

No-Bell Prize Competition 2026 Guidelines



The 2026 No-Bell Prize Competition, hosted by the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences, is an opportunity for graduate researchers enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences to practise succinctly communicating their research to a general audience using language free of jargon in a friendly and supportive environment.

Eligible applicants will submit a 90-second video, with the top presenters progressing to the No-Bell Prize Final. In the final, participants will:

- Present for 90 seconds
- Respond to three minutes of questions from the host
- Answer one minute of questions from the audience.

This comprises a total of five minutes and 30 seconds per finalist.

During the presentation, a panel will note each time they hear jargon, such as language which is too technical or acronyms that are not widely understood. An official will keep time and count the number of notes per speaker. The participant with the fewest notes during their presentation and the highest score from the panel will be the winner.

Participants who progress to the final will be competing for cash prizes, including:

- \$1,000 for the No-Bell Prize winner
- \$500 each for the two runners-up
- A People's Choice Award of \$500.

Key dates

Communications workshop:	Tuesday 7 July, 12:30–1:30pm
Submissions open:	Wednesday 8 July, 9:00am
Submissions close:	Sunday 26 July 2026, 11:55pm AEST
Finalists announced:	Mid-August
Finalists' one-on-one coaching:	27–28 August
No-Bell Prize Final event:	Thursday 1 October, 2:00–4:30pm

Eligibility

The competition is open to students who are currently enrolled in an eligible graduate research degree (eg, PhD, Master of Philosophy, Master of Research, Doctor of Medical Science) within the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.

Application process

To compete, applicants must register and submit a video as detailed below. Submissions will be assessed in line with judging criteria. These videos will be used by the selection panel to select the finalists and will not be made available outside of this process.

- 1) **Attend communications workshop** (optional): All students are encouraged to attend a communications skills workshop to develop their research-related communication and presentation skills. This will be held on 7 July, prior to submissions opening.
- 2) **Register and submit a video** by the deadline (11:55pm, 26 July) via the [No-Bell Prize application form].
- 3) **Video assessment:** Submissions will be assessed by a selection panel, based on the judging criteria below. The highest-ranked videos will be selected to compete in the final.
- 4) **Final event:** The selected finalists will receive tailored coaching on 27 and 28 August, and compete in the final on 1 October, 2:00-4:30pm.

Recording guidelines

Guidelines for submitted videos:

- The 90 second video should focus on one study, one result or an overview of a whole research project.
- Content delivered after the 90-second mark will not be considered by the selection panel.
- Presentations are considered to have commenced when a presenter starts speaking. The audio must be continuous with no sound edits or breaks.
- Applicants must ensure they are clearly visible and the audio is clear. Audio-only entries are not permitted.
- No slides or props (like costumes or lab equipment) are to be used. No additional electronic media (eg, sound or video files) are permitted within the video recording.
- Submissions must be made via a video format. Files submitted in other formats will not be accepted.
- Submissions should be no larger than 1 GB. Larger files will not be accepted by the form.
- Applicants will not be judged on video/recording quality or editing capabilities; rather, submissions will be assessed on content based on the judging criteria below.
- The decision of the selection panel is final.

Judging criteria

Comprehension and content:

- The presentation provided clear research context, significance and potential impact.
- The presentation followed a clear and logical sequence.

Engagement and communication:

- The presentation was delivered clearly and the language used was appropriate for a non-specialist audience.
- The speaker avoided scientific jargon, explained terminology and provided adequate background information to illustrate points.
- The presenter conveyed enthusiasm for their research, and captured and maintained the audience's attention.
- The speaker had sufficient 'stage presence', eye contact and vocal range; the speaker maintained a steady pace and had a confident stance.

Registering to compete

To register to compete in this competition, eligible graduate research students must submit their videos via the No-Bell Prize Application Form by the deadline of 11:55pm AEST, 26 July.

[Application form](#)

Please note that video files may take a while to load onto the form. If you are having trouble with the form, please contact the MSPS Engagement Team at engagement-psych@unimelb.edu.au. Do not send your video to this email address – all entries must be submitted via the form.

Presenting in the final competition

If selected to present in the No-Bell Prize final, you will be asked to present your research in person for five minutes and 30 seconds, which includes 90 seconds to introduce your research, three minutes of questions from the host, and one minute of questions from the audience. You must not use slides or other props.

If you progress to the final, you will also be offered two additional seats at the No-Bell Prize event for anyone you would like to invite to support you on the day.

Resources

You can find some [tips on recording your presentation here](#) (noting that your video submissions will not include a slide).

For more information

If you need more information, please contact the MSPS Engagement Team at engagement-psych@unimelb.edu.au.