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Award recognition for PhD researchers

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Two PhD researchers have been recognised for their research achievements with a special prize founded in honour of a Lancaster University professor.

Drs Yaroslav Pylyavskyy and Robyn Goldsmith, who both completed their doctorates in Lancaster University Management School in 2025, jointly won the **Boylan Prize**.

The prize was established in 2024 to honour Professor John Boylan, a distinguished scholar and Professor of Business Analytics within the Department of Management Science. It is awarded to PhD researchers in the Department of Management Science.

Dr Pylyavskyy's research focused on tackling the complex, previously underexplored, and practically important problem of conference scheduling, where large numbers of submissions must be assigned to rooms and times while satisfying a wide range of constraints and preferences.

During his PhD, he published five papers, including an article in the *European Journal of Operational Research*, and presented his work at several internationally recognised conferences. He also developed high-quality Python software that now forms the publicly available CoSPLib benchmark library for conference scheduling, and contributed to the scheduling of multiple major international conferences.

His PhD supervisors Dr Peter Jacko and Dr Ahmed Kheiri said in their citation for the award: "Yaro successfully developed innovative integer programming and matheuristic approaches that significantly advanced the state of the art. His work is technically impressive, impactful, and of consistently excellent quality.

"Yaro was a pleasure to supervise, always demonstrating independence, resilience, and a strong commitment to real-world applications. We are delighted that his expertise has been recognised through his successful internship and subsequent appointment at Tesco, and through the Boylan Prize."

Dr Goldsmith is now a Lecturer in Mathematics & Data Science at the University of Greenwich. Her research focused on developing novel demand forecasting algorithms for high-stakes business decisions.

Her work has already been implemented in a novel decisions support system at a leading automotive manufacturer to forecast demand and manage inventories for thousands of parts. As a result, the company not only incurs major cost savings but also important environmental benefits.

Her PhD supervisor, Dr Anna-Lena Sachs, said: "It is great seeing Robyn's work being recognised by the Boylan Prize. She has made several excellent contributions during her PhD in the areas of demand forecasting, outreach and dissemination.

"Robyn is also a highly talented communicator, committed to disseminating the importance of Statistics and Operational Research to a wider audience, which she has successfully achieved through a range of outreach activities as well as articles in the *Significance Magazine* and *Mathematics Today*.

"It has been a real pleasure working with Robyn and I hope that we can continue our successful collaboration in the future."

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> Dr Anna-Lena Sachs

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