MY THESIS
IN 180 SECONDS
 Applicant Specifications

MT180 Competition EPFL
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This competition is jointly organized by the Science Outreach Department and Mediacom, with support from the Doctoral School. ................................................................................................... 7

I – Competition Overview

1. What is it?

My Thesis in 180 Seconds is a competition that gives doctoral students the opportunity to present their research topic in simple terms to a general and diverse audience, and before judges who will grade them. In three minutes each student must deliver a clear, concise, and yet compelling explanation of his or her research project.

Each candidate will participate in one of the public selection events that held January 2020. The internal competition at EPFL, which will include 12 to 14 candidates, will be held on March 12 2020. The three finalists could advance to participate in a second round at the national finals, and possibly at the international finals as well.

2. Background

My Thesis in 180 Seconds is inspired by the competition «Three Minute Thesis» (3MTMD), which was first held in 2008 at the University of Queensland, Australia. In 2012, the concept was picked
up in Quebec by ACFAS. Since 2014, this competition has become increasingly successful since 2014. Several French-speaking countries have organized events: for example France, Morocco, Belgium and Québec, in Canada all participate.

3. Why should you participate?

My Thesis in 180 Seconds, provides a unique opportunity to hone your communication skills while also showcasing your research in a public space. Since the presentations are filmed and uploaded online, you can share your passion with the largest audience possible! However competition officials, reserve the right to select candidates on the basis of a submitted video, if the number of applicants is too large.

Dates to remember
Registration is open from 1st to 30 September 2019. Training sessions will be will be provided by a specialist in public speaking on the 30th and 31st October and 1st November. Each candidate can only participate in a single session. Selection events will be held on January 2020. The competition will take place at the EPFL Forum Rolex on March 12th March 2020.

5. Prizes
Prizes will be awarded to the top three participants as determined by a panel of judges from the fields of media and sciences. A special «audience award», chosen by the public, will also be given.

II - Rules, eligibility and evaluation criteria

1. Eligibility
To be eligible for participation, you must meet the following requirements:
- be currently or previously enrolled in a doctoral program with a thesis (PhD) at EPFL during this academic year (2019/2020) or have earned your doctorate during this academic year
- present a clearly defined doctoral project
- be able to express yourself in English or French
- be available for the competition on March 12th 2020
- the maximum number of participants is 80. The priority is given to participants that are in the last year of their thesis

2. ECTS Credits
Since 2016, the course is recognized by EPFL’s Doctoral School and participants in the MT180 competition may, if they so choose, receive an ECTS credit towards their doctoral degree. Conditions to receive credit are:
  1. Participation in one of the workshops in English or French
  2. Participation In the selection event for the finals and a final evaluation of at least 4/6.

3. Rules and regulations

   1. Technical constraints
   Please read the technical constraints below carefully. In the interest of fairness, they apply equally to all participants without exception. It is up to the organizer of the event to implement them.
Stopwatch
  o You have 180 seconds to present your doctoral research topic
  o A timer will count down the time from 180 seconds to 0. It must be positioned in front of you and, if you want to, it will be visible.

Time keeper
  o A person who will keep time, without being disruptive, will be positioned at a visible location. When you are ready to begin your presentation, you will notify the time keeper with an agreed-upon signal. A beep will sound when the stopwatch begins counting down. You may then begin your presentation.
  o If you wish, you may ask to be notified, by visual signal, when there are only 30 seconds left. A loud horn will sound when the 180 seconds are out (not one second more will be allowed). If you have not finished your presentation, you may choose to continue your presentation and thereby disqualify yourself from the competition, or not to finish your presentation and remain eligible for the competition.

Handling Interruptions
  o Under no circumstances will the stopwatch be reset to zero (even if your memory goes blank, if you notice that you’ve made a mistake or if you feel you weren’t ready), except in the event of a major technical problem.
  o Should a major technical problem occur (for example: a microphone doesn’t work, a slide doesn’t show up, the stopwatch doesn’t start), the president of the jury will stop the competition, and you will be permitted to begin your presentation again once the technical problem has been resolved.
  o Competitors are not permitted to interrupt presentations.

2. Oral presentation
  ✓ Your oral presentation must be delivered in English or French
  ✓ Other than paper notes, no other accessories will be permitted: no laser pointer, no clothing accessories used specifically for the presentation, etc.
  ✓ You have the right to address the audience by posing questions, if you wish.
  ✓ Depending on the materials available at the location where the finals take place, you may use a handheld microphone, which you can place on a microphone stand, if you wish.
  ✓ If needed, you may use a lectern or podium on stage.

3. Visual support
  ✓ You may use visual aids for your presentation. Although not compulsory, it is strongly recommended.
  ✓ You are only allowed to use a single, non-animated slide to illustrate your points. It will be projected on a large screen behind the stage.
  ✓ The text on the slide must be in French or English.
  ✓ The slide must use the format of PowerPoint (.ppt or .pptx) or image format (.jpeg or .jpg ; recommended resolution: 300 dpi).
  ✓ You must ensure that the images you are using are royalty-free or that the
owners of the images have granted rights of use for this contest.
✓ No audio or video support will be permitted.
✓ The title of the presentation on the PowerPoint slide may differ from that of your thesis so that you can popularize your topic. However, the complete title of your thesis will be announced orally by the moderator of the competition.

4. Evaluation criteria

Here are the criteria by which the members of the jury will evaluate your presentation:

✓ Speaker’s talent and engagement (out of 10)
  ✓ Has the participant demonstrated qualities of strong oratory: rhythm, fluidity, gestures, on-stage presence, etc.?
  ✓ Has the participant conveyed his or her passion for the subject?
  ✓ Has the participant sparked the public’s curiosity about the subject?

✓ Popularization (out of 10)
  ✓ Has the participant explained the concepts or ideas in language and terminology that is accessible to the audience?
  ✓ Has the participant used humor, metaphors and examples to illustrate the points?

✓ Presentation structure (out of 10)
  ✓ Have the structure of the presentation and the ordering of ideas facilitated understanding of the subject?
  ✓ Has the participant clearly explained the research he or she conducted?

✓ Favorite (out of 2)
  ✓ Did you note a particularly exceptional point in the presentation?

III – Additional support for students

1. Training and preparation

«My Thesis in 180 Seconds» is an exercise in summary and popularization that requires excellent preparation of speech and presence as well as in visual presentation using PowerPoint.

To help you be better prepared, EPFL is offering training in October and November. An orientation session will provide the opportunity for you to ask questions regarding regulations, technical requirements, and evaluation criteria.
IV – Jury

The jury will be comprised of representatives from the scientific community and broader science world, the business world and the media. Each selected judge must notify the members of the panel of any conflicts of interest, but may nevertheless evaluate all the presentations.

Filming
« My Thesis in 180 Seconds» will be filmed. The videos will be made available to both participants and their institutions within two months after the competition. Upon arrival at the preparatory meeting, you must sign a release of your rights to your image in connection with the distribution of these videos on the Internet (see point I.3) and their development on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
V  – Contact information

This competition is jointly organized by the Science Outreach Department and Mediacom, with support from the Doctoral School.

For additional information:
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