

Postgraduate Research Students of the Year 2015

The criteria against which their nominations were judged state:

“The nominee should be an outstanding research student who has excelled in some significant manner, for example, after the presentation of a thesis based on the recommendation and judgment of the external examiner; or has had a major research achievement during a PGR programme –e.g. high quality journal publications; research spin off, etc.”

Dr Ben Brown, Centre for Health Informatics, FMHS

Dr Ben Brown is a recently qualified GP, studying part-time towards a PhD in Health Informatics.

Ben’s work focuses on developing new methods of analysing patient data from health records to help the NHS improve the care it provides to the public.

Although still in the early stages of his doctoral studies, Ben has already had some notable achievements including first-author peer-reviewed publications, receiving an international prize in Health Informatics, and receiving a national award for Primary Care Informatics.

In 2014 he was offered three Doctoral Fellowships from the top UK medical research funders: National Institute for Health Research, Medical Research Council, and Wellcome Trust – a remarkable achievement.

Importantly Ben ensures he works closely with NHS practitioners so his findings can be translated into practice.

Ignacio Pecino, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, FHUMS

Ignacio Pecino's PhD research took place at the University’s NOVARS Research Centre. NOVARS is a research centre with specialisms in the areas of Electroacoustic Composition, Performance and Sound-Art. Current research strands include game-audio, Space in large multichannel systems and Interactive Art.

Ignacio’s work focused on interactive media and procedural audio as well as cybernetics, simulation and perceptual organisation, explored in the context of virtual 3D environments, with an emphasis on ontological interactions within the virtuality continuum.

He has presented (subsequently published) papers at the International Computer Music Conference, the premier annual event in the field, in both 2013 and 2014, and as well at the Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany, in December of last year.

In addition to this impressive set of achievements, through his spinout company, SonicMaps, he has commercialised highly successful apps for Locative Audio (GPS geolocation-based immersive audio experience).

Dr Oliver Freeman, Faculty of Life Sciences

Dr Oliver Freeman conducted his PhD in the Faculty of Life Sciences investigating diabetic neuropathy, a common secondary complication of diabetes.

In 2014 Oliver wrote, and was awarded, a Medical Research Council (or MRC) Centenary Early Career Fellowship Award to build on his research success. He extends his passion for science research to public engagement and science communication - leading a '*Pint of Science*' team for three consecutive nights of brain-based science; developing animations, and study day events.

He regularly writes for science blogs, has published an article in the *Biological Sciences Review*, and most notably was commended in the prestigious MRC Max Perutz Science Writing Awards for his article about his PhD research '*Why sugary nerves aren't so sweet*'. He was awarded his prize by David Willets who at that time was Minister of State for Universities and Science.

Dr Anthony Beddard, School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, FEPS

Dr Anthony Beddard's research is in the field of next generation power systems technology: High-Voltage DC converter transmission (or HVDC). This will form the backbone of the 'Energy Superhighway' needed to strengthen our electricity transmission networks to integrate renewable energy generation and low-carbon vehicles.

We do not yet know how to best use such systems, and Tony's research has made major contributions to understanding their reliability, protection and control. As well as receiving his PhD with an A(i) recommendation, he has written a large number of high quality conference and journal papers; made significant contributions to industry guidelines through work with the leading international industry body Cigré; and produced a patented invention which has led to £800,000 in research funding at Manchester.