- Try not to dumb down or devalue your research, what you are doing is exciting and you should convey enthusiasm for your subject.

#### 2. 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 and why you're doing it.

#### 3. 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.

#### 4. What Not to do

Try not to write your presentation like an academic paper. Instead, attempt to use shorter words, shorter sentences and shorter paragraphs. You can use humor, however be careful not to dumb down your presentation.

#### 5. Revise

You may like to proof your 3MT® presentation by reading it aloud, firstly to yourself and then to an audience of friends and family. This allows you to not only check your grammar and writing style, but it will allow you to receive critical feedback. Don't be afraid to ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is and why it is important

### Creating your 3MT® Static Slide

Before you start work on your slide, you should take the following 3MT® rules into account:

- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted
- 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 might like to consider some of the following suggestions from UQ:

#### 1. Less is More

Text and complicated graphics can distract your audience – keep in mind that these distractions may cause the audience to read instead of listen to your 3MT®.

#### 2. Personal Touches can be Effective

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

#### 3. Creativity Drives Interest

Do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your spoken oration.

#### 4. Work Your Message

Think about how your slide might be able to assist with the format and delivery of your presentation –for example, is there a metaphor that helps explain your research?

### Practicing your 3MT® Presentation

We hope you find the following tips from UQ useful as you prepare your 3MT® oration.

#### 1. Practice, Practice, Practice

Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and sometimes 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.

## 2. 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.

## 3. 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, pacing for no reason or playing with your hair as these habits are distracting for the audience.

## 4. 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.

## 5. 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.

## 6. Dress

Yes, please dress in business casual as there will be professionals in attendance. Please note that no costumes are allowed (including hats, masks, etc.).

## Frequently Asked Questions

UQ has developed the following FAQs to assist students wishing to participate in 3MT® and FAU has adapted the FAQ for our competition.

### Can I present my oration via Skype?

FAU will not allow remote presentation.

### Can I present my oration as a poem, rap or song?

No. While we appreciate everyone has a different presentation style, the purpose of the activity is to "engage the audience without reducing research to entertainment value alone" 3MT® is primarily about developing a student's oration skills. It is important that the competition is not seen as trivializing research or science.

### Do you have any presentation tips that I can follow?

Yes, you can watch this video for some general instructions on preparing for 3MT®. Please note this video was produced by UQ for a different competition but you may find it useful!

### Can I use a laser pointer?

Yes. A laser pointer is not considered a prop. However, the emphasis is on the oration.

### Can I use palm cards or speech notes be referred to during a presentation?

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

### Does my slide have to be in PowerPoint?

Yes, it is the required format as all slides will be collated into a single PowerPoint presentation for the competition and preliminary heats.

**How many transitions or animations can I have in my slide?**

None. The slide must be static and not change in any way during the presentation. Your slide must be displayed for the duration of your presentation.

**Do I have to use a slide?**

Yes, one static PowerPoint is required.

**What happens if my presentation is longer than 3 minutes?**

In the FAU 3MT® heats and final competition, a 30 second warning will be provided to competitors (a colored board held up by timekeeper) and a bell will sound at the three minute limit. If a presenter continues to speak after the bell they will be automatically disqualified.

**Is there a dress code?**

Yes, please dress in business casual as there will be professionals in attendance. Please note that no costumes are allowed (including hats, masks, etc.).

**Will I be able to see a countdown-timer at my final?**

Yes, there will be a countdown timer that you can see. Additionally, a colored card will be used to show a 30 second warning.

**Can I win more than one category?**

Yes, it is possible to win a place (First, Runner-Up, etc.) and win the People's Choice award.

**Do I need to attend the entire competition?**

Yes, supporting fellow students is important. Additionally, you must be present to win an award which will occur immediately following the competition.

## Additional Resources

- Attend one or more FAU 3MT® workshops (days and times TBA)  
Email [3mt@fau.edu](mailto:3mt@fau.edu) for additional information.
- Get paired with a coach (make sure to indicate this on your application)  
Select the coaching option in your 3MT® application or email [3mt@fau.edu](mailto:3mt@fau.edu) for additional information.
- 3MT® "How-To Video", produced by the International 3MT® winner, Amanda Pearce:  
[http://www.cags.ca/3mt\\_howto.php#.V590UPkrKUK](http://www.cags.ca/3mt_howto.php#.V590UPkrKUK)
- Tips from Matt Abrahams, Stanford University Lecturer:  
<http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/matt-abrahams-tips-techniques-more-confident-compelling-presentations>
- Tips from Inger Mewburn, RMIT University in Melbourne:  
<https://prezi.com/jwhwydfzqxo/how-to-talk-about-your-thesis-in-3-minutes/>
- Ontario Consortium for Graduate Professional Skills video, "6 Components of Successful 3MT® Speeches":  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9lx19UmCFI>
- Watch 3MT® competition videos from around the world at: <http://threeminutethesis.org/>

To learn more or to get involved, email [3mt@fau.edu](mailto:3mt@fau.edu), call 561-297-4740, visit the 3MT website:

***fau.edu/graduate/3MT.php***