



**“The IB allowed me to gain an appreciation and interest for the arts and humanities, especially history (and by extension sociology), subjects that I continue to read for leisure and enlightenment even during my professional education.**

**Aly Haji**

2008 IB Diploma Programme graduate  
Nicholson Catholic College  
Belleville, Ontario, Canada

Many young students who excel in the sciences are at risk of zealously pursuing them to the exclusion of other subjects. Thanks to the IB, Aly Haji was not one of them. As a 2008 IB Diploma Programme graduate, he attended Trent University for one year to fulfill the requirements for the graduate programme at the faculty of pharmacy at the University of Toronto. While he is studying to be a 2013 bachelor of science candidate in pharmacy and a 2015 candidate for his doctorate, Aly enjoys writing, painting and music composition as well.

In the Ontario Secondary School Diploma Programme, Aly’s abilities stood out. He completed grade 12 calculus in grade 10, achieving a 99% average, as he recalls, “without much work”. Then, he found the challenge he needed in the IB Diploma Programme, where, he says, “IB standard level mathematics required more work and analytic skill. I found this extremely enriching in that it allowed me to view mathematics in a completely different way.”

In fact, the IB prepared Aly so well that Trent University gave him credit for his higher level chemistry, biology and English courses, enabling him to take upper-year courses that he says enhanced and honed the skills needed for pharmacy school. “I am currently one of the youngest students in my second-entry professional programme (having been accepted after only a year of university),” he says. “I attribute this to the IB [Diploma Programme] in providing the capabilities to synthesize knowledge and analyse material—and the fact that I was able to take advanced organic chemistry and genetics classes in my first year of university, thanks to the IB transfer credits.”

But rather than simply accelerating Aly’s education, the IB expanded it. “Perhaps the most important aspect was the enthusiasm for my studies, especially in subjects

in which I normally would not have been interested, such as sociology and history,” he says. “In this sense, higher level English provided me with the skills needed to coherently prepare and write essays in a short period of time, and standard level history provided me with the skills needed to synthesize analyses of information and to an extremely precise and cohesive degree.”

The IB also revealed to Aly the rewards of community service. “My creativity, action, service project included working with mentally challenged individuals on arts and crafts projects and volunteering at a non-profit advocacy firm geared toward the underprivileged,” he says. “I took a lot away from these activities, especially the fact that community service is a duty for those who are privileged. I continue to work with the mentally challenged, both at the group home and in pharmacy practice—and I believe this has informed my career choices and decisions.”

**“The IB has taught me the necessity for infrastructure in a society. After completing pharmacy, I hope to pursue law so as to work in public health in less developed countries, both in the sense of improving the health of a population and working to enhance the social infrastructure.”**



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