

# The UnCollege Gap Year Program

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## OVERVIEW

Launched in 2013, the UnCollege Gap Year Program is a 12-month skills-building regimen designed to equip young adults to succeed in the 21st century. Born from decades of educational research and engineered in Silicon Valley, the program blends a structured skill development protocol with the benefits of self-directed learning.

## PHILOSOPHY

The core principle of UnCollege is that people should be empowered to take control of their own choices for education. For many, taking out loans to attend college immediately after high school is a less effective means of discovering their talents and direction than spending a year developing professional acumen. The experience-based program we've created teaches young adults the practical skills they miss in most conventional classroom settings through a blended approach of self-directed learning, accountability training, mentorship, and bounded risk-taking. This method, called Supported Self-Directed Learning, equips participants with the cognitive skills, confidence, and professional aptitudes they can utilize in all future endeavors.

## THE PROGRAM

The Gap Year program helps young people take an entrepreneurial approach to their lives, advocate for themselves, and create their own success. Program participants, called fellows, are guided through a year-long journey of self-directed learning designed to help them build professional competencies, execute ideas, create artifacts that demonstrate their skills, and refine their course through reflection and analysis. These goals are accomplished through a balanced process of personal coaching, group workshops, and expert mentorship.

Gap Year is divided into four phases:



To begin their experience, fellows select a destination abroad for the Voyage phase, working with Gap Year advisors to facilitate placement at an organization where they will work or volunteer. When they return, fellows live together in a Gap Year House during the Launch phase, immersing themselves in our workshop curriculum and working with personal coaches. This is followed by a three-month professional internship at a competitive company or non-profit. Finally, with support from program mentors and advisors, fellows pursue a professional venture of their own choosing which acts as a capstone to the curriculum.

## Coaching

Coaching is the backbone of the UnCollege Gap Year program and consists of three key functions: goal-setting/accountability, perspective, and connecting. The coach acts as a personal trainer for each fellow's personal and professional development. Coaching actively disrupts the idea of "finding your passion" by ensuring that goals are process-oriented, which means fellows are focused on the habits and systems for getting results rather than the results themselves. Coaches help facilitate opportunities for each fellow inside the UnCollege community as well as connecting them to outside resources and professional opportunities.

## Mentorship

Throughout the program, mentors guide and support fellows with field specialized and industry-specific knowledge. Mentors help fellows understand how to best sequence skill acquisition in their field, advise fellows on a strategic path to enter their industry, connect fellows to relevant resources, and give feedback on progress.

## Curriculum

Workshops are delivered four times a week during the Launch phase. Modules focus on optimum learning efficacy, maximizing output, creating value in the marketplace, communicating effectively, building effective networks, and shaping one's vision.

<b><u>Curiosity</u></b>	<b><u>Creation</u></b>	<b><u>Self-Advocacy</u></b>	<b><u>Hard Skills</u></b>
Research What Do I Want to Do How to Learn Informational Interview Emailing	Grit & Growth Mindset Getting Things Done Habits Problem Solving Portfolio	Effective Communication Public Speaking Networking Difficult Conversations How to Pitch	Online Presence Resume / Cover Letter Negotiation Entrepreneurship & Innovation How to Interview

## ON-GOING SUPPORT

The Gap Year program prepares young people for a professional world that doesn't currently exist. But in the modern economy, there is no reprieve from uncertainty so we're establishing the resources to guarantee on-going support in the following areas:

**Education Advising** - Because many fellows want to keep their education options open following the Gap Year program, we provide the services of a professional education advisor for those considering college or university.

**Career Advising** - To match the value that many university alumni associations promise to their graduates, we're establishing relationships with leading career services organizations to provide on-going career advisement to our fellows.

**Financial Advising** - In coming terms, fellows will have access to on-demand financial advising services with our partners at private financial advising companies. We provide this advisement to support our intent that our fellows will use their skills and savvy to make wise financial decisions and avoid pitfalls like excessive student loan debt.

## OUTCOMES

As of the winter of 2015, eighty-five percent of all fellows were working in professional positions prior to the end of the program. Some of the organizations employing UnCollege fellows include:

Campus	DevBootCamp
EL Group Int'l	Fidelis
Fwd.us	Galvanize
GoPOP	Hintside
Learnlol	Lifestreams
Light.co	Onus
Path	Redmart
Socialish	Upshift Partners
Student Energy	Women 2.0

Fellows pursuing college after their Gap Year have attended UC Berkeley, Hult International School of Business, Temple University, and Emory University among many others.

## ENROLLMENT

San Francisco location: 60 fellows per year max.  
 Sao Paolo, Brazil location: 60 fellows per year max.  
 Geographic representation: 16 U.S. states / 14 countries  
 Gender ratio: 59% male : 41% female

Young adults ages 18 to 28 are eligible to participate in the UnCollege Gap Year program.

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