TAKING A GAP YEAR – THINGS TO CONSIDER

We know that students who choose to take a gap year before tertiary study do so for a variety of reasons. These can include:

- taking a well-earned break from study
- taking advantage of a gap year program which is offered by a number of institutions
- qualifying for youth allowance
- experiencing the world of work and building up some financial reserves before commencing study
- to participate as a volunteer in national or international programs

Did you know that:

- About a quarter of young Australians take a gap year after completing Year 12 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research)
- In Victoria:
  - Two thirds of young people who defer take up a university place, with around 12% taking up a VET place and 5% taking up an apprenticeship or traineeship (DEECD research on university deferment)

Some questions to consider:

Will a gap year affect your chances of a scholarship?
Many scholarships come with a ‘no deferral’ condition, so be sure to check the conditions attached to your scholarship before deferring. Demonstrating your expanded experience and community involvement can help you gain a scholarship.

For how long can you defer?
Some universities will allow you to begin your studies mid-year, while others only allow for the usual deferral of one year. Some, on the other hand, are very lenient and allow students to defer for up to two years. This all depends on the institution and the course. Ask the question.

Have you considered other options?
If travel is your main objective then you might like to consider completing an exchange program during your degree, or completing your first year and then deferring to travel.
What are some options if you want to work or volunteer overseas?
Gap year companies (such as Lattitude Global Volunteering, Real Gap Year Experience, Letz Live and Professional Pathways Australia) provide tailored programs to work, travel and volunteer overseas.

How do I qualify for Youth Allowance?
Students from regional or remote areas who earn a designated amount of money during their gap year are able to qualify as independent and receive Youth Allowance during their studies. See the Centrelink website for more information on how you can qualify as independent.

Disclaimer
Any careers advice offered in this article should be taken as general advice. You should also seek advice and clarification from your careers teacher.