**University of Manchester Medal of Honour**

**Presented to Nick Bent and Abigail Shapiro on 28 February 2024**

**Citation:**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am honoured to be here tonight to present the University’s Medal of Honour to Nick Bent and Abigail Shapiro. Together they founded the Tutor Trust  – a remarkable charity born and based here in Manchester that has made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of less privileged students across the North of England for over a decade.

For those of you that don’t know, the Tutor Trust recruits and trains university students and recent graduates to provide high-quality tutoring to pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds in primary and secondary schools. The Tutor Trust works in partnership with schools, local authorities, and universities to ensure that every child has access to the academic support they need to achieve their potential regardless of family income or postcode.

Since their first session in 2012 in Whalley Range High School – just down the road from here:

* they have grown their activity to impact successfully 6,480 pupils last year across three city regions – Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and Merseyside.
* 98 % of these pupils say they rate their tutor as Excellent or Good (we wouldn’t mind at all if our own students said this about us!)
* The young people they work with averaged nearly one grade higher in Maths and one grade higher in their English GCSEs
* They have also used a randomised control trial to prove that Year 6 pupils who receive 12 hours of tutoring make, on average, three months’ additional progress compared with peers in the control group.

The Tutor Trust doesn’t only work with the University of Manchester – but also with [Manchester Metropolitan University,](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mmu.ac.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7Capril.mcmahon%40manchester.ac.uk%7C0e56e68509f94f7c0d0608dc36c775e2%7Cc152cb07614e4abb818af035cfa91a77%7C0%7C0%7C638445477499279969%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C4000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=AlXRaiMAm3zFp71jBpZPELl%2FPv%2BiwXGOpk%2FF3iiERps%3D&reserved=0)  [University of Salford,](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.salford.ac.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7Capril.mcmahon%40manchester.ac.uk%7C0e56e68509f94f7c0d0608dc36c775e2%7Cc152cb07614e4abb818af035cfa91a77%7C0%7C0%7C638445477499291876%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C4000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=U8qRIrxICSARkHsVYvRlfJ%2BEXaiTzDP5rcIiV38lAOc%3D&reserved=0)the [Royal Northern College of Music](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.rncm.ac.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7Capril.mcmahon%40manchester.ac.uk%7C0e56e68509f94f7c0d0608dc36c775e2%7Cc152cb07614e4abb818af035cfa91a77%7C0%7C0%7C638445477499303382%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C4000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yMfm9F4nyyku2Oid4PhC4NnTtEgobdjeKS%2BwU7MZvTM%3D&reserved=0) and higher education institutions in Leeds and Liverpool. However, we are, of course, very proud of our own founding connection to the charity. The first training of tutors began in partnership with this University – and in its early days the charity relied almost exclusively on University of Manchester students.

We are really proud to say a positive working relationship continues today where we:

* host an annual reception for the Tutor Trust;
* provide a significant proportion of tutors from our student base, particularly involving those Manchester students who themselves come from widening participation backgrounds;
* have many UoM alumni working for Tutor Trust;
* and partner with them on a School of Education research project looking at how language and training on poverty can be more inclusive and improve educational outcomes for learners.

So we honour and thank you, Abigail and Nick, for the quality opportunities you have given for so many University of Manchester students to enhance their sense of civic duty. These experiences support them as socially responsible graduates of tomorrow – many of whom go on to forge successful careers in education as a direct result of this experience.

We also want to honour you both personally for the work you have done to forge such successful partnerships with our University.

Nick, we know that you have more recently gone on to be the CEO of UpReach. This is of course another social mobility charity we partner with in ensuring our least advantaged graduates are not held back by their social background. We really value this continuing relationship and thank you for this.

And Abigail, on top of your work at Tutor Trust we appreciate the wider support you offer our University through your contribution as a member of our General Assembly. I am told, reliably by Julian, that you‘re an incredible connector and wider advocate for our University and that the words “no” or “too difficult” don’t seem to form part of your vocabulary!

Nick, Abigail, your values in establishing Tutor Trust – for education to improve the world and create a better tomorrow – are also those of The University of Manchester.

In the words of Agnieszka Palasz, a Primary Tutor and current undergraduate in Mathematics here at the University of Manchester: “Being a Tutor means that I can be the support I wanted when I was younger.”

We thank and honour your partnership, your fraternity (or sorority indeed) and the impact you’ve made together through the Tutor Trust. And we look forward to working with you to transform even more lives together over the next decade.