GENERAL INFORMATION

Why does NURSING 445 RN-BSN Capstone have a clinical component?

The UWM RN-BS-Nursing baccalaureate degree program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). CCNE requires that all students in RN-BSN 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-BS-Nursing 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 when possible. 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 the information on clinical settings below.

CLINICAL SETTINGS

Do I need to find my own clinical setting or will the UWM College of Nursing do that?

Both options are possible – some students find their own clinical site in an area of interest, while other students have the UWM College of Nursing find their site. You will need to determine whether or not you wish to arrange your own clinical site or have the College of Nursing do that for you. 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. Froedtert and Children’s have agreed to place all of their own employees in RN-BSN programs and other systems are willing to facilitate placements. For students who are not interested or not able to arrange their own clinical site, the College of Nursing will arrange a clinical. If we arrange your clinical site, we cannot guaranty any specific population, hours or site. We will request your clinical site preferences, but due to the very limited availability of specific sites, we cannot guaranty any specific clinical experiences, hours or sites.

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

The primary focus is that the student complete clinical hours in a nursing role they are not currently in. Because many of our RN-BS-Nursing 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, parish nursing, community health centers, clinics, urgent care centers, dialysis centers, homeless centers, day care centers, home care and hospice agencies and cardiac rehabilitation departments. See The “General Information – N445” information sheet for additional clinical practicum examples.

**Does the UWM College of Nursing need to have a contract with my clinical setting?**

Yes – UWM needs to have a valid educational contract with the agency or health care system you are completing your clinical hours in. UWM has existing education contracts with many health care systems, agencies and institutions in the metropolitan Milwaukee area. If you live outside the Milwaukee area, we may be able 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, urgent care 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?**

We will need your preceptors email, phone and mailing address contact information so that we can verify that he/she is willing to be your preceptor for N445. Your preceptor will need to sign a form stating that he/she agrees to be your preceptor.

**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 of 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?

First you will need to consult with your preceptor and determine a need that exits in the agency. Each Capstone student will also be assigned to a clinical faculty member. That faculty member will assist you in determining if your project meets the needs of the agency and the requirements of the assignment in the course. Your N445 seminar faculty can also help you to determine an appropriate clinical project.

Is there a course assignment related to the clinical project?

Yes – one of the assignments in this course is a written description of your clinical project. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade in the course. There is a detailed rubric for the evaluation of the clinical project in the N445 course syllabus.

PREPARING FOR NURSING 445 RN-BSN CAPSTONE

When do I need to begin the process of preparing to take the 445 Capstone course?

We suggest that students begin preparing for Capstone at least one full semester ahead of the date they wish to enroll in the N445 Capstone course. We will be sending out an email survey to all N445 Capstone students the semester before they enroll in the course. The survey will ask you to tell us your plans for completing your N445 clinical hours. You MUST return this survey by email to be enrolled in the N445 Capstone course.

You will need to determine whether or not you wish to arrange your own clinical hours or have the College of Nursing do that for you. 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, 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. For students who are not interested or not able to arrange their own clinical site, the College of Nursing will arrange a clinical. If we arrange your clinical site, we cannot guaranty any specific population, hours or site. We will request your clinical site preferences, but due to the limited availability of specific sites, we cannot guaranty any specific clinical experiences, hours or sites.

If you decide to try to find your own clinical site, the best way to start is to network through your current employer or another agency you have a contact in. Currently Froedtert and Children’s have agreed to place all of their own employees in RN-BSN programs. Other systems are also willing to help place their own employees. Review the list of possible clinical settings (see N445 Clinical Practicum Description sheet) and determine if there are sites that are of interest to you. Discuss these with your own manager or a nursing education representative at your desired site. You will need to find a preceptor prepared at the RN-BSN level or above who is willing to precept you for 60 hours of clinical time. You will also need to discuss a potential clinical project with your preceptor. Once you send your possible preceptor’s contact details to us, our preceptor coordinator will then contact your potential preceptor and determine if we have an existing contract with the agency. It may require additional time to attempt to pursue a contract if we do not have
a current contract with your preferred clinical agency. Contracts are usually facilitated by the education liaison or nursing leadership office in a clinical agency.

**Who should I contact if I have questions?**
Please direct your questions to your advisor or to the Capstone course coordinator. If they are unable to answer your questions, they will seek guidance from the appropriate program director or faculty member.

We look forward to seeing you in N445 – Capstone. Thank you for taking the RN-BS-Nursing journey with us!

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