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 this 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 at a 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 | www.copehealthsolutions.com
- EMT & Paramedic Training Program | www.healthdisasteroc.org/ems/education_and_training
- Global Pre-Meds | www.globalpremeds.com
- Post baccalaureate Premedical Programs | https://apps.aamc.org/postbac/#/index

**Law School Programs**
- Capital Fellows Program | www.csus.edu/center/california-studies/capital-fellows/
- City Hall Fellows | www.cityhallfellows.org
- Congressional Hunger Fellows | www.hungercenter.org/fellowships/
- Paralegal Certificate Program | https://ce.uci.edu/areas/legal/paralegal/

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

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

**Environmental Based Opportunities**
- Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) | www.eco.org
- Green Corps | www.greencorps.org
- Student Conservation Association | www.thesca.org
- World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) | www.wwoof.org
- Adventures Cross Country | www.arccgap.com

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

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