Imagine you are a scholar who has been asked to describe your research in an setting that includes the lay public – a press conference, a board meeting for a foundation or non-profit, or a class of aspiring students. Or you are a scholar applying for a grant or fellowship and you must capture the relevance and importance of your research in one short, compelling abstract for non-specialists. You are expected to explain not only what your scholarship is about but why the public should care about your findings in a way that resonates with a lay audience. You have only three minutes to get your message across and one static slide. This is the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.

This competition began at the University of Queensland in Australia (http://threeminutethesis.org/) in 2008 as a way to “cultivate students’ academic, presentation, and research communication skills.. (by) explaining their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.” Universities across the world are now participating in this unique event.

The Graduate School will host Loyola’s third annual competition on Thursday, February 15 at 4pm in the Information Commons, 4th floor (Lake Shore Campus). This event is open to the public and The Graduate School strongly encourages all faculty, students, staff, and community members to attend and support the competitors. The winner of Loyola’s 3MT will be invited to compete in the regional Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) 3MT event on April 6th at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI.

Who participates in the 3MT?

Any graduate student conducting research for a thesis or dissertation can compete. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to participate. Previous finalists and winners have come from a variety of disciplines including the humanities, health sciences, and social sciences. Since all graduate students must develop the skills to communicate their research to diverse audiences, this competition is suitable for everyone.

How can you enter the 3MT competition?

Each department can have only one competitor. Departments must host their own internal competition to determine which graduate student will compete in the university-wide competition. Contact your GPD or Department Chair if you are interested in entering in your department’s competition. Even if you are the only one from your department competing, the GPD and Dept Chair must nominate the student for the university-wide competition.

- It is up to each department to decide how to select their representative.
- Competitors are allowed one static slide and 3 minutes to present their research. See the 3MT website from the University of Queensland for more details on competition and judging requirements.
- Once a single winner/representative has been selected, the GPD and Chair nominate that student for the university-wide competition no later than one week before the date of the event.

Can I see some examples of 3MT competitions?

Sure! Check out the Vimeo page for 3MT for videos of competitions from around the world.