

## Zuzana Zelenková, Tereza Patlejchová and Daniel Pluskal are newly awarded laureates of the Government Award for Gifted Students

Pavel Doleček, Deputy Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, presented the 2024 Government Award for Gifted Students on Tuesday, 30 September at the Hrzánský Palace in Prague. The Government Award is presented in three categories to female and male high school, undergraduate or master's and doctoral students who have demonstrated exceptional talents and interest in research or scholarly work.



Pavel Doleček, Deputy Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, presented the Government Award to three gifted students on 30 September 2025. Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

*"We are not only very grateful to all the awardees for their work, but also for reminding us why it makes sense to support science. Science teaches young people to be resilient, seek solutions and think critically, and often produces results that impact us all. The laureates are a great inspiration for their classmates, colleagues, teachers and society as a whole,"* said Pavel Doleček, Deputy Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, during the ceremony.

The highest Government Award presented to young researchers for research achievements in 2024 went to **Zuzana Zelenková** from Gymnasium Brno-Řečkovice, Master's programme graduate **Mgr. Tereza Patlejchová** from the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice and PhD student **Mgr. Daniel Pluskal** from Masaryk University.

*"This award constitutes an exceptional recognition of young scientists' work, of their promotion of science and of their ability to provoke interest in a scientific career on the part of future students. All*

*three awardees have already achieved truly remarkable results: they have published, taught, collaborated with students and organisations abroad.*

*While the award-winning students owe their undoubted talents, skills and knowledge to nature and their families, I am convinced that educational institutions have played a significant role in cultivating their interest in science, as have their teachers and mentors who have guided these young people, who have motivated them, opened them to knowledge and helped them in their research,”* said Vice-Chair of the Czech Rectors' Conference and Rector of the Academy of Performing Arts, doc. Ingeborg Radok Žádná, in her laudation.

A total of 57 students were nominated for the 2024 Government Award for Gifted Students. The high number and quality of the submitted nominations is a testament to the fact that scientific activity is becoming a natural part of young people's lives during their studies.

The award ceremony was attended by members of the families of the award-winning students, as well as representatives of the Office of the President of the Republic and the parliamentary committees for science and education, chairs of the Czech Science Foundation and Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, members of the Council for Research, Development and Innovation, leading officials of ministries and important exponents of the academic community.

#### Laureates of the third annual Government Award for Gifted Students

**Zuzana Zelenková** has now been pursuing science for several years, specialising in the research of 3D organoids and their use in treating glioblastoma brain tumours. She has succeeded in a number of professional competitions – in professional secondary school activities in the field of Molecular Biology, in the 'Czech Minds' competition in the field of SANITAS and won a gold medal at the World Youth Science Competition. In addition to this research, she has also succeeded in several other fields, for example, in the History, Geography and Ecology Olympiads.

Zuzana Zelenková graduated from Gymnasium Brno-Řečkovice in 2025 and is currently studying general medicine and law and legal science at Masaryk University.

**Mgr. Tereza Patlejchová**, a recent graduate of a master's programme in biophysics, is currently enrolled in a Teaching for secondary schools' course with a focus on physics and biology at the Faculty of Science of the University of South Bohemia. Her research focuses on antimicrobial nanomaterials based on galvanic corrosion. The results of the work, which brings new possibilities in combating bacterial resistance, were published in the prestigious ACS Applied Nano Materials journal and are protected by a patent and a utility model. She also contributed to the development of laser printing using nanoparticles, the results of which were published in the Nano Letters journal. Her work brings added value for healthcare applications.

In addition to her scientific activities, she is actively involved in education – she teaches physics at high school, has spoken at conferences for teachers focused on science education, and is expanding her forthcoming publication *20 Tips for Science Class* with a set of support materials for high school students. In 2024, she participated in the European TalentOn science competition. In June 2025, she enrolled in a doctoral biophysics programme, where she intends to further pursue nanomaterials science.

**Mgr. Daniel Pluskal** is a biochemistry graduate at the Faculty of Science, Masaryk University, where he is now pursuing doctoral studies at the Loschmidt Laboratories at the Institute of Experimental Biology and RECETOX Centre, focusing on research of bioluminescence and its practical applications.

He has been recognised by the Learned Society of the Czech Republic and has published multiple articles in the prestigious Nature Catalysis, Nature Communications and ACS Catalysis journals. He co-authored international patents, has a passion for popularising science, playing historical musical instruments and performing medieval and folk music.

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