



This letter confirms your intent to apply for Gap Year Accreditation by the American Gap Association. As the governmentally recognized Standards Development Organization for Gap Years, we are honored to work with you - another organization dedicated to advancing the field of education through Gap Years. This Engagement Letter will lay out the expectations of the accreditation process, and hopefully answer many of the questions you might have.

The application is taking the most rehearsed organization a minimum of 4 months to pass, ranging up to 2 years depending on a variety of factors. That said, the benefits have universally been lauded by our members and we have never had a Gap Year member withdraw from active membership since our founding in 2012.

One thing I want to leave you with is that while AGA Accreditation will inevitably translate to more enrollments, our organization is not designed primarily as a marketing channel for our members, but rather to grow the Gap Year / Bridge Year movement. Although we're seeing clearly that organizations are finding a marketing benefit, the logic is that such benefits should be secondary to the broader movement. In short, if we can do our job to grow the Gap Year movement (facilitate college credit, access to FAFSA, reputation, research, professionalization, benchmarking, etc.) then of the many students who will newly consider the option, inevitably some sizable percentage will embark on an Accredited Program.

#### **PRIMARY BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION:**

- Professionalization and benchmarking using the US Department of Justice-approved Standards
- Free listing on [AGA Accredited web page](#)
- Free [Program-Specific web page](#) (sample here, rolling out 4/17)
- Promotional use of "AGA Seal of Accreditation" on all materials
- AGA Seal placed on all listings through GoOverseas, Teenlife, and GoAbroad
- Free access to all past [AGA Webinars](#) and discounts on future webinar series
- Exclusive discounts and listing status with AGA-partnered organizations. "Just mention AGA"
  - TeenLife, GoOverseas, Verge Magazine, Go Global Expo, & more ...
- Discounts with [GoAbroad services](#) including GoMedia (10%), GoAbroad Advertising (15%), GoAbroad HQ (10%), GoEvaluator (free), and FundMyTravel (free).
- Attributed photos on AGA brochures, articles, and promotional materials
- Discounts with health & evacuation insurance. iNext. STA & ISIC cards
- Discounts with iNext health & evacuation insurance (\$30 pp/year)
- Access to Gap Year data, trends, and expertise (eg., critical incidents, mental health, insurance)

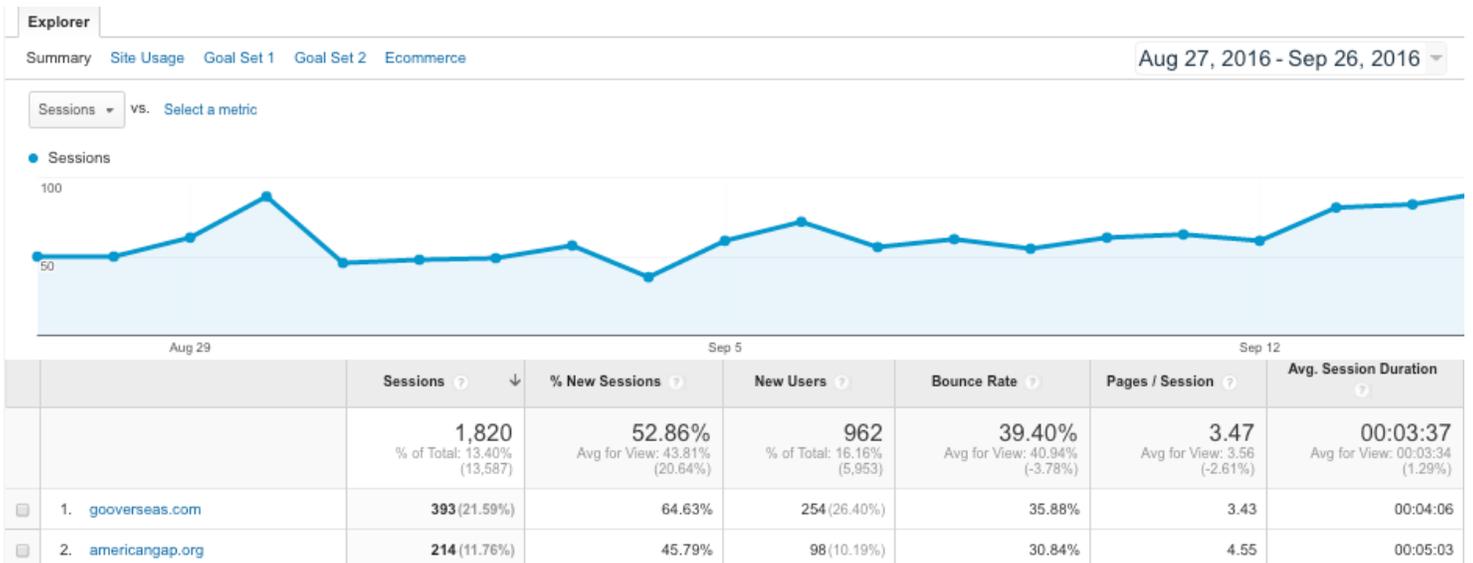
*When a counselor or family asks for references, simply say:  
"We're Accredited by the American Gap Association."*

**ACCREDITATION TIMELINES & PROCESS:**

All AGA staff and employees must sign a standard NDA form to ensure that proprietary materials are kept proprietary. As well, we use a cloud-based system with high-level encryption to ensure that your materials, once submitted, remain private. Inevitably, each organization will have unique approaches that fit with the broad depth of Gap Year programming available to students - it is the intent of this accreditation process to ensure primarily a safe and pedagogically sound experience for your students, thus, you will have the option to request exemptions from any Standard pending an explanation of your logic. We cannot say how long it will take an organization to become accredited as this is not a guaranteed outcome of the application process.

- 1) Review the current [Standards of Accreditation](#) to be sure your organization is ready to apply.
- 2) Sign & date the [Accreditation Engagement Letter](#) and submit it with a 10% deposit of your expected membership dues (see below). Payment can be made via wire transfer, ACH, or check.
- 3) Receive access to the [online system](#) via a username and password. Users have 6 months to submit their application once being granted access to the online system.
- 4) Submit the online application. Watch [instructions and a sample](#) of the proprietary system. We're finding this takes about 10-20 dedicated hours of work depending on whether new documents or systems need to be created. **Seriously, please watch this!**
- 5) You will send a copy of [this survey](#) to 20 of your recent Gap Year students.
- 6) Once the application is submitted, it takes between two and three months to receive an "Initial Assessment" which is sent back to you. Typically we are finding 30% - 90% "Investigate" notes.
- 7) Your organization will then respond to any questions or issues in the Initial Assessment and typically provide new evidence to support our understanding of your program.
- 8) Once we get your application to fewer than five "Investigate" responses, your application will then be passed to an [Advisory Board](#) member for review. We expect Advisors to return their assessment within two weeks. This is typically the last stop. Congratulations!

**ACTUAL GOOGLE ANALYTICS FOR AN ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION**



**ACCREDITED MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES:**

0 - 25 students	-	\$1,000 per year
26 - 50 students	-	\$1,500 per year
51 - 100 students	-	\$2,000 per year
101 - 200 students	-	\$3,000 per year
200 + students	-	\$4,000 per year

- “Gap Year” students are 17-20 years old and ‘on program’ for a minimum of 2 months.
- Abbreviated re-application after two (2) years followed by a full re-application two (2) years later. Full re-application every four (4) years thereafter.
- Organizations that run multiple programs should complete only one application.
- Annual fees are due each year regardless of whether it is an evaluation year or not.
  - AGA’s Bank Information: Pacific Continental Bank, 111 West 7th Avenue, P.O. Box 10727, Eugene, OR 97440-2727.

**COMMITMENTS:**

By signing this document, I represent that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the organization applying for Accredited Membership in the American Gap Association. Furthermore, my organization agrees to:

- Abide by the Standards even when not under review,
- Communicate with parents & students in a professional, timely, and respectful manner,
- Notify AGA of any critical incident within one (1) business day and include status, and plans moving forward. Organization must share with AGA a post-incident summary for the growth of the field and of the program (ask AGA for clarity if you are unsure of whether an incident qualifies as “critical”),
- Report any security threat to the AGA using the AGA Incident Reporting system (still in development),
- Review the admissions process annually,
- On any Accreditation Review year, send a copy of [this survey](#) to 20 of our most recent Gap Year alumni and Cc AGA staff so we can verify this has been done,
- Abide by the AGA Ethics and Judicial process as outlined by the Ethics Committee. This process may result in probationary status and potential expulsion from the AGA Membership without refund of any fees paid,
- Indemnify the American Gap Association and its members and staff from any lawsuit.

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization’s Address: \_\_\_\_\_

My Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My Preferred Contact Method & Details: \_\_\_\_\_

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