New Grad RN Job Offer Checklist

What to ask and verify before you accept your first RN offer. From Shift Differential: career and pay moves for new-grad and early-career RNs.

Residency or training program

- [ ] Is this a formal new-grad residency? How long does it last, and when does the cohort start?
- [ ] Is there a required commitment period after the program?
- [ ] Is there a training repayment amount if I leave early? Is it prorated?
- [ ] What do classes, mentoring and preceptor time look like?

Base pay and differentials

- [ ] What is the base hourly rate, and where does it sit on the pay scale?
- [ ] Night, evening, weekend and holiday differentials: flat amount or percentage?
- [ ] Does the differential apply to the whole shift or only to hours in a set window?
- [ ] Do differentials count toward the overtime rate?
- [ ] When is the first pay review, and how are raises decided?

Sign-on bonus, contract and clawback

- [ ] Bonus amount and payout schedule: lump sum or installments?
- [ ] How long must I stay to keep the bonus?
- [ ] Is repayment prorated? Would I repay gross or after-tax?
- [ ] Does an internal transfer or a change to part-time trigger repayment?
- [ ] Is there a non-compete or notice-period requirement?

Unit, ratios and schedule

- [ ] Which unit and shift? Is the assignment guaranteed or 'based on need'?
- [ ] What are typical patient ratios on this unit?
- [ ] How is scheduling done? Self-scheduling, weekend and holiday requirements, call?
- [ ] Will I float to other units, and when?

Orientation and support

- [ ] How many weeks of orientation, and can it be extended if needed?
- [ ] Will I have a consistent preceptor?
- [ ] What does the unit's new-grad turnover look like?

PTO and benefits

- [ ] PTO accrual rate and when I can start using it
- [ ] Health insurance start date and premium share
- [ ] Retirement plan: match amount and vesting schedule
- [ ] Certification, CE and BLS/ACLS renewal coverage

Tuition and growth

- [ ] Tuition assistance amount, and any service commitment attached to it
- [ ] Clinical ladder or specialty training paths
- [ ] Student loan support, if any

Before you sign

- [ ] I have the full offer in writing, including the bonus and residency agreements.
- [ ] I compared offers side by side: base, differentials, bonus net of clawback risk, benefits.
- [ ] I asked about anything unclear and got the answer in writing.
- [ ] I know my start date, unit, shift and orientation length.

Education only. This checklist is general information, not legal, financial, tax or career advice for your situation. Employer policies and contracts vary; read every agreement in full and consult a qualified professional about contract terms if needed. Shift Differential does not post jobs or place candidates.