

THE GAP YEAR

DEFINITION

The gap year is a period during which a student, enrolled in an initial higher education course, temporarily suspends their studies in order to gain personal or professional experience, either on their own or with a host organisation in France or abroad (Article D.611-13 of the French Education Code).

The gap period is instigated by the student and cannot be made compulsory during the course of study in which the student is enrolled (Article D.611-14 of the French Education Code).

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM A GAP YEAR?

All students enrolled in an initial course leading to a university diploma.

Every study cycle grants entitlement to a gap year.

WHY A GAP YEAR?

The purpose of the gap year, whether spent in France or abroad, is:

- To follow a course of learning that differs from the original one,
- To acquire professional experience:
 - o A work placement of 6 months maximum in the same host organisation, as long as this placement is part of a course of learning in a differing field from that of the original course of learning (Article L.124-5 of the French Education Code and D.124-2),
During the gap year, no placement agreements can thus be signed by EHESP.
 - o A fixed-term job,
- Volunteer work, civic service or voluntary service,
- A project to create a business as a student entrepreneur,
- The development of a personal project.

HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

The gap year can last one semester or one academic year.

It may be taken from the beginning of the first year of the course in the university cycle in question, but never after the final year of the course. At EHESP, it is thus possible to take a gap year:

- During M1, subject to the agreement of EHESP for matriculation in the first year of the master's programme,
- Between M1 and M2, subject to the agreement of EHESP for matriculation in the second year of the master's programme,
- During the first semester of M2, subject to the agreement of EHESP for matriculation in the second year of the master's programme,
- During doctoral studies, for a continuous period of up to one year, in line with the procedures set forth in Article 14 of the Order of 25 May 2016.

WHAT STATUS IS GRANTED DURING THE GAP YEAR?

Student status is retained, as well as the social benefits that are attached to the status.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS:

Before taking a gap year, the student must:

- Obtain the consent of the Director of EHESP, according to the procedure described below,
- Pay the Student Life and Campus Contribution (CVEC),
- Matriculate administratively, and pay the reduced school fees set by ministerial order each year (Article D.611-19),
- If the student is eligible for a social welfare grant, apply for the grant to be maintained during the gap year, on the understanding that the gap year or semester financed by the grant will be counted towards the breakdown of the grant. An international gap year project does not give entitlement to the mobility grants offered at EHESP,
- In the event of a gap year abroad, students should contact their health insurance fund and the Social Security Centre for European and International Liaisons (CLEISS) <https://www.cleiss.fr/> to prepare their departure.

During the gap year, students must:

- Maintain a constant link with the reintegration course head at the end of the gap year, in accordance with the procedures set out in the gap year agreement, keeping this person regularly informed of the progress of the gap year and their situation,
- Validate the semester or year of training that precedes the gap year.

If the student wishes to interrupt their gap year before the term set out in the agreement, then they must apply for early reintegration in writing. Reintegration into the course cannot occur without the written consent of the Director of EHESP.

After the gap year, students must:

- Undertake an assessment of the gap year and present it to their educational supervisor.

The potential allotment of ECTS is not automatically authorised. It requires an agreement, and the setting-up of practical procedures to validate the experience and skills acquired on the part of the teaching staff for the year following the gap year. Any ECTS credits obtained are added to the total number of European credits awarded at the end of the course (Article D.611-20). As such, they are recorded in a diploma supplement.

Students who wish to have their skills highlighted in the form of 3 ECTS credits will benefit from further support to allow them to identify and highlight their skills in the form of a written report and a presentation.

EHESP OBLIGATIONS:

- To issue a student card to the gap year beneficiary,
- To sign a gap year agreement,
- To support the student and provide educational support during the gap year:
 - o Basic support for all:
 - Preparatory support for the gap year:
 - interview with the Director of Schooling and Student Life or their representative,
 - interview with the head of the original course,
 - Supervision during the gap year:
 - access to the REAL educational platform,
 - contact with the educational supervisor, at least twice per semester,
 - Support for gap year assessment:
 - access to a tool to help summarise and assess the gap year (report).
 - o Further support for students requesting a recognition of their skills in the form of ECTS:
 - Basic support,
 - Access to a tool to help assess and highlight the skills acquired,
 - Interviews to help highlight the skills acquired,
- Reintegration of the student into their chosen course at the end of the gap year.

WHEN TO APPLY?

There are three application drives per academic year:

- A spring drive for one- or two-semester gap periods that start from the beginning of Semester 1 of the following academic year,
- A summer drive intended for newcomers, for one- or two-semester gap periods that start from the beginning of Semester 1 of the following academic year,
- An autumn drive for one-semester gap periods that start from the beginning of Semester 2 of the current academic year.

The opening and closing dates of the drives are decided by the Department of Schooling and Student Life and are posted on the EHESP website.

HOW TO APPLY?

The application form is available on the EHESP website and will be given to students after their interview with the Department of Schooling and Student Life.

It must be completed in full, and include the appropriate supporting documents, among which a cover letter setting out the project, the expected contributions and the wish to return to or continue the course of study, a photocopy of the student card, and a certificate from the host organisation, if applicable.

In the case of a gap year abroad, civil liability and repatriation insurance is highly recommended. Students must also provide a signed printout of the country sheet and travel advice from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs website when submitting their application, and once again upon signing the agreement: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/conseils-par-pays-destination/>.

The application file must receive the approval of the head of studies for the original course and for the reintegration course.

The complete file must be submitted to the Department of Schooling and Student Life before the deadline for the submission of files for each application drive.

Any incomplete applications will be considered inadmissible and will not be reviewed.

REVIEW OF THE GAP YEAR APPLICATION:

The application is reviewed in terms of the quality and consistency of the project presented by the student (Article D.611-18 of the French Education Code).

Each complete application will be reviewed by a Gap Year Committee composed of:

- The Director of Studies or their representative (Chair)
- The head of studies or their representative
- The Director of Schooling and Student Life or their representative
- A student representative on the Board of Governors and the Training Council or their substitute
- A doctoral student representative on the Board of Governors and the Training Council or their substitute
- The Director of International Relations or their representative, if applicable

The Committee's recommendation is sent to the Director, together with the application file.

When the Director agrees, an agreement is signed with the student.

In the event of refusal, the Director's decision is sent to the student by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt.

THE GAP YEAR AGREEMENT:

The agreement is signed by the Director of EHESP and the student before the gap year starts. This agreement includes the compulsory information set out in Article D.611-18 of the French Education Code.