



McMaster 3MT<sup>®</sup> Competition 2020  
Guidelines

March 18 and 19, 2020

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## **ABOUT 3MT®**

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a university-wide competition for graduate students in which participants present their research and its wider impact in 3 minutes or less to a panel of non-specialist judges. The challenge is to present complex research in an engaging, accessible, and compelling way, using only one static slide.

The 3MT® competition provides graduate students with an opportunity to refine skills that can be transferred after graduation to diverse career paths. Distilling research into a clear form, without over-simplifying, and highlighting the wider implications of the research are important skills to carry into post-graduate employment and public service.

The competition also enables students to showcase their research to a wider multidisciplinary audience, within the university, and to the broader public. The competition is open for the public to attend, and is advertised within the community. This is a unique opportunity to communicate the innovative and significant research undertaken by graduate students.

The 3MT® competition initially was developed by the University of Queensland in 2008, with competitions by other Australian and New Zealand universities following, culminating in the first Trans-Tasman competition held in 2010. Now the 3MT is held in more than 60 countries worldwide. UBC ran the first Canadian competition in 2011; Queen's and Western held competitions in 2012. In 2013, 16 Ontario Universities sent representatives to the inaugural Ontario 3MT® Competition at Queen's.

McMaster University is hosting our eighth annual competition in March 2020!

The main focus of McMaster's 3MT® is student development and learning how to effectively communicate complex research in just three short minutes. This unique opportunity will allow students to expand their range of communication skills in a dynamic and challenging way.

The top eligible presenter at McMaster will attend the Ontario 3MT® competition hosted by the University of Windsor in April 2020. Most Ontario universities are expected to participate in the provincial competition.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

- McMaster students must be registered in a Masters (thesis or MRP only) or PhD program at the time of the **3MT®** competition at McMaster, and must have made substantial progress on their research and analysis. Course-based Masters students are ineligible.
- PhD and Masters students who have defended, but have not yet graduated, are eligible.
- **3MT®** presentations must represent the primary research the student conducted in his/her graduate program.
- Presenters must agree to be video-recorded, and to allow those recordings to be made public and posted on the Graduate Studies website.
- Presenters must have registered using the online registration form on the School of Graduate Studies website, and received confirmation of a heat time from the School of Graduate Studies.
- Presenters must be available to present, in person. To advance in the competition, heat winners must also be available to present, in person, at the McMaster School of Graduate Studies final. The final will be held on March 19 at 2:00pm.
- The Winner will be expected to represent McMaster at the Ontario **3MT®** competition on April 15, 2020, in Windsor, Ontario.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Students must understand that the presentation of their research in 3MT® will be publicly accessible. (i.e., in the public domain.)

The presentation of the research will not affect any pre-existing rights following the competition, except as stated below:

- Due to the nature of the competition, we will not ask judges, reviewers, staff or the audience to sign non-disclosure statements. If your research is being/has been conducted under contract with an outside sponsor, students should discuss the related contractual terms of confidentiality and intellectual property with their supervisor before participating in this competition.
- All public sessions of the competition, including but not limited to oral presentations, are open to the public at large. Any and all of these public sessions may be broadcast to interested persons through media, which may include the internet.
- Any data or information discussed or presented in public sessions should be considered 'public'. If your research includes confidential or culturally sensitive material, we advise that you discuss your competition entry with your supervisor(s) before entering the 3MT®.

## COMPETITION STRUCTURE

- The competition for 2020 will consist of 6 heats of approximately 12 competitors.
- Four heats will run on March 18 and two heats will run on the morning of March 19.
- In each heat the top two competitors will go forward to the School of Graduate Studies Final\*.
- All Final presentations will be recorded.
- The top eligible competitor in the final will go on to represent McMaster at the Ontario **3MT**<sup>®</sup> competition on April 15, 2020, hosted by the University of Windsor.

\*The number of competitors moving to the final will depend on the number of students in the preliminary heats of the competition.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

Each competitor's presentation will be assessed according to the criteria listed below. Please note that each criterion is equally weighted.

### 1. Comprehension:

- Did the talk help you to understand the scholarly research and creativity?
- Did the presenter clearly outline the nature and purpose of the scholarly research and creativity?
- Did the presenter clearly indicate what is interesting about the scholarly research and creativity?
- Did the talk follow a logical sequence?

### 2. Engagement

- Was the talk engaging?
- Did the talk inspire you to want to know more?
- Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their work?
- Did the presenter capture and maintain your attention?

### 3. Communication

- Did the presenter use language and terminology that was clear and understandable?
- Was the pace of the talk effective?
- Did the presenter use non-verbal communication (i.e. eye contact, voice modulation, body language, etc.) effectively?
- Did the slide enhance, rather than detract from, the talk – was it clear, legible, and concise?

## **RULES**

- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted (no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are allowed), and the slide is to be presented from the beginning of the oration and remain in view for the duration 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, cell phones, etc.) are permitted.
- No notes or cue cards are permitted.
- Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- Presentations are to be spoken in standard oratory prose. (i.e., no poems, raps or songs, other than those that may be the target of research).
- 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.
- The competition will be administered in English.
- McMaster University has modeled the rules after the Ontario Provincial Competition for 2020. This was done to ensure the winners would be eligible to participate in the provincial competition and the national competition.

## **PRIZES**

Cash prizes are given to assist winners in attending conferences in order to promote their research and further their academic network.

- 1<sup>st</sup> - \$1,000.00
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - \$500.00
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - \$250.00
- 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> runner up – Dean's Award for Excellence in Communicating Research
- Competitor's Choice\*: \$250

The top five winners will also receive the Dean's Award for Excellence in Communicating Research and will be invited to the Graduate Student Recognition Awards ceremony in November 2020.

\*Voted on by the competitors at the 3MT final at 2:00pm. All competitors who attend the final will be able to vote, including those who competed in preliminary heats but did not move into the final.

## KEY DATES

Date & Time	What
January 9, 2020	Registration Opens
March 2, 2020 at 12:00pm (Noon)	Deadline to Register
March 9, 2020 at 12:00pm (Noon)	Deadline to submit slide.
March 18, 2020	Mar 18 – Heat 1 @ 9:00am, Concert Hall Mar 18 – Heat 2 @ 11:00am, Concert Hall Mar 18 – Heat 3 @ 1:00pm, Concert Hall Mar 18 – Heat 4 @ 3:00pm, Concert Hall
March 19, 2020	Mar 19 – Heat 5 @ 8:30am, Concert Hall Mar 19 – Heat 6 @ 10:30am, Concert Hall  Final @ 2:00pm, Concert Hall
April 15, 2020	Ontario 3MT® competition University of Windsor

## STUDENT RESOURCES

### Presentations

- [Previous McMaster Finalists](#)
- [3MT National Competition](#) – Videos from 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 are available
- [University of Queensland \(Asia-Pacific competition\)](#)
- Most Canadian universities have 3MT videos posted online that you can view

### Useful Guidelines

- [“Making the most of your 3 minutes”](#), by Simon Clews, Director Writing Centre, University of Melbourne (99KB)
- [“Thinkwell 3MT Tools Kit”](#), specifically Content Checklist and Feedback Format (173KB)

## STUDENT FAQs

### **Q – Why do some of the rules seem restrictive?**

A – McMaster has modeled the rules after the Ontario 3MT® competition to ensure that eligible winners can participate in the Ontario 3MT®, the national competition and in future years, international competitions.

### **Q – What proportion of my degree has to have a research component for me to be eligible to compete in the McMaster 3MT®?**

A – You are eligible to compete if your degree involves a thesis, dissertation or major research paper (MRP). If your program is course-based, you are not eligible.

### **Q – I was a student at the time of my competition at my university but will graduate before the Ontario competition. Am I eligible to enter?**

A – Yes, if you are eligible at the time of your university's competition, you will remain eligible for the Ontario competition regardless of your program status. You do need to have made significant progress in your research.

### **Q – Do I need to have the results of my research to participate?**

A – No, the focus of the competition is on the significance and impact of the research. You do not necessarily need results to explain this.

### **Q – Can I present my oration via Skype?**

A – No, you must present in person. The winner of the university final will be expected to attend the Ontario competition in person.

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

A – No, 3MT® is primarily about developing students' oration skills.

### **Q – Can I use a laser pointer or note cards?**

A – No, a laser pointer and/or note cards are not allowed.

### **Q – Does my slide have to be in PowerPoint?**

A – No, however it is the preferred format as all slides will be collated into a single PowerPoint presentation for the competition. A slide template is available for download on the Graduate Studies website: JPEG, Keynote or PDF formats are acceptable however, formatting cannot be guaranteed.

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

A – 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.

### **Q – Do I have to use a slide?**

A – No, the slide is optional as the emphasis is on the oration.

### **Q – Do I have to add citations/references to the slide?**



A – Yes, if appropriate. Note: you can use very small font for the citation/reference.

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

A - There will be a countdown timer facing the presenter. If a presenter exceeds three minutes they will be automatically disqualified.

**Q – Is there a dress code?**

A – There is no stipulated dress requirement such as “business casual”. Please wear whatever is comfortable for you. NO COSTUMES (including hats, masks, etc.).

**Q – Will I be able to see a countdown-timer during my presentation?**

A – Yes, the countdown timer will be visible to you.

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

A – Yes, it is possible to win a place (1st, runner-up, etc.) and win the Participant’s Choice Award.

**Q – What happens if I cannot attend the final?**

A – The winner of each heat is expected to participate in the next stage of the competition. If the winner is unable to attend the final, the runner-up will proceed to the next round of the competition.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

For more information, or to discuss accessibility requirements, please contact Natalie Taylor at (905)525-9140 ext. 23710 or email [grad3mt@mcmaster.ca](mailto:grad3mt@mcmaster.ca).

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have inquiries about the 3MT® competition, please contact Natalie Taylor, School of Graduate Studies, McMaster University via [grad3mt@mcmaster.ca](mailto:grad3mt@mcmaster.ca) or phone (905)525-9140 ext. 23710.