

Your Gap Year

Taking a Gap Year can create a lot of questions. Making plans for this time will help you to get the most out of it!

The list of questions and answers below are fairly generic as there are too many options and occupations for this to be specific, should you wish to discuss your personal situation please make an appointment with one of the qualified team at the Career Development Centre.

What do I want to achieve from my gap year?

Is it a break from studies, is it to earn enough money to qualify for Austudy, is it to build workforce employability skills, is it to explore the world? Is it more than one of the above or another reason altogether? Once you have established what you want to achieve in your gap year, you can begin planning.

What skills do I want to gain or improve?

Focus on your long term goal, what skills or experiences would be helpful in the future. E.g. Bachelor of Education – skills required include communication, a passion for learning, dedication to social, emotional, physical and psychological development of children, high levels of literacy and numeracy, organisational and time management abilities.

How can you gain these skills? Have you thought about possible options such as – Employment or Volunteer work in Childcare Centres, Schools including LAP and other reading programs, after school and holiday care programs, Library including school holiday programs, babysitting, swimming instructor, summer camp counselor overseas etc – Can you see where we are going?.

By getting involved you can be gaining skills to help you later on and possibly put you in front of the pack for job opportunities down the track, plus you get to experience if this is really the type of job you want to be doing.

What employer wouldn't look at someone who has shown an interest in there field not only by doing the study but by gaining workplace experience.

**Make
The
Most
Out
Of
Your
Gap
Year!!!!**

**Things to
think
about when
planning
your
Gap Year**



Career Development Centre

Who would offer me the opportunity to gain these skills?

Once you have determined the skills and experiences you would like to gain, think about the types of places where you could gain these skills. For example, If your long term plan is in Business, think about the organisations that may put on a trainee – larger companies such as Forestry SA, Carter Holt Harvey, Auspine, Scott's Agencies, Kimberley Clark, VanSchaiks, Local Council, Natural Resource Management Board, Law Firms, Hospitals, Real Estate Agencies, Accountants, Banks and other financial providers. At any of these places you would gain valuable skills and experience and an insight into the work and world of business..

When should I start to approach possible employers? How would I approach them, what should I say?

*You should start to approach employers as soon as possible - planning is great but taking **action** is how you will achieve your goals.*

There are many different approaches to finding work:

- *Cold Calling – going in, introducing yourself, asking to make an appointment to see the human resources manager (or the person who hires), or maybe you will get the opportunity to talk to someone there and then. Explain your situation and what you are seeking. Ask what you can be doing to give yourself the best opportunity of employment with them.*
- *Send a cover letter with your resume, explaining your situation and what you are seeking (an example is attached).*
- *Use your networks – do you know someone who works in or owns the type of business you are aiming at. Do your parents, family or friends know of someone? The “Who” you know can be a very valuable asset – use it to your advantage when possible. 70% to 80% of jobs are never advertised, they are found through word of mouth “ being in the right place at the right time”– make continual contact and give yourself every opportunity to succeed.*
- *Do work experience with the companies, while you are still at school and covered by the school's insurance (some companies don't take work experience people who don't have their own insurance coverage).*

Be persistent – jobs rarely come knocking on your door. Make sure that everyone you know, knows what you are looking for.

What will I be offering them?

*Before you talk to potential employers, think about what you are going to be offering them. In any successful working relationship you **both** need to be giving.*

What are your key selling points – reliable, punctual and honest worker, dedicated to gaining new skills and knowledge, enthusiastic to learn about the industry, excellent work ethic, consistent grades, keen and willing to undertake any duties, available to work any hours, good literacy and numeracy, good time management and organisational abilities, high level computing skills etc.



Career Development Centre

What should I wear and how should I present myself?

Whether you are going in to introduce yourself or attending an interview, you should dress for the position. Your dress should be neat and tidy, and reflect your understanding of the role requirements. (Visit or research the place of employment first if you are unsure of dress codes).

It is a positive if the employer can visualise you fitting into their work place.

How can I ensure that I earn enough money to qualify for Austudy?

This is a complex issue and you are best to discuss your individual situation with a consultant from Centrelink to ensure you know exactly what you are responsible for.

By having a position lined up before the end of the school year you give yourself a better chance of earning as much money as you can. You may find a job that is going to give you all the skills and experience you want, but it does not pay well. Many gap year students make the most of the casual labouring requirements over the summer periods in retail and hospitality and pick up weekend and night jobs as well. This also looks really good on a resume.

The qualified team at the Career Development Centre can assist you with information on casual labouring positions and any other possible opportunities.

Useful Websites

Want to have a working holiday abroad

www.gapyear.com

Want to know more about the Australian Defence Force

www.defencejobs.gov.au/education/gapyear

Local Regional Employment

www.cdc.org.au

Australia Wide Employment

www.careerone.com.au

Centrelink

www.centrelink.gov.au

Jo Blogg
Street Address
Mount Gambier SA 5290
Phone Number
Mobile Number

Individuals Name (Person in Charge of Hiring)
Organisations Name (Dental Surgery)
Organisations Address

To XXXX Organisation

I am currently completing my Year 12 with XXXX School, with the career plan of attending University of Adelaide to study Dental Surgery.

My plan is to take next year (2010) to develop my workforce skills and gain a valuable insight into the Dental industry, prior to continuing my studies. I would like to have an established plan of employment prior to commencing my exams later this year. I am seeking a casual or full time position within this industry and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss any possibilities with you.

Having worked at Target for the past 8 months, while studying, I have gained and developed my time management, organisation, customer service and team working skills. I am reliable and punctual and give 100% at all times. I am flexible to work any hours required and to undertake any role within your Dental Surgery.

I am an enthusiastic and self motivated learner, with the ability to gain knowledge, develop new skills and an understanding of position requirements quickly. I am keen to prove myself to be a valuable and productive employee.

I have attached my resume and I will contact your business within the next week in the hope of arranging a time to talk to you personally.

Yours Sincerely,

Jo Blogg