

**National Taiwan University and the Academic Writing Education Center**  
**Three-Minute Thesis Competition**



**What is a three-minute thesis presentation?**

The Three-Minute Thesis (3MT), originating in the University of Queensland in Australia, is an international research communication competition that challenges higher-degree students to present to an intelligent but non-specialist audience on the ideas they are researching, the new knowledge they are hoping to find, and the contribution their research is going to make.

3MT has been held at some of the top-ranking universities in the world, and National Taiwan University (NTU) now joins them to present its own 3MT event and invites you to participate. In the NTU 3MT produced by the Academic Writing Education Center (AWEC), you present your original research in an easy-to-understand language in front of a live audience in no more than three minutes. During your presentation, you concisely convey your research ideas and explain their significance. The NTU 3MT is an intellectual and academic challenge to communicate your research to a broader audience.

**Who can participate?**

All currently-enrolled NTU graduate students who are currently conducting original research or have publications that can contribute to the future theses/dissertations can participate in the 3MT Competition.

**How does the Competition work?**

There are three rounds of competition. In the preliminary round, you will submit a videotaped audition of your 3MT presentation as well as a file copy of your slide (if used). Up to twenty candidates will be selected to compete in the semi-final event. Eight out of the twenty semi-finalists will then move on to the final event. If any finalist is unable to attend the final event, the next runner-up in the semi-final will take his or her place. Both the semi-final and final events will be held in front of a live audience.

Here are the procedures to help you prepare for the Competition:

***Preliminary Round***

1. Learn how to create a 3MT presentation:
  - a. Visit 3MT at <http://threeminutethesis.org/3mt-showcase>.
  - b. Visit the AWEC at <http://www.awec.ntu.edu.tw> for the information on the 3MT presentation.
  - c. Attend the 3MT information seminar on Monday, March 23.



- d. Watch 3MT presentations on Youtube (keyword: 3MT).
2. Rehearse your 3MT:
  - a. Practice in front of your friends and ask for feedback.
  - b. Record your voice to help improve your pronunciation and intonation.
  - c. Practice in front of a mirror to see your body language and facial expressions.
  - d. Make sure you practice the timing – NO MORE THAN 3 MINUTES.
  - e. Get a coach to help you.
3. Learn how to format your files and what to do in your video:
  - a. Prepare one single static PowerPoint slide no larger than 5MB (if used).
  - b. Name in Chinese your PowerPoint slide file as *fullname\_3MT.ppt*, i.e. 王小明-3MT.ppt. (If you do not have a Chinese name, your file should be named as *last name\_first name\_3MT.ppt*, i.e. Doe\_John\_3MT.ppt.)
  - c. Produce one video in an MP4 format.
  - d. Name in Chinese your video file as *fullname\_3MT.mp4* or *fullname\_3MT.mov*, i.e. 王小明\_3MT.mp4. (If you do not have a Chinese name, your file should be named as *last name\_first name\_3MT.mp4*, i.e. Doe\_John\_3MT.mp4.)
  - e. State in English your full name, graduate program, and the title of the presentation at the very beginning of the video. The time it takes to do this will not be counted against the three minutes you may take to present your research.
4. Register and submit the two files by 12 noon, April 15:
  - a. Upload your video to YouTube and make sure to change the setting to “Unlisted” in the drop-down menu. Once your video is uploaded, do not re-upload.
  - b. Go to the [event website](#) and click “Register.”
  - c. Fill in your personal information and Youtube video link and upload your PPT file.
  - d. Click “Submit” after all the required blanks have been filled in.
  - e. Check your email for a confirmation email from the AWEC.

### ***Semi-Final Round***

1. Attend the presentation talk on Thursday, May 7.
2. Make adjustments to your PowerPoint slide and/or presentation (optional).



### ***Final Round***

1. Notify by email the AWEC whether you can attend the final event by May 18 ([ntuawec@ntu.edu.tw](mailto:ntuawec@ntu.edu.tw)).

### **What are the rules?**

The rules for the 3MT Competition at all rounds are as follows:

1. One single static PowerPoint slide is allowed. The slide must be presented from the beginning of the presentation.
2. No slide transitions, animations or movements of any description are allowed
3. No additional electronic media (e.g. sound or video files) are allowed.
4. No additional props (e.g. laser pointers, costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment, or tables) are allowed.
5. Presentations must be ended within 3 minutes. Competitors exceeding 3 minutes will be disqualified.
6. Presentations must be orally given; no poetry-reciting or singing is allowed.
7. Presentations must commence from the presentation stage or platform.
8. Presentation timing commences when competitors start their presentations through either movement or speech.
9. The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

### **What are the judging criteria?**

At all rounds, the 3MT judges will consider the two main aspects regarding your 3MT presentation:

#### **Comprehension & Content**

1. Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background to the research question being addressed and its significance?
2. Did the presentation clearly describe the key results of the research including conclusions and outcomes?
3. Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
4. Was the content communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?



5. Did the speaker avoid scientific/specialist jargon, explain terminology and provide adequate background information to illustrate points?
6. 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**

1. Did the presenter make the audience want to know more?
2. Was the presenter careful not to trivialize or generalize their research?
3. Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their research?
4. Did the presenter capture and maintain their audience's attention?
5. Did the speaker have sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintain a steady pace, and have a confident stance?
6. Did the PowerPoint slide enhance the presentation - was it clear, legible, and concise?

### **Are there any prizes?**

One winner, one first and one second runners-up plus one winner of Audience Choice Award will be announced and awarded in the final event.

### **FAQs**

*Q: Can I receive advice or coaching in preparing my 3MT presentation?*

A: Coaching is acceptable; you will need to arrange your own coaching. The 3MT and the AWEC will not offer personal coaching. However, you are highly recommended to attend the 3MT information seminar and presentation talk held by the AWEC on March 23 and May 7 respectively to know more about the Competition.

*Q: Can I change the topic of my 3MT after I have been qualified as a semi-finalist or finalist?*

A: You cannot change the topic or make any major changes to your originally-submitted video presentation. However, you are allowed to make small, cosmetic improvements to your original text and slide for the semi-final and final events, such as changing a few words or fixing your slide to make them clearer.

*Q: Do I have to announce my results?*

A: This is up to you. The rules do not require that you explicitly present your results. However, if you do have preliminary or final key results, you should consider how interesting they might be to the audience. Alternatively, you can predict your research outcomes.



*Q: Can I refer to palm cards or speech notes during my presentation?*

A: Yes, palm cards and/or speech notes are acceptable. However, this option may detract you from delivering your 3MT and is not recommended.

*Q: Is there a dress code?*

A: There is no stipulated dress requirement. Some have worn suits with ties and others t-shirts and jeans. Please wear whatever is comfortable for you. Do not wear any accessories that might distract the audience (e.g. hats, masks, wigs, fake glasses, etc.).

*Q: What is allowed on my 3MT PowerPoint slide?*

A: You are allowed to have one single static PowerPoint slide. In preparing the slide, remember that “less is more.” Your slide does not have to include text. Visual cues are very effective in assisting your explanation of the research.

*Q: Although I cannot deliver my 3MT as a poem or song, can I quote from a poem or song?*

A: Yes, you can include quotes from a poem or song if they are relevant to your 3MT topic. However, you are not allowed to use poetry and song lyrics to present your entire 3MT, so it is recommended that quotes from poems or songs be sparingly used.

### **3MT KEY DATES:**

- March 12      Event Announcement
- March 23      Information Seminar
- April 15       Video Submission Deadline
- May 1          Semi-Finalist Announcement
- May 7          Presentation Talk
- May 16        Semi-Final Event
- May 18        Notification of Attendance Decision Deadline
- May 23        Final Event