



Independent Gap Advice

<https://independentgapadvice.org/>

Who we are

- Independentgapadvice is an organisation offering impartial advice on any aspect of taking a gap year or shorter break, known as a mini gap, from formal education.
- We do not receive any benefit whatsoever from any of the organisations we work with for the advice we give.






Why take a gap year or mini gap?

- Lots of reasons. But these are the most pertinent:
 - Opportunity to experience new cultures and make new connections.
 - Opportunity to re-assess career options in the light of exam results, or simply to decide what to do next if unsure.
 - Development of skills and attributes that enable young people to stand out in the job market. The days of having a good education and simply getting a job are long gone.




Overview of the gap year market

- Gap year market is complicated.
- Around 100 reputable organisations, usually charities or dedicated small and/or medium-sized social enterprises.
- Other gap year organisations exist. But they vary widely in terms of reliability, quality and reputation.




What makes a gap year organisation reputable?

- No exact definition. But some potential questions to consider.
 - Is the organisation in question UK-based? Or does it have a UK-based representative? Being able to rely on UK law could be important if something goes wrong.
 - Does the organisation in question run its own projects/career experience opportunities? Or does it simply pass your details to a third- party organisation, who may not be reputable/reliable.
 - Is the organisation in question overcharging or even undercharging?
 - Is the project/career experience opportunity genuine?
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Finding a project/career experience opportunity

- Independentgapadvice has a [database](#) of organisations that we know to be reputable/reliable. Covers a wide range of potential options/interests.
 - **Don't just sign up.** Call the organisation in question and ask all possible searching questions.
 - Ask them to put you in contact with a recently returned volunteer/participant.
 - Only sign up once you have done both of these.
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Potential structure



A gap year could last up to 15 months. So structure is the key to success!



June to August: find a project/career experience opportunity.



September to December: raise the necessary funds.



January to April: volunteer on or take part in your project/career experience opportunity.



May to July: undertake independent travel.

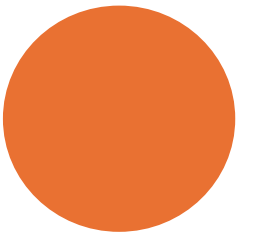
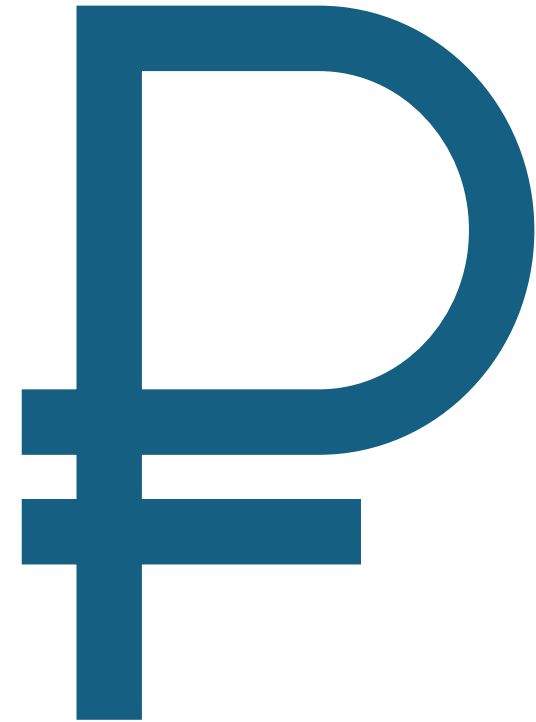


August: volunteer on US summer camp or prepare for university/apprenticeship/employment.



How much do I need to raise and how?

- Around £5000 in the case of a gap year.
- £3000 in the case of a mini gap.
- Should cover your expected expenditure, such as project and travel costs, vaccinations and travel insurance.
- How you raise the money is up to you.
- Possible suggestions include part-time work, sponsored events, babysitting for friends and a family or a combination of the above.
- Set up a bank account specifically for your gap year to ensure you don't spend money earmarked for your gap year by mistake.



Top tips for independent travel

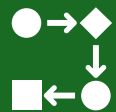
- Don't feel the need to continent surf. You will run out of money very quickly!
- Have somewhere to stay for your first night of independent travel, as you may need this at port of entry.
- Don't feel the need to stay in five-star hotels. Youth hostels are more than sufficient.
- Seek local advice on the key do's and don'ts to stay safe.
- Consider the travel safety courses run by [Objective Travel Safety](#).
- Borders may close at short notice. Be prepared to respond accordingly.



What is a mini gap?



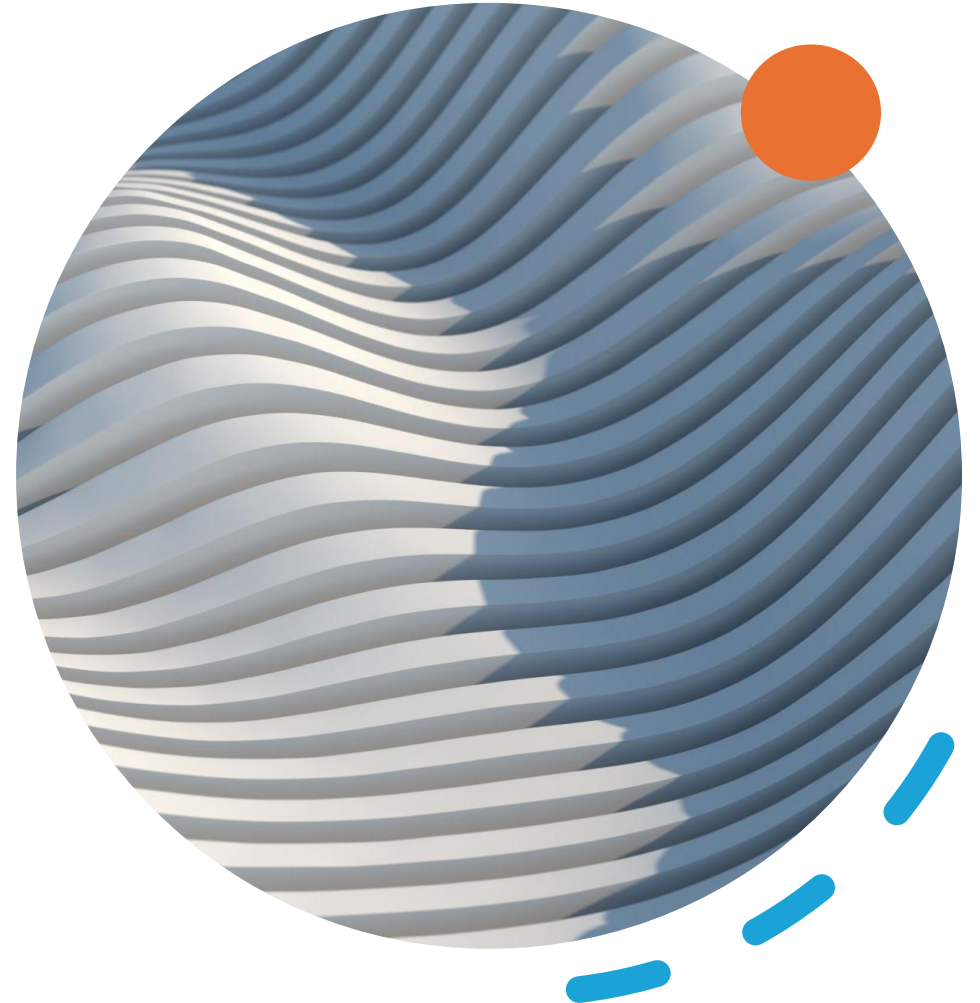
Typically lasts three months and might take place between the end of first year of university and the beginning of second year.



Principles re finding a project/career experience opportunity are the same as with a gap year.



Should expect to be on your project/career experience opportunity for a month to six weeks and then travel for a month to six weeks.



Options within the UK

Depending on your interests, staying in the UK can be better than going abroad.

EDT's Year In Industry scheme is a great example if your interest is STEM subjects.





Contact details

- Callum Russell
 - callum@independentgapadvice.org
 - 07557 916996
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