

2024 Grad Thesis SLAM

Preparation Series:

What is the Grad Thesis SLAM & How Do I Get Started?

Feb. 15, 2024



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Pronouns: he/him/his



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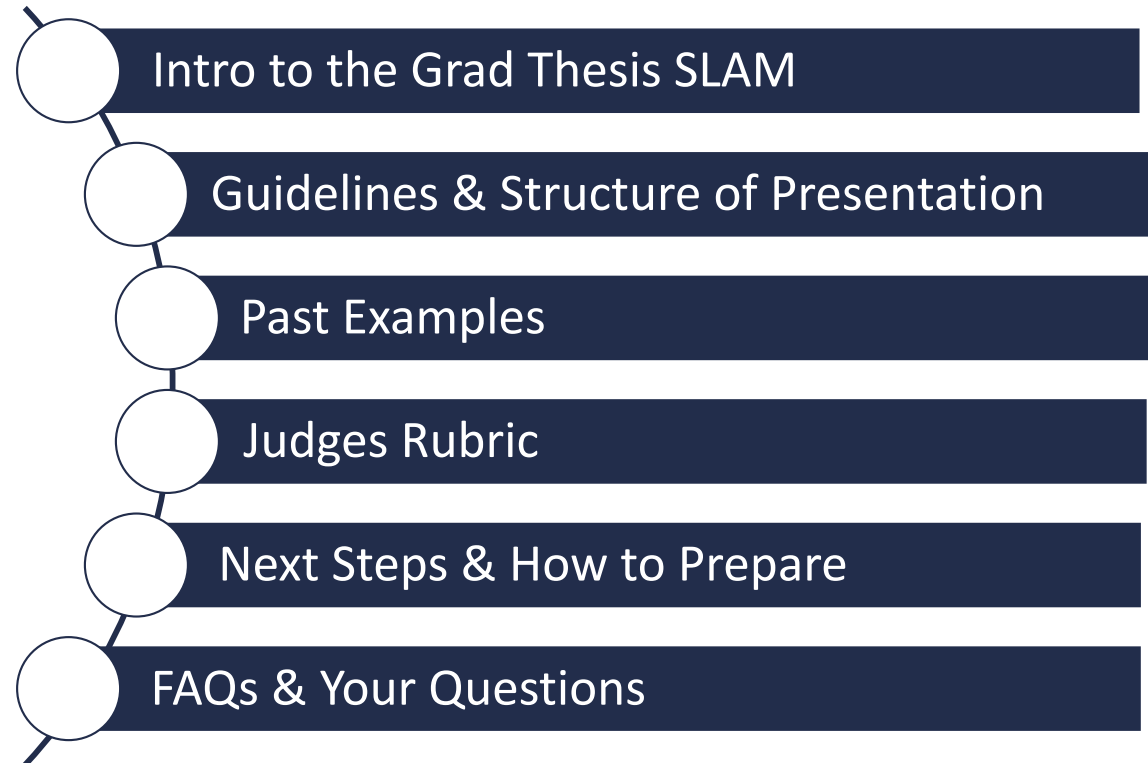
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Session Overview



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A Brief History

- The first competition was held in 2008 at the University of Queensland.
- Envisioned as a *skills development activity* that challenges graduate students to explain their research to a non-specialist audience.
- Today, it has expanded globally, with competitions held at over 900 universities in over 85 countries worldwide.

<https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/>

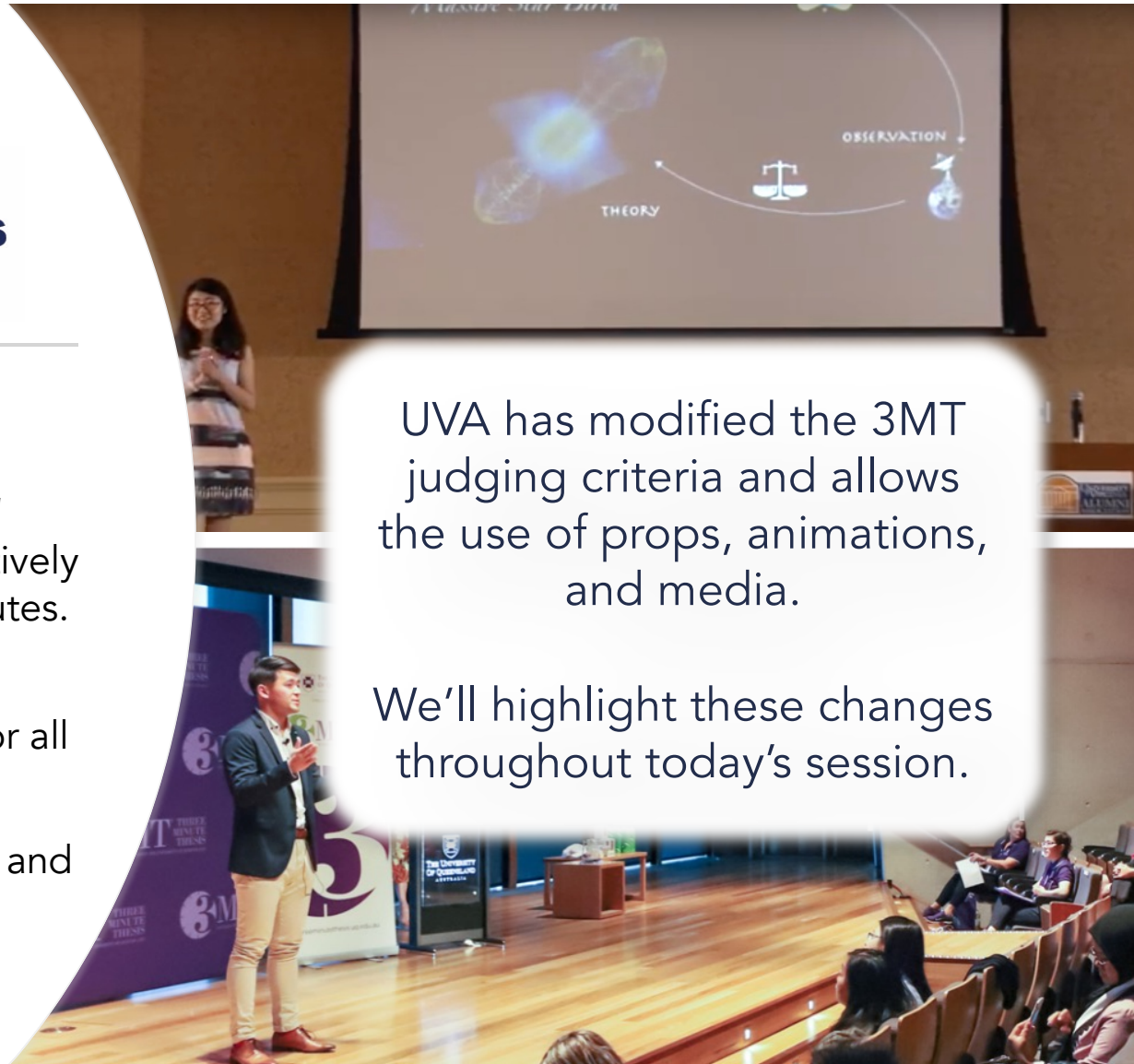


Grad Thesis SLAM

- Provides doctoral students from *all* disciplines an opportunity to effectively explain their research in three minutes.
- It is a modified version of the 3MT competition, to make it inclusive for all disciplines.
- Finalists have a chance to advance and compete in the National 3MT competitions

UVA has modified the 3MT judging criteria and allows the use of props, animations, and media.

We'll highlight these changes throughout today's session.



Why Should I Participate?

What is the value of preparing to give a 3-minute talk?

1. Get practice talking about research to non-specialists (a useful skill in many situations)
2. Learn how to distill your thesis down to what's most important
3. Receive guidance and a chance to practice public speaking, including supportive feedback sessions
4. Meet grad students from other disciplines and learn about different academic norms and research practices.



Cash prizes up to \$1,000, with prizes for all finalists.

Eligibility & Requirements

All current UVA doctoral candidates (or equivalent) who have passed their qualifying exams are eligible to enter the Grad Thesis SLAM competition.

Requirements & Recommendations

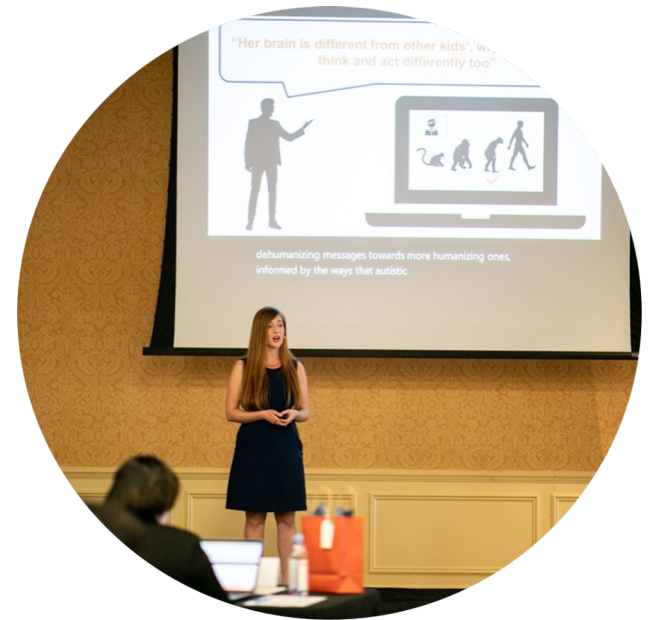
- All interested students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Preparation Series.
- **NEW** - Competitors must do one practice session with Kelly or Sam (group session or one-on-one)
- Preparation Series participants are not required to compete in the Preliminary Competition.
- The Preliminary Competition will take place in person on April 1 - 5
- The Final Competition will take place in person on the afternoon of April 16th

<https://phdplus.virginia.edu/2024-grad-thesis-slam>

Presentation Guidelines

Duration

- Maximum of 3 minutes
 - Competitors exceeding 3 minutes are automatically disqualified.
- Presentations begin when presenter either moves, speaks, or uses media or a prop.
- Judges have final decision on timing and disqualification.



Presentation Guidelines

Slides, Props & Media

- A single PowerPoint slide is permitted, but not absolutely required.
- Animations are allowed but limited to those available in PowerPoint.
- Video and audio are allowed, but **must not exceed 15 seconds**.
- The presenter can use props. However, props should be necessary to explain the research and must be approved in advance by event organizers.
- Each presentation starts with a title slide, which does not count toward your time limit (template provided).
- Note cards are not allowed.





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Past Examples & Highlights

- What strengths did you recognize in the two presentations?
 - How did they hook or engage the audience?
- What aspects of the presentations were memorable?
- What parts were more forgettable?



Competition Timeline

Preparation Series | Thursdays at 3:00 pm

- What is the Grad Thesis SLAM & How Do I Get Started? | Today (60 mins.)
- Engaging Your Audience & Telling a Compelling Story | Feb. 29 (virtual; 90 mins.)
- Slide Design & Presentation Skills | Mar. 14 (virtual; 90 mins.)
- Practice Your Presentation & Receive Peer Feedback | Mar. 21 or 22 (in person; 90 mins.)

Preliminary Rounds | April 1 - 5, times TBA

Grad Thesis SLAM - Final Competition | April 16

<https://phdplus.virginia.edu/2024-grad-thesis-slam>

Preliminary Round

New Cabell Hall
French Conference Room
April 1 - 5
Times TBD



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Final Competition

UVA Alumni Hall

April 16, 2024

~3:30 – 5:30 pm



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Judges Rubric

GOALS	ELEMENTS	CRITERIA
Comprehension & Content	Motivation	
	Intellectual Significance	
	Clarity of Thesis	
	Organization	

Judges Rubric

GOALS	ELEMENTS	CRITERIA
Engagement & Communication	Delivery	
	Appropriateness	
	Accessibility & Visual Clarity	
	Engagement	

The decision of the judges panel is final.

Accessibility Considerations

The closed caption function on PowerPoint will be turned on during the live presentations.

Reminder – Judging Criteria Includes:

- Were all elements accessible to a broad audience?
- Were all graphics, props, and text easy to view and interpret?
- If used, were sound elements clearly audible and video clearly visible?



How to Get Started...



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19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	 29	Mar 1
4	5	6	7	8
Spring Break				
11	12	13	 14	15
18	19	20	 21	 22
25	26	27	28	29
Apr 1	2	3	4	5
Preliminary Competition				
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
	 GTS 			

How to Get Started

Before the next session, ask:

- Why should your audience care about your graduate work?
 - Take a satellite view of your research, how does it connect to others, relate to current events, pop culture, etc.
- What is the Big Picture problem, issue, or unknown aspect you are addressing?
- What is something about your research that is not obvious to someone outside your discipline?




Some Common Mistakes

Engaging Your Audience

- No hook or don't engage the audience
- Too many analogies or ones that are too distant from your research

What to Include

- The and, and, and... (fact, after fact, after fact...)
 - This presentation does not need to summarize your entire dissertation.
 - Waiting until the end to think about your slide
 - Bad props (scale or size) and ones that don't add to the presentation
- 

Some More Common Mistakes

Finding the Sweet Spot

- Unbalanced presentation, with not enough intro or recap
- Too much content and details

Finishing Strong

- Finishing weak or sprinting to the end
- Lack of preparation
- Not seeking feedback (from a general audience)



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I include videos and media?

- Yes. Sounds and video files are permitted but must not exceed 15 seconds of the 3-minute presentation.

Can I use props?

- Props are allowed, but they must be approved in advance of the preliminary round and may not exceed 15 seconds of the 3 minutes.



Frequently Asked Questions

How many slides can I include?

- You can only use one slide, but PowerPoint animations are allowed.

Can I use a Keynote, PDF, or other file types?

- No. Only PowerPoint slides are allowed.



Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if I exceed three minutes?

- Competitors who exceed 3 minutes will be disqualified.
- Judges have the final decision on timing and disqualification.

When do the 3 minutes start?

- You initiate your presentation through movement, speech, or use of media or a prop.





What questions do you have?



Registration Link



Contact us!



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