

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

“Always keep an open mind and don’t let opportunities pass you by. The IB Diploma Programme opens doors to new opportunities that you may not even know exist.”

Nisarg J Shah
2005 IB Diploma Programme graduate
Dhirubhai Ambani International School
Mumbai, India



What happens when you combine a passion for scientific innovation with a solid educational foundation and a drive to improve lives? You get Nisarg J Shah, a 2005 IB Diploma Programme graduate. Nisarg is striving to transform lives through biomedical innovation by pursuing his PhD in chemical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He credits the educators who influenced him and the opportunities to explore, innovate and be challenged for setting him on his path.

Nisarg is pursuing doctoral studies in chemical engineering at MIT in the hopes of continuing to innovate in the field of biomedicine and translate new technologies from the laboratory into the clinic to make a real difference in the lives of patients. “I have always been passionate about science research and the potential for revolutionary change that it can bring [...] I will continue to pursue new and exciting ideas that have potential to transform lives,” says Nisarg.

Nisarg credits his education for inspiring and nurturing his love of science and mathematics. He comments, “I have been fortunate to have phenomenal teachers in the Diploma Programme (DP). I had great science teachers who went the extra mile as educators and were inspiring mentors.” The role of teacher mentorship continued while completing his bachelor degree in chemical and biomolecular engineering at Johns Hopkins University, where a lab teacher inspired him to pursue a PhD with a focus on biomedical research. His education, Nisarg says, taught him the importance of asking questions in order to do good science.

Nisarg found the high standard and quality of the IB curriculum very well recognized at university. His mathematics and science classes gave him a head start in a number of introductory classes and allowed him to even skip some to get to the core subjects faster. But even with his passion for science, he recognizes the benefits of a broad foundation: “In school, the flexibility of the IB programme really allowed me to sample a wide variety of topics ... and allowed me to make an informed choice for my major. The IB programme allowed me to anticipate what university would be like—and I was looking forward to the experience.”

While in the DP, he found the extended essay to be a profound experience that shaped his thinking. He is especially thankful to his IB teachers and school for offering incredible support by providing advice, resources and equipment for him to shape and pursue his project.

He also cites the creativity, activity, service (CAS) component as an opportunity to explore new areas of learning and to collaborate with peers outside of the classroom, which often presented interesting challenges. “Overall, the CAS experience helped me be more tenacious and persevere to achieve a goal, something that I still appreciate today.”

Nisarg highlights the importance of encouraging future students to be innovative and providing them with opportunities for expanding their creativity. He thinks, “the Diploma Programme does a great job of this—particularly through CAS and the extended essay and I believe that this will continue to distinguish the DP and be very important for higher education.”

“The IB Diploma Programme is internationally recognized. However, the education systems in the US and India are different and it is certainly important to keep in mind their requirements. Planning ahead will help you prepare well. Certainly, the DP will help you stay prepared no matter where you decide to pursue higher education.”

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