



# GETTING STARTED IN PRACTICE

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The transition from study to professional practice can feel overwhelming. Suddenly, you're not just a clinician: you're also a decision-maker, navigating choices that will shape your career. This resource has been created to support new therapists and health practitioners as they take their first steps into the professional world. It outlines the key differences between working as an Employee, Contractor, or Room Renter, helping you understand which path best suits your goals, experience, and lifestyle.

Inside, you'll find a clear overview of each model, along with practical checklists, reflection questions, and planning tools to guide your decision-making. Whether you're just starting out or reassessing your setup, this guide is designed to help you begin your journey with confidence and clarity.

### 1. Getting Started in Practice Checklist

Use this checklist to help you prepare for your transition into professional practice.

#### Before You Start

- |  |
|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clarify your professional goals – short-term stability or long-term independence?                            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research local clinics or shared spaces that align with your values and ideal clientele.                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review your professional registration and insurance requirements (public liability, professional indemnity). |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understand your tax obligations (especially if contracting or renting).                                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set up a reliable booking and client management system.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Build a professional online presence (simple website, social media, or practitioner listing).                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identify a mentor or supervisor for regular professional guidance.   |

# PRACTICE MODEL CONSIDERATIONS

Which is best for you when you enter the workforce? How do you know which to choose?

## **CONTRACTOR:**

Payment is usually based on a percentage of the fees charged to the client. Usually it is 60/40 for Practitioner/Owner, but it can be negotiated based on experience, time of day, the room that's available, if you have admin support included and a number of other things.

This option is helpful for a Practitioner just starting out, who may be trying to build a client base as they will not be out of pocket if they don't see any clients, and they are not usually required to work unless they have a client. It helps to support a budding practitioner, but means no consistent income can be relied on.

The positive side of this option is the more you grow, the more the you AND the clinic earns.

## **ROOM RENTAL:**

This option is great if you have an established client base, as you are required to only pay the room rental, which would be a set fee. Again, this would be negotiated based on the clinic/owner requirements and overall clinic rental. This is helpful if you're a clinic owner as your rent will be covered and you know exactly how much money to add to your budget forecast. It is great for a practitioner who has a large and consistent client base as they are required to pay the rental fee, but everything else on top is theirs.

However, the down side of this is that you are required to pay the room rental regardless of how many clients you see, so on occasion you may have cancellations or choose not to work a day, you will still need to pay.

The negative aspect for a clinic owner is that you will only receive the room rental and no more income based on how many clients the practitioner sees.

## **EMPLOYEE:**

You would be an employee with all of the benefits including accruing sick pay and holiday pay. This is a good option if you require a stable income, as you are paid at an hourly rate and will know how much money you receive at the end of each payment cycle. It is potentially helpful for a clinician just starting out, as they can build up their client base whilst still being paid per hour for their time- which can be used for marketing and networking whilst they gradually add clients.

This option is encouraged for clinic owners by the tax department due to potential issues with discrepancies of clients seen.

This option may mean a lower base rate due to minimum wage requirements, which can lead to resentment if you're seeing a lot of clients at a high fee set by the clinic owner.

## **BEST OPTIONS FOR YOU:**

- Best option for clinic owners:

Hybrid of Employee base rate and % per client seen over a certain number. This encourages your employee to grow their (and your) client base, whilst you're supporting them and your business.

- Best option for clinicians starting out:

Either contractor % or Employee base rate + % per client seen over a certain amount- depending on circumstances. It allows you to have income coming in while incentivising you to build your client base.

- Best option for clinicians with established client bases:

Room Rental or Contractor depending on circumstances. Depending on if you would prefer the flexibility of contracting, which allows you to not have to pay if you don't use the room or if you would prefer to pay a specific amount upfront and then pocket the rest of the fees.

## GETTING STARTED IN PRACTICE: GRADUATE RESOURCE ADD-ON

### If You Choose to Be an Employee

- ✓ Review your employment contract – check pay rate, leave entitlements, and professional development support.
- ✓ Understand your clinic's cancellation, rebooking, and client-handling policies.
- ✓ Track your learning goals for the first 6-12 months.

### If You Choose to Be a Contractor

- ✓ Set up an ABN (Australian Business Number) and register for GST if required.
- ✓ Discuss fee-split terms, admin support, and access to resources upfront.
- ✓ Set up your practice management system for appointments and invoicing
- ✓ Establish boundaries around your schedule and workload.

### If You Choose Room Rental

- ✓ Review your rental agreement carefully – what's included (furniture, utilities, admin help)?
- ✓ Budget for quieter periods and build an emergency fund.
- ✓ Set up your practice management system with pricing, cancellation policy and reminders
- ✓ Develop a client attraction plan (referrals, digital presence, partnerships).

## GETTING STARTED IN PRACTICE: GRADUATE RESOURCE ADD-ON

### 2. Questions to Ask Before You Commit

- What is included in the fee split or rental fee?
- Who owns the client records and manages bookings?
- What marketing or admin support will I receive?
- Are there expectations around working hours or client numbers?
- What happens during cancellations, public holidays, or slow weeks?
- Are supervision or peer mentoring opportunities available?

### 3. Graduate Starter Resources

[!\[\]\(d3fb9f94af8b26d1c844efa9a98805b0\_img.jpg\) Allied Health Professions Australia](#)

[!\[\]\(950a62bbddad88d64435fd35607dfc42\_img.jpg\) Australian Taxation Office - ABN & Contractor Info](#)

[!\[\]\(5a132f13505a6571904d622757b7a8f0\_img.jpg\) Insurance for Practitioners \(\[AON\]\(#\), \[Guild Insurance\]\(#\), etc.\)](#)

[!\[\]\(10f8862fc183b400327470ea85afe9ae\_img.jpg\) My Appointments Blog - Tips on digital tools, scheduling, and client management:](#)

[!\[\]\(e1d6102fe77919492c04879c8450f1f5\_img.jpg\) Services Australia - Provider Digital Access \(PRODA\)](#)

## GETTING STARTED IN PRACTICE: GRADUATE RESOURCE ADD-ON

### 4. Your First Month Plan

**17** **Week 1:** Set up registration, insurance, and systems.

**17** **Week 2:** Set up registration, insurance, and systems.

**17** **Week 3:** Connect with other practitioners or clinics for collaboration.

**17** **Week 4:** Reflect, review, and refine your schedule and client flow.

Ready to streamline your client journey? [www.strategicalignment.com.au](http://www.strategicalignment.com.au)  
[hello@strategicalignment.com.au](mailto:hello@strategicalignment.com.au) @strategic\_alignment



Ready to streamline your client journey?

[www.strategicalignment.com.au](http://www.strategicalignment.com.au)

[hello@strategicalignment.com.au](mailto:hello@strategicalignment.com.au)

@strategic\_alignment