

TAKING A GAP YEAR

Directorate:
Counselling and
Career
Development
NOVEMBER 2020



Define tomorrow.

UNISA



GAP YEAR

January

Get an advantage with your university application



March

Make new friends

Meet new people



Cultural exposure

May



August

Improve your people skills



Guess what...

Come back with great stories

October



Preparation for the future

December

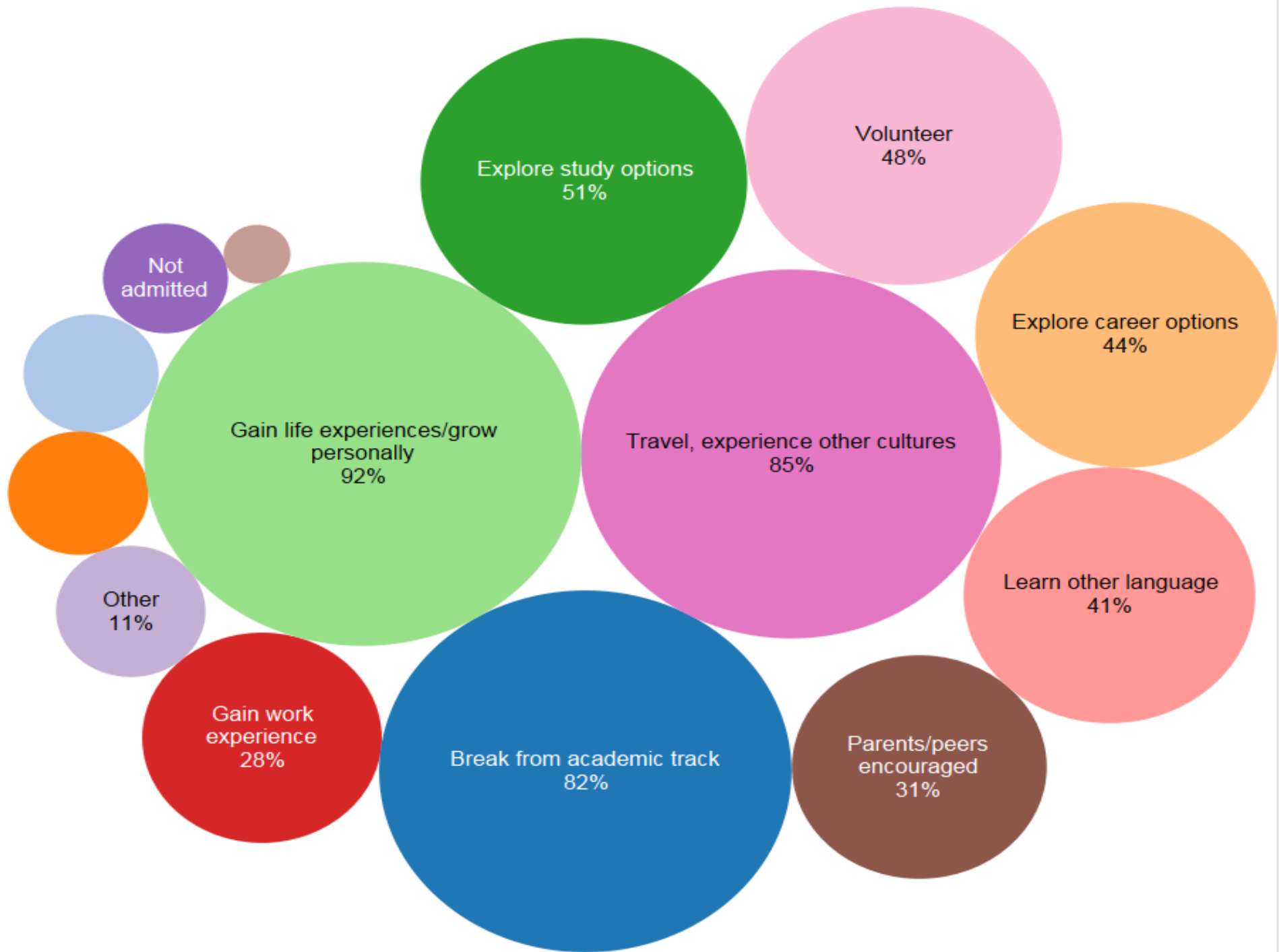


Read more at www.topuniversities.com

What is a Gap Year?

- A **Gap Year** is a semester or year of **experiential learning**, typically taken after high school and prior to career or post-secondary education, in order to deepen one's **practical, professional, personal awareness** and **development**.
- Many students, especially those at risk of academic burn-out, benefit from taking a year off studying so they can return with more energy and motivation

Benefits of taking a Gap Year

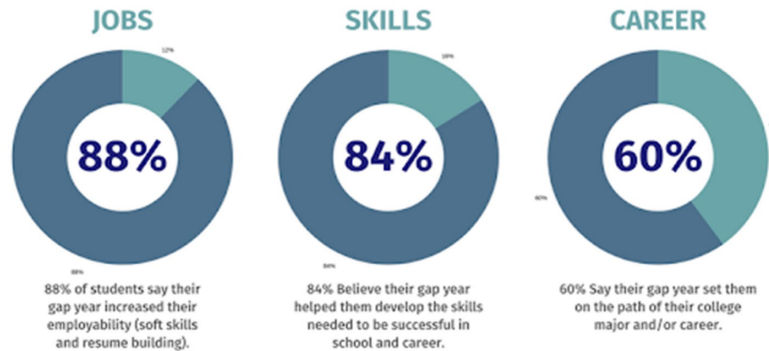


- A gap year is a life-changing experience for any individual and when carefully planned, it can be an enormous boon for professional, academic, and personal development.
- Generally, employers view gap years very favourably as they are looking for more than just a degree from graduates.
- Having additional skills is a huge plus for recruiters and if your gap year can help show off these skills, it is a huge bonus.
- Participating in a gap year displays the qualities many employers look for in a prospect: **courage, teamwork, curiosity, service, leadership skills, open-mindedness** and a **willingness** to try something new.
- The grit you'll acquire can be a **cornerstone to success** and can also give you work experience employers are desperately looking for.

TIPS for a productive Gap Year



GAP YEARS & CAREER READINESS



- The first step to having a productive gap year is to do research.
- Determine what you want to accomplish during your time off.
 - Do you want to travel?
 - Do volunteer work?
 - Do you want learnership, internship, work shadowing, research on careers
- Get inspired by visiting websites dedicated to gap years.
- Capture all the opportunities you identify:
 - Create a list of everything you want to accomplish.
 - Make a Pinterest board with all the gap year possibilities.

Volunteer or Gain Work Experience

- Get your foot in the door for a career that you really want.
- Vastly improve your chances of making it by getting work experience.
- You may want to work for a big major company or a smaller business, or perhaps you want to work in television or gain experience in your chosen degree subject.
- Shadowing someone already in that role is a great way to gain the experience you need.



How to make a Gap Year remarkable



- Do not just go on vacation
- Experience different cultures
- Find work/volunteer experience that is relevant to your career ambitions
- Make sure you get a positive reference
- Keep track of your accomplishments such as skills, and abilities developing.
- Find a cause that's meaningful to you
- Learn a freelance-able skill
- Keep an open mind

Take a Gap Year to figure out your career options

- **Developing soft skills** in a challenging & dynamic setting will really set you apart in the workforce
- **Trying lots of different new jobs** is a great way to see what really gets you motivated e.g. **retail, NGO, public services, libraries**, etc.
- You'll meet some amazing people, build friendships & **professional connections for life**.
- A gap year provides the perfect opportunity to take stock of your career – **no matter your age**
- It also increases your **emotional intelligence** by interacting with different people & cultures



Take a Gap Year to figure out your career options

- Seize opportunities to **develop your technical skills, social skills, interpersonal skills and communications skills.**
- It's always good to **learn what has worked for others & what hasn't**
- A gap year can help you **gain clarity** around your future career path
- **Research about careers of interest** by speaking to professionals in the field.
- Use Google or watch YouTube videos of relevant careers of interest.
- Maturity & independence are natural side-effects of a gap year
- You will learn **what you don't want** to do
- Do online course for computer skills or **improve public speaking, reading English fluently.**
- Keep engaged on topics or books that are related to your career interests

- 1) Volunteering / Service**
to emphasize empathy, hardship, and the interdependence of us all
- 2) Career Exploration / Internship**
to understand what your major might be like in the real world
- 3) Paid Work**
for increased ownership, improved career ambition, and financial literacy
- 4) Free Radical**
allowing some space to explore the unknown is what makes it a "gap year"



Gather information on funding options



- Get more information on the requirement for NSFAS.
- Research about bursaries.
- Get information about organisations and companies that fund students for certain careers.
- Start to apply for funding from different organisations.

Challenges During Gap Year

- Gap years can be expensive, select a place close to your home.
- You might be totally on your own.
- You might lose momentum.
- It's easy to feel like you're falling behind.
- It's hard to keep in touch with friends.
- Gap years require a ton of extra planning.



Benefits of a Gap Year after graduation



A Break from Academia

- Chance to step away from the chaos and enjoy a different pace of life
- Return to your academic pursuits with a renewed energy and excitement, boosting both your performance and your mental health.

Time to Work on postgraduate applications

- Time to reflect on your study experience and use it to craft the personal statements and application materials you may need.

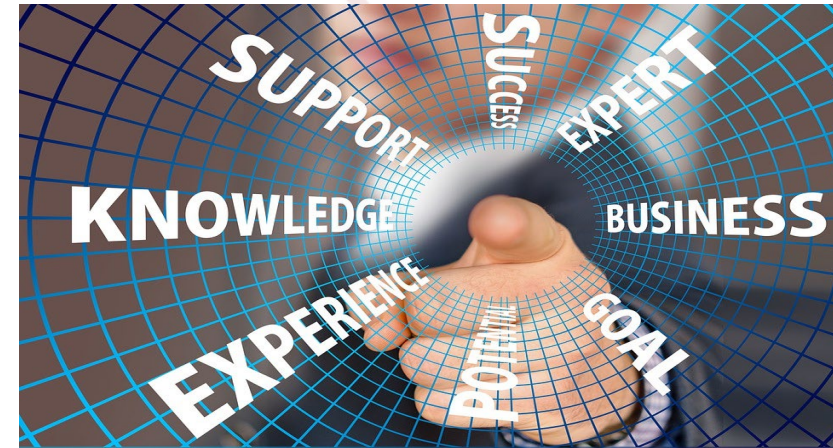
A Chance to Gain Real-World Experience

- If you're lacking in hands-on experience, you can use your gap year to get some.

Time to Boost Academic Credentials

Essential Skills Needed for 4IR

- Complex problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- People management
- Coordinating with others
- Emotional intelligence
- Judgement and decision making
- Service orientation
- Negotiation
- Cognitive Flexibility



Beware of the following issues



- **Human Trafficking** if you are interested in working abroad
- Don't accept job offers where you are requested to pay money upfront, that's a **scam**.
- For Au Pair work make sure you use an agent that is well known and accredited.
- Be suspicious if something sounds too good to be true.

To learn more about planning for a Gap Year:

- <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/rhubarb/gap-year-skills.html>
- <http://www.gapwork.com/gap-year-ideas/work-experience/index.htm>
- <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/10236-productive-gap-year.html>
- <https://www.gviafrica.co.za/blog/what-are-the-benefits-of-doing-a-gap-year/>
- <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/176062666656330190/>
- <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/386324474271358881/>
- <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/gap-year-figure-out-career>
- <https://www.shemmassianconsulting.com/blog/gap-year-after-college>
- [Travel Scams to Avoid – Gap Year Store Blo](#)
- www.gapyeartravelstore.com

A close-up photograph of a desk. In the foreground, a green ballpoint pen lies diagonally on a light-colored surface. Behind it, a white calculator with black buttons is partially visible. To the left, there are two beaded necklaces: one with dark blue beads and another with light blue beads. In the background, a red circular object with some text is partially visible.

The past cannot be changed. The future is yet in your power !

Contact us

We are available by e-mail:

- counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za
- counselling@unisa.ac.za

Visit our website

For more resources like these, visit our website:

www.unisa.ac.za/counselling

Thank you

Developed by:

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