



3MT® Ontario 2026 Competition

Handbook for Participating Universities

Hosted by



Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Brock University

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), Australia. Much of the information in this handbook is drawn from UQ material. We thank UQ for making their 3MT® resources available to universities around the world.

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Event Overview

What is 3MT®?

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a competition for graduate students in which participants present their research and its wider impact in three minutes or less to a panel of non-specialist judges. The challenge is to make the presentation of complex research and its implications engaging and accessible, without oversimplifying. The ability to clearly explain complex research to a generalist audience is a key skill useful in many career paths graduate students pursue post-graduation.

The 3MT® competition was initially 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 in 2010. UBC ran the first Canadian competition in 2011, and there are now 3MT® events across the country. Queen's University hosted the inaugural Ontario 3MT® in 2013. The location of the annual provincial competition is determined at an Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) meeting. Brock University will be hosting the 2026 Ontario 3MT® competition. The top two presenters from the Ontario 3MT® will go on to represent the province at the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) 3MT®, which is the Canadian national competition, taking place during the annual CAGS Conference.

The Ontario 3MT® brings together students from across the province and provides them a unique opportunity to learn about each other's research activities, develop professional skills, and contribute to a province-wide research culture.

2026 Key Deadlines

March 1, 2026: Each participating university must register their interest by completing the [university registration form](#)

April 5, 2026: Participants and university representatives who plan to attend must register their details using the [attendee registration form](#)

Guests of presenters may register their details using the [guest registration form](#).

Competitor Details provided by 3MT® coordinator

- Name (title/first/last)
- Degree
- School/Faculty/Institute/ Supervisor
- Thesis Title
- 3MT® Presentation Title
- 3MT® PowerPoint Slide (16:9 ratio)
- Headshot of participant

May 1, 2026: participants must submit their final slide and presentation title by email to sheaton@brocku.ca

Registration

Registration is open to all Ontario universities. The 2026 registration fee is \$500 per university. Each university will receive an invoice after the event via email.

Participant Prizes

1 st place	\$1,000
2 nd place	\$500
3 rd place	\$250
Participants' Choice	\$100

NB: Presenters vote to determine Participant's Choice)

Contact

If you have any queries about the 2026 Ontario 3MT®, please get in touch with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Brock University, at sheaton@brocku.ca.

2026 Ontario Competition Rules

Eligibility

Eligibility requirements vary by stage of the competition. Institutions and organizers must verify eligibility at each level; that is, success in a local competition does not guarantee eligibility to advance to the regional or national stages. To advance beyond the local level, competitors should meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Participants should be registered in a thesis-based Master's or PhD program at a CAGS member institution (eligible for Tri-Council funding) and in good standing.
- Course-based, professional, visiting, exchange, postdoctoral or undergraduate participants are not eligible to advance beyond the local level. Exceptions to this can be discussed with regional organizers/Dean's and CAGS representatives.
- Competitors who have defended their thesis but have not yet convoked at the time of the local competition remain eligible to advance.
- Competitors must be able to participate in person. Digital submissions will only be considered if there is an academic accommodation.
- International students are eligible but should ensure their ability to travel during the dates of the regional and national competitions. Of note, they should remain able to travel if advancing to the North American showcase (usually takes place in the United States).
- Presentations must be delivered in English at the 3MT regional competitions.
- Presentations in French are accepted during the National CAGS showcase. French-speaking competitors wishing to advance to the North American showcase must be able to deliver their presentation in English.
- All regional and national participants must agree to be photographed and recorded, and consent to have their presentation made publicly accessible.

Confidentiality and Intellectual Property considerations:

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:

- Judges, reviewers, staff, and the audience are not asked to sign non-disclosure agreements. 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(s) before entering the 3MT®.
- All public sessions of the 3MT®, including but not limited to oral presentations, are open to the public. Any of these public sessions may be broadcast to interested persons through a variety of media, including the internet.
- Discussing or presenting any data or other information in the public 3MT® sessions means that the data or information are public (i.e., in the public domain). If your research

includes confidential or culturally sensitive material, you must discuss your entry with your supervisor(s) and any other relevant parties before entering the 3MT®.

The host university may take photographs, video and/or audio recordings, or make transcripts of the presentations, material prepared for use in presentation at the 3MT®, and any 3MT® related events for promotional purposes and to support knowledge mobilization.

Judging Criteria

The following categories are guidelines for judging the presentations of each competitor. The weighting of each category is to be determined by the host university. The decision of the judging panel is final.

Communication

- Did the graduate student use non-verbal communication (i.e. voice modulation, body language) effectively?
- Did the graduate student use language that was jargon-free, or if jargon was used, was it accompanied with an explanation to make terms understandable to a non-expert audience?
- Did the presentation follow a logical sequence?
- Did the graduate student use their three minutes effectively? Did they elaborate too long on a particular aspect? Did the presentation feel rushed or incomplete?

Comprehension

- Did the presentation help you to understand the methodology behind the scholarly research being undertaken?
- Did the graduate student clearly outline the nature and purpose of their research?
- Did the graduate student clearly indicate the fascinating or compelling aspects of their research?
- Did the graduate student provide an understanding of the background and significance to the research question being addressed?
- Did the graduate student clearly describe the impact and/or results of the research, including any conclusions and outcomes, or further steps to be taken?

Engagement

- Was the presentation engaging? Did the graduate student use creative language and storytelling to capture and maintain the audience's attention?
- Did the graduate student convey enthusiasm for their work?
- Was the graduate student careful not to trivialise or generalise their research?
- Did the PowerPoint slide create intrigue without dividing your attention - was it clear, legible, and concise?

- Did the presentation inspire you to want to know more?

Presentation Requirements

Student Presentations

- All presentations are limited to three (3) minutes; however, exceptions may be made for accessibility accommodations.
- Presentations should be spoken word and regular prose. Poems, slam poetry, raps, songs, or performances are not permitted. Minor elements of the above may be incorporated should it be the topic of research.
- Minor creative or cultural elements (e.g., gesture, posture, attire, or props) may be integrated when intrinsic to the research, provided they do not distract from clarity or accessibility.
- The presentation should be based on the participant's own research or research-creation work and should be understandable to a general audience.
- Presenters must use language appropriate for a non-specialist audience, avoiding disciplinary jargon or unexplained acronyms.
- Physical interactions with the audience are not permitted.
- Speaker notes on stage are not allowed; however, exceptions may be made for accessibility accommodations.
- The presentation commences when the competitor begins speaking or moving.
- If a graduate student's research includes confidential or culturally sensitive material, CAGS advises that competition organizers discuss the entry with the graduate student and their supervisor.

Presentation Slide

- A single, static slide is permitted for each presenter.
- The slide should be displayed from the beginning of the presentation and remain visible until its conclusion.
- The slide must not include transitions, animations, embedded videos, or audio.
- The slide design and content are left to the discretion of the competitor, provided all images and content used conform to Canadian copyright law.
- The slides should be created using the same aspect ratio, typically 16:9.
- The use of a slide is recommended but may be optional for local competitions, depending on institutional format or the creative nature of the presentation.
- The hosting university should provide an introductory slide consisting of the graduate student's name, graduate degree and program, supervisor, and 3MT® title.
- No additional electronic media is permitted during the presentation, including but not limited to sound and audio files emitted from the stage or audience.

Props and Costumes

To preserve the focus on oral communication of the competition, the following guidelines apply to the use of props or presentation materials. Limited accommodations may be considered when related to accessibility, alternative research formats, or culturally grounded approaches to research communication:

- Physical objects, costumes, instruments or laboratory equipment are not permitted.
- Any cultural attire worn for reasons of identity or tradition is permitted.
- All presentation materials must comply with the host institution's health and safety regulations and should not pose a risk to the presenter or audience.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

- Presenters must ensure that the information shared is suitable for public dissemination and does not breach confidentiality, contractual, or cultural protocols.
- Participants presenting work involving Indigenous knowledge, community-based research, or culturally sensitive materials are encouraged to consult with their supervisor or community partners prior to participation.
- Institutions should provide guidance for ethical storytelling and representation of research participants or communities.

Responsibilities of the Host Institution

The host university will:

- Make all arrangements for the post-competition lunch for all competitors and their university representative (1 competitor + 1 university representative), judges, and VIPs (to be determined by the host university). Additional lunch tickets may be purchased if space is available. The cost (\$60/per person) will be added to the invoice after the event.
- Provide participating universities with a list of nearby hotels/B&Bs See Appendix A.
- Coordinate media coverage both locally and regionally.
- Select and liaise with all judges.
- Provide promotional materials for participating universities to use.
- Update the competition manual to assist future host universities.
- Create a host website for the Ontario competition and provide participating institutions with the URL for that website.
- Run the competition in accordance with published guidelines and post videos with closed captioning of all presentations on the host website.

Responsibilities of Participating Institutions

Participating institutions will:

- Cover accommodation, travel, and meal expenses for their own competitors and university representative(s) (except for the post-event lunch described above).
- Attend the post-event lunch.
- Fully register for the competition by the deadline date.
- Provide the host institution with media contact information for their region.
- Provide the host institution with all required participant information by the deadline.
- Provide the host institution with their university's logo and the URL for their main internal competition web page.
- Include a link to the Ontario 3MT® website on their internal web pages.
- Ensure that all competitors meet the eligibility requirements of the competition.
- Ensure that all competitors understand and agree to abide by the rules of the competition.
- Ensure that all competitors understand that it is their responsibility to seek advice should they have concerns about Intellectual Property and confidentiality.
- Ensure that all competitors agree to be photographed, video-recorded, audio-recorded and/or transcribed, and that all competitors permit all of these to be presented in the public domain (e.g., in print, in audio, in video, on university websites, and on other social media sites).
- Agree that the presentations at the Ontario 3MT® competition may be live-streamed during the competition.
- Agree that the videos from participating university's internal 3MT® competition winners will not be posted until after the provincial competition.

Frequently Asked Questions: Students

What proportion of my degree must have a research component for me to be eligible?

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

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?

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.

Can I present at the Ontario 3MT® remotely?

The Ontario 3MT® takes place in person. There is no remote participation option.

Does my slide have to be in PowerPoint?

Yes, all slides must be in PowerPoint with an aspect ratio of 16:9.

What happens if my presentation is longer than 3 minutes?

A 30-second warning will be provided to competitors (a coloured card held up by the timekeeper). If a presenter continues to speak beyond three minutes, they will be disqualified.

Is there a dress code?

There is no dress code. Please wear whatever is comfortable for you. However, no costumes or props are permitted (including hats, masks, etc.).

Will I be able to see a timer at the Ontario 3MT®?

Yes, a countdown timer will be visible to you.

Can I win more than one category?

Yes, it is possible to place first, second, or third and win the Participants' Choice Award.

What happens if I cannot attend the Ontario 3MT®?

The winner of each university final is expected to represent their university at the Ontario competition. If the winner is unable to attend the final, the runner-up will be invited to the Ontario competition.

Appendix A: Accommodation

Brock has reserved room blocks at a local hotel and through our on-campus residences. Please book your accommodation as early as possible to ensure availability.

Brock University Residences:

Special Rate: Private \$89.00 CAD per night

Shared \$59.00 CAD per night

Booking Link: [Reservation Link](#)

Instructions on how to register for bedrooms:

1. Go to the online booking site
2. Click "Book Overnight Accommodation."
3. From the drop-down, select "Yes - I am attending a Conference or Event."
4. From the next drop-down, select "No - Register" if you have not previously booked accommodations online at Brock
5. Complete the required fields to build your profile. Click "Save and Continue"
6. On the "Accommodations Selector" page, enter the Group Promotion Code: 3MT2026. *If this code is not entered, the system will not allow bedroom reservations, as all other accommodation areas are unavailable over the conference dates*
7. Select the preferred accommodation style (private vs. shared)
 - a) Private, not sharing a washroom with the neighbouring bedroom
 - b) Shared, meaning sharing a washroom with the neighbouring bedroom
8. Read the information, click "Continue."
9. Select the dates that you wish to stay overnight, click "Select" under "Earp Residence."
10. Select a bedroom option and click "Add to Cart."
11. Follow the prompts to complete payment with a credit card. After, the registrant can indicate a preference to share with a specific guest who is reserving separately via the comments section.
12. Successful registrants will receive a confirmation email once the process is complete. If an email is not received, the reservation is not confirmed, and the process is incomplete.

Four Points by Sheraton St. Catharines Niagara Suites

Special Rate: \$169.00 CAD per night

Booking Link: [Reservation-Link](#)

Appendix B: Venue Information

Ontario 3MT®

Who: Ontario 3MT participants, university representatives, and the public.

When: Wednesday, May 6. Doors open at 9:30 am, event begins at 10:00 am

Where: David S. Howes Theatre, University Rd. W, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2P 3K8 | [Map](#)

Post-Event Lunch

Who: Ontario 3MT participants, University representatives, and invited guests only.

When: Wednesday, May 6, 12:00 pm

Where: Pond Inlet, University Rd. E, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2P 3K8 | [Map](#)

Directions and Parking:

There is paid [parking on campus](#); Lot D is the closest parking lot to the 3MT venue. You are encouraged to use the [HONK app](#).