**FLEX Capstone FAQs**

**FLEX 445 RN-BS Capstone Clinical Component**

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Why does NURSING 445 FLEX have a clinical component?**

The UW-Milwaukee Flex Option RN-BSN baccalaureate degree program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). CCNE requires that all students in RN-BSN completion programs have a clinical component to their degree program to enable them to integrate new knowledge in a clinical setting. The goal of the clinical experience is to provide an opportunity for RN students to experience and learn from a nursing role that is different from their current or past roles. Although many of our RN students work in direct patient care, they often choose to plan their clinical experience in a non-direct care site. Direct care clinical experiences are also possible if they are completed in a role that is not the student’s current role.

**How many clinical hours are required?**

60 clinical hours are currently required in all of the UWM College of Nursing RN-BSN programs. Up to 10 hours of the 60 clinical hours can be used off site to complete a required clinical project.

**Can I complete my clinical hours in the setting where I currently am employed?**

We encourage students to complete their clinical hours in the agency or system where they are currently employed. Our RN students often have connections within their employment setting that facilitate a clinical placement. The clinical hours must be completed in a role other than the student’s current role. An example might be that a student who is employed in an acute care staff nurse role might complete clinical hours as a member of quality improvement team. See suggested clinical settings.

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**CLINICAL SETTINGS**

**What types of settings can be used for the clinical experience?**

The primary focus is that the student complete clinical hours in a role they are not currently in. Because many of our RN-BSN students work in direct patient care, this often means a clinical experience in non-direct care. Examples of non-direct care clinicals include working with a CNS or nurse educator on a specific project, policy update or quality initiative, working on a Magnet committee, creating an education module or program for staff or patient education. Direct care clinicals include agencies such as health departments, community health centers, clinics, homeless centers, day care centers, home care and hospice agencies and cardiac rehabilitation departments. See The “FLEX Capstone Clinical Component” information sheet for additional clinical practicum examples.

**Do I need to find my own clinical placement?**

Yes – you will need to find your own clinical placement for Capstone in FLEX. We encourage students to arrange their own clinical placement and hours through their current employer or an agency contact whenever possible. The reason for this is that it allows students to obtain a desired experience, population, specific hours or clinical site. Many health care systems are willing to help to place their own RN students in clinical experiences required for educational purposes.
Do I need to have a contract with my clinical setting?

Yes – UWM needs to have a valid affiliation agreement contract with the agency you are completing your clinical hours in. UWM has existing educational affiliation agreement contracts with many health care systems, agencies and institutions in the metropolitan Milwaukee area and throughout Wisconsin. If you live outside the Milwaukee area, we will try to help to facilitate a contract with the agency you wish to use for your clinical hours.

Do I need to take time off of work? Can I complete my clinical hours on evenings and weekends?

Most of our RN-BSN students work full time and need to find a way to compete the required 60 clinical hours. Clinical hours can be completed at whatever time is negotiable between the student and preceptor. Most community health agencies are only open during the daytime on weekdays. Students who use these agencies often use vacation time or days off of work to complete their clinical hours. Some home care, hospice, parish nursing and free clinic agencies do offer evening and weekend hours, but this is very site dependent. If you are able to find a clinical site that offers alternate hours, you may be able to complete your clinical hours during the evening or on weekends.

What should I wear at my clinical site?

There is no Capstone uniform – student should wear whatever is worn in the agency by the nursing staff. Some agencies prefer business casual clothing and others require scrubs or a lab coat. Please ask your preceptor for guidance about what to wear during clinical hours.

PRECEPTORS

Do I need to have a preceptor?

Yes – a preceptor prepared at the RN, BSN level or above (MSN or DNP) is required to supervise your clinical hours.

Who is qualified to be my preceptor?

All preceptors MUST be prepared at the RN, BSN level or above (MSN, DNP). Nurses prepared at the Associate Degree level only are not eligible to be a preceptor. MD’s are also not eligible to be preceptors.

How can I verify that my preceptor has agreed to work with me?

Your preceptor will need to sign a form stating that he/she agrees to be your preceptor. We will also have you ask your preceptor to sign a second form verifying that you have completed your 60 clinical hours. These preceptor forms are both available on the NURSING 445 FLEX site.

Can I work only with my preceptor?

You should work primarily with your preceptor, but he/she may wish to facilitate additional clinical experiences with other members of the health care team in the agency. If both you and your preceptor feel that working with additional health care team members will be valuable to your learning, you may do this as a part of your clinical experience.
THE CLINICAL PROJECT

What is the clinical project?

Capstone students in all of our programs are required to complete a clinical project in their clinical practicum site. The Capstone clinical project is meant to be a project that meets the needs of the agency and attempts to improve the outcomes of care in that agency. You will need to work with your preceptor to determine the most appropriate clinical project for your site. Examples of clinical projects include a staff education seminar, resource binder or online module, development or updating or a clinical guideline, care plan or policy, data collection related to a Joint Commission, Magnet or quality review initiative. See the “Capstone Clinical Project Examples” information sheet for additional clinical project examples.

How will I know if my clinical project is appropriate for NURSING 445 FLEX?

Each student must submit a Capstone clinical project proposal for approval my the NURSING 445 FLEX faculty. The clinical project proposal can be found on the FLEX D2L site as well as on the FLEX web page about the NURSING 445 FLEX set. Once your clinical project proposal is returned with approval of the faculty, we can begin your clinical project.

Is there a FLEX assessment related top the clinical project?

Yes – Assessment #4 in the NURSING 445 FLEX competency set is a written description of your clinical project. This assessment is worth 30% of your final grade in this competency set. See the learning path for Assessment #4 in the NURSING 445 FLEX competency set for more information about this assessment.

PREPARING FOR NURSING 445 RN-BSN CAPSTONE

When do I need to begin the process of preparing to take Nursing 445 in FLEX??

We suggest that students begin preparing for Capstone at least 3 calendar months ahead of the date they wish to begin the NURSING 445 FLEX competency set. You will need to find a preceptor and have them agree to precept your clinical time. You will also need to discuss a potential clinical project with your preceptor and complete a clinical project proposal. It may require additional time if we do not have a contract with your preferred clinical agency. Contracts are usually facilitated by the education liaison or nursing leadership office in a clinical agency. Please work closely with your ASC to determine when to start the NURSING 445 FLEX competency set as we do not want you to begin the competency set until your preceptor and your clinical site is secured.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please direct your questions to your ASC. If they are unable to answer your questions, they will seek guidance from the appropriate program director or faculty member.

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