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# Three Minute Thesis (3MT<sup>®</sup>)

## Organizers' Resource Guide

Created by  
the Graduate Professional Development Network (GPDN)

*in association with the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS)*

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# Introduction

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Welcome to the Canadian 3MT® Organizers' Resource Guide. We created this document for colleagues across the country facing the daunting – but always rewarding – task of organizing a Three Minute Thesis event at their home campus.

To help planners navigate the process, we solicited advice from experienced 3MT organizers. This is organized in five parts.

- Section 1 offers rich and varied advice on each of the phases of **planning** the event: initial steps, tasks leading up to event day, event-day actions, and post-event day tasks.
- Sections 2 to 5 present other strategies related to your event: securing **partners**, **promoting** your 3MT, administering **prizes**, and supporting/**training** participants.

Follow the links in the [Table of Contents](#) below to instantly access the advice that interests you.



As you engage with the document, you may identify gaps or oversights, or find yourself with questions that the document does not yet address. You may have your own ideas and experiences to share. If so, reach out to us! We designed this guide as an unpublished, "living" document so it can accommodate additions and revisions. We will be sure to consider yours for an upcoming edition.

We look forward to the conversation, which – we hope – will provide opportunities for learning and skill development, and help us create a shared mission as 3MT organizers and advocates across Canada.

Happy planning!

- Colette, Rob and Charity

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## Section 1. Planning the Event

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### 1. Tasks to complete well before event day

#### **Determining the scope of the final event (format, budget, size, location)**

##### Things to consider

- First, determine the purpose of running an event like the 3MT at your institution. What does this suggest about how to approach format, budget, size and location? What size of event are you comfortable coordinating, given your experience and resources on hand?
- Second, consider the budget. If the funding is not internal, whom could you ask for funds, partnerships, sponsorships?
  - As you set up your budget, consider the following: What can you afford? What can you get free of charge? What do you need to get quotes on? Will we give prizes? What needs to be booked? How much can we spend on promotions?
- Third, set up your task list. Ensure that it clearly outlines what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and who is responsible for getting it done.
- Fourth, consider staffing. How many team members are you going to need in the lead up to and on the day? Where will you get them from (students, staff, community)?

##### Pro tips

- Get input from campus allies. Do you work with a designated member of your university's communications team? Does your institution have a Vice-President Research (or equivalent) and/or an Office of External Relations (or equivalent)? Involve them early in these considerations.
  - Find out early who is on-board to take part in the event. Who are your champions?
- See [Scalability and Partnerships \(below\)](#) for more information.

## Selecting a venue

### Things to consider

- When choosing a venue, think first about the purpose of the event you delineated above. Consider these questions:
  - How do you want the students to feel? What do you want to showcase to the audience?
  - Is this primarily intended as a learning opportunity for students, or as a way to showcase graduate research at your institution, helping with recruitment, increasing visibility on campus, and engaging the broader community?
  - What size of audience do you want or expect to attract to the event?
  - How much money do you have to spend on a venue (if any)?
- Depending on these considerations, you may wish to book a venue either on or off campus.
  - On-campus venues can often be booked through your institution's central room booking and obtained without a fee. However, organizers may then have to wait for clearance by the Registrar's Office (contingent upon classroom booking), which can produce delays and complications.
  - Be prepared, even if booking a free room through your institution, for ancillary costs such as table transport and set-up, garbage and recycling services, and cleaning.
- You might consider having two venues available to you if you are uncertain how much traction the event will get, particularly in the first year.
- Remember that, whether your venue is big or small, you can make the event a research extravaganza!

### Pro tips

- Before booking a venue, it's advisable to visit it and do a dry run through your finals. Factors to consider include:
  - Proximity to a reception area or atrium (if you are including a reception component in the event)

- Accessibility for those with different mobility requirements
- Overall aesthetic appeal, cleanliness, and general character of the space: does it look like a stage for scientific and scholarly innovation?
- Quality of projection system and visibility of screens
- Quality of sound system and ease of use of all A/V components
- Ability to decorate the space with standing banners, balloons, and/or other decorations
- Here are some other logistical questions to think about:
  - What sort of lighting do you need for video production/photography?
  - Is it best to use lapel or hand-held microphones, or a combination?
  - Where will the judges sit? Where will competitors sit? How much space is there for the general audience?
  - Where will the MC host from?
  - Will you erect banners, and if so, which type (pull up, banner, A frame etc)?

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## **Securing audio-visual support**

### Things to consider

- In planning A/V services, consider these things:
  - What will make the event effective and comfortable (that is, easy to see, hear and follow) for those attending live?
  - Do you want to livestream the event for viewers off-campus?
  - Do you want a video record of the event?
- If you want to livestream the event, it's strongly advisable to work closely with your university communications team and AV professionals.
- If you wish to have a video recording of the event, consider what form it should take. A complete recording of the event? A collection of individual videos depicting each student presenter? Both?

- Think about where you can host these after they are produced. A YouTube channel, social media, your website, elsewhere?

### Pro tips

- Note that you may be able to choose between on-campus and off-campus technical providers.
  - On-campus providers, including university or college AV sub-units, may be more cost-effective. Professional video production teams may create slightly higher-quality videos and more seamless/multi-camera livestream productions. Another option is to work with student-run production teams, providing them with valuable experience.
- Regardless of who the provider is, consider what they will need from you.
  - Do they need a running sheet or a list of the order of presentations? This allows them when editing to put the right name to each video.
  - Do they need any graphics to add to the editing to highlight your university's brand?
  - Do they need copies of each of the student's slides, again for editing purposes? Who will do the captioning?

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## Creating an online presence

### Things to consider

- Building a web page, landing, or section on your web site is essential in order to provide participants and other audiences (faculty, staff and community members) with consistent and reliable information.
- Connect with your internal communications associate or webmaster to design the page. Consider including:
  - Event timelines (workshops, feedback sessions, heats, final)
  - Eligibility and judging criteria
  - Participation details
  - Previous 3MT videos as examples
  - Workshop slides and/or other University resources

- Consider designing the page such that “evergreen” content can remain in the same space from year to year, and so that it is easy to change competition-specific information as needed. Be sure to use approved visual identity materials.

### Pro tips

- The workshops and training sessions you offer to 3MT presenters can be recorded and converted into online resources.
- Remember that GPDN partners and other institutions have created open access content to which you can link.
  - Leverage existing resources to minimize duplication of effort.
- Some institutions can provide organizers with short-form or vanity URLs (e.g. [uab.ca/3mt](http://uab.ca/3mt)) to help interested parties access online resources more quickly.
  - In addition, consider creating a QR code linking to the page that you can include on slides, posters and other visual promotions.
- See [Promotion and Communications \(below\)](#) for more information.

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## Recruiting judges

### Things to consider

- Remember that the purpose of the event is to showcase research to a broader audience. Recruit judges who understand this type of delivery.
- Select judges who are in a position to highlight or promote graduate research at your institution, such as:
  - Media professionals, local non-profits, government representatives, angel investors;
  - Prominent alumni and municipal representatives such as local MLAs;
  - Members of outward-facing university boards and units, such as Alumni Council, Senate, and/or the Board of Governors/Trustees;
  - University staff from writing centres, teaching & learning, research offices, IT, career services, libraries, and more.

## Pro tips

- Judges appreciate being included—this can strengthen university partnerships.
- Be cautious in how you recruit and brief faculty judges. Some may view 3MT as "dumbing down" research instead of making it more accessible.
  - In addition, take care to avoid conflicts of interest when participants and judges hail from the same program.
- Involving diverse judges boosts visibility for graduate studies across campus.

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## Coordinating preliminary/semi-final rounds

### Things to consider

- Consider both faculty-run selection events and campus-wide preliminary rounds.
- Encourage faculties and departments to organize their own heats to ensure broad participation across disciplines.
- If you are hosting campus-wide preliminary or semi-final rounds, start by determining the number of rounds based on registration.
  - In each round, mix/intersperse presenters from different disciplines to prevent similar topics from being presented back-to-back.
- There are a number of ways to determine which presenter(s) in each preliminary round advance to the finals. Consider the options that are best for you:
  - A fixed number of the top presenters selected by judges? A People's Choice winner (or, if that entrant is among the judges' top choices, another highly rated speaker)? A wildcard entry decided by your office?
  - If you are hosting a number of heats or preliminary rounds, will you reserve the right to choose more finalists from one day than another?
- It's also important to consider questions of diversity, which may influence how you use wildcard choices and balance admission to the finals.

- Try to ensure that a variety of disciplines are represented in the final.
- Be sensitive to and mindful of other forms of diversity.

#### Pro tips

- Presenting a 3MT can be nerve-wracking. During earlier rounds, encourage students to focus on delivering their presentation rather than fixating on timing.
  - Remind them that a strong 3MT usually lasts between 2:50 and 3:00; balancing information with clarity and conciseness is more important than racing to beat a buzzer.
  - You may wish to reinforce this point by allowing some flexibility at the finals (allowing, rather than disqualifying, slightly longer talks, while warning students that judges are unlikely to reward talks that run past 3:03).

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## Planning additional elements of the preliminary and final rounds

#### Things to consider

- As soon as possible, you should develop a promotional plan. This may involve:
  - Creating posters, website updates, social media kit, media/advancement outreach;
  - Identifying a photographer and writers for the event coverage (in house, University Relations, or external).
  - See [Promotion and Communications \(below\)](#) for more information.
- Determine a prize structure for your competition.
  - Will your prizes be monetary or non-monetary?
  - Confirm whether the award will be processed through HR (e.g., payroll) or via an alternative honorarium or award payment.
  - Explore external sponsorship/donor options.
- Plan for effective hosting.

- Who do you want to be master of ceremonies/host for the heats, and for the final event?
- Do you want a media personality? Do you want one of your Associate Deans? Do you want to do it yourself? For the final, you may want a profile person to help promote the event. If so, reach out early.

## 2. Tasks to complete prior to event day

### **Arranging for People's Choice voting**

#### Things to consider

- Decide who is eligible to vote: in-person attendees only, or in-person and online participants (if the event is streamed or videos are posted post-hoc).
  - Decide on the voting method.
    - You may opt for paper ballots or online voting (e.g., using a QR code). The online option allows for (1) more efficient computation, (2) the collection of demographic/voter information, and (3) a more expanded vote including livestream or online viewers; see below.
    - Choose a voting format. Voters may be invited to select just one favourite, or to rank their top choices.
    - Determine how voters will be collected and counted. As mentioned earlier, online voting is faster and easier to calculate compared to paper ballots.
    - Use software that restricts voting to one per person/account.
    - Consider the pros and cons of running People's Choice voting *after* the event to increase the engagement via website/YouTube videos.
  - If using online voting, test the system in advance to avoid technical issues.
    - Use secure survey software that limits voters to one vote per VPN or unique IP address.
    - Gather insights about your voters by including optional demographic questions (e.g., student, faculty, family member, undergraduate, government official, entrepreneur).

#### Pro tips

- Consider the pros and cons of running People's Choice voting *after* the event to increase the engagement via website/YouTube videos.
  - Delaying People's Choice results can generate post-event engagement.
  - Conversely, a People's Choice winner at the event can enhance excitement and (depending on results) increase diversity on the winners' podium.

## Coordinating invitations and special guests

### Things to consider

- Start the invitation process early. Presidents/principals, provosts, and dignitaries have busy schedules; book your date early and send a “hold the date” email.
- If you want them to attend and/or speak, coordinate with their assistant and follow any specific requirements.
- Make a list of high-value attendees, and create a VIP list.
- Special guest invitations are best sent through your Graduate Dean’s Assistant, while general invites can be promoted via posters, social media, websites, and newsletters.
- Encourage faculty participation by emailing graduate programs and faculty to invite them to support student researchers.

### Pro tip

- If your Principal/President is attending, consider timing your event to fit their availability—this increases the likelihood of securing their participation.

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## Creating an event program and voting sheets

### Things to consider

- Your event program may take the form of a one-pager or a booklet; the people’s choice between them may depend on event size.
  - *One pager*: Include participant names, program/department, degree, supervisor, presentation topic (in order), judges’ names/roles, and acknowledgments (e.g., prize donors).
  - *Booklet*: Add photos, a message from the graduate dean/president, sponsor acknowledgments, and more.
- Decide whether you’ll produce the program in-house or use a commercial printer (costly for small runs but can enhance professionalism).

- If you produce a booklet in-house, remember to budget time for folding and assembly.

#### Pro tip

- Make digital and print versions of the program available. Digital versions are budget-friendly and easy to update.

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## **Gathering and producing slide decks, video and web assets**

#### Things to consider

- As you take steps to finalize your digital and visual design, consider the following:
  - *Slides*: Use a pre-designed slide deck template (e.g., from UofQ) and personalize it.
    - Request slides early (PowerPoint, 16:9 format) but expect last-minute updates—import them just before the event.
    - Confirm slide versions upon arrival to ensure presenters have their latest files.
  - *Website content*: Gather participant/judge bios, event countdown, live stream links, and post-event videos.
    - Plan website/social media stories for before, during, and after the event.  
Assign a writer.
  - *Photos/videography*: Ensure participants/judges sign photo/video releases and post a notice for the audience. Work with videographers early. Define what to record, file formats, captions, and deadlines.

#### Pro tip

- Create a checklist to track content collection and approvals so nothing gets missed.

## Tackling other event logistics

### Things to consider

- Consider how you want to handle *audience refreshments*.
  - Plan for a refreshment break to enhance the pacing of the event and/or to provide activities during judges' deliberation.
  - Post-event networking allows for participants to connect with judges and the audience.
  - If you are hosting a catered break, contact prospective caterers early to compare prices, which may vary widely. Look for opportunities to save money by selecting cost-effective items; maintain an RSVP list so you can provide a realistic estimate to caterers and avoid overpaying.
  - *Pro tip:* Even a small snack table can encourage engagement!
- Consider how best to handle *prizes*.
  - Seek low-cost or free prizes (swag, bookstore items, etc.).
  - List full retail value in your budget for future reference.
  - *Pro tip:* Sponsor-donated prizes help build partnerships—reach out early!
- Make things clear for your *volunteers*.
  - Define roles & shifts early.
  - Consider a stipend or event T-shirts if budget allows.
  - *Pro tip:* A pre-event volunteer briefing ensures smooth coordination on the day.
- Work to ensure *accessibility and inclusivity*.
  - Book sign language interpreters if needed. Ensure the budget covers this.
  - Identify other accessibility needs (e.g., seating, captions, venue accessibility).
  - *Pro tip:* Send an accessibility survey with registration to anticipate needs.

- Prepare an effective *script* and/or minute-by-minute guide.
  - Create a detailed script for the MC (ask GPDN colleagues for samples and ideas).
  - Prepare a production version of the script (with slide transitions/graphics) for A/V support (ask GPDN colleagues for samples).
  - *Pro tip:* A backup MC ensures you're covered in case of last-minute changes.

### 3. Event-day tasks

#### **Coordinating speakers and special guests**

##### Things to consider

- Share event details (timing, location) early so guests can prepare.
- Provide parking info and passes if applicable.
- Assign a point of contact to greet VIPs (e.g., an associate dean for the principal/dean/president).
- Clarify speaker topics to avoid repetition. You may wish to share an excerpt of the MC script to help them visualize other elements of the presentation
- Ensure special guests meet participants, take photos, and provide media quotes.
- Send guests an event overview beforehand so they know what to expect.
- Don't forget the MC—ensure they meet key guests and review the schedules/running sheet.

##### Pro tips

- A personalized welcome email with key details (e.g., schedule, contact info, parking) helps speakers and registrants feel prepared and valued.
- You may also wish to provide judges with a short briefing note explaining their role and outlining judging criteria (see sample).

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#### **Conducting the event**

##### Things to consider

- Develop a detailed running sheet and share it with volunteers, AV staff, and the MC.
- Confirm all materials (slide decks, timers, name tags, judging sheets) are ready in advance.
- Set up equipment and have volunteers in place at least 30 minutes before doors open.

- Ensure participants and judges arrive early for briefings and any last-minute preparations.
- Assign a team member to assist VIPs and/or media representatives and provide event insights.
- Follow the schedule but remain flexible for unexpected changes.
- Decide in advance whether to allow online participation and plan accordingly.

#### Pro tips

- A pre-event rehearsal, including AV checks and a brief run-through with key speakers, helps ensure a smooth and professional experience.
  - Ensure your participants arrive on time (minimum 30 minutes in advance) so that you can review logistics, such as the use of microphones and slide advancers.
  - Give each presenter a chance to practise their talk. Try to replicate the event flow as closely as possible, including speaker order and method of introduction, to help each person plan for the experience.
- When possible, it's helpful to encourage participants to practise their talks alone in the presentation space, before and/or after the rehearsal, to increase their confidence and familiarity with the room.

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## Judging Facilitation

#### Things to consider

- Ensure judges arrive early, are guided to a separate room to leave their belongings safely, receive their judging packages (prepped score sheets, rubric, blank paper, pen, etc.), and receive a thorough briefing before the event begins.
- A diverse judging panel means not all judges will share the same background or expertise.
- Providing a 10-15 minute briefing is a great way to get everyone on the same page and highlight the main points of the 3MT competition.
- Because presentations move quickly, a simpler score sheet works best. Judges may either score each participant on a sliding scale or more holistically.

- Encourage judges to write a few notes for feedback to share with each student after the event, ensuring judges' names remain anonymous.

### Pro tips

- Examples of key points to highlight during the initial judging brief:
  - Did the student explain *why* their research matters? Does the presentation showcase the significance and impact of their work? This competition emphasizes research advocacy.
  - Is their research question clearly stated? Does the audience understand *what* the student is investigating and the background context?
  - Did the student clearly describe *how* they conduct/ed their research—their role, approach, and methods—in a way that is understandable to a non-specialist audience?
  - Were the conclusions, outcomes, or potential implications of the research clearly communicated? Does the presentation answer again “*Why does this matter?*”
  - Is the presentation meeting the audience where they are? Does it tell a compelling story that maintains engagement?
  - This is an inclusive competition open to Master’s and PhD students, data conclusions are not always critical since students may be at different stages. They should still demonstrate potential and realistic outcomes.
  - Be receptive to all research types, from climate science to literature reviews. Every research contribution matters.
  - Reflect on your own experience: Were you engaged for the full three minutes? If so, why?
- Following the presentations, lead judges back to the briefing room and give them time to organize their sheets and notes.

- To keep the event moving smoothly, judging deliberation times should be kept to a minimum (20-25 mins).
- Encourage judges to rank their top three to five (3-5) presenters.
- Write each judge's rankings on a whiteboard or chalkboard, circling any repeat names.
- Focus on names that appear most often in judges' top rankings, this helps identify the top presenters and winners.
- Allow time for each judge to explain their selections and why—especially if they chose someone not commonly ranked by others.

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## Celebrating winners and participants

### Things to consider

- Acknowledge all participants—they've worked hard to craft their talks. Capture individual and group photos before, during, and after the event, and present each one with a certificate of participation.
- Ensure the photographer is ready when winners (top 2-3, People's Choice) are announced. Consider using a large ceremonial cheque or framed certificate for first place and include judges and leadership in photos.
- Help media connect with students for quotes and promotional content.
- Send a press release and coordinate with University Relations for broader coverage.
- Post results on your website immediately—have a draft ready in advance.
- Celebrate with refreshments, a cake, or even a sit-down dinner if budget allows.

### Pro tips

- Great photos and social media posts amplify the event's impact—share widely and tag relevant groups!
- After the event, ask all participants, judges, friends and family to join you in some light refreshments.

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## Other event-day tasks

### Things to consider

- Pack up efficiently. If everyone pitches in, it won't take long, allowing volunteers to join in the post-event refreshments.
- If possible, store equipment and materials in a nearby room for easy collection the next day.

### Pro tips

- A clear post-event checklist ensures nothing gets left behind and makes cleanup smoother!
- Consider sharing one-time decorative features (balloons, floral arrangements, etc.) with participants to keep as souvenirs. This reduces clutter, makes tear-down easier, and gives them something celebratory to take home.

## 4. After event day

### **Following up with participants, winners and special guests**

#### Things to consider

- Send thank-you emails to special guests, judges, the MC, volunteers, and contracted services.
- Email participants to acknowledge their efforts and let them know when to expect a copy of their video/photos.
- Provide next steps for those advancing to another 3MT event, such as the Regionals.
- If media follow-ups are needed, inform the winners about interview dates/times.

#### Pro tip

- A well-timed thank-you note fosters goodwill and encourages future involvement.

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### **Coordinating the winner's travel to the regional/national showcase**

#### Things to consider

- Confirm the winner's availability and ensure funding covers travel, meals, and accommodation.
- If the winner can't attend, offer the opportunity to the runner-up.
- Book travel and accommodation, and notify event coordinators of your representative's details.
- Consider allowing the student to bring a friend or family member, especially for long trips. *Friends and family members often will pay for themselves for any additional costs (e.g. flights, meals, train/ferry, etc.)*

#### Pro tip

- Planning travel early ensures smoother logistics and reduces last-minute stress.

## Other post-event tasks

### Things to consider

- Promote the next event through media and encourage community participation, whether in-person or via live stream.
- Offer additional coaching to the winner to refine their presentation.
- Update the website with results, photos, and captioned videos.
- Maintain historical records for future reference.

### Pro tip

- A strong post-event media push keeps momentum going and builds excitement for future competitions.
- When you save your records to the cloud, create a file structure that allows you to store documents in folders clearly linked to key segments of event planning (e.g. early planning and admin, communications and promotion, preliminary round adjudication, etc.).
  - Creating a parallel set of files for each subsequent year allows quick and convenient access to templates, images and documents you created in previous years.
  - This saves time – why reinvent the wheel? – and serves as a kind of backup checklist, reminding you of key steps in the process.

## Section 2. Scalability and Partnerships

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### Securing community and campus partners

#### Things to consider

- Explore partnerships with local councils, nonprofits, or community organizations for funding, venue support, promotion, or judging.
- Engage university units like MarComm, the Research Office, and Advancement for promotion and to highlight graduate research.
- Involve faculty communications teams early to help craft compelling stories.
- Collaborate with the student union and/or graduate students' association to recruit volunteers.

#### Pro tip

- Consider hosting additional public showcase events at senior centres, undergraduate research conferences, Rotary Clubs, etc. This would provide students with more opportunities to hone their 3MT skills while expanding the reach and impact of both the competition and their research.

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### Identifying champions

#### Things to consider

- Encourage faculty supervisors, deans, and alumni to promote the event as a key professional development opportunity.
- Leverage past participants as ambassadors to share their experiences.
- Engage student leaders to rally their peers.
- Reach out to community groups and local media for event promotion and potential judging roles.
- Consider inviting the Mayor as a judge to gain city-wide visibility.

## Pro tip

- Champions with influence can drive enthusiasm and participation.

## Other considerations

- Decide whether to offer an online format. While it increases accessibility, it requires additional planning and tech support.

## Section 3. Promotion and Communications

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### Things to consider

- Tailor your efforts to your resources, focusing on delivering the right message at the right time.
- Always include a call to action in your posters (e.g., *Register now!* or *Support your peers* with date, time, and venue). Distribute via PDFs and, if possible, print copies to display around campus (e.g., grad union spaces, international student areas).
- Create a social media kit with templates and a timeline for sharing content. Ensure the message is clear and share it with programs and University Relations.
- Set up a webpage to showcase event details, participants, judges, and how to watch (including live streaming and results).
- Engage with media to generate interest. Pitch the event as a chance to learn about research at your university, highlighting the 3-minute format.
- Live stream the event, then post the recorded videos (with captions) on your website or YouTube.

### Pro tip

- Promote the live stream well in advance to build anticipation and excitement.

## Section 4. Prizes

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### Things to consider

- Be mindful of institutional preferences, as some may not see it as a competition. Select 1-2 students to represent your institution, if needed.
- Offer small prizes like bookstore items, grad swag, or donations for preliminary rounds. Some institutions don't offer prizes at this stage.
- For the final round, offer larger prizes such as monetary awards (e.g., \$1000 for first place). Consider a People's Choice award with items like a backpack or \$250.
- Give all participants a certificate of participation to recognize their involvement.

### Pro tip

- Clarify expectations with your institution early to ensure smooth coordination and avoid confusion.

## Section 5. Student Support and Training

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### Things to consider

- There are many resources available for students to learn how to create a 3MT talk. If you lack the resources to run workshops, reach out to colleagues for samples and leverage these existing materials.
- Viewing past 3MT videos can help students understand how to structure their talks. Consider curating a selection of these videos on your website, showcasing examples from various fields to inspire students.
- Feedback sessions are invaluable for students. Allow them to practice and receive peer feedback on presentation style, message clarity, and slide design. This helps them refine their delivery and boosts confidence.
- Offer one-on-one meetings with students, especially after the first round. While you shouldn't share judges' results, you can provide constructive feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.
- Remind students to have fun and embrace the learning experience. While it's a competition, it's primarily an opportunity to develop new skills and connect with other graduate researchers.
- Be mindful of students with disabilities and accommodate their needs (e.g., extra time, sign language interpreters, voice modulators). Discuss their requirements before the event to ensure they can fully participate.
- Some departments may hold their own mini-events. Offer your support by hosting a workshop or volunteering as a judge to show that your office is committed to student success.

### Pro tip

- Be sure to provide ample support and feedback throughout the process, helping students focus on growth and skill-building rather than just the competition outcome.
- Suggest that students use their 3MT experience as a basis for participating in other knowledge mobilization activities and competitions (e.g. [SSHRC Storytellers](#), [Spotlight](#), [Falling Walls Lab](#), etc.). "You've done your 3MT; now what?"

## Appendix. The Value of 3MT: Testimonials

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### Testimonial from a judge

“My involvement with 3MT has been one of the most surprising and gratifying things in my life. Each year, I eagerly look forward to this event, and were I not a judge, I would be in attendance anyway. In fact, I cannot understand why this is not an annual CBC special event. This is exactly the sort of thing we should be collectively celebrating. After a few hours of exposure to these bright, beautiful and inquisitive minds, I am left edified and with a deep and comforting sense that we are all going to be ok. Our future is in good hands.”

- Rob Baker, The Tragically Hip

### Testimonials from students

“Do it, you have nothing to lose and many things to gain. Even if you don’t make it far, you will gain many skills that as graduate students we lack and we highly need. It will make you a more confident communicator and presenter.”

- El Zahraa, PhD candidate, Kinesiology & Health Studies, Queen’s University

“Participating in the 3MT competition was an incredibly rewarding experience. It challenged me to step back and view my research in a broader context, which renewed my motivation and clarified my goals. Explaining complex ideas to a non-scientific audience helped me to distill my work to its most essential components—a skill that has proven invaluable in talks, writing, and everyday conversations. The confidence and communication techniques I developed through 3MT continue to benefit me professionally and personally. Overall, the experience I gained through the competition has been truly priceless..”

- Atia Amin, PhD Candidate, Molecular Genetics, McGill University |  
Winner of the 2022 Canadian National 3MT Showcase  
and the 2022 North American 3MT Showcase

“Hearing about 3MT’s blend of rigor and entertainment sparked great excitement in me. It felt like the perfect opportunity to share my research more widely, and I’m so glad I signed up. Throughout the competition, I was overwhelmed by the warmth and support of our tightly knit University of Regina community. I’ll never forget being

featured in our 50th Anniversary video or hearing both kids and adults say how clearly and enthusiastically I explained my work.

"To anyone considering 3MT: it's fiercely rewarding. Beyond the impressive prizes, you'll discover hidden strengths, gain confidence in public speaking, and learn to distill complex ideas in simple and compelling ways. Yes, it requires an investment of time, but the returns in networking, exposure, and unforgettable experiences (like touring St. Louis's iconic Arch) are absolutely worth it. 3MT helped me uncover talents I didn't know I had and continues to inspire me to bridge academic research with the broader world."

- Michael Mensah, PhD Student, Biology, University of Regina |  
Winner of the 2024 Canadian National 3MT Showcase

"Participating in the 3MT competition was a transformative experience for me. It pushed me to distill my complex research into a concise and engaging presentation. The process not only improved my public speaking skills but also helped me gain a deeper understanding of my own work. The feedback from the judges and the audience was incredibly valuable, and it was inspiring to see the diverse range of research being conducted by my peers. I highly recommend the 3MT to any graduate student looking to enhance their communication skills and share their research with a broader audience."

"The 3MT competition was a fantastic opportunity to showcase my research in a unique and challenging format. Condensing years of work into a three-minute presentation was no easy task, but it taught me how to communicate my ideas clearly and effectively. The support and camaraderie among the participants were amazing, and I learned so much from watching others present their work. Winning the People's Choice Award was a highlight of my academic journey, and I am grateful for the experience. The 3MT is a must for any graduate student."

- USask 3MT Finalists

#### Testimonial from an organizer

"It may seem that there is lots to consider and juggle to run this type of event, but keep in mind why we are doing this - promoting research, promoting our students, giving them skills to succeed. When you see the growth in our students' confidence and communication skills, you will realize how awesome and rewarding it is."

- Colette Steer, Manager, Graduate Experience, Queen's University

