

GURU NANAK SOCIAL MOBILITY SCHOLARSHIPS

Announcement

1. Mukhtiar Singh and the Sikh Education Council are delighted to announce the result of the second Guru Nanak Social Mobility Bar Scholarships.
2. The aims of the scholarships are:
 - a. To improve social mobility in professions perceived to be out of reach for those from poorer backgrounds. This will be achieved through financial awards, mentoring and work placements.
 - b. To encourage a wider understanding of Sikh jurisprudence by considering whether society may learn from Sikhism for the benefit of us all. To achieve this, applicants are asked to write an essay on the topic. This year's essay question was, "*What is Sikh Jurisprudence*".
3. Whilst no feedback is provided, the best answers engaged with the second aim of the scholarships and demonstrated the requisite skills for becoming barristers (researching; persuasive writing; structured and logical arguments; and analytical ability). In considering the quality of the essay, we consider the stage of the applicant's studies as well as the obstacles they face. It does not matter if we disagree with the points made, but it is important that they are well-argued and sourced.
4. It was once again a difficult decision and there was very little between the top three.
5. The winner is BPTC student **Gemma Grant**. In addition to a thoughtful essay, her ability to overcome a number of significant obstacles is remarkable and indeed inspiring. From a working-class background, she demonstrated an overwhelmingly strong commitment to change career to the Bar. Mukhtiar Singh will provide her with £4,000 to alleviate the

financial burden of pursuing a career at the Bar; and also mentoring for one year.

6. Turning to BPTC student **Brigitta Balogh**. Her application and essay were so impressive that Mukhtiar Singh has decided to award another scholarship and so will be awarding her with £300 and an offer of a work placement. Ms Balogh demonstrated strong commitment to the Bar and despite her own substantial obstacles, has fought (and continues to fight) for the rights of marginalised groups.
7. **Richard Mahal** was the runner up, and he will be offered a work placement. His essay was particularly impressive as was his academic achievements despite substantial obstacles. His commitment to social justice was commendable.
8. All three are congratulated for their impressive applications and thoughtful essays. Despite financial and social disadvantage, they have shown strong commitment and ability to become barristers. Each have their own stories of overcoming significant obstacles, which many are privileged not to face. Of particular note was their pro bono work and commitment to social justice. All three are expected to be successful barristers in the future.
9. Those that were not successful (including the runner ups), and continue to meet the criteria, are encouraged to apply again next year. Assistance with pupil applications will be offered to all of those that made the requisite effort in their applications.
10. The essays will be published on the Sikh Education Council website and on Mukhtiar Singh's website.
11. Chambers and firms willing to provide work placements should please contact Mukhtiar Singh at info@singhbarrister.co.uk. Please state whether you are able to pay for reasonable travel expenses.

Next year

12. There will be another Bar Scholarship next year offering financial prizes, mentoring and work placements. If you are a barrister or Chambers who wish to also provide a Bar Scholarship, please do get in touch.
13. The Guru Nanak Social Mobility Scholarships will be available in other professions in the future, hoping to provide further scholarships for solicitors, doctors and politicians.
14. Any firms or individual solicitors wishing to sponsor a **Solicitor Scholarship** should please contact Mukhtiar Singh at info@singhbarrister.co.uk.
15. Details about next year's scheme will be published at around March/April 2020 on the website (singhbarrister.co.uk) and via LinkedIn.
16. In the spirit of the legal profession, and in the spirit of Sikhism, award winners and runner ups who subsequently secure pupillage through the scheme ("the Scholars") will be expected to participate in the scheme in the future including providing mentoring.
17. It is hoped that as the scheme develops, Scholars will lead engagement in state schools with the Sikh Education Council to encourage the very best potential to consider a career in the Bar, whatever their background.
18. Questions about the Bar Scholarship or the scholarships generally should be directed to Mukhtiar Singh: info@singhbarrister.co.uk
19. Mukhtiar Singh is an Employment and Commercial Barrister at Garden Court Chambers. He is one of the Bar Council's Social Mobility Advocates as part of the #IamtheBar scheme. <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/careers/i-am-the-bar-social-mobility/>