

when I was lost, they lit the way

"I am from Afghanistan. After living in Iran for many years, we moved to Turkey. I finished high school there and started studying Computer Engineering at university.

However, before completing my first year, we moved to Canada. When I arrived in Canada, my English wasn't strong enough, so I was placed in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes to improve my language skills. After finishing those classes, I was supposed to go to an adult high school.

But that path seemed almost impossible for me — two years of ESL, followed by at least two more years at adult high school. It felt like the end of the road for my dreams.

Everything changed the day a classmate told me about Academic Upgrading. I was curious and asked her how it worked. At first, I didn't believe it was possible. But then I decided to apply to Durham College Academic Upgrading. They scheduled an online appointment for me.

While I was waiting, many people around me said it was fake, or that I would have to pay a lot of money because nothing like that could be free.

Their words doubled my stress because even dreaming of this opportunity was beautiful. In my anxiety, I reached out to Meagan at Durham's Upgrading department and told her I needed to talk. She answered all my questions, calmed me down, and helped me believe in the process. After that, I started the upgrading courses — and I met incredible teachers.

Because of the efforts of these wonderful people and the Upgrading team, I received an offer from the Dental Hygiene program. I've come a long way and now I'm on the same level as other students.

They helped me more than I ever imagined. When I was lost in the middle of my journey, they lit the way and walked with me. I'm forever grateful to Meagan, my teachers, and the entire Upgrading team. Thank you — from the bottom of my heart — for helping me believe in myself again."

— Asma, Durham College



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