Welcome to FLEX Capstone First Steps

Dear FLEX 445X RN Capstone Student,

Congratulations - the end of your RN-to-BSN journey is near! As you plan for your final competency set in FLEX and your graduation from UW-Milwaukee, it is important that you be aware of the following information:

**GRADUATION:**

- **Students are required to apply for graduation through PAWS regardless of whether they are planning on participating in the graduation ceremony.** The graduation fee will show up in your PAWS Student Center within two months of applying for graduation.
  - **NOTE:** If you do not “apply” for graduation, you WILL NOT officially graduate.

- **APPLY FOR GRADUATION:** You can **apply online via PAWS under "Academic Summary"**. There is a $40.00 graduation application fee to process your diploma and final transcript (even if you do not attend any formal graduation ceremony).

- **GRADUATION DATE:** When you apply for graduation in PAWS you will need to enter a graduation month and year. For this date, please enter the **first** month of the subscription period that you're enrolled in Capstone. Example: If you're enrolled in Capstone for the set that starts in the December subscription period, please enter “December”. Please apply for graduation in the month **prior** to the start of your Capstone, or by the 10th day of the start of your Capstone. Example for December students: November 1st through December 10th. Setting a reminder on your calendar or your phone can help to remember this step!

Please consult with your ASC or call the Registrar's Office (414-229-6571) should you have questions about the graduation process. See this checklist [https://uwm.edu/onestop/your-student-record/graduation/](https://uwm.edu/onestop/your-student-record/graduation/)

**N445X CAPSTONE COMPETENCY SET REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **PLEASE REVIEW ALL DOCUMENTS POSTED ON THE FLEX Capstone Resources web page at** [https://uwm.edu/nursing/academics/undergrad/capstone-resources/](https://uwm.edu/nursing/academics/undergrad/capstone-resources/)

2. **FIND A PRECEPTOR AND SET UP YOUR OWN CLINICAL PLACEMENT** (see Capstone Prep site for more information) **AND COMPLETE AND RETURN YOUR FLEX CLINICAL PRACTICUM PROPOSAL** to the Program Director through the FLEX “Capstone Preparation” Canvas site. The Program Director will add you to this Canvas site when you contact your ASC about preparing for Capstone. Please plan ahead - setting up a clinical placement requires planning and time for approval from the agency and the college.

3. **BACKGROUND CHECK, HEALTH RECORDS AND URINE DRUG SCREEN:** Please refer to page two of this letter - which explains the process for submitting your required compliance documents (Criminal Background Check, Health Records and Urine Drug Screen). These documents are required for all nursing students in any mode of learning.
CELEBRATE:

In addition to the optional large all university UWM Commencement/Graduation Ceremony, there will be a College of Nursing Convocation/Pinning Ceremony at the end of the fall and spring semester. Graduates can choose to be a part of both ceremonies (each is optional). You will receive information about the ceremonies from your ASC and the Registrar’s Office.

**Large UWM Commencement/Graduation Ceremony:**
Graduates who choose to participate in the commencement ceremony will be required to rent or purchase a black cap and gown. Caps and gowns are available from many vendors or they may be rented/purchased online by the UWM vendor at any time: Herff Jones or by phone: 262-363-3055 Monday-Friday (8AM - 6PM). Note: Caps and gowns will be shipped to the graduates’ mailing address. No invitations are needed for the university all-school graduation ceremony.

**College of Nursing (only) Convocation/Pinning Ceremony**
You only need to wear a black graduation gown for the Convocation/Pinning ceremony. Optional pinning/convocation announcements are available at the UWM College of Nursing Student Affairs office - invitations are not required for admission to the event.

Presentation of the official UWM College of Nursing pin is done as part of the Convocation/Pinning Ceremony - but pins can be mailed if you choose not to attend the ceremony – please let your ASC know if you will be attending.

*Good luck in your final competency set. Thanks for choosing FLEX as a part of your RN-BSN journey!*  

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N445X CAPSTONE COMPETENCY SET REQUIREMENTS

Clinical Compliance Documentation

1. The UWM College of Nursing requires that every student (even RN students) meet the clinical compliance policy of their setting. This means that you will be required to submit documents related to your health and immunization records, as well as a criminal background check and urine drug screen. This is a request of our clinical agencies. The following are required of every nursing student:
   a. Criminal Background Check
   b. Urine Drug Screen
   c. Health history, assessment and documentation of immunization records

2. The UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing uses a company called Castlebranch to verify agency compliance for students in clinical placements when employers do not have adequate information needed.

3. There are two different ways that RN Capstone students can meet the clinical compliance document requirements:
   a. OPTION #1 – ONLY FOR RN STUDENTS COMPLETING THEIR CLINICAL HOURS AT THEIR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: If you are doing your Capstone clinical hours at your current employer – your employer may already have a background check, drug screen and health/immunization records for you on file. If your employer has these records, they may be willing to “waive” your need for an additional background check, urine drug screen and health records collected through Castlebranch. If your employer will waive these requirements, they must sign our posted waiver form and expressly request that these requirements be waived. *NOTE—Students of Aurora-Advocate and UW-Health & Hospital in Madison MAY NOT USE THE Option #1 WAIVER PROCESS and MUST USE OPTION #2 below—this is a decision made by Aurora Advocate and UW Health. You should contact the nursing student placement office at your employer/clinical site to discuss this.

   b. OPTION #2 – REQUIRED FOR ALL RN STUDENTS COMPLETING THEIR CLINICAL HOURS AT A SITE WHERE THEY ARE NOT EMPLOYED AND ALL EMPLOYEES OF Aurora-Advocate and UW Health & Hospital in Madison: If you are doing your Capstone clinical hours at an agency where you are NOT an employee (or your system requires it), you must meet the clinical compliance document requirements through a company called Castlebranch You must create an account and order and pay for the following services on the Castlebranch site at www.castlebranch.com. The services, costs and codes you need as of 12/1/19 are:
      i. Criminal Background Check ($38) – Code UE35bg
      ii. Urine Drug Screen ($34) – Code UE35dt
      iii. Health assessment and immunization records documentation tracker ($30) – CodeUE35im
STEPS THAT YOU MUST TAKE:

1. **Formally apply for graduation online in PAWS** (see directions above).

2. Decide which Clinical Compliance Documentation option above applies to you. **If you are using Option #1, contact your employer’s nursing student placement office** to discuss the requirements of the agency for an RN employee in a non-direct care clinical project practicum. Find out if they have employment records on file and ask if they are willing to waive any additional records through Castlebranch for your clinical placement. Agencies generally have standard policies and requirements for clinical compliance documents for students in their sites and **you must complete any procedures or documentation that they require.** You must have your employer’s representative (a supervisor or the nursing student affiliation representative) sign the clinical compliance waiver form available on the FLEX Capstone resources webpage if you are using Option #1. **If your employer will not sign a waiver and prefers that you do submit new documents and documentation in Castlebranch, you will not be able to use a waiver.** The form must then be returned to our Capstone preparation site in Canvas.

3. **If Option #2 applies to you, CREATE AN ACCOUNT ON THE** [https://mycb.castlebranch.com/](https://mycb.castlebranch.com/)

   a. **Order and pay for** a background check, drug screen and health and immunization records tracker on the Castlebranch website using the codes noted above.

   b. You will need to upload records of physical exams and immunizations to the site. This will allow you to access your records from the website in the future to provide them to an employer, university or clinical site. We have provided a form explaining specific requirements (“Health Requirement”) and documents needed on the Capstone resources web page. Many graduate programs use Castlebranch for clinical compliance, so if you choose to pursue graduate school, having an account in Castlebranch will be helpful to you.

   c. **Your Castlebranch account is owned by you** – you can share your official records and documents stored in Castlebranch with your clinical site as they need them.

4. If you have questions related to an employer waiver of additional records, please contact the Capstone set faculty Lisa Mihlbauer MSN, BSN, RN, MS, IBCLC, CNE at [lisamihl@uwm.edu](mailto:lisamihl@uwm.edu).

5. If you have questions or concerns about using the Castlebranch site, please contact Mike Walk at [walk@uwm.edu](mailto:walk@uwm.edu) or 414-229-5047 in the UWM College of Nursing Student Affairs office.

Again – congratulations on reaching the end of your RN-BS-Nursing journey. Best wishes for a great final competency set!