

What to look for in your first role

A guide for choosing a first job that helps you grow



You've worked hard to get here. A great first job will accelerate your growth, build your confidence, and show you what a great practice looks like. Use this guide to find it.

Look for clinics that answer these questions clearly and specifically. Confident answers signal a practice that has thought carefully about the clinician experience.



Documentation and technology

The best clinics invest in tools and workflows that help clinicians spend more time focused on patients and less time catching up after hours.

- What EMR do you use, and how long does a typical note take?
- Do clinicians finish documentation during working hours?
- Do you use any AI or documentation support tools?
- Do your clinicians rate your AI tools highly?
- How much admin time is built into the schedule?



Caseload and what a real day looks like

You're looking for a sustainable caseload, which goes beyond the number of patients on your schedule. Look for if the clinic provides support via software systems and mentorship. And find out what expectations you'll be required to meet.

- What will my daily caseload be as a new grad, and how does that compare to experienced clinicians?
- Is there a ramp-up period as I learn the clinic's workflows and patient population?
- How are double-bookings, overlapping appointments, cancellations, and schedule gaps handled?
- What is the no-show and cancellation rate, and does it affect my pay?
- What is the physical setup for high-demand work?



Credentialing

Credentialing is required before you can treat patients under most payer contracts. A well-organized clinic will help you understand the timeline and what your first few weeks will look like.

- How long does credentialing take, and how does my start date account for that?
- Will I be paid my full salary while credentialing is pending?
- What will my schedule look like during that period?
- Can I see patients under a supervising clinician's credentials while mine are pending?
- Who manages the credentialing process, and what do I need to provide?



Mentorship, feedback, and support

As a new grad, this may be the single most important factor in whether you thrive in your first year. Look for structure, consistency, and a clinic that makes learning part of the job.

- Will I have a dedicated mentor in my first year, and who is it?
- How often will we meet, and is that time scheduled or informal?
- What happens if I do not know the answer with a patient in front of me?
- Is there a 30-, 60-, or 90-day check in? What does a formal review look like?
- How do clinicians give feedback to leadership?
- What does onboarding look like in the first 90 days?



Growth and career path

Your first role should help you build a foundation, but it can also give you a clearer picture of what's possible in your career.

- What does growth look like here, and what have past new grads moved into? Look for real direction: specialization, senior or lead roles, eventually leadership or ownership.

Compensation and transparency

You are allowed to ask direct questions about money. A reputable clinic should be able to explain how pay works in a clear and respectful way.

- How is compensation structured: base salary, productivity-based, or hybrid?
- What is the timeline for raises, and what drives them?
- Do clinicians typically need PRN work to supplement their income?
- What does the full benefits package include?
- Do you reimburse for state licensure renewal and national certification dues (APTA, AOTA, ASHA, etc.)?
- Is there a non-compete clause, and how far does it reach?

Continuing education

Every state requires continuing education to renew your license. Hours and requirements vary by state and discipline. This is your responsibility to track, so ask how the clinic supports it.

- What is the CE reimbursement budget, and does it cover registration, travel, and time off?
- Does the clinic offer in-house CE or training, journal clubs, residency, fellowship, or mentorship programs?
- Is there a payback clause if I leave after using the CE benefit?

Culture

A clinic that is proud of its culture will show you, not just tell you.

- Can I speak with a clinician currently on the team, ideally a recent grad?
- What is clinician turnover like, and why have people left?
- What does a hard day look like here, not just a good one?
- How does the clinic support work-life balance?

When you get a chance to talk to a current clinician, ask the unpolished version of these questions. Ask if they would take the job again.

A note for new grads:

It's easy to feel like you should take the first offer you get, especially with student loans and the pressure to start your career. But a quality first clinic is worth being a little patient for. Asking thoughtful questions does not make you difficult. It shows that you are serious about learning, contributing, and building a sustainable career. A credible clinic will appreciate that.

Find a clinic that's right for you

Students:

Apply to first-time roles at Prompt clinics inside Exxat.

[See Jobs on Exxat One](#) →

Clinicians:

Share your career preferences and get matched with tech-forward Prompt clinics across the country.

[See Career Connection](#) →