



**EDITH COWAN  
UNIVERSITY**

**THREE MINUTE  
THESIS (3MT)  
COMPETITION**

**2018 HANDBOOK**



Cover image: Marcin Lipski, ECU 3MT 2015 Finalist  
ECU Sports Science PhD Candidate



Compiled by Felicity Higgs  
3MT Coordinator, Graduate Research School  
Updated May 2018

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# ABOUT THE 3MT

## WHAT IS IT?

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication competition that challenges Higher Degree by Research students to explain their research project to a non-specialist audience in three minutes. Developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), the competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by research students across disciplines.

...It's about making other people feel a small measure of the passion that we have for our fields of research. It's also a fantastic opportunity to meet other researchers and learn about the amazing and inspiring things that are happening around Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, in the name of discovery"

**Catherine Properzi,  
2016 ECU 3MT Winner**



"In a world where we are bombarded with information, 3MT is about learning skills, not just to communicate our research, but to actually engage people and make our research matter to them..."

# WHY TAKE PART?

## **Asia Pacific 3MT<sup>®</sup> Research Travel Grants**

Winner: \$5000

Runner Up: \$2000

People's Choice: \$1000

## **ECU 3MT Cash Prizes**

Winner: \$1500

Runner Up: \$1000

Third Place: \$500

People's Choice: \$250

## **School Semi-Finals Cash Prizes**

Winner: \$250

Runner Up: \$150

Third Place: \$100

## **CHALLENGE**

Step outside of your comfort zone!

The 3MT is a fantastic opportunity to challenge yourself, have fun, and win prize money for your research.

The ECU winner will have all expenses paid to compete at the Asia-Pacific 3MT Competition on Thursday, 27 September 2018 at The University of Queensland.



# WHY TAKE PART?

## COMMUNICATE

Taking part in the 3MT competition helps you to make valuable connections with researchers and other professionals within and beyond ECU. Research students are expected to develop networking skills at all stages of candidature.

Since 2016, 96% of survey respondents have reported that they felt more engaged with the research culture at ECU as a result of participating in the 3MT and other Research Week activities.

Exposure from the 3MT, and knowing how to engage different audiences, can significantly increase the reach of your work. Your 3MT presentation could generate public and media interest in your research, and may lead to new and exciting opportunities!

"You just need to have a go - you never know!" **Amelia Ruscoe, 2017 ECU 3MT Winner**

**Philippa Vojnovic, 2014 ECU 3MT Winner**, received substantial media attention for her research after the competition.



16  
interviews



29  
news  
items



over  
855,000  
people  
reached

Philippa also presented to a WA Parliamentary Committee. She made fruitful connections within industry and research, and her name is now synonymous with her topic.

# WHY TAKE PART?

## CONNECT

Making the latest thinking and research outcomes accessible to the public is an important part of a researcher's work. Research communication is a vital professional skill that research students are expected to demonstrate at all stages of candidature (Review of Australia's Research Training System 2015, ACOLA).

As a 3MT participant, you will receive specialised training and step-by-step support from the Graduate Research School. This training will help you to focus on the issues and outcomes of your thesis and communicate your research to new audiences.

"I learnt how to make the complex research I do accessible, which makes it easier to talk to my friends and family about what I do."

**Tenielle Porter, 2016 ECU 3MT**

I am a decent public speaker, but there is so much room for improvement. Especially with engaging the audience! Making my talk creative or less scientific was challenging. I think very much like I write, and I need to think differently for speaking."

**Shantha Karthigesu  
2016 ECU 3MT**



# WHO CAN ENTER?

## ASIA-PACIFIC ELIGIBILITY

Active PhD and Professional Doctorate (Research) candidates who have successfully passed their confirmation milestone by the date of their first presentation are eligible to participate in 3MT competitions at all levels. This includes those who have submitted their thesis, but have not received their results.

## ECU ELIGIBILITY

All active PhD and Professional Doctorate (Research) candidates are encouraged to participate. Integrated PhD students and Masters by Research candidates are also welcome to compete up to and including ECU finals, but are not eligible to participate in the Asia-Pacific 3MT® Competition.

## WHAT IF... ?

### **I've only just completed my proposal, and I don't have any data yet.**

As long as you have successfully passed your confirmation milestone by the date of your first presentation, you are eligible to participate.

Competing in the early stages can help to consolidate your project before you start, and gives you a great elevator pitch to interest others in your work! You can enter the 3MT as many times as you like, so starting early can also develop your skills and improve your chances for next year.

Most registrations in 2016-2017 were for students in the Early and Mid stages of candidature and a number of ECU prize winners from recent years have participated more than once.





# WHO CAN ENTER?

## **I'm not studying in the sciences so I don't have enough 'real research' credibility to win.**

The largest number of registrations and participants in 2016-2017 represented the School of Medical and Health Sciences, so there is definitely a lot of competition from the field. That said, ECU prize winners from recent years have represented Business & Law, WAAPA, Education, and Arts & Humanities.

Greater participation from researchers outside of the sciences is absolutely encouraged. You could contribute to improving perceptions of research in your field by increasing awareness of your project.

## **I need to prioritise actually doing my research and writing my thesis. I don't have time for extracurricular activities.**

Absolutely. But as a researcher, there is an expectation that you will develop necessary professional skills in communicating and networking. How much value does your research have if it is not shared?

## **I already know how to present my research. I've presented at conferences and/or taught at university.**

Many research candidates do have experience presenting their research, usually in long-format presentations to a specialist audience. The ECU 3MT competition provides opportunities to develop a very different skill-set, in engaging a general audience in a very short period of time.

88% of 2016-2017 survey respondents said that they would participate in the 3MT - or a similar competition - in the future, and 96% would recommend that other students participate in the 3MT.

# 3MT & JUDGING CRITERIA RULES

## COMPETITION RULES

- A single static PowerPoint slide is permitted.
- No slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are allowed.
- 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 three minutes maximum and competitors exceeding three 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 either movement or speech.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.


# 3MT & JUDGING CRITERIA RULES

## JUDGING CRITERIA

### COMPREHENSION & CONTENT

- Did the presentation provide an understanding of the background to the research question being addressed while explaining terminology and avoiding jargon?
- Did the presentation clearly describe the impact and/or results of the research, including conclusions and outcomes?
- Did the presentation follow a clear and logical sequence?
- Was the thesis topic, research significance, results/impact and outcomes communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience?
- 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?

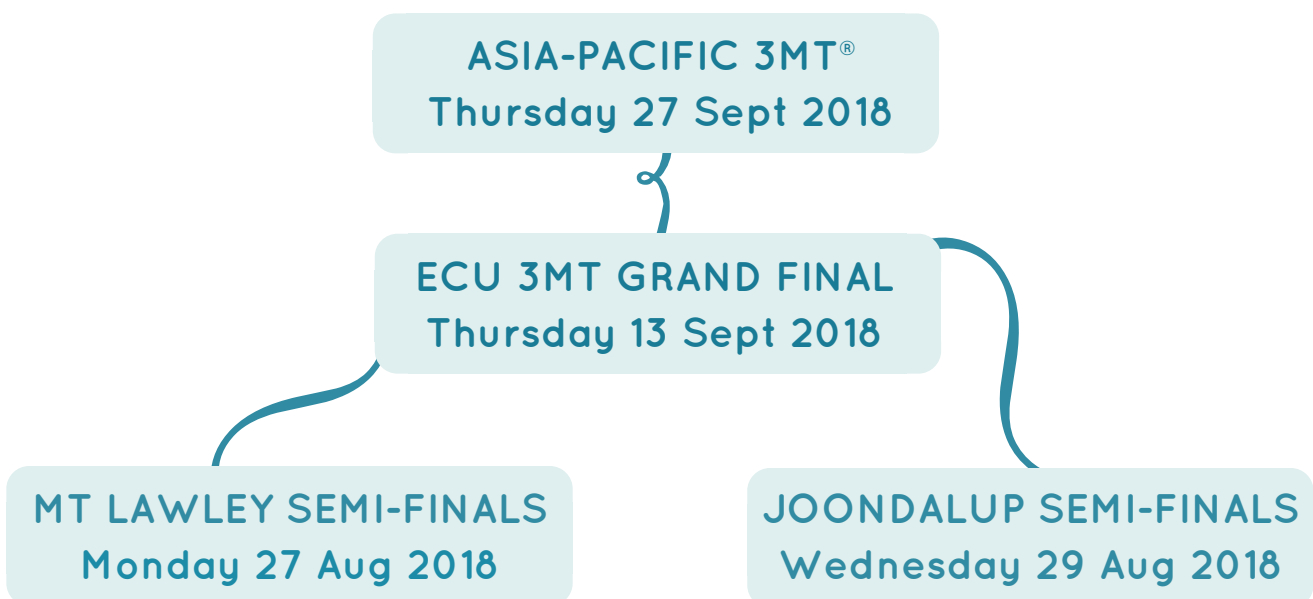
### ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

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

# 2018 ECU 3MT COMPETITION

## COMPETITION STRUCTURE

Schools will be paired for semi-finals in Joondalup and Mount Lawley. Twelve students (three from each semi-final) will compete in the ECU 3MT Grand Final during Research Week (10 - 14 September 2018).



## HOW TO ENTER

Register to enter the 2018 ECU 3MT Competition via [www.ecu.edu.au/research/week/3mt-competition](http://www.ecu.edu.au/research/week/3mt-competition) or click [here](#).

# 2018 ECU 3MT COMPETITION

## EVENT DETAILS

### Semi-Final 1

- WAAPA
- School of Arts & Humanities

### Semi-Final 2

- School of Business & Law
- School of Education

### Semi-Final 3

- School of Engineering
- School of Sciences

### Semi-Final 4

- School of Medical & Health Science
- School of Nursing & Midwifery

### 2018 ECU Grand Final

- Top 12 finalists from Joondalup and Mount Lawley Semi-Finals.

### Mount Lawley Semi-Finals Monday 27 August 2018

ECU Mount Lawley  
ML10.131

Semi-Final 1 at 3.00pm

Semi-Final 2 at 4.00pm

### Joondalup Semi-Finals Wednesday 29 August 2018

ECU Joondalup  
JO19.143

Semi-Final 3 at 3.00pm

Semi-Final 4 at 4.00pm

### Thursday 13 September 2018

ECU Mount Lawley  
ML17.157

4:00pm - 6.00pm

# SUPPORT & TRAINING

## 3MT BOOTCAMP

This year, 3MT training will be delivered over a two-day bootcamp. Three core workshops will be provided to support you in developing transferable presentation skills. Experienced staff will be on hand to help you create a complete 'first draft' of your presentation, which you will have the opportunity to present for feedback on the second day. These workshops will be supported by practice sessions in the lead up to the finals.

# 1

### **Creating brilliant 3MT content**

Saturday 4 August, 10:00am - 12 noon, JO34.545/546

Not sure where to start? Dr Cecily Scutt will help you to identify and communicate the central ideas of your research, imagine your audience, and decide how much detail to include.

# 2

### **Perfecting your 3MT slide**

Saturday 4 August, 1:00pm - 2:00pm, JO34.545/546

Learn how to best utilise your single 3MT slide, and make an impact, with Marziya Mohammedali.

# 3

### **Performing your 3MT**

Sunday 5 August, 10:00am - 12 noon, JO34.545/546

Engage your audience with presentation tips from our very own WAAPA expert, Julia Jarel. Develop performance skills including speaking well, using your body, timing, and overcoming nerves.





# SUPPORT & TRAINING

## 3MT CONTACTS

Felicity Higgs  
3MT Coordinator  
f.higgs@ecu.edu.au

Chaminda Ranasinghe  
Research Week Assistant  
c.ranasinghe@ecu.edu.au

Sharon Smart  
Research Week Officer  
s.smart@ecu.edu.au  
6304 2802

## SCHOOL CONTACTS

### Arts & Humanities, Engineering

Heather Williams (Bunbury & ML)  
h.williams@ecu.edu.au  
6304 6396

### Science, Medical & Health Sciences

Joseph Sim (JO)  
j.sim@ecu.edu.au  
6304 3460

### Business & Law, Education, Nursing & Midwifery, WAAPA

Bev Lurie (JO & ML)  
b.lurie@ecu.edu.au  
6304 5237

## SOAR CENTRE

Support, Opportunities, Advice and Resources for HDR students. Open weekdays during semester, or by appointment during breaks. For more information, visit <http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/research/for-research-students/soar-centre>

Mount Lawley 3.118  
9370 6398

Joondalup 34.350  
6304 5751



2018  
3MT  
Handbook

**EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY  
THREE MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION**

HANDBOOK FOR PARTICIPANTS  
AND SUPERVISORS