

The Gamecock's Guide to a GAP YEAR



Is a Gap Year Right for You? Professional School/Graduate School Tracks

WHAT IS A GAP YEAR?

A gap year is a period of time between completing your undergraduate education and beginning professional or graduate school. Despite the name, a gap year does not have to be exactly one year. Some students take one year, while others take two or more years before continuing their education.

Taking a gap year does not mean that you are falling behind. When used intentionally, this time can provide an opportunity to strengthen your application, gain meaningful experiences, prepare for entrance exams, improve your academic record, explore your career interests, or simply ensure that you are prepared for the next step in your professional journey.

WHY TAKE A GAP YEAR?

Students choose to take a gap year for a variety of reasons. This time can be used to strengthen your professional school application, gain additional experience in your intended career field, complete prerequisite or academic enhancement coursework, prepare for an entrance exam, work and save money for future educational expenses, or take a break from academics before beginning a rigorous professional program. When approached with clear goals and a plan, a gap year can be a valuable opportunity for academic, professional, and personal growth.

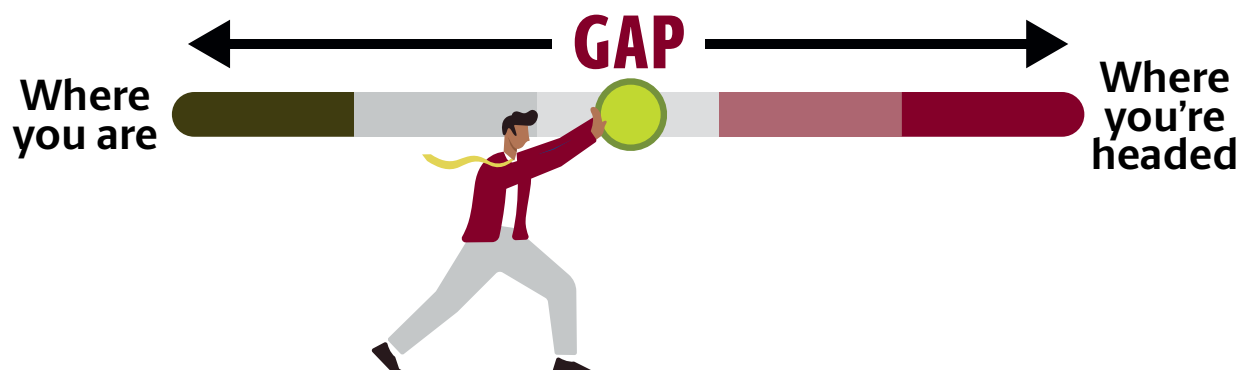
WHAT CAN YOU DO DURING A GAP YEAR?

As you are thinking about taking a gap year, create a plan for your time. Depending on what your reasoning is for taking a gap year and the end goal in mind, there are a variety of options for what you can do. If professional school is a goal for you, check out potential ways you can make your gap year work for you in the table below.

RESOURCES

- ✦ [Pre-Professional & Graduate School Pathways](#)
- ✦ [Gap Year for Medical School](#)
- ✦ [Gap Year for PA School](#)
- ✦ [Admission Blogs & Guides](#)
- ✦ [Gap Year for Law School](#)





SCHOOL	OPTIONS FOR WHAT TO DO DURING GAP YEAR	
GRADUATE (GENERAL)	- Find a job or internship related to your interests - Participate in research - Volunteer or participate in service opportunities	- Strengthen your résumé or CV - Complete prerequisite or additional coursework - Explore graduate programs and career options
LAW	- Prepare for and take the LSAT - Work in a legal or non-legal position - Pursue an internship - Participate in public or national service	- Volunteer in your community - Gain professional experience that develops communication, leadership, research, and critical-thinking skills
MEDICAL	- Gain clinical or healthcare experience - Shadow physicians and other healthcare professionals - Participate in research - Volunteer or engage in community service	- Prepare for and take the MCAT - Complete prerequisite coursework - Consider post-baccalaureate or academic-enhancement coursework, if needed
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT	- Gain direct patient care hours - Work in a healthcare setting - Shadow physician assistants and other healthcare professionals - Volunteer or participate in community service	- Complete outstanding prerequisite courses - Prepare for required admissions assessments, if applicable - Continue exploring and learning about the PA profession
PRE-HEALTH	- Explore different health professions and specialties - Gain healthcare or patient care experience - Shadow professionals in your intended field - Participate in research	- Volunteer or engage in community service - Complete prerequisite coursework - Prepare for required admissions exams, if applicable - Continue strengthening your professional school application

Overall, this time primarily between your undergraduate degree and professional school can be valuable. It is okay if your journey to your end goal looks different from others. Create a plan, seek support along the way, and do what is best for you.



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