Career Guide for Post-Graduates

Why Take a Gap Year?

Are you a graduating student trying to decide what to do with your life? For most students, the choice is between graduate studies or employment. However, a third option is readily available in the form of a gap year. A gap year is a great way to pursue lifelong dreams while you figure out the direction you want your life to take. Whether you travel to South America or volunteer in Maine, a gap year is a fulfilling and motivating experience.

For testimonials regarding the personal benefits of a gap year, please click here or refer to the tips section at the bottom of this page.

How Employers Perceive a Gap Year

A constructive gap year is a great way to stand out during the application process. Working in a non-profit or volunteer organization is of course tremendously valued, but even a year spent backpacking is seen as a productive experience, demonstrating self-reliance, flexibility, and communication skills. If you plan on taking a gap year, be sure that you will be able to show concrete instances of how it has developed you as an individual.

For more information on how to market your gap year to employers, please click here.

Employment Options after Graduation

If you plan on entering the workforce directly after school, consider applying for post-graduate internships. Such internships can range from a few months to over a year and are a great way to network within a company and gain valuable experience. While employment for 18 to 29 year olds has dropped nine percent since 2006, the number of internships offered by companies has progressively increased. According to a 2011 NACE survey, companies hire about 58 percent of their interns for full-time positions and find about 39 percent of their full-time workforce within their internship programs.

How to Turn your Internship into a Job Offer

The first step to transforming an internship into a job offer is to land the internship itself. If you are looking for an internship, call the employer directly and have a conversation with them about the position. This not only shows interest, but it demonstrates clear initiative and drive. After any interview, send a handwritten thank-you note. Such seemingly trivial mannerisms will help you stand out and make an impression as a candidate.

Once you have an internship, be sure to develop a professional network. Work hard to make an impression on your employer and always try to introduce yourself to colleagues in your field. If possible, try to develop a mentor-mentee relationship with someone in your office. Professional connections will give you a better chance of being hired within the company you are interning for, or, at the very least, give you a solid reference base for other positions you apply for.

For more tips on how to turn an internship into a full-time job offer, please click here.

Articles and Resources for Recent Graduates

- “So you’ve Graduated College... What’s Next for You? Eight Critical Issues Facing New Grads”
- “Getting a Job Out Of College: Three True Stories and Some Tips”
- “Six Tips for Finding Your First Job After College”