

Both students have, **impressively, been chosen out of 40,248 applicants to Harvard College** this year.

Cover image via The Harvard Club of Malaysia & The Harvard Gazette

According to a statement released by the Harvard Club of Malaysia, Mohamed Aqil and Zad Chin Qi Qi will be part of the Ivy League school's undergraduate class of 2024 that will be starting in September this year.

The 20-year-olds will **also have their studies fully sponsored by Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) and Yayasan Khazanah** respectively.

Both students are products of the national education system with Aqil hailing from Sekolah Agama Menengah Tinggi Tengku Ampuan Jemaah in Shah Alam and Chin from Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan Ave Maria Convent, Ipoh.

They are currently completing their A-Levels at Kolej Yayasan UEM in Lembah Beringin.

Impressively, both of them were chosen out of 40,248 applicants to Harvard College this year.

They will be joining a **select few of 1,908 undergraduate students** who were **successfully admitted**, which is 4.9% of the total applicants.

According to the Harvard Club of Malaysia, the last time a Malaysian student was admitted to Harvard College was in 2017.

An avid debater and tennis player, Aqil has held multiple leadership positions in school and is a voracious reader and writer, particularly of philosophy.

**He told SAYS that he was excited about getting into Harvard, but not just for the institution's famous reputation.**

"[It's] more so for the intellectual experience and educational opportunities than it is the prestige," he said.

"Being in a place **where the brightest minds in the world are concentrated really appeals to me**," he explained, adding that he had always hoped to study overseas and was interested in the flexibility offered by undergraduate programmes in US universities.

It's been 5 months since I got the offer but that moment at 8 a.m. on a Friday when I sujud syukur and cried after checking my email still sticks in my mind as one of the **most surreal moments** of my life hahaha. Alhamdulillah <https://t.co/cJOO2PCc1f> — 'Aqil (@aqilazme) May 20, 2020

Planning to major in Computer Science and Social Studies, Chin has joined several competitions and invented a wide variety of devices, from ones that can detect forest fires to others that can pick up trash.

She has also founded two non-profits, BASE (Basic Aid for Scholarship Essentials) Initiative and Project BAWE (Beating Automation with Education), which are both aimed at helping underprivileged children have better opportunities at education.

Under her leadership, Project BAWE has actually been rolled out in two low-cost housing areas in KL.

Chin told SAYS **she was happy** and **could not believe the news** when she was first told that she was getting into Harvard.

She shared that she has always been drawn to the idea of a liberal arts education.

She had even later received an offer from Princeton University but chose to go with Harvard instead.

"I like Harvard's CS50 professor, whom I got to know when I went for their course on edX," she said, adding, **"I really want to research about the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in**

healthcare tech, and

Harvard medical school is one of the best medical schools in the world."She also encouraged other students who wish to enter Harvard to keep working hard and to give it a try, regardless of their background.

"We all may think that entering Harvard or prestigious universities is almost impossible... It has a low probability, but it doesn't mean it's but it doesn't mean it's impossible! Work hard and keep fighting!"

Nadiah Wan, who is currently the Group CEO of TMC Life Sciences Berhad and also CEO of Thomson Hospital Kota Damansara said that both Aqil and Chin had impressed them during their interview sessions.

"[It was] their intellectual curiosity, maturity, drive, and desire to make an impact in society," she said in a statement by the Harvard Club of Malaysia.

"We believe that not only will they benefit tremendously from the opportunities available to them at Harvard, they will also be significant contributors to the Harvard community."

Meanwhile, Khaw, who is the Director of Research at Khazanah Nasional Berhad, added that they knew these two were not just brilliant students, but also youth with enormous potential to make an impact in the world.

"We wish them heartiest congratulations and we hope that their journey at Harvard will be a valuable experience in shaping them to be the great people we know they can be and to be inspirations for other young Malaysians," he said.

Take a sec to spotlight these 2 amazing young persons who beat the odds & got coveted spots in Harvard College Class of 2024! So, so proud of Aqil & Zad. Confirmation that our youth in Malaysia are our greatest treasure. Please share their story to inspire other young Msians! [pic.twitter.com/MXx4jqfa74](https://pic.twitter.com/MXx4jqfa74) — Nadiah Wan (@lapetitemaligne) May 20, 2020