

Gap or Bridge Year Options

Cornell Career Services

Resources

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.

Resources

Career Services has a variety of information on this topic in the 103 Barnes Hall library. You can search the career library holdings by going to career.cornell.edu/Resources/Search Career Libraries. Use the “Keywords” search box at the left top of the screen and enter gap year. You can add words to your search such as health, teach, international, short term, public policy, etc. From the Resources page, you can view a collection of websites through the Link Library tab at the right and look at resources under “Gap” or “Bridge Year.”

Sample Community Service and Health 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. You can 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. You serve full-time or part-time, for a period not to exceed twelve months. 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. You must be 17 years old or older. Deadlines for applying vary depending on specific positions listed.

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

Horseshoe Farm Fellowship

(www.projecthsf.org/gap-year-fellowship) This one-year (13-month) program is for recent college graduates interested in 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.

Teach for America (www.teachforamerica.org) Participants teach for two years in public schools and are paid with benefits. You must have a bachelor's degree by the first day of summer training. It is a two-year commitment, and teacher training is provided. You must be a U.S. Citizen, national permanent/resident status, or deferred action for childhood arrivals recipient. You must have at least a 2.5 GPA, and you can apply online through their website. You can also find postings through Handshake. Check their website and Handshake for more details and deadlines.

Sample International/Other Gap Year Resources

BUNAC (www.bunac.org/) This organization offers flexible, paid work and travel programs in Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and North America. It also has volunteer and teaching placements in Africa, South and North America, and Asia. There is a cost.

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.

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 plus three months for training, working directly with communities to build capacity in education, health, youth in development, the environment, community economic development and agriculture. It takes six months for the application process. Students apply for a specific program/country. For more information, Cornell's Peace Corps campus recruiter can be reached at peacecorps@cornell.edu.

The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (www.jetprogramme.org/en/) This program, sponsored by three Japanese ministries, aims to promote internationalization in Japan's local communities by improving foreign language education and fostering international exchange at the community level. Appointments are for one year and are paid. You must have a bachelor's degree. Check Handshake and their website for more details and deadlines.

Handshake (www.cornell.joinhandshake.com/) for looking for short-term jobs, fellowships, and gap-year opportunities.

To learn more about gap-year options that are right for you. Schedule an appointment with Rita Boratav, 103 Barnes – 607-255-5296.