

Why and How to **DEFER FROM COLLEGE**

Did you know that more high school graduates than ever are choosing to defer from college to pursue a gap semester or year? It's true and there's a clear reason why – taking time off before college is beneficial for students and the universities they in which they chose to defer. In fact, of the top-tier colleges across the country – the majority openly help students take time off.

Why colleges support time off.

Students who take time off typically return with a higher level of self-awareness, confidence and a motivation to learn. Students who possess such traits when they arrive on campus tend to graduate faster, avoid transferring to another school, and contribute more to the overall campus culture. It's because of these facts that most universities are supportive of students who defer their admission.

“Deferring can be helpful whether students are pursuing things that represent a passion or interest that they want to delve into more deeply before they jump into their college experience.”

MICHELLE PLACEK,
Director of Marketing and Communications
at John Hopkins University

“Taking a constructive year off can help augment what a student has done in the high school classroom. And students who take the time are much more prepared to succeed on campus – they typically come in ready to succeed,”

HEATH EINSTEIN,
Dean of Admissions TCU

Benefits of time off before college*:

98%

agreed that a gap year helped them develop as a person

93%

said their gap year helped them develop communication skills

84%

acquired skills to be successful in their career

96%

reported an increase in self-confidence

88%

said their time off made them better candidates for employment

Did your parents know that? Well, they should! ***Times have changed.***

****According to the American Gap Association***

So How Do I Actually Defer from College?

How do you tell them that you want to attend...just not this coming semester? It's actually fairly simple, but the process does change depending on which institution you choose to attend.

1. Contact admissions and let them know that you plan on attending.

This step typically happens in the month of May once you've received your college acceptance letter. All you have to do is confirm as if you would attend the school in the fall. This will allow the university to start getting all of your paperwork in order.

2. Ask about their deferral policy.

You need to find out the specific process for your university. It will no doubt require writing a letter (we talk about that below) but you need to understand each step so that you don't miss one! You can also check the American Gap Association's database. The database lists most college's policies on Gap Year deferral and is organized by state.

It's also important to check and make sure your university will allow you to take one semester off if you plan on deferring for half a year. You will need to do the same with scholarships. If you've been offered financial assistance with your initial acceptance letter, it doesn't mean you're guaranteed that same offer when you return. In several cases, you have to reapply for financial aid and scholarships, but almost all students are granted the same amount or more in scholarship money when they are forced to do this the following term.

3. Firm up your gap semester or gap year plans.

Colleges will want to know what you are doing before you rejoin them later that year. They will want to know how they can best support you and when they can expect you on campus. It is imperative that you plan your time off. Pick your program and outline your year based on the dates of the program and the dates you intend to go back to school.

4. Send your "Intent to Defer" letter.

Take what you have done in step three and write a formal letter or email to the admissions office (or wherever you found out you need to send it in step #2). If your university requires more information, ask your gap semester or gap year program to write the university a letter. This will lend a validation to your intention and assure the university that you have a plan. The due date for this letter varies depending on your university. Gap Global is happy to provide an Intent to Defer letter upon request.

5. Be relentless about follow up tasks.

Inevitably, your university will need you to fill out certain paperwork and confirm your plans. It won't take long, but make sure to complete these as soon as possible and don't make them wait.

6. Commit to your gap semester or gap year program.

The steps above can be complete within a matter of a few short days. Once they are, be sure to secure your spot in the gap program of your choosing. Don't wait around; you might lose your spot!

7. Go have a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

This is your time to explore! Go make the most of it during your gap semester or year.