

CPSA Prize for the Graduate Student Three-Minute Thesis Competition

Terms of Reference

CPSA Programme Committee:	the Committee
CPSA Prize for the Graduate Student Three-Minute Thesis Competition:	the prize
Teaching Section Head:	the section head
Chair of the competition:	the chair

1. The Committee will award the prize every year.
2. The Three-Minute Thesis (3MT®) is an academic research communication competition developed by the University of Queensland (UQ), Australia. Its principles and main guidelines will be applied to the prize competition.
3. In the implementation of these Terms of Reference, the Committee shall act through and be represented by the section head and the chair; the latter will be appointed by the section head.
4. Eligible contestants are MA or PhD students who have made substantial progress on their masters' research paper or thesis research and analysis. Term papers or other graduate work are not eligible.
5. A presentation/proposal that has been submitted to the prize cannot be submitted to the same prize in a subsequent year.
6. Instructions regarding the submission of a proposal are included in the CPSA Annual Call for Proposals.
7. Contestants must be members of the CPSA in the year the presentation is considered for the prize. The membership fee must be received at the [CPSA Secretariat](#) by the early registration deadline, which usually falls on March 31.
8. The Committee shall be responsible for the administration and granting of the prize. This responsibility includes ensuring the regular granting of the prize, the integrity of the adjudication process, and publicity surrounding the granting of the prize.

9. The selection of the recipient of the prize will be the responsibility of the Committee. In making the award, the Committee will seek the recommendation of the **Prize Jury** that will preside over the competition's Finals (see **ANNEX I**).
10. The jury will:
 - be appointed by the chair in consultation with the section head;
 - consist of three non-expert members (e.g., politicians, journalists, elected officials, senior public officials). At least two jury members should be able to read and converse in French;
 - be responsible for nominating the recipient of the prize;
 - should feel free to recommend that no prize be given if in their view no presentation worthy of the prize is made.
11. The preliminary round(s) or "heat(s)" of the competition will be presided over by a **Preliminary Jury** composed of two political scientists appointed by the chair in consultation with the section head. At least one jury member should be able to read and converse in French.
12. Jury members can sit on the jury for up to two consecutive years.
13. See **ANNEX I** for contestants' instructions and details about the competition during the Annual Conference. See **ANNEX II** for the judging criteria document.
14. A jury member mentioned in sections 9 and 11 shall not judge a presentation if he/she/they stands to gain monetarily from the outcome of the decision or is in any way related to any contestants.
15. At any time during the jury deliberations, any member of the **Preliminary Jury** mentioned in section 11 who considers that he, she or they has a conflict of interest (for example, the jury member is the contestant's thesis supervisor or is judging the work of a student in his or her department, a co-author or a former student) shall remove himself, herself or themselves from the jury, and a substitute shall be appointed by the chair in consultation with the section head, if possible.
16. The awards will be organized and coordinated by the chair in consultation with the section head, with the competition's sponsors and academic presses. The winner and up to two runners up will receive a grant for an amount of money to be determined. The winner and the runners up may receive gift cards, which are typically donated by academic presses.
17. The winner and runners up will be announced during the annual conference.
18. The prizes will be sent after the conference by the [CPSA Secretariat](#).

19. The Committee, in consultation with the CPSA Secretariat, will oversee the implementation of the prize process.

ANNEX I - INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE PRESENTATION AND RULES TO APPLY DURING THE COMPETITION

1. Contestants:

- must email to the [CPSA Conference Team](#) by **February 27, 2026** the following information:
 - i. a picture (headshot);
 - ii. the URL of academic/professional (e.g., University, LinkedIn) page;
 - iii. Twitter-X/Bluesky/Instagram handles;
 - iv. a message confirming attendance to the information session / dress rehearsal below;**
 - v. a message indicating if they authorize the CPSA to video-tape their presentations during the "Finals," and to post them on the CPSA Web site after the conference.
- are encouraged to attend a 40-minute information session on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 @ 12:30pm ET via Zoom;
- are invited to attend a 60-minute dress rehearsal on Tuesday, June 2 @ 12pm ET in-person at the University of Ottawa (**room TBD**);
- are expected to prepare a three-minute presentation for the juries -contestants exceeding the three-minute **maximum** will be disqualified;
- should note that they will present their graduate research in three minutes to a jury composed of non-experts (Finals). Therefore, presentations should be

accessible, engaging and adhere to rules of plain language (click [HERE](#) to see winning and runners up presentations in previous competitions);

- are allowed to use one static PowerPoint slide to augment their verbal presentations (no slide transitions, animations or 'movement' of any description)
-no additional electronic media (e.g., sound or video files) are permitted or props are permitted;
 - must be available to present in the preliminary heats (usually "Heat 1" and "Heat 2," to be held during the first two days of the conference) as well as the final competition (the "Finals," to be held on the last day of the conference).
2. The maximum number of preliminary heats will be four, with the number of contestants in each heat and the number of preliminary juries determined by the number of submissions at the discretion of the chair and section head. Usually, four contestants participate in the "Finals." The top scores across the preliminary heats will advance to the "Finals". There is the possibility that the number of contestants who advance from each preliminary heat will not be equal. The contestants who received the top scores per preliminary heats will be informed via email or Twitter after all preliminary heats are complete.
 3. The **Preliminary Jury** (or juries) for the preliminary heats, and the **Prize Jury** for the Finals, will use a judging criteria document that follows the principles of the official 3MT™ of the University of Queensland to assess the presentations. The document will be provided to contestants before the competition.
 4. The judging criteria document:
 - assesses two areas: a) Comprehension and Content, and b) Engagement and Communication Style;
 - is composed of twelve questions graded on a scale of 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
 5. The **Preliminary Jury** (or juries) will have a brief period after presentations are delivered to complete their judging criteria document.
 6. One jury member is responsible for the initial tabulation of the scores, and a second jury member confirms the tabulation is correct.
 7. The contestants of the preliminary heats with the highest scores will participate in the Finals. In the unlikely event of a tie, the chair will cast the deciding vote.
 8. The **Prize Jury** for the Finals:
 - will not deliberate on the presentations;

- will have a brief period after presentations are delivered to complete their judging criteria document.
9. One jury member is responsible for the initial tabulation of the scores, and a second jury member confirms the tabulation is correct.
10. The contestant(s) with the highest score will win the competition.
11. In the unlikely event of a tie, the prize will be divided equally.
12. The chair must email:
- the name of the winner and runners-up to the [CPSA Conference Team](#) as soon as the competition is over;
 - a 100-word citation to be posted as the "Excerpt from jury report" on the CPSA Website (click [HERE](#) to see previous prize citations) one week after the conference at the latest.

ANNEX II - JUDGING CRITERIA DOCUMENT

NAME OF THE CONTESTANT _____

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION _____

CURRENT OR LAST DEGREE OF PRESENTER

DATE _____

TO BE GRADED ON A SCALE OF:

1 (STRONGLY DISAGREE)

2 (DISAGREE)

3 (NEUTRAL)

4 (AGREE)

5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

COMPREHENSION AND CONTENT	
The presentation provides an understanding of the background and significance to which the research question is addressed, while explaining terminology and avoiding jargon.	/5
The presentation clearly describes the impact and/or results of the research, including conclusions and outcomes.	/5
The presentation follows a clear and logical sequence.	/5
The thesis topic, research significance, results/impact and outcomes are communicated in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.	/5
The presenter spends adequate time on each element of their presentation and the presentation was not rushed.	/5
TOTAL - COMPREHENSION AND CONTENT	/25
ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION	
The oration makes a potential audience want to know more.	/5
The presenter was careful not to trivialise or generalise their research.	/5
The presenter conveys enthusiasm for their research.	/5
The presenter captures and maintains a potential audience's attention.	/5
The speaker has sufficient stage presence, eye contact and vocal range; maintains a steady pace, and has a confident stance.	/5
The PowerPoint slide enhances the presentation; it was clear, legible, and concise	/5
TOTAL - ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION	/30
TOTAL - PRESENTATION	/55