

Three Minute Thesis Competition
Graduate Research School

Related links

[3MT 2012 - RSVP and event details](#)


Congratulations to all of our 2012 contestants for their wonderful presentations!

1st place: Sumaiya Ahmed, *The waiting game in the movie industry: Timing decisions for DVD release* (School of Marketing, Australian School of Business). [Click here](#) to see the presentation on UNSWTV

Runner-up: Billie Ganendran, *The curious mix of penguins and statistics* (Physical, Environmental & Mathematical Science, UNSW Canberra). [Click here](#) to see the presentation on UNSWTV

People's Choice Prize: Ludmila Khodai, *Forced gender disguise in Afghanistan: Girls passing as boys* (School of Social Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences). [Click here](#) to see the presentation on UNSWTV

ASPIRE Award: Johannes Luetz, *Climate migration* (Institute of Environmental Studies, Arts and Social Sciences). [Click here](#) to see the presentation on UNSWTV

Watch the main coverage [3MT on UNSWTV](#)

See pictures of 3MT on the [GRS facebook](#) page.

2012 3MT Interfaculty Final

The 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) is an academic competition developed by the University of Queensland for PhD and Research Masters candidates. With just three minutes to give a compelling presentation on their thesis topic and its significance, the 3MT competition forces research candidates to consolidate their ideas and crystallise their research discoveries.

UNSW 3MT 2012 Interfaculty Final


The 2012 3MT Interfaculty Final will be held:

25 September
4:30pm to 7:30pm

[Click here for event details](#)

UNSW Prizes 2012 Prizes

- First prize \$3,000 – plus entry into the 2012 Australia and New Zealand competition in Brisbane including, flights and accommodation
- Runner-up prize \$1,500
- People's Choice prize \$1,000
- ASPIRE  prize \$500

ASPIRE  is a UNSW widening participation program that works with school students to support their educational aspirations. This year at 3MT will have some of the school students from this program as VIP guests, and they will be awarding a special ASPIRE Prize for the presentation they enjoy the most.

UNSW 3MT 2012 - Judges

The guest Judges for the 2012 Interfaculty Final:

- Emma Ayres
- Mark Bouris
- Dr Margaret Kiley
- Dr Norman Swan

For more information on 2012 judges, please click [here](#).

UNSW 3MT 2012 - Eligibility, Rules and Judging Criteria

Eligibility

- Candidates who are active in a higher degree research program
- Candidates must be on track for timely completion
- Graduates are not eligible
- Competitors who are eligible at the time of entering the UNSW Interfaculty Final shall remain so for the Australia and New Zealand final

Rules

- 1) A single, static PowerPoint slide is permitted
- 2) No additional electronic media
- 3) No additional props
- 4) Presentations are limited to 3 minutes maximum – competitors exceeding 3 minutes will be disqualified
- 5) The decision of the adjudicating panel is final

Judging

- 1) Communication style: was the thesis topic and its significance communicated in language appropriate to an intelligent but non-specialist audience?
- 2) Comprehension: did the presentation help the audience understand the research?
- 3) Engagement: did the oration make the audience want to know more?

Previous UNSW 3MT Events

[Previous UNSW 3MT Interfaculty Final Winners](#)

[Previous UNSW 3MT Interfaculty Final Judges](#)

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This monthly newsletter is produced by the Graduate Research School to provide research candidates with the latest information on upcoming events, seminars, awards and achievements. If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please email Christina Bacchiella: c.bacchiella@unsw.edu.au



Message from the Dean of Graduate Research

My favourite UNSW event of the year, 3 Minute Thesis, was held on September 25 and it was a magnificent showcase of 22 of our talented researchers. A limited edition T-shirt was presented to all finalists to confirm the sentiment that we love 3MT (see the GRS facebook page for how it looks on one of our finalists Daniel Boland). Again, I congratulate all of the participants on their excellence and wish our selected finalist Sumaiya Ahmed all the best in the Trans-Tasman final at UQ later in October. I would also like to congratulate all of the speakers on the night for their enthusiasm and dedication to their research, which was truly inspiring to all in attendance. UNSW Canberra finalist Billie Ganendran received the second prize for her presentation on *The curious mix of penguins and statistics* and the People's Choice Prize was awarded to Ludmilla Khodai who spoke on *Forced gender disguise in Afghanistan*. We were also fortunate to have with us a group of high school students, part of the ASPIRE program who presented their own ASPIRE prize to Johannes Luetz who spoke about *Climate migration*. And, yet another piece of exciting news from our Canberra campus was that Sheila Naomi Rouli Tobing won the *Young Scientist Award* at the 9th European Fluid Mechanics Conference held in Rome from September 9 to

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attendance at the conference was supported by the PRSS scheme.

Professor Laura Poole-Warren



3 Minute Thesis - The Final Countdown

The 3 Minute Thesis Competition was held on the 25th of September and was a huge success. It was fascinating to hear first-hand accounts from PhD candidates at the forefront of research across so many disciplines. More than 350 people in the audience (including 20 year 11 students from the ASPIRE program) were left inspired, intrigued and hanging for more by the compelling presentations. To quote one student- "I thought it was going to be really boring but in the end I found it really interesting and I learnt a lot!" A well-deserved congratulations goes to all of the 22 finalists who left the high-profile panel of judges, Emma Ayres, Mark Bouris, Dr Margaret Kiley and Dr Norman Swan, with an extremely difficult decision to make.

The results:

1st place: Sumaiya Ahmed, *The waiting game in the movie industry: Timing decisions for DVD release* (School of Marketing, Australian School of Business). <http://youtu.be/SI8XOGubJyY?hd=1>

Runner-up: Billie Ganendran, *The curious mix of penguins and statistics* (Physical, Environmental & Mathematical Science, UNSW Canberra). <http://youtu.be/6yS--V2CBBs?hd=1>

People's Choice Prize: Ludmilla Khodai, *Forced gender disguise in Afghanistan: Girls passing as boys* (School of Social Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences). <http://youtu.be>



Upcoming Events

Annual Progress Review Seminar

17th October 2012, 12:00pm to 2:00pm

Thesis Submission Seminar

23rd October 2012, 12:00pm to 2:00pm

Meet the Dean

21st November, 12:00pm to 2:00pm



UNSW PhDs in the Media...

Listen to ABC radio presenter Dr Norman Swan's interview with Amrita Kapur and Ludmilla Khodai from the 3MT competition on the Saturday Extra program:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/saturdayextra/three-minute-thesis/4281870>

Chloe Angyal, a FASS PhD student, has recently had this article

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ASPIRE Award: Johannes Luetz, *Climate migration* (Institute of Environmental Studies, Arts and Social Sciences).

http://youtu.be/f9_RmUuBwmU?hd=1

Watch a great clip about 3MT by UNWTV:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHqnb0MORmg&feature=youtu.be>

You can also see some pictures from the night on our

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/media>

</set/?set=a.448318345220039.141072.196853440366532&type=1#!/media>

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And below we hear more from our winners.



Sumaiya Ahmed – 1st Place

Managers, maintaining a portfolio of products, often have to make critical timing decisions about when to release the new version of a product. My research examines such timing decisions focusing on the motion picture industry. In particular, I aim to find the optimal time to release DVD after a movie has been launched at the Box Office, recognizing the dependence between these two channels. Releasing a DVD too early may mean people defer going to the theatre and buy the DVD, causing lower sales at the Box office. On the other hand, releasing too late, once the excitement surrounding the film has dissipated may lead to lower DVD sales. Using a copula modelling approach, I find that the optimal release time depends on the genre, star-power, critical-rating and so on and conclude that films stand to

published in the Sydney Morning Herald

<http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/what-ive-learnt-from-romcoms-20120925-26iyi.html>



CAPS Workshops – October 2012

WORKSHOP SEMINAR	DATE	TIME
<u>Kensington Campus</u> Mindfulness Meditation	Monday 8 th and 15 th Oct 2012	12-1pm
<u>College of Fine Arts</u> Mindfulness Meditation	Thursday 4 th and 11 th Oct 2012	12-1pm
Time Management	2 Oct	2-3pm
Postgraduate Journey	5 Oct	1.30-4pm
Preventing Procrastination	9 Oct	2-3pm
Improving Mood	10 Oct	2-3pm
Relaxation & Meditation	17 Oct	2-3pm

To Register go to

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and follow the links: For Students/Workshops &

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make substantial gains by adopting a more systematic approach to timing-decisions.

The 3MT competition is a great way to showcase your research that would allow you to escape the world of jargon and numbers. Condensing a thesis down to the bare essentials in a way that could be understood by people who are hearing your topic for the first time is one of the most challenging things you can do in your early research career. It feels even more rewarding when people from so many other disciplines want to learn more about your research.



Billie Ganendran – Runner-up

The security of the Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor* colony on Phillip Island, Victoria is potentially threatened by environmental factors such as climate change, as well as anthropogenic threats posed by the thousands of visitors to the island each year. My research is part of a long running study of this colony that commenced in 1967, and is one of the longest uninterrupted studies of vertebrates in the world. I conduct the first ever detailed statistical examination into the effects of several environmental factors, such as sea surface temperatures, wind strength, ambient temperature, rainfall and marine productivity on the survival of Little Penguins. Additionally I will also investigate the effects of human settlement and human intrusion into the colony on the survival of these birds.

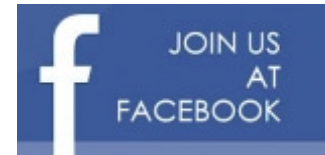
Participating in the 3MT competition was an incredible experience – firstly, because it allowed me to be part of an exciting exchange of research with our university community and beyond, and secondly, because it was a fantastic

Seminars/Workshops

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GRS on Facebook

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We post about events and other things we think our UNSW postgrad researchers might find useful, interesting or amusing. We welcome your posts and comments too.



Get PGC Social

The Arc Postgraduate Council (PGC) team has the inside scoop on the latest and greatest piece of web-based brilliance. To make sure that you do not miss out on PGC events, we have created a Facebook group dedicated to invitations to, and information on, PGC events. The **PGC Social** Facebook group is a one-stop source for all of your postgrad social activity updates. There are many events happening in

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exercise on how to pick out the most critical aspects of my research and communicate not only the facts but also the excitement and passion. One of the highlights of my candidature so far!



Ludmilla Khodai – People's Choice

My thesis is about the ancient Afghan practice of Bacha Poosh, which allows girls to pass as boys. Since in Afghanistan there is a high economic and social pressure to have a son couples that do not have one revert to this practice and dress one of their daughters as a boy to pretend that she is their son. Although the public is aware of the biological sex of the child involved, it agrees to treat the child just like a boy. These transformed girls enjoy all the freedom that is reserved for boys until they reach marriageable age. Then the masquerade is over and they have to go back to the role of a woman. In my research I investigate how the bizarre experience of changing gender resonates throughout the life of adult women in Afghanistan who were raised as boys. Furthermore I investigate how the Afghan public constructs a shared knowledge when it agrees to play the game in this gender staging. This case study will illustrate the diversity of how cohesive gender roles are negotiated.

Participating in the 3MT was a challenge as suddenly there was no room to escape to and I had to state what my research was really about. It forced me to re-think my work and reminded me of the importance to focus on the essentials. To my mind the 3MT is a great opportunity to leave your desk and to reach the public. What a great feeling when people come and tell you how interested they are in your research!

the coming weeks so join up fast. Tell your postgrad friends to join before they miss out on the fun.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/468599343152978/>



Unibeat Escort Services

Free Unibeat escorts are available to students and staff between 6pm and 6am, 7 days a week, all year round. Take advantage of this if you are working late in the lab or in the library, or anywhere else on campus.

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<http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/safety-security/security-services/unibeat-escort-services/>

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Johannes Luetz - ASPIRE Award:

The 3MT was an exhilarating and hair-raising experience. Multiple cameras, bright lights, large audience, time pressure, no lectern, no speaking notes, nowhere to hide... simply terrifying! Yet the competition was a good forum to raise awareness about an issue I'm passionate about. I'm convinced we will be hearing much more about climate change driven migration as the century unfolds. Due to climate system inertia processes and impacts like sea level rise, precipitation changes and extreme weather events progress slowly and will be hard to stop and impossible to reverse after they manifest more visibly. Drawing on field research conducted in the South Pacific Tulun and Nisan Atolls, Bolivia, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Philippines in 2010, 2011 and 2012, my PhD dissertation argues that climate migrants ought to be more closely consulted if equitable, practicable and sustainable resettlement outcomes are to be achieved. There are plans underway to produce a documentary from the numberless hours of high definition video footage captured during fieldwork travels... I am grateful for the research support received from World Vision, the ASPIRE prize awarded by young people, and, most of all, for the things I learned during fieldwork from hundreds of displacees, to all of you, thank you!

A UNSW-TV produced short clip on my Bolivia field research is available at:

<http://tv.unsw.edu.au/video/bolivia-leaving-the-land>



Swiss Government Research Scholarships

These scholarships will enable selected applicants to undertake research in the field of their PhD, at selected Swiss institutions, for a maximum period of 12 months.

Applications close: Friday 16 November

For more information see "Research Scholarships" at:

http://www.sbf.admin.ch/htm/themen/bildung/stipendien/eskas_laender/australia_en.html

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Victoria (front) with Professor Hisano. Behind: Other international postgraduate students researching food security

Victoria Roberts - Research Global Act Local

Fourth year PhD candidate, Victoria Roberts, took a break from the monotony of her regular work and study routine to travel the world for eight months to undertake research practicum secondments in her field. Victoria's PhD is titled *Australia's role in achieving global food security: to what extent can reform of the research and development tax concessions contribute?*

With the support of her supervisors, Professors Margaret McKerchar (UNSW) and Natalie Stoianoff (UTS) and UNSW Associate Exchange Director, Michelle Kofod, Victoria managed to organise three consecutive research secondments, visiting Japan, the United States and South Africa. The purpose of her global journey was to learn about the R&D tax systems and food security policies of these countries for the international comparative chapters of her thesis.

Victoria's first stop was the University of Kyoto in Japan. Under the tutorship of Professor Shuji Hisano, an expert in the field of food security, Victoria attended classes and presented on her PhD topic. The secondment also provided Victoria with two research translators to assist with her high-level law research and twice-weekly Japanese language classes.

Next stop was the United States. Victoria swapped the cold Japanese weather and bustling streets to experience life in the tiny town of South Royalton Vermont, location of Vermont Law School. Again Victoria was fortunate to attend summer school and present on her thesis topic. Amidst plenty of country air, green grass and sunshine, Director of the Environmental Tax Policy Institute, Professor Janet Milne assisted Victoria with her understanding of the US tax system.

Final destination was University of Cape Town, South Africa.

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Living on campus Victoria had the benefit of two renowned academics, Tracy Gutuza for information on the South African tax system and Dr Debbie Collier for her knowledge of food security.

Victoria was fortunate to be one of ten winners to receive partial funding from the UNSW Exchange Office for her research practicum at UCT. Further information on university exchanges can be found at:

<http://www.international.unsw.edu.au/outbound-opportunities/research-exchange/>

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This monthly newsletter is produced by the Graduate Research School to provide research candidates with the latest information on upcoming events, seminars, awards and achievements.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Christina Bacchiella:
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Your time starts now

02 October 2012

Twenty-two of UNSW's brightest PhD students faced a research battle of a different kind as they competed in the annual Three Minute Thesis competition (3MT).

Hosted by the Graduate Research School, the competition was tough: in less than the time it takes to boil an egg, finalists had to explain three years of intensive research in an engaging way to a live audience.

Sumaiya Ahmed from the School of Marketing at the Australian School of Business was selected by the high-profile panel of judges – Emma Ayres, Mark Bouris, Dr Margaret Kiley and Dr Norman Swan – as the winner for her presentation: *The waiting game in the movie industry: Timing decisions for DVD release*.

By highlighting discrepancies in revenue and in the waiting periods from major blockbuster going from the big to small screen, Ahmed has developed a computer model to help the movie industry better plan DVD release dates.

"This was the greatest feeling ... because I was competing with extremely brilliant contestants who had such interesting research," she said.

Ahmed won a \$3,000 cash prize and will represent UNSW at the 2012 Australia & NZ final at the University of Queensland, competing against entrants from more than 40 universities.

The runner-up was Billie Ganendran from the School of Physical, Environmental and Mathematical Sciences at UNSW Canberra for her energetic talk on the "curious mix of penguins and statistics".

Ganendran's research examines the Little Penguin colony on Phillip Island, Victoria, which is increasingly threatened by environmental factors and a growing tourism industry. Her thesis project is the first to conduct a detailed statistical analysis of these threats – research she says is crucial to ensuring the birds' survival.

Two doctoral candidates from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences were also recognised.

Ludmilla Khodai from the School of Social Sciences won the People's Choice award for her presentation *Forced Gender Disguise in Afghanistan: Girls passing as boys*.

For his presentation exploring the plight of climate migrants, Johannes Luetz, from the Institute of Environmental Studies, won the ASPIRE prize. This award was voted on by high school students taking part in the University's [ASPIRE program](#).

The 3MT competition requires candidates to communicate their research in an accessible way, which is an important skill for PhD students to develop, said Professor Laura Poole-Warren, Dean of Graduate Research.

"The competition demonstrates that excellence in communication is alive and well in our postgraduate researchers, who are working on innovative and inspiring research" said Professor Poole-Warren.

VIDEO: Watch highlights of the 3MT competition

Media contact: [Myles Gough](#), UNSW Media Office, 9385 1933

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And the winner is ... Sumaiya Ahmed

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