

Three Minute Thesis at Universidade de Lisboa

GUIDELINES

Considering that the new knowledge produced in universities is essential for solving major societal challenges, and that the dialogue between science and society is especially important in this capacity building process, the Universidade de Lisboa organizes the competition Three Minute Thesis at Universidade de Lisboa, which aims to stimulate the science communication skills of doctoral students. Through this initiative, PhD students are challenged to explain the importance and impact of their research to a non-specialized audience, while promoting scientific culture and fostering interdisciplinarity and mutual knowledge at the Universidade de Lisboa.

Article 1st Object

These guidelines defines the ways in which the academic competition Three Minute Thesis at Universidade de Lisboa is organized, , hereinafter referred to as competition, inspired by a format developed and patented by the University of Queensland, Australia (3MT®).

Article 2nd Objective

1. The academic competition Three Minute Thesis at Universidade de Lisboa is intended to develop unique skills of PhD students, such as communicating complex ideas in a simple and creative way to diverse audiences, in just three minutes and using a single slide.
2. The competition aims to:
 - a) Stimulate the participants' science communication skills and develop the ability to present their research in a clear and effective way and in an appropriate language for a non-specialized audience;
 - b) Promote scientific culture and interdisciplinarity, by giving participants the opportunity to meet, learn about and discuss their research;
 - c) Strengthen external relations, through the participation of the winners in competitions with other universities, representing Universidade de Lisboa;
 - d) Foster dialogue between science and society, continuing the Strategic Plan of the Universidade de Lisboa.

Article 3rd Eligibility and Applications

1. All PhD students enrolled in the 3rd year or above of a Doctoral Study Cycle at the Universidade de Lisboa are eligible for this competition.
2. Applications are submitted under the terms of the corresponding public notice.
3. Candidates cannot apply for more than one scientific area in the same edition of the competition.

4. The winners of an edition cannot compete again in another edition of the competition.

Article 4th
Scientific Areas of the Awards

Applications for the competition are submitted in the following areas:

- a) Social Sciences;
- b) Arts and Humanities;
- c) Medical and Health Sciences;
- d) Engineering and Technologies;
- e) Natural Sciences.

Article 5th
Competition

1. Participation in the competition involves making an oral communication of a maximum duration of three minutes on the importance and impact of the candidate's research, using a single slide, and the recording of which cannot be edited in any way.
2. The competition comprises two phases:
 - a) Phase 1 (selection): candidates submit a vídeo of their communication with a maximum duration of three minutes, accompanied by a single slide. The jury selects twelve finalists, based on the criteria defined in Article 8.
 - b) Phase 2 (final): the finalists participate in the final competition, with an oral presentation before the jury and the public, in which the winner is selected, as well as the second and third places.

Article 6th
Communication

1. Oral communications in the competition, in Phases 1 and 2, are made in Portuguese or English.
2. The topic of the communications presented by each competitor is the same in both Phases, but the style or structure of the communication can change from one Phase to the next.
3. The communications at contest, whether in vídeo format in Phase 1 or in-person in Phase 2, follow the following rules:
 - a) Maximum duration of three minutes. Communications exceeding three minutes are disqualified. Time is considered to start counting when the candidate starts the presentation through movement or speech, until the moment he/she ends it.
 - b) Only one single static slide is allowed – without transitions, animations or any kind of movement. In Phase 1, this slide is not included or integrated in the video, but submitted separately in pdf format. The title of the slide must mention Universidade de Lisboa, the name of the participant, the title of the communication and the scientific area. In Phase 2, the slide is displayed from the beginning of the candidate's communication.
 - c) Props, such as objects, costumes, laser pointers, musical instruments, laboratory equipment, animated backgrounds, or any other type of scenario, are not allowed.

- d) Video and áudio cannot suffer any kind of editing, such as cuts, halts, or any kind of effects or others. The video has to be recorded from a single take and the camera must be static.
 - e) Communications are in spoken speech (no songs, rap or poems).
 - f) In Phase 2, communications take place from the stage.
 - g) Electronic devices are not allowed during video recording (sound and video documents).
4. Videos that do not comply with the criteria defined in the preceding paragraph will not be considered.
 5. The sent videos are used solely and exclusively for the purposes of the present competition.

Article 7th

Jury

1. The selection of Phase 1 finalists is made by a jury appointed for this purpose by the Rector, for each of the scientific areas in contest, and:
 - a) The jury is chaired by a Vice-Rector of the Universidade de Lisboa, counting with the presence of a science communicator, a representative of each partner and professors / researchers of the corresponding scientific area;
 - b) The jury deliberates in a meeting, considering the global evaluation of the scientific content and the communication;
 - c) From each meeting is drawn a minute, which contains the date and place of the meeting, the members present, the subjects considered, the deliberations taken and the form and result of the evaluations;
 - d) The jury reserves the right not to select finalists whenever the applications submitted do not comply with the objectives that have presided the institution of the competition or do not comply with the provisions of the Guidelines.
2. The assignment of the awards in Phase 2 is carried out by a jury that brings together the members of the Phase 1 juries, as follows:
 - a) The jury gathers the members of the juries of Phase 1 and follows the same procedures;
 - b) The Jury reserves the right not to award prizes whenever the finalists do not comply with the provisions of the Guidelines.

Article 8th

Evaluation of the Applications

1. The Jury will evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:
 - a) Scientific criteria – Ci
 - Provides a clear context for the research question;
 - Conveys the research strategy and the results obtained;
 - Conveys the conclusions and impact of the research;
 - Uses rigorous language that is suitable for non-specialists.
 - b) Communication criteria – Co
 - Balanced in body language, eye contact, use of available space and voice projection;
 - The slide is an asset;
 - Clear, conveys enthusiasm, arouses curiosity and captures attention;

- Good time management.
2. Each member of the jury responsible for assessing the scientific component will give each candidate a score between 0 and 100.
 3. Each member of the jury responsible for assessing the communication component will give each candidate a score between 0 and 100.
 4. The final mark (Nfinal) for each candidate is determined by the expression:

$$N_{\text{final}} = 0,5 * M_{\text{Ci}} + 0,5 * M_{\text{Co}}$$

where M_{Ci} corresponds to the average of the C_i marks awarded by the members of the jury who assessed the scientific component and M_{Co} corresponds to the average of the C_o marks awarded by the members of the jury who assessed the communication component.

Article 9th

Finalists

1. The twelve finalists are selected between the best evaluated candidates in each scientific area, proportionally, considering the number of candidates in each area, as well as the total number of candidates.
2. It is incumbent upon the Vice-Rector designated to preside over the juries to draw up the list of finalists, which is announced to the candidates.

Article 10th

Prizes

1. Cash prizes are awarded for the following rankings: 1st place - 5.000,00 €; 2nd place - 2.000,00 €; 3rd place - 1.000,00 €.
2. If the jury considers awarding ex aequo prizes, the amounts indicated in the previous number are divided by the number of winners and there cannot be more than two winners in each classification.
3. The finalists and prize winners are also awarded merit recognition diplomas.
4. Candidates are given access to training in science communication.
5. Certificates of participation are awarded to all candidates.

Article 10th

Prize Awarding

Awarding of the prizes takes place in a public ceremony, presided over by the Rector, with the presence of the partners.

Article 11th

Organization

Universidade de Lisboa organizes the competition and sets the application periods and the deadlines for carrying out the necessary procedural acts, which will be disclosed, namely on the website, along with other relevant information.

Article 12th

Advertising and Disclosure

The competition is properly advertised, namely on the Universidade de Lisboa website and other communication channels.

Article 13th
Amendments to the Guidelines

1. The Rector reserves the right to change any provision of the presente Guidelines, whenever he deems it convenient and adequate.
2. Any amendment to these Guidelines is published on the Universidade de Lisboa website.

Lisbon, 29 January 2026

The Rector

Luís Ferreira