Some students take a “gap” period lasting one or more years between two major phases of their lives, such as the time between graduating from college and starting graduate school or medical school. It can be a time for exploring a career field, engaging in national or international service, traveling, or working to save money for graduate school and to gain valuable experience.

A Few Considerations
Here are a few questions to ask yourself before doing a gap year:
- How much time can you take?
- Do you need to make money?
- Are you restricted to a certain geographical region?
- Do you need to gain a certain type of experience for graduate or medical school?
Narrowing down where you want to be, for how long, the type of experiences you are looking for, and why will help you in your gap year search.

Career Library Resources
Career Services has a variety of information on “gap” year in the 103 Barnes Hall library or search online at career.cornell.edu/resources. Search the Career Libraries using “gap year” as your key word search. Narrow your search by adding additional key words such as health, teach, international, short term, public policy, etc. Also view a collection of websites in the Link Library.

Sample Community Service Gap Year Opportunities

AmeriCorps State and National
(www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps)
This is the domestic Peace Corps. Types of positions and locations vary across the country. Search by interest like “hunger” and “state.” Full-time volunteers receive a living allowance and receive an award at the end of service, which can be used for paying for eligible post-secondary education.

Serve full-time or part-time, between ten months to one year. You can look in Handshake for postings or search and apply for jobs online by type of position and location. An applicant must be a U.S. Citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien. Deadlines for applying vary depending on specific positions listed.

City Year
(www.cityyear.org) Participants work with students in third-ninth grade who are at risk of dropping out. You serve full-time for eleven months in urban communities and will receive a modest stipend, health insurance, and an education award at the end of service. You must be a U.S. Citizen or legal permanent resident between 18-25 years of age and have a high school diploma, GED, some college, or a college degree. You apply online through their website, and can look for their postings in Handshake. Deadlines vary.

Teach for America
(www.teachforamerica.org) Participants teach for two years in public schools and are paid with benefits. It is a two-year commitment, and teacher training is provided. You must be a U.S. Citizen, permanent resident, or have deferred action for childhood status. Applicants need a 2.5 GPA and should hold a bachelor’s degree by the first day of summer training. Apply online through their website or postings in Handshake. Check website and Handshake for more details and deadlines.

Sample Health Gap Year Opportunities

Community Health Corps
(www.communityhealthcorps.org) This is the largest health-focused, national AmeriCorps program that promotes healthcare for America's underserved, while developing tomorrow's healthcare workforce. Members perform a variety of activities associated with health services and programs for patients and communities, often by functioning as community health workers. You must be a U.S. Citizen or national, or lawful permanent resident to apply. Benefits include a living allowance, health insurance, and an education award.
More Sample Health Gap Year Opportunities

Horseshoe Farm Fellowship
(www.projecthsf.org/gap-year-fellowship) This 13-month program is designed to prepare recent graduates to become leaders in the rapidly changing health and education fields. Fellows work with the Greensboro, AL, community and Horseshoe Farm programs and residents. Focus areas include community involvement and engagement; direct service and support to others; development, management, and leadership of a community-based nonprofit organization; and healthcare system issues. Housing is provided. A driver’s license is needed. There is flexibility in fellow schedules to allow for medical school applications and interviews. The deadline is in early February.

The Wellstone Fellowship
(www.familiesusa.org/about-us/careers/wellstone-fellowship) This is a year-long program in Washington, DC. The Wellstone Fellow’s primary responsibilities include drafting talking points, blogs, fact sheets, and other publications; developing content for the Families USA website and email lists; and other duties. The Fellow will learn about health reform implementation, health equity, the private insurance market, health system improvement, and other important health policy issues. You will develop an understanding of the tactics and strategies used in state-based consumer health advocacy organizations. This is a paid fellowship with a deadline in early February.

Sample International /Other Gap Year Resources

BUNAC
(www.bunac.org/) This organization offers flexible, paid work and travel programs in Canada, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. It also has volunteer and teaching placements in Africa, South and North America, and Asia. Internship programs are also offered in Great Britain, South Africa, Australia, Spain, Asia, and Central America. There is a cost associated with these programs.

Global Volunteer Network
(www.global.volunteernetwork.org) The vision of this organization is to connect volunteers with communities in need, with a particular focus on vulnerable women and children. Length varies from one week to longer. Fees cover food and lodging.

Idealist
(www.idealist.org) This organization’s mission is to close the gap between intention and action by connecting people, organizations, ideas, and resources. The site offers a database of domestic and international nonprofit jobs, volunteer opportunities, internships, and more.

Peace Corps
(www.peacecorps.gov) You serve abroad for two years working directly with communities to build capacity in agriculture, education, health, youth in development, the environment, and community economic development. It takes six months for the application process. Students apply for a specific program/country. For more information, contact Cornell’s Peace Corps campus representative at peacecorps@cornell.edu.

Dave’s ESL Café
(www.eslcafe.com) This is the internet’s meeting place for English as a second language and English as a foreign language teachers and students from around the world.

Handshake
Use Handshake for looking for short-term jobs, fellowships, and gap-year opportunities.

To learn more about gap-year options schedule an appointment with an advisor either stop in 103 Barnes Hall or 607-255-5296.