

Florida State University Policy 9-5

Title of Policy: Bridge Year Deferment of Matriculation

Responsible Executive: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approving Official: Dr. Sally McRorie, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Effective Date: 2015

Revision History: New

I. INTRODUCTION

Each year, Florida State University Office of Admissions grants a small number of one-year deferments of matriculation to admitted high school students who wish to take a bridge year (also known as a gap year) between graduation from high school and matriculation at FSU. As bridge years become more popular in America and other leading universities formalize deferment processes, FSU proposes to formalize a deferment of matriculation process for admitted high school students who wish to take a bridge year before matriculating at FSU.

II. POLICY

Florida State University Office of Admissions would allow admitted high school seniors to defer enrollment at FSU for one year to engage in meaningful and structured endeavors that complement an FSU education. The period of time after high school known as a bridge year (or a gap year) is most commonly spent undertaking international or domestic volunteering, internships, or other special activities.

High school seniors interested in taking a bridge year and deferring enrollment at FSU for a year must submit a short application detailing proposed plans for the bridge year, learning objectives for the year, and how the bridge year will support their educational goals. Bridge year programs/experiences should be sustained over the majority of the bridge year deferment, although the year could be composed of multiple projects. The application includes a release of liability. The application will be reviewed by a university committee and students will be notified of their deferment status.

Students admitted for Fall semester who are approved to take a bridge year would defer until the following Fall; Summer semester admits would defer until the following Summer semester. High school seniors offered admission to start at FSU in the Spring semester are not eligible for a bridge year deferment.

Students undertaking a bridge year will be invited to participate in structured group activities and reflection upon returning. Once matriculated at FSU, bridge year students will be encouraged to build on their bridge year experience and connect with the curricular and co-curricular programs of FSU, with assistance from offices such as the FSU Center for Leadership and Social Change and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Academic Engagement.

Other requirements for students granted a deferment of matriculation:

- Admitted students who are approved to take a bridge year may not apply to any other colleges or universities during their bridge year, and they must not earn college credit during the year.
- The Office of Admissions reserves the right to review the status of any admitted student, including those on a bridge year, and to rescind its offer of admission if a student's academic and personal record does not remain satisfactory in all respects.
- Deferments granted by the FSU Office of Admissions apply to general admission to FSU only. Students also applying to special, limited access, academic programs (dance, film animation, film production, music, or theatre) would also need to coordinate a bridge year deferment with their specific academic program.
- If there are any policy changes at FSU during the period of a student's bridge year, the changes will apply to the student just as to all a members of his/her *matriculating* class.
- At this time, the university does *not* offer financial assistance to offset the costs of a bridge year and Florida Bright Futures funding would not apply to a bridge year. Some bridge year organizations do have limited financial assistance available, and students have had success fundraising (e.g., through crowdfunding websites) for bridge year experiences.
- FSU Scholarships awarded to the student will be deferred until the student matriculates the following year. Bridge year deferments should not affect Florida Bright Futures funding provided the student enrolls in a degree program at FSU and receives the first disbursement by the end of the second academic year after high school graduation.
- Bridge year students should confirm financial deferment eligibility with private or other non-FSU scholarship programs (e.g., ROTC Scholarships cannot be deferred). Bridge year students should remember to apply for federal financial aid (via FAFSA) after January 1 during their bridge year.

III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The Florida Constitution, Article IX, Section 7 provides that the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) shall establish the powers and duties of the individual university boards of trustees (BOT). BOG Regulation 1.001(4) (a) 3. grants the BOT authority over admissions and enrollment which authority has been delegated by the FSU BOT to the President. The President has delegated authority over academic affairs to the Provost. Florida State University Policy 2-1 establishes the procedure for development and approval of official university policies.

Additional requirements pertaining to student admissions are outlined in the Florida State University Admissions Policy.

The Provost or designee will be responsible for monitoring compliance with the policy. The Provost or designee shall be responsible for review of the provision of this policy

and for making any necessary revisions as needed. The policy and any procedures established by the policy will be reviewed every three years.

Dr. Sally McRorie
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date