

# University of Manchester Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Participants Guide

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### 3MT Drafting

#### **Write for your audience**

- Avoid jargon and academic language.
- Explain concepts and people important to your research - you may know all about Professor Smith's theories but your audience may not.
- Highlight the outcomes of your research, and the desired outcome.
- Imagine that you are explaining your research to a close friend or fellow student from another field.
- Convey your excitement and enthusiasm for your subject.

#### **Tell a story**

- You may like to present your 3MT as a narrative, with a beginning, middle and end.
- It's not easy to condense your research into three minutes, so you may find it easier to break your presentation down into smaller sections.
- Try writing an opener to catch the attention of the audience, then highlight your different points, and finally have a summary to restate the importance of your work.

#### **Have a clear outcome in mind**

- Know what you want your audience to take away from your presentation.
- Try to leave the audience with an understanding of what you're doing, why it is important, and what you hope to achieve.

#### **What not to do**

- Do not write your presentation like an academic paper.
- Try to use shorter words, shorter sentences and shorter paragraphs.
- You can use humour, however be careful not to devalue your presentation.

#### **Revise**

- Proof your 3MT presentation by reading it aloud, to yourself and to an audience of friends and family.
  - Ask for feedback.
  - Ask your audience if your presentation clearly highlights what your research is about and why it is important.
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## 3MT Slide

Before you start work on your slide, you should take the following rules into account:

- One single static PowerPoint slide is permitted;
- No slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description are permitted;
- Your slide is to be presented from the beginning of your oration; and
- No additional electronic media (e.g. sound and video files) are permitted.

If you need to reference a picture, image or any kind of content in your slide, you can do it on the title page or at the bottom of the slide in a small box.

### Suggestions

You may like to consider some of the following suggestions.

- Less is more: text and complicated graphics can distract your audience – you don't want them to read your slide instead of listening to your 3MT.
  - Personal touches: personal touches can allow your audience to understand the impact of your research.
  - Creativity drives interest: do not rely on your slide to convey your message – it should simply complement your oration.
  - Work your message: think about how your slide might be able to assist with the format and delivery of your presentation – is there a metaphor that helps explain your research?
  - An engaging visual presentation can make or break any oration, so make sure your slide is legible, clear and concise.
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## 3MT Presentation

### Practice, practice, practice

- Feeling nervous before you present is natural, and a little nervousness can even be beneficial to your overall speech. Nonetheless, it is important to practice so you can present with confidence and clarity. Practicing will also help you gauge the timing of your 3MT so that you keep within the time limit.

### 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.

### Body language

- Stand straight and confidently.
- Hold your head up and make eye contact.
- Never turn your back to the audience.

- Practise 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.
- Do not make the common mistakes of rolling back and forth on your heels, pacing for no reason or playing with your hair as these habits are distracting for the audience.

### **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.

### **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.
- View presentations by [previous 3MT finalists](#).

### **Dress**

- There is no dress code. It is important that you feel comfortable so you can focus on your presentation.
- Do not wear a costume of any kind as this is against the rules (as is the use of props).

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## **3MT Recording Guidance**

Recording your presentation can be done using a camera and or handheld video recorder however most phones allow you to record through the camera function and most computers have recording ability (via camera or webcam) using inbuilt programs such as:

### **Windows**

- Camera App
- Microsoft Photos - Video editing feature

### **Macintosh**

- QuickTime
- iMovie

Online programs which you might like to consider include:

- Zoom - see [how to record yourself via Zoom](#).

### **Filming at home**

There are three factors to consider when selecting your location to ensure you are producing the best video possible: light, sound and background.

## **Light**

Dark environments impact the overall quality of your video because cameras do not perform well in dim lighting. Ensuring you are well lit guarantees the camera and therefore, your audience, can see you clearly. Look for a room in your home that has lots of natural light. If you are using light from a window, ensure you are facing towards the window so light falls on you directly.

Any additional lighting you can introduce will further improve the quality of your video. Look around your home for desk lamps, torches etc. Watch [this tutorial](#) for more information.

## **Sound**

When filming video at home, ensure you choose a very quiet environment where you have as much control over the sound as possible. For example, choose a small room where you have the ability to close all doors and windows. Make sure any noisy electronics in the room such as fans, air conditioners, computers, phones and possibly even your fridge are temporarily turned off. These are much louder in video than you may think and are very distracting to your audience!

Be aware of any audible interruptions you don't have control over such as aeroplanes, lawns mowers and cars. Consider filming during a quiet time of day such as early in the morning when there are likely to be less interruptions. If there are audio interruptions during your recording, do not continue. Wait it out and try again at a later point!

## **Background**

Aim for a clean, plain wall as your background, completely free of visual distractions from the waist up where you will be framing your shot.

## **Setup**

Whether you're filming on a phone, tablet or web cam, there are further factors to consider when actually setting up to film your video:

### **Support**

Ensure phones and tablets have enough storage available, are in aeroplane mode, fully charged and either connected to a tripod or, placed on a stable surface (think creatively - Blu Tack to wall). Your friend cannot offer to be a tripod by holding your phone or iPad for you: Your video needs to be completely stable as movement is very distracting.

### **Camera orientation**

Ensure phones and tablets are turned onto their side so the video is filmed horizontally not vertically. This is to ensure the finished video is the correct shape and size when uploaded to Vimeo.

### **Eyeline**

To ensure your eye line is correct, the tripod or surface where your recording device is placed, should be high enough so that the camera lens is in line with your eye level. Try to avoid the camera lens having to either point up or down towards you.

## Framing - Two Options

1. Set up your shot so you are in the centre of the frame, not being cut off at the top and so you can be seen from the waist up. Ensure there is equal space and just the blank wall background on either side of you.
2. Set up your shot so you are to the left of the centre of the frame without being cut off at the top and so you can be seen from the waist up. The right side of the video frame should be just the blank wall background, as this is where your slide will be edited in.

## Focus

Before you start recording, ensure your device is able to auto focus on you and isn't focusing on anything else around you instead. Be sure to watch your recording back and ensure you remain in the focus the entire duration.

## Proximity

Ensure your recording device isn't too far away from you. The microphone on the device should be as close to you as possible to achieve both the desired framing and to ensure the audio is as clear as possible.

## Test recording

Complete a short recording of a portion of your talk. Ensure you are speaking at the volume you intend to use for your presentation. Review the test recording to ensure all of the above elements are complete and working.

## Presentation tip

Be aware of your eye movement. Maintain eye contact with the camera lens as though they were a person in the audience watching you present live.

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## 3MT Submission

Once you are happy with your video please use <https://wetransfer.com/> (or similar) to email your video file and slide (either PDF or JPG) to [mdc@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:mdc@manchester.ac.uk).

The slide and video should be sent as individual files\*.

In the message please include your full name and the title of your 3MT Presentation.

The deadline for submission is **April 14<sup>th</sup> 2021**.

*\*Your video files are for judging purposes only will not be put online. We may ask permission to put the 3 winning videos on our website once announced.*