



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Threesis Grand Finale 2026

3 Minutes

3 Slides

3 Judges

29 April 2026
O'Donoghue Theatre, University of Galway

Guest judges:

- Kevin Murray, Threesis 2025 winner
- Audrey Bleach, Senior Culture & Operations Leader, CISCO
- Professor Dónal Leech – Dean of Graduate Studies at University of Galway.

Host:

Dr Jessamyn Fairfield, University of Galway

Threesis is brought to you by University of Galway's Office of the Vice-President for Research & Innovation





1. Adam Collison "What Happens to the Air Quality when we Retrofit our Schools and Offices?"

Adam is a PhD researcher at the School of Natural Sciences, where he also earned his BSc in Physics. His research addresses an important, but often overlooked side effect of Ireland's climate goals: the impact of building retrofits on indoor air quality. For the last three years his work has brought him around the country monitoring metrics related to air quality in public buildings undergoing energy retrofits. His research is funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and is supervised by Dr. Miriam Byrne (University of Galway) and Dr. James McGrath (Maynooth University).



2. Hui Mo "The Invisible Shield: How Colorectal Cancer Escapes the Immune System"

Originally from China, Hui is pursuing a PhD in Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the School of Medicine, funded by the China Scholarship Council (CSC). Her research focuses on investigating the role of Siglec ligands in the regulation of immunosuppression in colorectal cancer. This interdisciplinary work will take place at the University of Galway and Galway University Hospital, where Prof. Aídeen Ryan has played a key role in establishing a collaboration involving immunologists, cancer researchers, surgeons and gastroenterologists



3. Grace Barnes "Disabled Women's Sexual Rights in the European Court of Human Rights"

Grace is from Devon, England and she is conducting her PhD research at the Centre for Disability Law & Policy under the supervision of Prof. Eilíonóir Flynn. Grace is interested in the operation of disability, gender and sexual stereotypes. She is researching the construction of disabled women's sexuality in the European Court of Human Rights and how this shapes their access to sexual rights and their understandings of their own identities. Grace is a Hardiman scholar and her project is funded by Research Ireland.



4. Yash Bhandakkar "Mechanical Characterisation of Blood Clot"

Yash is a PhD researcher in the Tripathi Lab, based in the School of Mathematical & Statistical Sciences at the University of Galway supervised by Dr. Bharat B. Tripathi and Prof. Karen Doyle. His research focuses on the mechanical characterisation of blood clots for improved stroke treatment using advanced scientific machine learning methodologies. His research is funded through the CÚRAM MedDevDoc Programme, an MSCA Co-funded initiative.



5. Ciara Pagden "microRNAs for Breast Cancer Patient Monitoring and Treatment"

Ciara is a PhD researcher supervised by Prof. Róisín Dwyer and funded by the Research Ireland Frontiers for the Future Programme. Her work focuses on the role of microRNAs in advanced Breast Cancer. This involves investigating how these small molecules contribute to the growth, survival, and spread of cancer. By identifying which microRNAs are driving the progression of this disease, Ciara aims to contribute to the advancement of monitoring and treatment options for advanced Breast Cancer patients.



6. Annemarie Shalloo "What is it about Alternative Education Provision in Ireland which supports working class young people completing their leaving certificate?"

A proud Clare woman living in Galway, Annemarie's PhD research is guided by the supervision of Dr. Cormac Forkan (UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, School of Political Science and Sociology) and Dr. Clíona Murray (School of Education). Annemarie's research will focus on Alternative Education in Ireland today, using an equality/equity lens and employing an interpretivist approach. Her research will specifically focus on alternative projects who work in conjunction with mainstream education and who support young people from working class areas to complete their leaving certificate and progress on to further education and training, higher education, and apprenticeships. Her research aims to highlight what the wider educational community, both (alternative and mainstream) can learn from this in tackling educational disadvantage.



7. Maria Elena Siegle "The Tumour Orchestra - Developing a Cellular 3D Model of Triple Negative Breast Cancer"

Maria is a PhD student working in the Lambe Institute for Translational Research in the group of Prof. Sharon Glynn as part of the Horizon Europe MSCA doctoral network NO-CANCER-NET. Her project focuses on developing cellular three-dimensional models of Triple Negative Breast Cancer that reflect the complex composition and environment of the tumour in the human body. The model can then be used to study the role of an abundantly present protein, called inducible Nitric Oxide Synthase, in the development and progression of this rare and aggressive type of cancer.



8. Sienna Stucke "Healing Helminths: Investigating Parasitic Proteins for Neuroinflammatory and Neurodegenerative Diseases"

Originally from Minnesota, USA, Sienna is a PhD student in Pharmacology and Therapeutics within the School of Pharmacy and Medical Sciences under the supervision of Prof. Eilis Dowd. She is funded by the Parkinson's Disease Research Award from Tony & Peigí O'Donoghue through the Galway University Foundation. Collaborating with Prof. John Pius Dalton's lab in Molecular Parasitology, her research focuses on the use of helminth-derived proteins as potential therapeutics to combat neuroinflammation in neurodegenerative disease models.



9. Andrea Fernandes "Childhood maltreatment and Brain Connectivity"

My name is Andrea. I am originally from Venezuela and have been living in Ireland for the past 11 years, which I consider my second home. I am currently a first-year PhD student at the Clinical Neuroimaging Lab at the University of Galway. My research focuses on investigating the relationship between childhood trauma, resilience, and brain connectivity in individuals with mood disorders, under the supervision of Prof. Dara Cannon.



10. Leah Palmer "A Journey North"

Leah is a PhD student in the Discipline of English under the supervision of Dr. Eavan O'Dochartaigh and Prof. Daniel Carey, and is working as part of the IRC-funded project Exploring the Arctic Archive. Her research focuses on the Arctic in the nineteenth century, examining how newcomers to the region from Ireland and Britain interacted with the Indigenous Peoples who had lived in the Arctic for generations. She is a founding member of the Association of Polar Early-Career Scientists Ireland, and represented Ireland as a 2024 Arctic Frontiers Emerging Arctic Leader. Passionate about the Arts and Humanities, she is proud to be representing her discipline, and showing how Arts and Humanities research can change the way we see the world for the better.



11. Lara Ressin "The Influence of Brain Architecture and Function on Cognition"

Lara is pursuing her PhD in Psychiatric Neuroimaging under the supervision of Prof. Dara Cannon in the Department of Anatomy, within the School of Medicine. Her research is supported by the Hardiman Scholarship, and she is affiliated with the Centre for Neuroimaging, Cognition and Genomics. She explores how the brain's structural architecture and functional connectivity work together to shape cognition and contribute to bipolar disorder. Through this work, she aims to better understand how changes in these systems may drive cognitive differences and the development of psychiatric conditions.

Go Raibh Maith Agat / Thank you!

Threesis is a research communications training programme and public engagement competition for postgraduate research students at University of Galway.

This year, we trained nearly 60 students and held a series of four heats. Tonight, some of the very best from those heats are on stage, sharing the story of their research.

Threesis is led by the Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation (Graduate Studies Office, Research Office, Researcher Development Centre and Innovation Office) with the support of the wider university community and partners.

It takes many hands - and the support of our amazing research community - so here we thank everyone who has been part of our Threesis 2026 village.

The Threesis Organising Team

Grand Finale

Participants: Our 11 finalists.

Judges: Kevin Murray, 2025 Threesis Winner, Audrey Bleach – Senior Culture & Operations Leader, CISCO, and Professor Dónal Leech – Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Galway.

MC: Dr. Jessamyn Fairfield, University of Galway

Venue: Mike O'Halloran and the O'Donoghue Theatre, and Buildings & Estates

Logistics, design and marketing: Éabha Leech

Slidedeck: Éabha Leech

Audiovisual: Staunton Media

Photography: Mike Shaughnessy

Printing, catering, trophies: Snap Printing, Galway Trophy Company, Sult and Masterchef

Press: Ruth Hynes

Training sessions

Trainees: Our postgraduate research students who participated in training sessions.

Trainers: CÚRAM's Claire Riordan with Ruth Hynes

Facilitation and Venue: Sinéad Beacom and Dr. Marina Ansaldo, Research Development Centre.

Heat Stages

Participants: Postgraduate researchers who shared the story of their research.

Judges: Anne Marie Forde, Sinéad Beacom, Dr. Marina Ansaldo, Dr. Kevin O'Sullivan, Ksenia Menshikh, Dr. Conall Hawkins, Dr. Heike Vornhagen, Áine Mhic Thaidhg, Claudia Costache

MCs: Sinéad Beacom and Dr. Marina Ansaldo

Slides, timekeeping and feedback: Éabha Leech

Special thanks: Audiences

Finalists' bootcamp

Mentors: Brendan Smith, Niamh Connolly, Dr. Marina Ansaldo, Dr. Heike Vornhagen, Ruth Dooley, Áine Mhic Thaidhg, Prof. Ann Torres, Dr. Davood Roshan, Gwen O'Sullivan, Dr. Deborah Mireles, and Elaine Rea.

Co-ordination: Sinéad Beacom

Coaching: Theresa Hogan-Leahy

Venue: Mike O'Halloran and the O'Donoghue Theatre

A very special thank you to everyone in tonight's audience!