

Considering a Gap Year?

What is a Gap Year? Is it right for me?

It's taken after high school graduation, focuses on experiential learning, to deepen one's practical, professional and personal awareness. Typically, students use this time to travel, work, or volunteer and figure out what they want to study when they eventually return to college. Some students may be experiencing burnout and are taking a break to focus on their mental health.

Will a Gap Year affect my Financial Aid?

That depends. **Some scholarships do not allow you to defer funds. So you want to make sure and understand the requirements of any scholarship you receive prior to deciding on a Gap Year.** Grants and Federal Financial Aid can be re-applied for every year, and your eligibility only changes if your family's financial situation changes. If you have already received student loans and decide to take a Gap Year after completing some college, then you will have to start making loan payments. But once you re-enroll in school, payments will be deferred again until you finish or stop.

Do I need to complete an official Gap Year Program?

You don't. But keep in mind colleges expect to see more maturity and more direction from applicants who took time off. There needs to be some connection between how you spent your Gap Year and your future academic goals. Time spent during a Gap Year should enhance your academic profile. Just working some part-time hours and living with your parents might not demonstrate enough growth.

What if I've already been accepted to college?

Experts suggest not making your plans to take a Gap Year part of your college applications—it doesn't make you a more attractive candidate. Once admitted, have a conversation with the Admissions department and notify them that you are considering a Gap Year. They will likely ask for more information about why you want a Gap Year and may require some paperwork. Some schools may have policies regarding how students can take a Gap Year, and they may require you to check in mid-year to make sure your plan to enroll the following year is still on track. They could also stipulate that you can't take classes at another institution, which could possibly change your status to a transfer student. Generally, schools will allow you to defer enrollment by paying a deposit to retain your spot and enrolling after the Gap Year. Keep in mind that Decision Day for most colleges is May 1st. Final decisions regarding your enrollment in the Fall would need to be communicated to schools by that deadline.

How can I find a Gap Year Program?

There are many Gap Year programs out there, both in Colorado or even nationally. You will need to spend some time researching opportunities to find one that fits your interests and goals best. Here are some websites that can help you get started.

[How a Gap Year Prepares Students for College](#)

[Gap Year Programs for Adventurous Spirits](#)

[Denver Gap Year \(faith-based programs\)](#)

[Devil's Thumb Ranch Resort & Spa Gap Year](#)

[Gap Year Programs through YMCA of the Rockies](#)

[A Parent's Guide to the Best Gap Year Programs](#)

[AmeriCorps](#) (lodging and travel expenses are covered and you can earn money for your education)

