



NURSING

BSN-DNP, Masters - DNP &

PMHNP Certificate

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018

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I. Welcome

Congratulations on being accepted into the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) certificate program at Robert Morris University (RMU). Your success depends on many factors, including a commitment to academics, communication with faculty, as well as an ability to utilize and understand the resources available to you at Robert Morris University. This handbook will serve as a guide to assist you throughout your years in the program. Please refer to the many web links provided in this handbook.

The [School of Nursing and Health Sciences \(SNHS\)](#) website is rich with information to assist you in achieving success in the program. Please visit the SNHS website for more information.

A. DNP Program Contact Information

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II. About Robert Morris University

Robert Morris University, a private nonprofit institution, was founded in 1921 as the Pittsburgh School of Accountancy. In 1935 the School was named The Robert Morris School in honor of a famous Pennsylvanian financier of the American Revolution. In 1962, the Pennsylvania Department of Education approved status as Robert Morris Junior College. With authorization to grant the Bachelor of Science in business administration degree in 1969, the State approved status as Robert Morris College. The State approved the granting of the MBA degree in 1988.

Over the years, most notably since 1990, the College expanded and diversified its curriculum beyond the original specialty of business with its addition of graduate programs in communication, information systems, and education. In recognition of these changes, the Carnegie Foundation reclassified Robert Morris as a Master's (Comprehensive) I institution in 2000. Following a comprehensive self-study and site visit, the State granted university status in May 2001. The institution formally changed its name to Robert Morris University in January 2002.

Robert Morris University is organized into five academic units. Degrees are offered in the School of Business; School of Communications and Information Systems; School of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science; School of Education and Social Sciences; and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. Deans of the five schools report to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Robert Morris University offers baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

A. Accreditation and Approval

Robert Morris University Department of Nursing Undergraduate Program received full accreditation for ten years by [CCNE \(Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education\)](#) for the period 2010-2020. The DNP Program is also approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing.

B. Mission, Vision and Values Statements of the RMU SNHS

MISSION:

The Robert Morris University School of Nursing and Health Sciences (SNHS) is learner-focused and transforms lives by preparing exemplary healthcare professionals. This is accomplished through the delivery of evidence-based academic programs in a highly engaging environment that aligns with accreditation standards and incorporates knowledge of health care trends, team-based concepts, application of research to practice, inter-professional communication skills, global citizenship and leadership characteristics, all of which focus on the ultimate goal of leading with integrity and compassion throughout their lives in a diverse and rapidly changing healthcare environment.

VISION:

To become a nationally recognized “best value” leader and school of excellence by providing a highly proactive, innovative and engaging learning environment that is focused on preparing future healthcare clinicians, scholars, educators and leaders to function within teams and excel in the rapidly changing healthcare environment.

VALUES:

1. High-quality innovative programs with attention to individual/student achievement. (Academic Excellence, Individuals Matter)
2. Faculty and student commitment and accountability to the profession. (Professional Focus)
3. Student engagement through active, lifelong learning in a rapidly changing healthcare environment. (Student Engagement)

4. Collaboration and inter-professional education to enhance patient safety and outcomes. (Changing Lives)
5. Appreciation of cultural differences when caring for patients from a holistic and global perspective. (Global Perspective)
6. Faculty as models of excellence in the roles of teaching, scholarship, service, and clinical practice. (Academic Excellence, Individuals Matter)

C. Program Objectives

The mission of Doctor of Nursing Practice education at RMU is to prepare clinicians who “apply nursing science and clinical reasoning at the highest level of nursing practice to plan, and implement care.” Doctoral-prepared advanced practice clinicians will be called upon to address the challenges of advanced nursing practice today with an eye to providing quality improvement for tomorrow. The objectives for each of the program tracks are outlined below:

The educational objectives of the **Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGNP) Track** of the BSN to DNP Program are to prepare certified registered adult gerontology nurse practitioners who:

- Monitor, educate and plan for the long-term health care needs of adults
- Diagnose and treat primary care diseases and illnesses in the adult setting and address a wide range of adult health care problems, in collaboration with other health care professionals
- Address adult health needs in a holistic, culturally competent manner, including diet, exercise, complementary therapies, genetics, drug and alcohol use
- Identify patients' specialty referral needs and make such referrals as appropriate
- Provide support and treatment on a long-term basis for patients with chronic illnesses
- Become a partner in the health care processes that involve other specialists.

The educational objectives of the DNP - **Family (Individual - Across Lifespan) Nurse Practitioner Track** of the BSN to DNP Program are to prepare certified registered family nurse practitioners who:

- Monitor, educate and plan for the long-term health care needs of families
- Diagnose and treat primary care diseases and illnesses across the life span and address a wide range of family health care problems, in collaboration with other health care professionals
- Address family health needs in a holistic way, including diet, exercise, complementary therapies, genetics, drug and alcohol use, and others
- Identify patients' specialty referral needs and make such referrals as appropriate
- Provide support and treatment on a long-term basis for patients with chronic illnesses
- Facilitate collaborative processes

The educational objectives of the **DNP - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Track** of the BSN to DNP Program are to prepare certified registered psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners who:

- Utilize expert communication and leadership skills with interdisciplinary teams to ensure quality of care of patients experiencing mental illness
- Employ clinical reasoning at the highest level of nursing practice to aid in the differential diagnosis of both medical and psychiatric disorders across the lifespan, in collaboration with other health care professionals
- Utilize pharmacologic, non-pharmacologic and complementary interventions using an evidence-based practice approach in the provision of treatment to individuals across the life span experiencing acute and chronic psychiatric disorders
- Engage proactively in the development and implementation of health policy in relation to mental health
- Demonstrate knowledge of standards and principles for selecting and evaluating information systems and patient care technology
- Function as team leaders to facilitate collaborative, inter-professional teamwork to ensure safe, patient-centered care
- Use evidence-based practice health promotion findings, related to clinical prevention and population health, to improve the health status of the U.S. population
- Demonstrate culturally competent care in the provision of treatment to individuals experiencing acute and chronic psychiatric disorders across the life span.

The **Masters-to-DNP Program** prepares advanced practice nurses to:

- Apply nursing science and clinical reasoning at the highest level of practice to plan and implement care.
- Utilize expert communication and leadership skills with interdisciplinary teams to create improvements in health care and complex health care delivery systems.
- Integrate theory, clinical inquiry, information technology, and evidence-based practice for clinical decision-making and the provision of patient care.
- Lead health care provider teams to systematically evaluate outcomes and implement quality improvements based on evidence-based practice.
- Generate a culturally competent practice environment.
- Influence health policy to improve health care delivery and outcomes for all stakeholders.
- Partner with other health care providers to form an inter-professional team to advance high-quality, safe, patient-centered care.
- Lead initiatives to promote disease prevention and population health.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Certificate Program

The **PMHNP Certification Program** is designed to prepare certified registered PMHNPs who:

- Utilize expert communication and leadership skills with interdisciplinary teams to ensure quality of care of patients experiencing mental illness
- Employ clinical reasoning to aid in the differential diagnosis of both medical and psychiatric disorders across the lifespan
- Utilize pharmacologic, non-pharmacologic and complementary interventions using an evidence-based practice approach in the provision of treatment to individuals across the lifespan experiencing acute and chronic psychiatric disorders
- Function as team leaders to facilitate collaborative, inter-professional teamwork to ensure safe, patient-centered care
- Demonstrate culturally competent care in the provision of treatment to individuals across the life span experiencing acute and chronic psychiatric disorders.

D. Department of Nursing Faculty

The [Department of Nursing Faculty](#) members are committed to teaching, scholarship and service. Faculty members are encouraged to maintain active clinical practice in their area of expertise and direct patient care. As such, they are excellent role models for students transitioning from clinicians to clinical scholars and educators. Students will form scholarly relationships with faculty and will be assigned an academic advisor during the first semester and a DNP Project Advisor when beginning work on the scholarly DNP project. Our faculty are committed to assisting students to achieve success while maintaining academic rigor and high standards for excellence. Contact information regarding individual faculty members can be found at:

III. Policies, Procedures and Important Guidelines

A. Academic Calendar

The [Academic Calendar](#) has important dates, including start and end dates for the semester, dates for registration and tuition payment, course withdrawal among other important dates. Be sure to enter the correct range of dates for searching purposes.

B. University Policies

Students are expected to review and adhere to all [University Policies](#) as well as those specific to the nursing program.

The following link provides information about tuition and university fees.
[Tuition and University Fees](#)

C. Department of Nursing Policies

The following link provides access to the Department of Nursing graduate policies and procedures. The Department of Nursing has **specific** [Graduate Policies](#) that guide our academic practices. Students are required to review and be familiar with all graduate, nursing and DNP policies.

D. Academic Integrity

The fundamentals of Academic Integrity are valued within the Robert Morris University community of scholars. All students are expected to understand and adhere to the standards of Academic Integrity as stated in the [RMU Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Any student who violates the Academic Integrity Policy is subject to possible judicial proceedings according to the recommendations of the Academic Integrity Committee. Sanctions are outlined in the policy and depending upon the severity of the violation could range from no disciplinary action to being dismissed from the university

E. Email and Netiquette

RMU email is used by the faculty, staff and administration to communicate with nursing students. Please check your RMU student email daily. All academic program communication will be sent to the student's RMU email account only. Learners are responsible for monitoring this email account and responding appropriately.

NOTE: If students prefer a different email account, arrangements can be made to forward the RMU student email to that address. Please contact the [RMU IT Help Desk](#) for assistance.

Students in online courses must respect the online classroom as a learning environment. Professional behavior is expected at all times when interacting with peers and instructors. The guidelines for behavior and interaction in an online environment are referred to as netiquette. Click on the following link for a guide to proper netiquette.

[Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#)

F. Chain of Command

If a question or concern arises regarding a course issue, the student should discuss the issue at the level of the course instructor. If the issue is unresolved at the level of the instructor, the student should follow the procedure outlined in the [Student-Faculty Disputes Policy](#). The Program Director can also assist the student in determining the next course of action.

G. Appeals Process

If a student is appealing a decision related to a departmental policy, the student must notify the Program Director and provide a rationale for the appeal. The Program Director will determine the appropriate process based on the reason for the appeal and then communicate the process to the student.

H. Fees

Additional fees associated with the graduate nursing programs include, but are not limited to, costs related to equipment, simulation lab fees, transportation/parking

fees, and clinical compliance requirements. Examples of the clinical requirements include health evaluations, drug testing, TB testing, criminal clearances, and CPR certification. The inclusive and cost of items are subject to change based on clinical agency requirements.

The following link provides information about tuition and university fees.

[Tuition and University Fees](#)

IV. Curriculum

A. Program Tracks

The RMU Department of Nursing offers several areas of focus for the [DNP program](#):

[BSN-to-DNP](#)

[Masters-to-DNP](#)

[PMHNP Certificate](#)

B. Course Catalog

The RMU [Course Catalog](#) contains information regarding courses, dates, and times which are helpful when scheduling.

C. Advising and Registration

Students are assigned an Academic Advisor as they begin the DNP or PMHNP certificate program. The Academic Advisor serves as a resource and assists with student with course mapping throughout the curriculum.

All DNP and PMHNP certificate students must have their course selections approved by their academic advisors prior to registration for the fall, spring, and summer terms. Academic advisors will be assigned to you upon admission to the program. Students must schedule an appointment with their academic advisor prior to registration.

DNP students are assigned a DNP Project Advisor in addition to their academic advisor following the overview of their DNP project topics. See the section on [DNP Project Guidelines](#) for additional information.

D. Transfer of Credits

Graduate level courses may be accepted. [Transfer Students](#) requesting admission to the Graduate Nursing programs will be evaluated on an individual basis.

E. Academic Progression and Graduation

All students who have concerns about their academic standing should discuss academic progression with their academic advisor. DNP and PMHNP certificate students should be aware of the [Policy for Acceptable Academic Standing](#).

F. DNP Project Guidelines

Students should be familiar with and adhere to the [DNP Project Policy](#) and guidelines.

V. Practicum Information/Simulation Lab

A. Confidentiality and HIPAA

The [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability](#) (HIPAA) Act of 1996 is an extensive piece of legislation that requires the standardization of electronic patient health, administrative, and financial data.

Strict patient confidentiality is expected at all times in accordance with HIPAA, RMU policy, and clinical facility policy and procedures. A violation of patient confidentiality may result in dismissal from the nursing program.

B. Clinical Requirements

The Department of Nursing has contracted with [CastleBranch \(CB\)](#) to facilitate the completion and monitoring of all clinical requirements. Students will receive detailed information regarding how and when to access CB. Costs for the use of CB are the responsibility of the student.

Students are responsible for reading all materials carefully and for adhering to the [Clinical Requirements Policy](#) and procedures. The cost of obtaining the clearances listed below is the responsibility of the students. Failure to adhere to mandated clearances and other documentation may result in delays and/or exclusion from clinical sites; this may result in a delay in completing the program of study or dismissal from the program.

The following clinical requirements are due prior to starting practicum experiences

- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY113)
- Pennsylvania Criminal Record Check Clearances (SPA-164)
- FBI Criminal History Background Check

Students need to have all clearances submitted and APPROVED by the required due date. Failure to comply may result in an automatic withdrawal from the course. Please allow up to six weeks for completion of clearances.

NOTE: A charge or a conviction of a felonious act may prevent students from attending clinical experiences. Inability to fulfill clinical objectives could result in failure in the course and/ or dismissal from the program.

All clinical agencies where a student is scheduled to have a clinical practicum experience must be informed if a student has a positive criminal background check. The agency will decide if they are willing to provide the student with a practicum experience based on the review of the background check. If a student is not accepted for a clinical practicum experience, this may jeopardize the student from progressing in clinical courses. The

student will be responsible for securing his/her own clinical site/preceptor who must be approved by the practicum course faculty.

C. Health Insurance

All students in the DNP and PMHNP certificate program are required to carry health insurance while enrolled in the program. If you need health insurance, this can be obtained through Robert Morris University. If you have your own coverage, you must enter your health insurance information on the RMU website each academic year or you will be automatically invoiced for the health insurance offered through RMU. The following link has information for students regarding student health insurance coverage:

[Robert Morris University - Student Health Insurance](#)

D. Health Evaluation

An initial health evaluation is required prior to the start of the first course with clinical agency activities. In order to comply with the National Council of State Board of Nursing regulations and contractual agreements with the clinical agencies, the Department of Nursing requires a separate health evaluation. The form is available on the [CastleBranch](#) website.

Students are responsible for downloading the form and having it completed by the healthcare provider. Completed forms need to be uploaded to the Castle Branch website by the given due date. **All clearances must be submitted and approved by the required due date.** Please allow up to six weeks for completion of clearances. Always keep a copy of any important documents that are submitted.

A health exam is required yearly after the initial health evaluation for as long as the student is enrolled any clinical courses. The annual health evaluation form is also available on the [CastleBranch](#) website. **All costs associated with the health screening are the responsibility of the student.**

E. CPR Certification

Current CPR certification is required prior to the first practicum course and must be maintained throughout the DNP or PMHNP certificate Program. The certification required is the American Heart Association “Healthcare Provider” Level. Students are responsible for the cost of certification. A copy of the CPR card is to be uploaded to the Castle Branch site. The student keeps the original.

F. Drug Screening

An initial negative drug screen is required of all students prior to beginning clinical practicum activities. Information about the drug screening process is available through [CastleBranch](#). The cost of this initial drug screening is the responsibility of the student and must be completed according to the process described on the CB website. Some agencies and circumstances may require an additional random drug screening process and details will be provided at the time of the random drug screening request.

G. RISE Simulation Center

The School of Nursing and Health Sciences uses highly realistic simulation experiences for clinical instruction in the [Regional Research and Innovation in Simulation Education \(RISE\) Center](#). Simulation involves the use of mannequins and/or Standardized Patients (trained actors) to re-create the clinical setting in a safe environment. The RISE Center features four high-fidelity simulation rooms, two outpatient office examination rooms, a home health suite, three debriefing areas, one 8-bed clinical performance suite for nursing skills practice and multiple office meeting areas. State-of-the-art audio-visual equipment allows for debriefing using recordings and live Audiovisual (AV) feeds remotely. The RISE Center features a family of high-fidelity mannequins and the information management system also assists with scheduling, monitoring of usage, and provides a database to assist with measuring outcomes.

H. Appropriate Attire for Clinical Practicum Experiences

It is expected that DNP and PMHNP certificate students will dress professionally and wear RMU issued lab coats during clinical practicum experiences. However, clinical agency requirements will supersede school requirements for appropriate attire.

I. Student Liability Insurance

Students are covered by a group liability insurance policy through the RMU SNHS for issues related to practice in the clinical, lab, and simulation settings. A copy of the policy is maintained within the SNHS.

VI. Student Resources

A. International Experiences

Nursing students are afforded the opportunity to engage in education abroad programs offered through the [Center for Global Engagement](#). In addition, Dr. Carl Ross serves as the Coordinator of the Nicaragua Experience. Students participating in the trip to Nicaragua are eligible to receive credit toward their clinical experience in designated courses, provided they meet the pre-requisite requirements. Course faculty can address course-specific requirements and allotment of clinical hours.

Dr. Ross can provide additional details about the trip to Nicaragua: [SNHS International Studies](#)

B. Financial Aid Information

Please contact the [Financial Aid Office](#) for information regarding the financial aid process at RMU. Additional financial support links are provided below:

[Scholarship Information](#)
www.pheaa.org

C. Student Health

Robert Morris University has partnered with UPMC to provide [MyHealth@School](#) – an onsite health and wellness center that treats a variety of health issues.

D. Library

The [RMU Library](#) is staffed by qualified librarians to assist you in your scholarly projects. There are also many nursing professional journals located in the library in print format. In addition, the RMU Electronic Library is a helpful service to search databases while off campus.

RMU has a Nursing and Health Services library expert, Bruce Johnston who can be reached at johnston@rmu.edu.

VII. Graduation Information

A. Commencement

RMU hosts a formal graduate commencement ceremony each May that includes both the December and May graduates. The dates are included in the academic calendar. This formal academic ceremony is rich with tradition and includes the academic procession of administrators, faculty, and students, a pertinent message delivered by a guest speaker, and the presentation of each graduate candidate. Academic regalia are worn. Family and friends are encouraged to attend. **Students must apply for graduation in the first two weeks of the semester in which they will graduate. Please see the website for details.**

VI. Extracurricular Activities

A. Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI)

[Sigma Theta Tau International](#), the Honor Society of Nursing, promotes scholarship in the profession of nursing. There are specific criteria for selection and it is an honor to be selected. *Upsilon Phi* is our chapter of Sigma Theta Tau. Students who become eligible are invited to join and are strongly encouraged to do so.

B. Committees

DNP and PMHNP certificate students are welcomed and encouraged to serve on university or school committees and provide valuable information. Please contact the DNP Program Director for more information about participation.