



IMPAIRED STUDENT IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Student learning occurs in a variety of settings with direct student-patient contact and interactions with others. The right of patients and the public to safe professional practice supercedes the student's learning and skill acquisition needs. Faculty has the obligation to assess and make professional judgment with respect to each student's fitness for participation in the learning environment. Student impaired performance includes, but is not limited to, a student functioning while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances or under psychological distress.

Students will be expected to follow procedures specified by the Nurse Practice Act in the state where they are licensed. Any evidence of impaired practice by a licensed RN who is functioning in the role of an RMU graduate student must be reported to the State Board of Nursing in which the student is licensed for further investigation. The State Board may suspend the RN's license to practice, but halt further disciplinary action if the RN agrees to participate, and is eligible for the Voluntary Recovery Program. The Department of Nursing will follow the policies and procedures of that program regarding assessment, treatment, and school monitoring.

When a faculty member makes a professional judgment that a student's physical and/or psychological condition has impaired his/her ability to provide safe, effective and supportive patient care or otherwise to perform in accordance with course-specific behaviors, the student will be asked to leave the learning environment.

Procedure

- When there is concern that a student poses a risk of harm to self, patients, or others in the learning environment, the faculty member or Robert Morris University (RMU) representative should remove the student from the learning environment and document the incident.
- When the clinical agency has a policy regarding fitness for duty, in addition to the RMU policy, the agency policy will also be followed.
- If needed, and at the faculty member's discretion, a representative from the school may accompany the student to the nearest healthcare facility for emergency treatment and/or testing. Transportation will be provided as appropriate.
- The student is informed by an RMU representative of a temporary suspension from the learning environment and will be directed to schedule a mandatory appointment with the appropriate nursing administrator.
- The documented evidence of impairment is reviewed with the student and the student has an opportunity to provide an explanation.
- If the student requests a formal hearing, one will be conducted in accordance with RMU's judicial procedures.
- Before being permitted to return to the learning environment, the student may be mandated to obtain a health assessment including necessary follow-up testing and/or counseling which may be completed through the emergency department or at any healthcare facility authorized by the student's health insurance carrier, at the student's expense. The assessment shall include a release to return to the learning environment.



- The student has the right to refuse this assessment, treatment, and further monitoring. However, the Department of Nursing may inform the student that he/she is not permitted to return to learning environment without certification from a recognized healthcare provider that he/she is either undergoing the treatment or does not need treatment and is fit for duty.
- If the student has been referred to treatment, the student will be permitted to return to the learning environment only on the specific recommendation of an appropriate treatment provider that the student is capable of safe and skilled clinical performance.
- Refusal by the student to follow any step of this procedure may result in dismissal from the Department of Nursing or indefinite suspension.
- Confidential medical information will be maintained in a restricted file in RMU Department of Nursing.
- Information will be shared with treatment providers and others designated by the student only with the student's written consent.
- No information will be shared unless there is a clear and direct need to know.
- The student and a representative of the Department of Nursing will sign a return to school agreement, individualized according to the student's needs. This agreement will delineate the terms of the student's return to the learning environment.
- The Department of Nursing has the right to impose conditions on the student's return to the learning environment as necessary following treatment and consistent with the objective of not posing a risk of harm to self, patients, or others in the environment.
- The Department of Nursing will provide monitoring of the student as needed following return to school and clinical practice.
- Any subsequent behaviors that indicate unsafe performance will result in additional procedures being followed as detailed herein or dismissal from the school, dependent upon the nature, extent and/or severity of the behaviors.

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