

Gap Year & Spring Admit Opportunities

In recent years, U Prep students who have chosen a gap year (or were offered spring admission) have spent their time “off” doing some of the following:

- Global Citizen Year
<http://globalcitizenyear.org>
- Travel to Israel
- Working on an Organic Farm (“wwoofing”)
<http://www.wwoof.net>
- Self-generated employment/volunteer work
- Taking classes locally

Increasingly, students are choosing to take time off between high school and college, and colleges are offering students the opportunity to enroll in the spring (instead of the fall) as a forced “gap semester.”

Reasons why students choose a gap year are wide and varied. It is a very individual and personal decision for each student and their family. Many see the time before college as a natural break in a student's progression along the academic path. Some reasons why students take advantage of this time are:

Maturity: They are old enough to travel on their own and it is often the first time that they experience and identify themselves as separate from family and friends, an important step in their maturation.

Autonomy: It is often the first time that they are exercising a substantive choice regarding what it is that they want to do with their lives, for at least a semester or a full calendar year. Since students view it as their time away from school, they take more responsibility for it and for themselves.

Independence: They get a chance to focus on their interests and decide what they want to do in college, they develop independence and the ability to work on their own, they create a network of contacts to use in their future and most important they have a sense of accomplishment and pride in themselves when their year is completed.

Preparation: They are not academically or emotionally prepared for the rigors of college. They need a respite from their studies and the time away from school provides a non-traditional educational experience for them. During this time off, students develop the necessary skills for a successful college experience.

Remember that taking time off isn't for everyone. If you already know exactly what you want to major in, and you think that you are mature enough for the intense work that comes along with college, then you probably want to continue on to college right after high school. Weigh your options and pick the best choice for you. If you do decide to take time off and haven't been offered spring admission, it is best to apply to college during your senior year of high school. After you receive an acceptance to the college, you can request to have the acceptance deferred for one year; most colleges will allow you to defer. Be sure to make a plan and set goals for your gap year. Decide on an activity that will be beneficial for you in the long run, such as volunteering in a foreign country, exploring different career paths, or improving your study skills. Whatever you decide to do, one thing is for certain: you will enroll in college a changed person.

I've been offered spring admission – what does that mean?

Increasingly, colleges and universities are offering first-year students admission for the spring term of the academic year instead of the traditional fall semester – frequently called “January,” “February,” or “Spring” Admission. Why?

- There are more on-campus beds available in the spring than there are in the fall since more students tend to study abroad in the spring and because colleges can expect a certain amount of attrition each spring.
- With increasingly competitive application pools, spring admission is a great option for students who want to attend a particular school but for whom there wasn't enough space in the class for the fall term.
- Spring admission is offered only to students for whom the adjustment will be relatively easy socially. Because these students will be arriving during the middle of the school year, university administrators are confident that they will be able to handle the mid-year transition.

What are the benefits of a spring admit?

- Spring admits have a refreshing break from school between high school and college.
- If you graduate mid-year with the rest of your spring-admit cohort, it means you get an extra summer before becoming an adult.
- More jobs and internships are available for college students during the school year than in the summer when competition isn't as steep.
- Spring admits are part of a smaller cohort of students who often become very close to each other because they are in a similar situation.

What am I going to do in the fall if I'm not at college like all my high school friends?

- Travel. Take classes overseas and learn a foreign language. Take a road trip around the Pacific Northwest. Go trekking in Nepal... or Alaska.
- Take classes – whether you are enrolled at a University overseas, a university at sea (*have you heard of the Seamester?*) or the community college down the street, you'll want to make sure the credits transfer.
- Volunteer nearby, or if you're feeling adventurous, go farther away.
- Get a job elsewhere – a fishing boat in Alaska! Working on an organic farm!
- Get certified – as a lifeguard, a Wilderness First Responder, a yoga instructor, or whatever else you didn't have time for in high school.
- Get a job at home for a few months to earn money to support the above activities for a few months (and gain some extra time to hang out with your siblings or your favorite pet).
- The options are endless, and you won't have any regrets. When else in your adult life will you have such wide-open opportunities?

Programs and Websites to Explore:

American Field Service

www.afs.org

AmeriCorps (Corporation for National Service)

www.cns.gov/americorps

Amigos de Las Americas

www.amigoslink.org

Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies

www.ausable.org

Bard College Berlin

www.berlin.bard.edu

British American Education Foundation

www.baef.org

Bridges: Study Abroad

www.bridgesstudyabroad.com

Broad Reach

www.gobroadreach.com

Center for Interim Programs

www.interimprograms.com

City-Year

www.cityyear.org

Dynamy	www.dynamy.org
Earth Corp	www.earthcorps.org
Earth Watch	www.earthwatch.org
Full Sail Center for Recording Arts	www.fullsail.com
Foundation for Foreign Study	www.fffoundation.org
Gap Year Students at Middlebury	http://middgapyearstudent.wix.com/middgapyear
Global Citizen Year	www.globalcitizenyear.org
Habitat for Humanity	www.habitat.org
High Mountain Institute	www.hminet.org
Global Routes	www.globalroutes.org
LEAPNow	www.leapnow.org
Leysin American School-Switzerland	www.las.ch
Middlebury College Gap Year Resources	www.middlebury.edu/admissions/apply/gapyear/bibliography
National Outdoor Leadership School	www.nols.edu
NACEL Open Door	www.nacelopendoor.org
Outward Bound	www.outwardbound.org
Oxford Advanced Studies Program	www.oasp.ac.uk
Rotary International Exchange	www.rotary.org
Sea Mester	www.seamester.org
Student Conservation Association	www.sca-inc.org
Studio Art Centers International Florence	www.saci-florence.org
StudyAbroad.com	www.studyabroad.com
Up With People	www.upwithpeople.org
Taking Off	www.takingoff.net
The School for Field Studies	www.fieldstudies.org
TASIS Schools	www.tasis.com
Where There Be Dragons	www.wheretherebedragons.com
World Learning	www.worldlearning.org
World Wide opportunities on Organic Farms	www.wwoof.net

Books and Resources

Gap Year Guidebook 2010. Wendy Bosberry-Scott. 2010.

Gap Year: How Delaying College Changes People in Ways the World Needs. Joseph O'Shea. 2013

Lonely Planet The Gap Year Book. By Joe Bindloss, Charlotte Hindle, and Andrew Dean Nystrom. 2005.

Lonely Planet The Big Trip. 1st Edition 2008.

Planning Your Gap Year: Hundreds of Opportunities for Employment, Study, Volunteer Work and Independent Travel. Nick Vandome. 2005.

The Complete Guide to the Gap Year: The Best Things to Do Between High School and College. Kristin M. White. 2009.

Your Gap Year: Everything You Need to Know to Make Your Year Out the Adventure of a Lifetime. Susan Griffith. 2010.

What is a Post-Graduate (PG) Year?

A PG Year is essentially a 13th year of school or a second senior year of high school that students might choose to strengthen academic skills, participate in sports and build an athletic resume, retake standardized tests, improve chances of admission, or for a little extra time to mature. There is only one school which offers a PG Program exclusively: Bridgton Academy in North Bridgton, Maine (www.bridgtonacademy.org). For a complete list of schools that offer PG Years, visit: privateschool.about.com/od/students/qt/pgyear.htm.