



FIJI NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY



*Centre for Graduate
Studies (CGS)*



THREE MINUTE THESIS *STUDENT HANDBOOK*



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FOREWORD



Fiji National University (FNU) was the first to host the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition in Fiji and perhaps the regional South Pacific universities. in 2022. This was repeated in 2023 and 2024 with another large and successful participation by graduate students. I am glad that we can continue the competition into the third year. The competition is not new. It originated in 2008 at the University of Queensland in Australia and FNU is happy to be a part of it.

The competition tests both the quality of research and communication skills. Nothing is more wonderful than the ability to communicate extremely complex undertakings to people outside one's profession in a very short period. It boosts the researcher's confidence

and helps t to understand the complexities of the topic under examination. More significantly, a confirmation that other communities understand the research marks the start of research with real-world impact which, is a key pillar of our strategy.

I encourage all aspiring FNU researchers to come out publicly and contribute.

This year, we will accept research proposals for upcoming projects and provide inputs. We value inputs as they are effective in improving on ideas and achieve good outcomes. We thank the FNU Students' Association for supporting this competition. I also thank the colleges for nominating their students and the Centre for Graduate Studies team for hosting this occasion.

Professor Nii-K Plange

Professor Nii-K Plange
Dean Centre for Graduate Studies



EVENT OVERVIEW

WHAT IS IT?

Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is a challenging, inspiring and interdisciplinary competition developed by The University of Queensland to showcase the next generation of students and early-career professionals. Participants have three minutes to present a compelling oration on their thesis topic and its significance. It is important to note that 3MT is not an exercise in trivialising or 'dumbing-down' research, but challenges students to consolidate their ideas and research discoveries so they can be presented concisely to a non-specialist audience.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

In your post-graduate programme, the majority of students enrolled in Graduate Studies Programme need to focus extensively in producing a full-scale thesis. The ability to communicate the importance of your research project and articulate your findings is very valuable. **The 3MT offers the following advantages:**

- i. Provides participants with networking opportunities amongst likeminded individuals.
- ii. Celebrates and promotes excellent talent in
- iii. academia and the innovation sector.
- iv. Strengthens links between research and development across academia and business.
- v. Enables participants to communicate their ideas effectively to the wider community and audience.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Anyone who is active in the Graduate Studies Programme, or
- Master by coursework students who have a significant thesis component (including thesis under submission).

PRIZES

The winners of the FNU 3MT will be awarded with the following prizes:

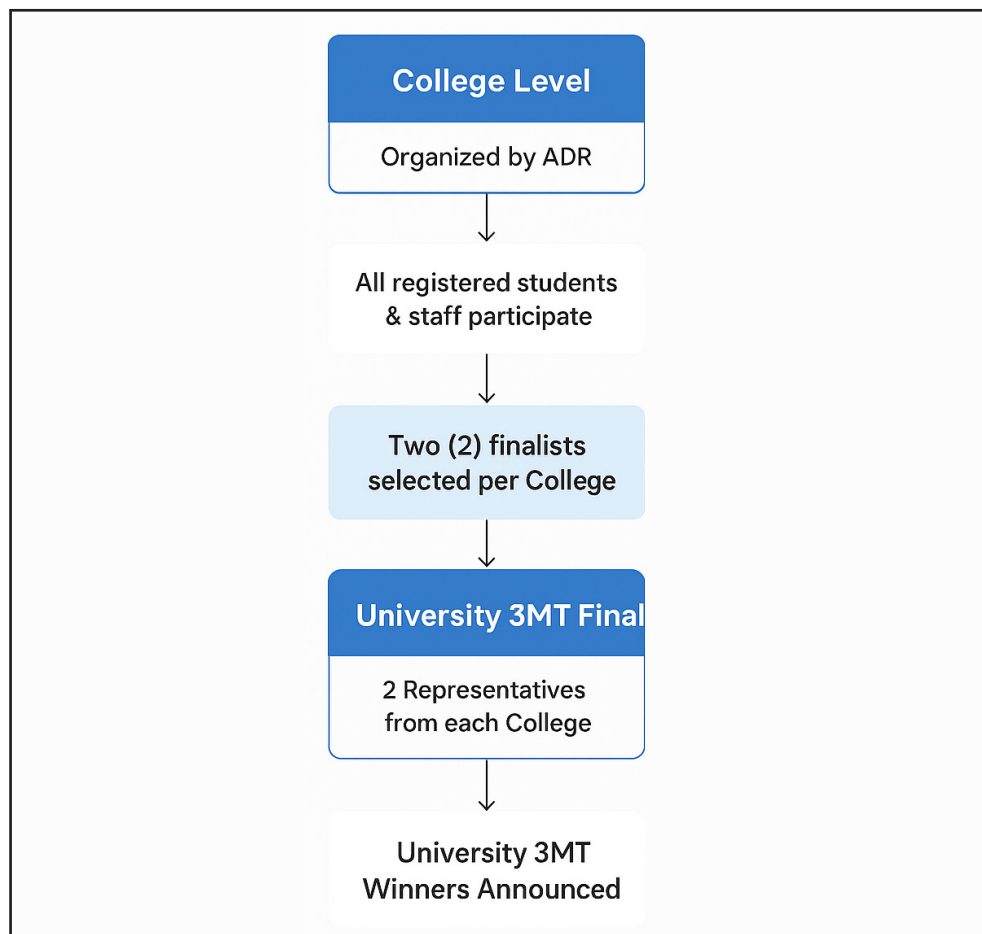
First Prize	1,500 FJD cash
Runner-up	1,000 FJD cash
People's Choice	500 FJD cash

KEY DATES

DATE	ITEM
17 October, 2025	1st Training Session- Week 13
22 October, 2025	2nd Training Session- Week 14
23 to 24 October, 2025	College Finals
27 October, 2025	College Finalist list due date- Week 15
28 October, 2025	3rd Training Session- Week 15
30 October, 2025	FNU 3MT Final Competition

PROGRESSION

The following chart outlines the progression of students throughout the competition and highlights key contacts for each event. According to the eligibility requirements, all registered students and staff will participate in the 3MT College rounds noting that a college finalist will include two students who will progress to the University Final. It is mandatory to have two (2) representatives from each college to participate in the University Competition.



The Association Dean Research (ADR) will organize the internal 3MT competition at the college level. From the college level, the finalists will include two (2) graduate students who will compete in the University Final.

Panel Members

- FNU Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning & Teaching (Chair) or Nominee
- VC Nominee
- FNU Pro-Vice-Chancellor Corporate or Nominee
- FNU Pro-Vice-Chancellor TVET or Nominee
- Industry Collaboration Partner

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

JUDGING CRITERIA

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

Breakthrough factor (50%) – How innovative is the proposed idea?

Relevance and Impact (40%) – How relevant is the idea to the discipline and beyond?

Structure/Performance (10%) – How convincing was the presentation?

1. COMPREHENSION:

- 1.1. Did the presentation help the audience understand the research?
- 1.2. Did the presenter clearly outline the nature and claims of the research?

2. ENGAGEMENT:

- 2.1. Did the oration make the audience want to know more?
- 2.2. Was the presenter careful in conveying the content of their research in a form that was understandable to a general audience, but also meaningful to an expert one?
- 2.3. Did the presenter convey enthusiasm for their work?

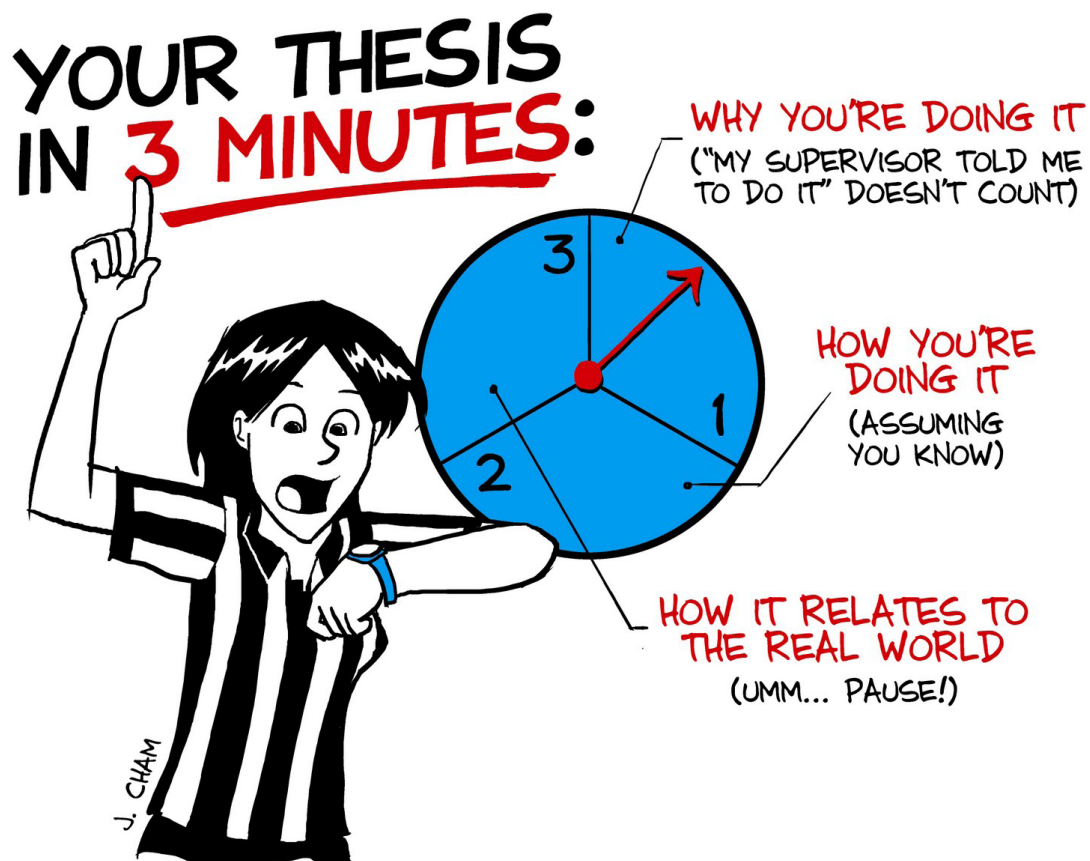
3. COMMUNICATION STYLE:

- 3.1. Was the thesis and its significance communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
- 3.2. Did the speaker use sufficient eye contact and vocal range, maintain a steady pace, and a confident stance?
- 3.3. Did the speaker avoid scientific jargon, explain terminology that needed to be used, and provide adequate background information to illustrate points?
- 3.4. Did the presenter spend the right amount of time on each element of their presentation – or did they elaborate for too long or were rushed?

RULES

The following rules have been developed for the competition.

1. 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).
2. No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.
3. No additional props (e.g. costumes, musical instruments, laboratory equipment's) are permitted.
4. Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum and competitors exceeding 3 minutes will be disqualified.
5. Presentations are to be spoken word (e.g. no poems, raps or songs).
6. Presentations are to commence on the stage.
7. Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts their presentation through movement or speech.
8. The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.
9. Presenters are strictly not allowed to use any written materials during the presentation.



3MT TRAINING SESSION

1. In preparation for the competition, we have organized training sessions to help students refine their skills and strategies. Please find the proposed training session dates below

Training Session 1: 17 October 2025

Training Session 2: 22 October 2025

Training Session 3: 28 October 2025



3MT TRAINING SESSION

PREPARATION

It is important to note that the world's best public speakers prepare before important presentations. To assist you with your preparation, please find below a few suggestions that will help you in writing your presentation, creating your slide and practicing your verbal presentation.

A GOOD 3MT PRESENTATION

- Doesn't try to say too much
- Is delivered with poise.
- Has expression (pauses and inflections to stress key points)
- Includes a story, metaphor or emotional element
- Gives concrete examples
- Doesn't 'telegraph'
- Tells you things you didn't expect to hear about on the topic

PRACTICING YOUR PRESENTATION

We hope you find the following tips useful as you prepare your 3MT oration

1. Practice, practice, practice

Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and sometimes a little nervousness is a good

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.
- 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.

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. Analyse how they engage with their audience.
- Visit the 3MT website to view presentations by previous 3MT finalists.

6. Dress

- While there is no dress code, if you are unsure of how to dress, your personal presentation is important, so you may choose to dress for a job interview or an important meeting.
- Do not wear a costume of any kind as this is against the rules (as are any props).

7. Practice using a microphone

While each School, Department or College may use different equipment, at the FNU Final, you will have a wireless



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q: Can I also be eligible if I am in a programme that has Masters by coursework but has a thesis component?

Yes

Q: Am i eligible if i have not gone through the candidature confirmation but preparing for my proposal defense?

Yes

Q: Can I present my oration using a digital medium, for example Skype/Zoom?

Normally not

Q: 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 trivialising the research.

Q: Can I use a laser pointer?

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

Q. Does my slide have to be in PowerPoint?

No, however, it is our preferred format as all slides will be collated into a single PowerPoint presentation for the competition.

Q. 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.

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

In the 3MT Final, a 20-second warning will be provided to competitors (a fluoro board held up by the timekeeper) and a bell will sound at the three-minute limit. If a presenter continues to speak after the bell, they will automatically be disqualified.

Q. Is there a dress code?

There is no stipulated dress requirement such as ‘smart casual’. Some students have worn suits with ties, others t-shirts and jeans. Please wear whatever is comfortable for you. Please note that no costumes are allowed (including hats, fancy masks, Dame Edna specs).

Q: Can I win more than one category?

Yes, it is possible to win a place (a place getter and the People's Choice award).

Q: What happens if i cannot attend the final?

The winner of each heat or final is expected to represent their School/Department/ College at the final competition stage. If the winner from the College level is unable to attend the final, the college will not have a representative at the 3MT.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any queries about 3MT please contact the 3MT Event Coordinators in the Centre for Graduate Studies (CGS)

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