This letter confirms your intent to apply for Accreditation by the Gap Year Association. This Engagement Letter will lay out the expectations on both sides of the accreditation process.

The Gap Year Association (GYA) is the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for gap year education as recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission. GYA’s Standards & Accreditation Committee is composed of GYA Members voluntarily representing the field at large, including: gap year program staff, gap year consultants, risk management consultants, legal professionals, individual parents & students, and invited experts. The committee meets on a bi-monthly basis (6+ times per year), and updates these Standards of Accreditation every 3-5 years. We are honored to work with you: another organization dedicated to maximizing the potential of young adults through accessible gap year opportunities.

The application process takes an average of 8 months if successful, but has taken as little as 4 months and as much as 2 years to complete, depending upon a variety of factors. Gap Year Providers seeking to maintain GYA Accreditation after a successful accreditation, must apply for re-accreditation every 4 years, with an Accreditation self-study conducted 2 years after (re)Accreditation. More details are provided below.

While it is our hope that GYA Accreditation will inevitably translate to more enrollments, our Accreditation process is not designed primarily as a marketing channel for our members, but rather to professionalize our membership. By demonstrating the highest caliber of gap year education through passage of all relevant standards, Accreditation paves the way for organizations to offer college credit to their program participants.

**PRIMARY BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION**

1. Professionalization and benchmarking using the U.S. Department of Justice-approved Standards for Gap Year Education
2. Ability to participate in GYA's College Credit Program through GYA's partnership with Portland State University. Students on GYA Accredited Programs can earn up to 16 quarter-credits (1 semester’s worth) of college credit. Details include:
   a. Flat fee of $1,700/student for up to 4 courses through PSU, with minimal additional administrative requirements from program staff,
   b. Increase access to and enrollment in your programs by leveraging 529 tax deferred college savings to pay for most program expenses,
   c. Academically recognize the value of high value experiential education.
3. Listing on Accredited Programs web page, in addition to the General Programs page
4. Program-Specific Public Profile Web Page
5. Ability to use GYA’S Seal of Accreditation on all materials
6. Accreditation Plaque to display at fairs and promotional events
7. GYA Accreditation Seal placed on all listings through marketing partners such as GoOverseas & Teenlife
8. Exclusive discounts and listing status with GYA-partnered organizations
9. Attributed photos in GYA promotional materials
10. Discounts with iNext health & evacuation insurance
11. Discounted rates on the annual conference and other GYA professional development opportunities
12. Access to exclusive gap year experts, data, and trends
13. An incredible working community of high-quality peers
ACCREDITATION TIMELINES & PROCESS

All reviewing parties must sign GYA’s standard NDA form to ensure that proprietary materials you submit are kept private. As well, we use a cloud-based system with basic encryption to ensure that your materials, once submitted, remain private. Inevitably, each organization will have unique approaches that fit within the breadth of gap year options available to their students. It is the intent of this process to focus on safety and a pedagogically sound experience for your students, thus, the Standards have been authored to accommodate a wide variety of possible gap year options. In addition, you may request an exemption from any standard pending an explanation of your reasoning.

We cannot say how long it will take an organization to become accredited as this is not a guaranteed outcome of the application process. In the event that the organization is denied GYA Accreditation after our extensive review and professional mentorship offerings, we encourage the organization to view denial as an opportunity for growth and improvement. We encourage denied applicants to re-apply after two years. Our goal is to respond to any submitted application with a complete review within two months of submission.

APPLICATION STEPS

1. Review the current Standards of Accreditation to be sure your organization is ready to apply.
2. Sign & date this Accreditation Engagement Letter and submit it to keri@gapyearassociation.org. GYA will send you an invoice with a non-refundable deposit of $1,500 that is applied to your Accreditation Review Fees (either $3,000 or $4,000 depending on size). Payment can be made via credit card, 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 granted access. If the Application is not completed within 6 months, the organization must either:
   - Start over and submit a new Accreditation Review Fee or
   - Request an extension and pay $1,500
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. Submitted documents must be current as of 4 years prior to the date of application.
5. GYA will send you two unique survey links to share with:
   - 20 recent gap year alumni (having completed your program in the past two years).
   - 5 recent field staff (having worked as a gap year educator in the past year).
6. Once the application is submitted, it takes between two and three months to receive an “Initial Assessment” which is sent back to you with notes asking for clarification or additional information. This is done through a simple Excel document.
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 and the assertion that standards have been met.
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 step.

ACCREDITED GAP YEAR MEMBER DUES

- Accreditation fee (every 4 years) of $3,000 - $4,000 depending on the size of your organization (≤150 gap year students/year). Accreditation fees are due only on Review Years; otherwise standard membership dues are annual.
  - Organizations that run multiple programs should complete only one application.
  - Organizations that have different brands must complete a separate application for each brand seeking accreditation by GYA.
GYA Membership dues are separate from Accreditation fees and paid annually according to the Provider rates. When not in a revue year, the dues are paid annually according to the following rates:
  - 0 - 50 students: $400 per year
  - 51 - 100 students: $575 per year
  - 101 - 200 students: $1,100 per year
  - 200 + students: $2,200 per year
* GYA considers gap year students as 17-21 years old and ‘on program’ for 2+ months

COMMITMENTS
By signing this document, I represent that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the Organization applying for Accredited Membership in the Gap Year Association (GYA). Furthermore, my Organization agrees to:
  - Abide by the Standards even when not under Accreditation Review,
  - Communicate with parents & students in a professional, timely, and respectful manner,
  - Attend a GYA conference at least once every three years,
  - Participate in a required self-study two years after formal accreditation (GYA reserves the right to request evidence from the self-study for up to 10 standards),
  - In the event of a fatality or near-fatality during a gap year program, the Organization shall notify Gap Year Association’s Executive Director as soon as practicable following the event, consistent with any applicable privacy regulations and any other legal or law enforcement requirements or requests,
  - Review your organization’s admissions process annually,
  - Emphasize experiential training methods for staff and students whenever the opportunity allows,
  - Abide by the GYA Ethics and Judicial process as determined by GYA. This process may result in probationary status and potential expulsion from the GYA Membership without refund of any fees paid,
    - For example, organizations should: refrain from buying other organizations’ hashtags or key phrases (or names) as Google Ad words; refuse to copy content from competitors without proper attribution / permission; etc.
  - Commitment to participate in GYA Research (directed by the GYA Research Committee): complete the annual State of the Field Survey and encourage alumni to take the National Alumni Survey,
  - Not use any proof of GYA Accreditation in the event membership lapses or the organization loses its status as a GYA Accredited gap year (e.g., display plaques and GYA seals),
  - Indemnify the Gap Year Association and its members and staff from any lawsuit arising out of the Organization’s negligence or willful misconduct.

Organization Name: ________________________________
Organization’s Address: ________________________________
Name (printed): _______________________________________
Date: __________________________
Signature: ___________________________________________