Gap Year

Gap years can be defined as a transition period prior to pursuing graduate school or establishing a career. Students choose this intentional period of time to gain skills, prepare for exams, or to obtain hands-on experiences in relation to their future career goals.

**SHOULD YOU CONSIDER TAKING A GAP YEAR?**

Can you identify with these statements?

- I’m not sure what to do after graduation
- I want to go to graduate school, but I’m not sure which type of program to pursue
- I’d rather gain hands-on experience than go directly to graduate school

*If so, then a gap year might be just what you need!*

**Taking advantage of this time may include:**

- Exploring an interest or fulfilling a dream you may not be able to pursue in the future
- Developing transferable skills through real-life experiences
- Learning more about yourself through self-evaluation
- Making an impact within a community by volunteering or joining a meaningful organization
- Gaining exposure to different cultures
- Studying for entrance exams such as the LSAT, MCAT, or GREs in preparation for graduate or professional school
- Exploring career fields

**Questions to Consider**

**Location**
- Where would I like to have a gap year experience?
- Should I work abroad or stay in the United States?

**Program type**
- What type of experience am I looking for?
- What do I hope to take away from this?
- How will I benefit my career goals?
- What kind of programs would I prefer: social service, health, environmental, research, education, community development, arts and culture, advocacy, or public service

**Program Length**
- How much time am I willing to commit for a gap period?
- Am I looking for summer, full year, or multiple years?

**Paid or Unpaid**
- Will my student loans be postponed if I participate in this program?
- Will I pile on more debt?
- Is a gap experience realistic and suitable to my personal circumstances?

*Please note that many programs have early deadlines. Be sure to research and prepare accordingly.*
Sample Gap Year Experiences

Medical Programs & Opportunities
- Cope Health Solutions | copehealthsolutions.com
- EMT & Paramedic Training Program | ochealthinfo.com/providers-partners/education-training/paramedic-training-programs
- Post baccalaureate Premedical Programs | students-residents.aamc.org/preparing-medical-school/postbaccalaureate-programs

Law School Programs
- Capital Fellows Program | csus.edu/center/center-california-studies/capital-fellows
- City Hall Fellows | cityhallfellows.org
- Congressional Hunger Fellows | hungercenter.org/what-we-do
- Paralegal Certificate Program | ce.uci.edu/areas/legal/paralegal

Service in the United States
- AmeriCorps | americorps.gov
- City Year Youth Service Corps | cityyear.org
- Congressional Hunger Center | hungercenter.org
- The Greenlining Institute Academy Fellowship Program | greenlining.org
- Public Allies | publicallies.org
- Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs | coro.org
- Peace Corps | peacecorps.gov
- Volunteer for Peace | vfp.org

Programs Focused in Education
- Teach for America | teachforamerica.org
- MATCH Corps | matchschool.org
- JET | jetprogramme.org
- EPIK | epik.go.kr

Environmental Based Opportunities
- Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) | eco.org
- Green Corps | greencorps.org
- Student Conservation Association | thesca.org
- World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) | wwoof.org
- ARCC Programs | arccprograms.com

Post-Graduate Internship Opportunities
- Internships.com | internships.com
- Idealist | idealist.org
- The Carter Center | cartercenter.org
- American University’s Graduate Gateway Program | american.edu

Just for Fun
- Au Pair | aupair.com
- Back Door Guide to Short-Term Job Adventures | backdoorjobs.com
- Cool Works | coolworks.com