



UNIVERSIDADE
DE LISBOA

INITIATIVE

3-MINUTE THESIS LISBOA

PREPARE, STEP BY STEP

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For questions related to 3-Minute Thesis ULisboa, please contact:
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3-Minute Thesis ULISBOA

An 80,000-word PhD thesis would take 9 hours to present. Here, your time limit is... three minutes. Share your research with us!

What is it?

3-Minute Thesis (3MT®) is an academic competition that aims to cultivate the academic, presentation and research communication skills of PhD students, inspired by a format developed by the University of Queensland (Australia).

Its first edition took place in 2008 and, since then, its popularity has increased, currently taking place in more than 900 universities in 80 countries.

Universidade de Lisboa promotes for the first time this competition in 2022/23, challenging its PhD students to explain the importance and impact of their research to a non-specialist audience, in three minutes, using a single slide.

Who can apply

All PhD students enrolled in the 3rd and 4th years of a Doctoral Program at the Universidade de Lisboa in the current academic year are eligible for this competition.

How will it work

The competition is organized in **two Phases**:

Phase 1: candidates submit a three-minute video accompanied by a single slide. The jury will select the finalists, based on criteria of understanding and clarity of scientific content, public engagement and communication.

Phase 2: finalists participate in science communication and management training and in the 3-Minute Thesis ULisboa final competition, in which the winner is selected.

You are eligible and want to participate?

Check all the information in [WEBSITE](#)

FINE-TUNE YOUR PRESENTATION

Even the world's best public speakers prepare before important presentations! Here are a few suggestions to help you in writing your presentation, creating your slide, and practicing:

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 3-Minute Thesis as a narrative, with a beginning, middle and end.
- It is 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 – it might be a rhetoric question, a surprising statistic or a quote from a renown personality in your field, for example. 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 are doing, why it is important, and what you hope to achieve.

Revise

- Proof your 3-Minute Thesis 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.

NOW, PREPARE YOUR SLIDE

Before you start working 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 allowed.
- Your slide is to be presented from the beginning of your oration.
- No additional electronic media (e.g., sound and video files) are permitted.

You may like to consider some of the following suggestions.

Less is more.

Text and complicated graphics can distract your audience – you do not 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.



YOUR BODY TALKS, TOO

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 3-Minute Thesis 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.
- Practice 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 3-Minute Thesis presentation to be delivered from a single spot on stage. The goal is for you to fine-tune your communication style while being yourself in the best possible version, to really convey your message.
- Try not to roll back and forth on your heels, pace for no reason or play with your hair – these habits are distracting for the audience.

Record yourself

- We know it is difficult but try to record your rehearsals and watch your presentation, to understand the pace of your speech – where you pause, speak too quickly or speak just right – and how you are using body language.
- 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 3-Minute Thesis finalists.

Dress

- There is no dress code. However, if you are unsure of how to dress you may like to dress for a job interview or an important meeting. It is important that you feel comfortable so you can focus on your presentation.
- If you are presenting on a stage that has a wooden floor, be aware of the noise your footwear might make.
- Do not wear a costume of any kind as this is against the rules (as is the use of props).

RECORDING YOUR VIDEO

On Phase 1 you will be required to submit a video of your presentation, so here are a few guidelines. 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. 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 do not 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.

Whether you are 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. 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.

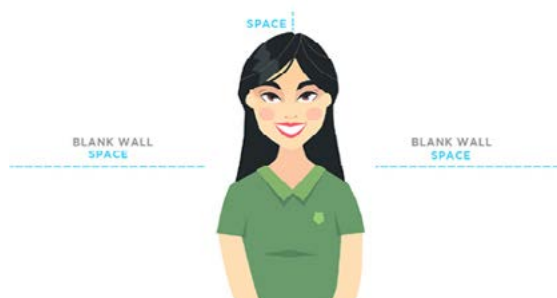
Camera orientation

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

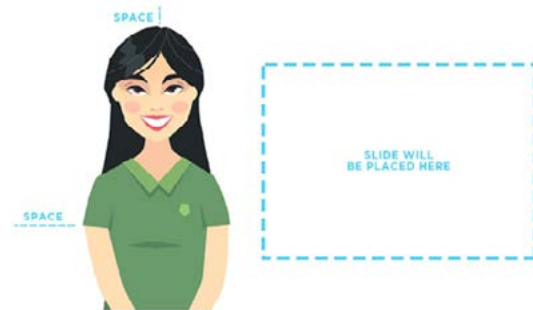
To ensure your eye line is correct, the tripod or surface where your recording device is placed should be high enough so that the camera lens is in line with your eye level. Try to avoid the camera lens having to either point up or down towards you.

Framing - Two Options



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.



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 can auto focus on you and is not focusing on anything else around you instead. Be sure to review your recording and ensure you remain in focus for the duration of your presentation.

Proximity

Ensure your recording device is not 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.



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