

## How did your disability shape your decision to study the program you chose?

As someone on the autism spectrum, my experiences have shaped me in ways that deeply influenced the path I chose. While there are challenges that come with living with a neurodevelopmental disability, being autistic also means seeing the world from a unique perspective. It allows me to hyper-focus on my interests, empathize deeply with others, and notice patterns others might overlook. These strengths, combined with my personal experiences, led me to pursue an Honours BA in Psychology with a Concentration in Child and Youth Development at York University.

Throughout my life, I struggled with reading, writing, and oral communication, especially during childhood. When I was three years old, my parents tried to teach me to speak in Urdu, but I had difficulty selecting words and forming sentences, and my vocabulary was very limited. Concerned, they took me to a doctor, and I was officially diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Because of my language delays, I was enrolled in speech therapy for four to six years. With hard work and dedication, my English vocabulary gradually improved, and I learned to express myself more clearly. Unfortunately, my speech therapy had to stop due to financial difficulties, as my family was also supporting my father, who lives with multiple sclerosis. At school, I often fell behind in reading and had to attend special education classes to catch up. When I moved to a new city and started grade five, I was still learning at a different pace than my classmates and was given easier questions to complete. At the time, I didn't mind I was no longer being pulled out of class like I had been in my old school, and that made me feel more included. When it came time to choose classes for grade nine, I selected the academic-level stream. But shortly after submitting my choices, my teachers called me in and suggested I switch to the applied level. I didn't fully understand why at the time. I assumed my teachers knew what was best for me, so I agreed without advocating for myself. Looking back, I realize that they may have underestimated my abilities because of my learning disability. When I told my mom what had happened, she stepped in to advocate for me. She insisted that I be placed back in academic-level courses and the school agreed. My first semester of high school took place online due to the pandemic. It was a difficult transition, especially because I learn much better

in person. I was unfamiliar with the strict due dates, and I nearly failed French as a result. But once I understood how high school worked, I pushed myself to stay on track. By my second year, when I returned to in-person classes, my marks improved significantly. I earned honours in grades ten, eleven, and twelve something I'm incredibly proud of. Studying psychology in university has felt like unlocking doors I never knew existed. I've started to understand human behaviour, motivation, and mental health in ways that resonate with my own experiences. I've realized that autism isn't something that needs to be "fixed" it's simply a different way of experiencing the world. And I've seen how powerful it is when teachers, parents, and professionals understand and support neurodiverse students. That understanding has led me to my goal of becoming a teacher. I want to bring empathy, structure, and insight into the classroom. I want to be someone who doesn't just teach academic content, but who creates a safe and inclusive environment where all students no matter how they learn can succeed. I want to advocate for students who think and learn differently, to be the kind of teacher who models patience, compassion, and understanding. I believe my autism gives me a unique advantage in this field. I know what it feels like to sit in a classroom and feel overwhelmed by noise or unclear instructions. I also know how powerful it is when a teacher takes the time to understand and believe in you. My experiences offer a perspective that no textbook can teach, and they remind me every day why I chose this path.

Ultimately, my disability didn't hold me back it guided me forward. It inspired me to ask deeper questions, care more intensely, and fight for a world where differences are not just accepted but celebrated. My autism isn't separate from my academic and career goals it's at the heart of them.



Office of the University Registrar  
4700 Keele St. Toronto ON Canada M3J 1P3  
[www.yorku.ca](http://www.yorku.ca)

July 12, 2025

Reference: Maha Aziz, Student Number 221452198

Dear Sir/Madam:

This is to certify that Maha Aziz is currently enrolled and registered as a full-time student in the Faculty of Health at York University for the Fall/Winter 2025 - 2026 academic session.

Normally each course is comprised of a minimum of 3 hours of instruction per week. There may be additional tutorials and labs. Attendance is not kept.

The Fall/Winter 2025 - 2026 academic session will begin on Sep 01, 2025 and will end on Apr 30, 2026.

Yours truly,

Keshia Gray  
University Registrar & Assistant Vice Provost

This letter was generated by the student, via York University's secure student protocol/portal.

This information is valid as at Jul 12, 2025 05:02 PM.

Part 1: Physician or regulated health care professional information		
First name:		Area code and telephone number:
Komal		905 887 3222
Last name:		
Lindzon		
Specialty:		
Indicate all that apply:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Audiologist/Speech-Language Pathologist <input type="checkbox"/> Chiropractor <input type="checkbox"/> Neurologist		
<input type="checkbox"/> Nurse Practitioner <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapist <input type="checkbox"/> Ophthalmologist <input type="checkbox"/> Optometrist		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physician - Family <input type="checkbox"/> Physician - Psychiatrist		
<input type="checkbox"/> Physician - Other (specify):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapist <input type="checkbox"/> Psychologist or Psychological Associate <input type="checkbox"/> Rheumatologist		
This form will NOT be accepted if the chart below is incomplete or submitted without a stamp or signed letterhead		
Canadian Provincial/Territorial Licence #	CASO #32240	Place office stamp here - if you do not have an office stamp, you must sign and attach your letterhead to this form
Address	2-9255 Woodbine Ave. Markham, Ontario L6C 1Y9	
		R. LINDZON, M.D. 2-9255 Woodbine Ave. Markham, ON L6C 1Y9 Tel 905-887-2222 Fax 905-887-3655

**part 3: Nature of patient's disability**

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Acquired Brain Injury
- ☐ Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- ☒ Autism Spectrum Disorder  
(e.g., autism, pervasive developmental disorder)
- ☐ Chronic health/medical disability  
(e.g., Crohn's disease, epilepsy, chronic pain, heart condition)
- ☐ Deafened, deaf, Deaf or hard of hearing
- ☐ Functional / mobility impairment  
(e.g., paraplegia, quadriplegia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis)
- ☐ Learning disability

Note: eligibility criteria require that psycho-educational assessments must have been performed in the last 5 years or since the patient was 18. Individual Education Plans are not considered to be acceptable documentation of a learning disability for OSAP or Ontario Learn and Stay Grant purposes.

Answer the following questions:

Has a psycho-educational assessment been performed by a registered psychologist?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

If "Yes", enter the date of the most recent assessment:

Day    Month    Year

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Was a learning disability confirmed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

☒ Mental health impairment

☐ Visual impairment

☐ Other disability not indicated above – Specify:

**Part 4: Mobility/movement and/or sensory impacts**

Check all that apply:

- ☒ No mobility/movement or sensory impacts
- ☐ Ambulation   ☐ Standing   ☐ Sitting   ☐ Stair climbing   ☐ Lifting/carrying/reaching
- ☐ Grasping/gripping/dexterity   ☐ Low vision (after correction)   ☐ Legally blind   ☐ Hearing loss
- ☐ Sensory impacts - Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other - Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe impact(s):

**Part 5: Cognitive and/or behavioural impacts**

Check all that apply:

- ☐ No cognitive or behavioural impacts
- ☒ Attention and concentration   ☒ Memory   ☒ Information processing (verbal and written)
- ☒ Stress management   ☒ Organization and time management   ☒ Social interactions
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Other - Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe impact(s):



This passport is valid for all countries unless otherwise specified. The bearer must comply with any visa or other entry regulations of the countries to be visited.

SEE OBSERVATIONS BEGINNING ON  
PAGE 5 (IF APPLICABLE)

**MEN TIONS ET RESTRICTIONS:**  
Ce passeport est valable pour tous les pays  
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des pays où il a l'intention de se rendre.

VOIR LES OBSERVATIONS DÉBUTANT À  
LA PAGE 5 (LE CAS ÉCHÉANT)

Signature of bearer - Signature du titulaire




75106276

## CANADA



Passport No./N° de passeport  
**AS106219**

Issuing Authority/Autorité de délivrance  
**MISSISSAUGA**



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Ontario

# Ontario Secondary School Diploma Diplôme d'études secondaires de l'Ontario

This Diploma is granted to  
Ce diplôme est décerné à

**Maha Aziz**

a student of  
élève de

Eastdale Collegiate and Vocational Institute

who has fulfilled the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma  
in accordance with the provisions of the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

qui a rempli les exigences prescrites pour l'obtention du diplôme d'études secondaires de l'Ontario,  
en vertu des dispositions du ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario.

Dated at Oshawa, Ontario  
Délivré à

the 26th day of June 2024  
ce 26th jour de

  
Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation  
  
Principal of School / Directeur ou directrice de l'école