

Interview with Kyushu U 3MT Competition 2026 Award Recipients

On July 27, 2026, Kyushu University hosted its sixth 3MT virtual competition. The 3MT competition is a research communication contest where PhD students use a single slide to present their research in English to non-specialist audience in just three minutes. It started in 2008 at the University of Queensland, our partner university, and is now held at over 900 universities in almost 85 countries and regions worldwide.



First Prize & People's Choice Recipient: Pratiksha Mundhe (left)

2nd year, Doctoral Course, Graduate School of Information Science and Electrical Engineering

Presentation title: "Computing Shouldn't Cost the Earth"

Runner-up: Ai Nagata (right)

2nd year, Doctoral Course, Graduate School of Economics

Presentation title: "Beyond Scrap-and-Build: Renovation as Climate Policy"

Interviewer: Prof. Natalie Konomi, Global Strategies Office

*Year of study at the time of the competition.



Following the award ceremony on August 25, 2026, Prof. Konomi spoke with the award recipients about their research and their experiences of participating in the competition.

Prof. Konomi (K): First of all, congratulations again. I'm very happy to welcome the two award recipients of this year's Kyushu University 3MT Competition. Before we move on to interview questions, I would like to invite each of you to briefly introduce yourself.

Self-Introduction and Research

Pratiksha (P): Hello, I am a second-year Ph.D. student from the Graduate School of Information Science and Electrical Engineering. The title of my 3MT presentation was "Computing Shouldn't Cost the Earth". My research is about computing hardware, like our personal computers or the data centers we hear about these days. In my 3MT presentation, I talked about improving the efficiency in running tasks on this hardware - that is, using as little power as possible without compromising the quality of the results.

K: This is a very important research topic, and you did a wonderful job presenting it.

Ai (A): I am a second-year PhD student at the Graduate School of Economics. My research focuses on reducing the life-cycle emissions of housing through renovation rather than new construction. The title of my 3MT presentation is “Beyond Scrap-and-Build: Renovation as Climate Policy.”

K: This is an important issue not only in Japan but also in many other parts of the world. Your presentation was very impressive as well. Thank you.

Question 1 What inspired you to participate in the 3MT competition this year?

A: A senior student in my lab was selected as a finalist last year. At first, I hesitated to participate, but during the briefing session, I saw a message saying that students who were not confident in their English were welcome. That encouraged me, and I felt that this competition would be a great opportunity to challenge myself. To be honest, the research grant was also one of my motivations, as it would help support my research activities.

K: Yes, research support is certainly an important aspect of the competition.

P: At my graduate school, we have a mini version of the 3MT competition. I participated last year and found it interesting. I got to know about Kyushu University 3MT through one of my seniors, who was participating. I thought of participating and challenging myself on a bigger platform. I submitted an entry last year, but I did not pass the first round. This time, I prepared and polished my submission, and submitted it again.

K: Yes, I remember your entry from last year. Ai, I hope you will consider participating again next year, too. For both of you, it seems that encouragement from your *senpai* (senior students) or others who had already participated in 3MT played an important role. I hope you will spread the word to the other students as well.

Question 2 What was your first impression of the competition?

P: At first, I thought I needed to explain my research in 3 minutes to a general audience. However, after learning more details, I realized fitting all that information into three minutes is a challenge.

A: My first impression was that 3MT was quite different from a typical academic conference presentation. In conference presentations, the format and structure are usually more clearly defined, but in 3MT, I felt that I had much more freedom in how I presented my research. Although I found that freedom quite challenging, it was also one of the most interesting aspects of this competition.

K: It is certainly challenging to fit everything into three minutes. It is interesting that you found the 3MT format gave you more freedom in presenting your research than a conventional presentation.

P: I agree. While preparing the script, I felt that freedom was a double-edged sword. We can use any idea or method of explanation. At the same time, every example and every sentence needs to be used carefully in the right direction to serve a clear purpose. If used in the wrong way, you would lose precious time and balance of your presentation.



K: That makes a lot of sense. Finding that balance is important. That is an interesting perspective. Now, I have a more practical question.

Question 3 When and how did you start preparing for your presentation?

A: I started preparing about three weeks before the first-round deadline. I first wrote the script and asked my online English tutor to check it, and then I made the slide. Since I was not very confident in speaking, I spent more time practicing the actual delivery than working on the script and slide. Looking back, I think that was a good strategy.

P: I began preparing my presentation about a month before the deadline. I thought about finding examples for better explanation in the first stage, with a focus on analogies and metaphors that would help convey my message and explain the concept without using technical words. Then, I put together a script, and the script ended up being about four and a half minutes long. I refined it, moving back and forth between the script and the slide to ensure they were connected. It took about three weeks to finish the script. I recorded my presentation several times until I found the one that I felt represented my presentation best.

K: It sounds as though you both spent around three to four weeks preparing for the competition. When you first started preparing, what were you most concerned about: the content and the three-minute limit, or recording yourself?

P: For me, I was mainly concerned about the contents.

A: For me, I was more worried about recording myself.

K: I see. Recording yourself can be challenging, too.



Question 4 Did you receive any support-maybe from your lab members or friends during this process?

A: For the first round, I hesitated to show my presentation video to others, so I mostly prepared it on my own. After advancing to the final round, I gained more confidence and started sharing the video with my family members and friends who were not familiar with my research. Their feedback was especially helpful in improving my delivery, including my gestures and how I emphasized key messages. I received support from my lab members and my supervisor during the voting period as well. I am very grateful for all the support I received from the people around me.

P: For the first round, when my script was ready, I shared it with friends who are from different fields, as well as my family members, and my lab mates. Their feedback helped me. I also requested feedback from Prof. Konomi. I asked many people for help during the process, and I am very grateful for their support.

K: I imagine it is not always easy to find people who can give feedback on a presentation in English. Did that affect whom you could ask for feedback?

A: My father is an English teacher at a high school in Japan, and he gave me advice on gestures and body language for presenting in English. His advice was very helpful.

K: That's wonderful. When you received feedback, were there any suggestions for improvement, or was the overall response already positive?

P: The feedback I received on my first recording was that I needed to put more energy into my presentation through my body language. I tried to incorporate it into later recordings.

A: One suggestion I received was to soften my facial expressions and smile a little more.

K: Conveying your enthusiasm and energy through a video is difficult, but it is an important aspect of 3MT. A smile can help convey that enthusiasm and passion.

Question 5 How did it feel to present at Kyushu University's 3MT competition?

K: Your pre-recorded videos were shown first, and then you joined the live online session to answer questions from the judges. How did you find those experiences?

A: I was very nervous during the live session, and I was not completely satisfied with some of my answers during the Q&A. However, it was still a very valuable experience. I also found it interesting to listen to the other participants, including Pratiksha-san, and I learned from the way they responded to the judges' questions.

P: I was nervous on the day of the live session, especially the Q&A session. The judges were from diverse backgrounds, so I had no way of knowing which point or part of my presentation they might ask about. I spent a lot of time thinking about the questions they were likely to ask.

K: Were the questions what you had expected?

P: Their questions were not what I expected, and I felt that my answers were not to the point.

K: You both did a great job. Were you able to concentrate on the other presentations, or were you too nervous?

P: I was nervous on the day of the competition; however, when the videos were released for voting, I watched all of them twice. The first time, I tried to understand the content: what they were talking about. The second time, I watched how they presented it.

A: I had already watched all of the other participants' videos before the live session, but on the day of the competition, I was too nervous to really focus on them.

K: As part of your preparation, did you watch videos from previous Kyushu University 3MT competitions or those available on the UQ website? Or did you mainly prepare independently?

A: I watched videos of the previous Kyushu University winners. I also checked the UQ Asia-Pacific 3MT website and watched a few participants' videos. They were all excellent, but because their presentation styles were so diverse, I felt that watching too many might confuse me about my own approach. So I mainly used the Kyushu University videos as references.

P: I watched Kyushu University videos as well as UQ videos. And, in my free time or when I am doing other work, I would put on YouTube videos from other universities. I listened to what they talked about, how they presented it, and how they approached their technical concepts. Their approaches helped me learn how to present my own topic more clearly.

K: That's wonderful. It's very interesting to see the different ways you used previous 3MT presentations and how those approaches worked for each of you.

Question 6 What advice would you give to students who are thinking about participating in 3MT?

P: For those who might be thinking about applying, I would say, “Just do it”, because there is nothing to lose. Participating in 3MT, in both technical and academic senses, will help you develop a lot in terms of communication skills and confidence.

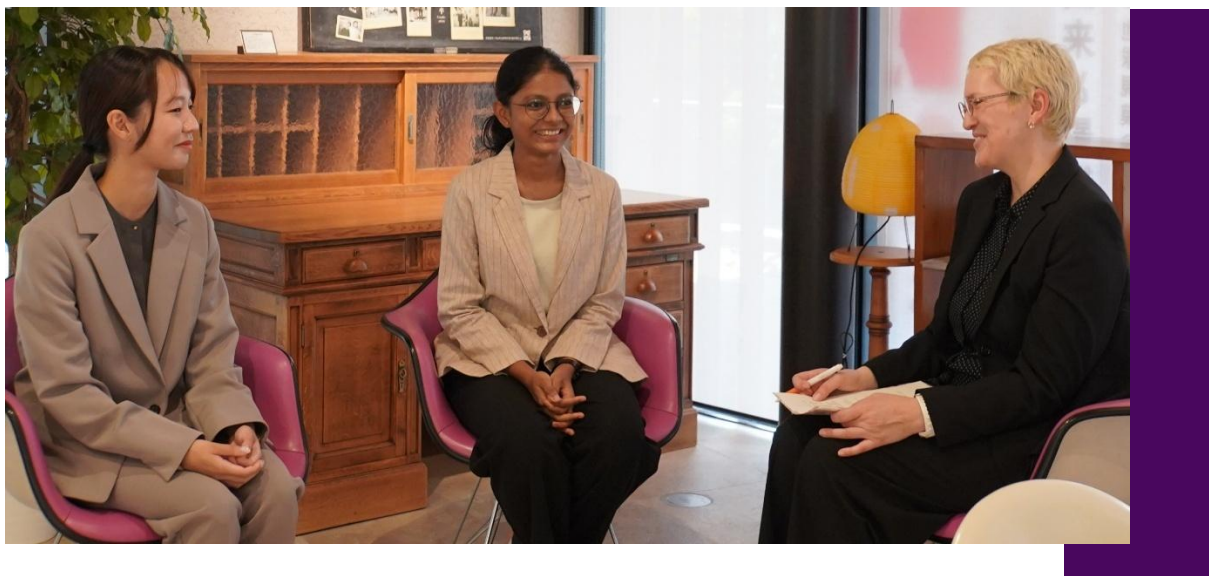
A: If you are even a little interested in 3MT, I would definitely encourage you to give it a try. I know that recording yourself and watching your own presentation can feel uncomfortable. However, this experience helped me improve both my presentation skills and my ability to communicate my research during my PhD. If you have the opportunity, I hope you will take part in the competition.

K: You both encouraged students who are even a little interested in 3MT to give it a try and challenge themselves. What would you say to students who have not yet considered participating in 3MT? What aspects of 3MT do you think more students should know about?

A: I should also mention that the research grant was an attractive incentive. I think many PhD students would appreciate this kind of support for their research, and it is certainly one of the appealing aspects of the competition.

P: As another aspect of joining 3MT, I would say, “Be greedy” when it comes to improving your skills. Giving presentations and explaining your research to a general audience so that they understand what you are doing and why it matters are important skills for a researcher. And 3MT sets an objective goal to assess your skill improvement. As an additional aspect, especially for PhD students, research life can sometimes become monotonous. I personally believe one should have side quests, and 3MT is one of the best side quests you can have.

K: Wonderful. Thank you both for sharing your experiences and advice. Your comments also give us useful ideas for encouraging more students to participate in future competitions. Congratulations again!



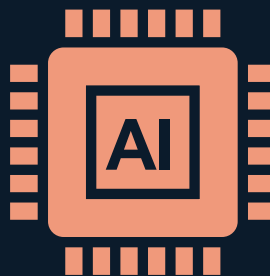
Award Recipients' Slide

Your Brain



20 W

AI Data Center



~20,000,000 W

Closing the energy gap

First Prize & People's Choice recipient:

Pratiksha Mundhe

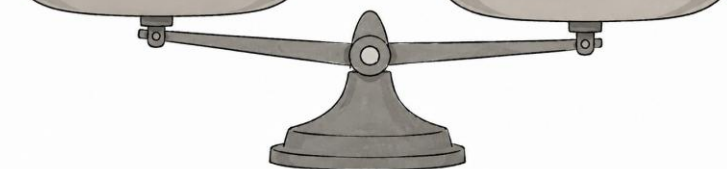
Presentation title: "Computing Shouldn't Cost the Earth"

What if the greenest house is not a new one?

New energy efficient house



Renovated existing house



Runner-up:

Ai Nagata

Presentation title: "Beyond Scrap-and-Build: Renovation as Climate Policy"