Is it acceptable to take a gap year after graduating in Australia?

As an international student, you've been working on your future ambitions since the time you planned to study in Australia. You proceeded to every next step cautiously regarding admissions, visa application, accommodation, planning your finances while studying abroad, and so on. You managed to complete your graduation in Australia, and you worked very hard to get high scores so you can plan your career ahead. However, you believe that before proceeding to studying at a university in Australia, you want to take a gap year to gain work experience, earn more money, and explore the great outdoors. However, it's a little tricky to take that step before truly understanding the implications of taking a gap year.

In this blog, we're here to explain what it means to take a gap year and whether Australian universities allow it for students.

What is a gap year?

For those of you who are not aware about the term 'gap year'; it includes typically a year (or more) long break from studies taken to commit yourself to experiential learning. This gap is typically taken by students between high school graduation and college enrollment. You can take it by participating in an organised gap-year program, working as an intern or paid employee, volunteering, or travelling independently.

Most often, students are exhausted from studying for clearing, spending the duration of their courses doing assignments and burning the midnight oil to clear their exams. You could say that moving towards another few years at the university feeling burned out as a student after graduation may not be an ideal step forward. So, students want to rest, take a year off, but not with the intention to spend time idle. They do it with the aim to take a break from academics, discover your interests, and further explore their career opportunities in the kind of education they want to pursue.

A gap year can also include the lull period during COVID-19, which is typically different from a traditional gap year. This means that a COVID-19 gap year will look a lot more justifiable than the traditional gap year taken by any student. During the pandemic, many students were offered different ways to continue education. They turned to online internships, jobs, and resources. This included creative work they could do at home, such as writing a book to stay occupied in a productive manner.

That said, a gap year has favoured students struggling with burnout from competitive pressure, and wanting to learn more about themselves. They find this time rewarding in terms of recharging, refocusing, and discovering their interests on their own terms. Therefore, entering a gap year comes with a responsibility of having a strong sense to explore and learn.

Is a gap year acceptable to universities in Australia?

Universities in Australia are flexible to an extent for gap years, and this depends on the number of gap years taken. They allow gap years in your resume with the condition that you can present genuine reasons with reliable documents that justify the gap.

However, the gaps that exceed a year require stronger reasons that if not presented accurately may negatively affect your scope of admissions to study in Australia at the higher-ranked education institutions. So, make sure you have valid documents to support your reasons for taking a gap (if in the case of a gap of more than a year) like work, health or personal problems, and other related issues.

Education institutes love a productive student who is serious about their future, and this is what you should want for yourself as well. Let's say you plan to take a gap year or more than a year, you need to ensure that you've spent this time building your application portfolio. This means that you've taken part in productive activity that is relevant to your area of specialisation. It will help build a solid professional impression, and show your sincerity and seriousness to the university where you apply for admissions.

University admission offices in Australia do not take fake or inaccurate document submissions lightly. So, make sure not to resort to any such action that can lead to a permanent ban on your travel to Australia. Being honest about your activities during the gap years are your best and safest bet while arranging, assembling and submitting documents that resonate with your reasons for taking a gap in your education years.

While a gap year of one or two years is still accepted by most universities in Australia, a longer break such as five years may prove to be a setback for you, especially if you are applying for a Bachelor or lower level courses. This means that your chances of admission at any university might get affected if you've taken a five-year gap.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that you have a solid resume of work experience or valid documents that justify any other genuine cause for the gap. This may not be an easy trip until your admissions get approved, so you should be prepared to provide evidence requested. This could mean for especially for personal reasons such as health or financial issues that resulted in taking a long break after graduation. At the same time, if your reasons do not seem genuine or valid, and the reasons seem like you could've still joined a university under those circumstances, your admissions request may be declined. For instance, if you travelled to explore different parts of the world is not reason enough to expect an approval on admissions after a five-year gap.

Genuine reasons that justify your gap year to study in Australia

There are several activities you can take up during your gap year or years. This depends on your condition and financial status as well. At the same time, many international students sometimes struggle with reasons that are not in their control.

Health issues – It's possible that you may develop a sudden illness that prevents you from enrolling into a university. Upon re-trying admissions after recovery, you must provide the necessary documents like diagnosis and health reports that justify your illness.

Family and financial issues – If you are struggling with family issues, you may be compelled to take a break from your studies. Informing the University of Family Issues back home can increase your likelihood of gaining admissions when the time arrives.

Chances of gaining work experience – Some universities prefer students with some work experience. So, taking a gap year to work at a firm and gain work experience is acceptable as long as you have the experience certificate to prove it.

Preparing for your exams – You may have planned to prepare for competitive and other examinations. And these exams could demand adequate time from students. With an aim to prepare well and get a high score, you could take a gap year from studies. You can justify this break with the help of the scorecard you receive after taking the exam.

There are additional documents that you can provide to justify your gap years, including salary slips, medical certificates, medical reports, appointment letter, experience letter, and course certificates.

Are you planning on studying in Australia? Feel free to talk to our professional counsellors at Expert Education.

Alternate title
Exploring the Gap Year dilemma after graduating in Australia