



School of Nursing and Health Sciences

**GRADUATE  
NURSING**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2009-2010**

**Robert Morris University**  
**School of Nursing and Health Sciences**  
**Department of Nursing**  
**Graduate Student Handbook**

## **I. Welcome**

Congratulations on being accepted into the School of Nursing and Health Sciences graduate program at Robert Morris University. 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 graduate nursing program. Please refer to the on line links provided in this handbook. The School of Nursing and Health Sciences (SNHS) website contains detailed information to assist you in achieving academic success in your graduate program: [Robert Morris University-SNHS-website](#)

## **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.

RMU is organized into six academic units. Degrees are offered in the School of Business, School of Communications and Information Systems, School of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science, School of Adult and Continuing Education, School of Education and Social Science and the School of Nursing. Deans of the six schools report to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Robert Morris University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees.

## **Mission of RMU**

The mission of Robert Morris University (RMU) is “to offer high quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs that integrate the liberal arts with technical and professional programs.” The addition of masters of nursing in education and a doctoral nursing program (DNP) clearly supports the mission as liberal arts provide nurses with a solid foundation for clinical skills required for advanced nursing practice. The vision of RMU is:

“to be a leader in providing high quality technological and professional education at moderate cost to qualified students seeking preparation for careers in business, communications, government, education, information sciences, applied science, engineering, and health-related fields.”

“The University shall be known for its innovative curricula integrating communications and information sciences in all disciplines and providing superior services to students and employers seeking graduates with technical or professionally oriented degrees emphasizing applied knowledge.”

The master’s and doctoral programs complement the University’s strong communication and information sciences, making the program unique from other nursing programs in the region. The concept of health care as a team-focused process is emphasized in all of RMU’s health related degree programs. Education in scientific, ethical and behavioral skills is bolstered by training in patient-centered care, patient safety, efficiency and efficacy of care and use of state-of-the-art technology.

The M.S.N. in nursing education will provide you with knowledge of the educational process and practical experiences that will prepare you to be an effective educator and leader. The curriculum combines strong interdisciplinary support courses in education and information science with focused nursing courses to develop expertise in teaching and presentation methods that incorporate the use of technology.

The mission of doctoral nursing 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.” Doctorally prepared advanced practice clinicians will be called upon to address the challenges nursing practice today with an eye to providing quality improvement for tomorrow. Building on excellent existing graduate programs at RMU, doctoral nursing education will prepare advanced practitioners who possess the communication skills necessary to function in multidisciplinary teams.

The Master of Science in Nursing and the Doctor of Nursing Practice are clearly part of the vision of RMU.

### **III. Academic Information**

#### **A. Graduate Contact Persons:**

Dr. Lynn George, PhD-  
Associate Dean of School of Nursing and Health Sciences;  
Phone: 412-397-3689  
Email: [George@rmu.edu](mailto:George@rmu.edu)

Dr. Judith A. Kaufmann, DrPH, FNP-BC- Director of DNP Program  
Phone: 412-397-5482  
Email: [Kaufmann@rmu.edu](mailto:Kaufmann@rmu.edu)

Ms. Lynn Gaydosik, Coordinator, Graduate Nursing Programs  
Phone: 412-397-5481  
Email: [Gaydosik@rmu.edu](mailto:Gaydosik@rmu.edu)

#### **B. Academic Calendar**

The RMU academic calendar has important dates including registration, tuition due dates, course withdrawal, and semester start and end dates. Click here to view the RMU Academic Calendar for 2009-2010 academic year: [Robert Morris University - Academic Calendar](#)

#### **C. Course Catalog**

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

#### **D. Department of Nursing Faculty**

The Department of Nursing faculty is 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 will be excellent role models as you transition from clinicians to clinical scholars. You will form scholarly relationships with your faculty and will be assigned an academic advisor during your first semester and a Capstone Advisor as you begin to work on your scholarly project. Our faculty is committed to assisting students achieve success while maintaining academic rigor and high standards for excellence. Contact information regarding individual faculty members can be found at [Faculty and Staff](#)

#### **E. Accreditation and Approval**

Robert Morris University Department of Nursing Undergraduate Program was accredited by CCNE (Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education) for the maximum length of time for a new program (five years) in the fall of 2005. A visit for continued accreditation of both the undergraduate and the graduate programs is scheduled in the fall, 2009. The BSN Program earned full approval by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing in the fall, 2007 and the DNP programs have been approved by both the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing in

2007. The BSN-DNP Program was the first program in Pennsylvania to receive State Board approval.

## **F. Transfer of Credits**

Graduate level courses may be accepted. Please follow this link for more details about the policy [Transfer Students](#)

## **G. Registration**

All graduate nursing students need to have their course selections approved by their advisors prior to registration for the fall, spring and summer terms. Graduate advisors will be assigned to you on admission to your program. You must schedule an appointment with your advisor prior to registration. DNP students will be registered each semester by the Graduate Coordinator and MSN students may self register through the website Graduate students in any program may not register without written approval of their advisors.

## **H. Curriculum**

The RMU Department of Nursing offers several graduate programs:

Master's of Nursing (MSN) with a focus of Nursing Education

[MSN Program Information](#)

Doctor of Nursing Practice

[DNP Program Information](#)

## **I. Academic Progression and Graduation-**

All students who have concerns about their academic standing should discuss academic progression with their academic advisor. Graduate students should be aware of the policy for academic standing: [Graduate Academic Standing Policy](#)

## **IV. Policies / Procedures**

### **A. Nursing**

The Department of Nursing has specific graduate policies which guide our academic practices. The following link provides access to the Department of Nursing. Students should take the time to view this important page: [RMU - SNHS Graduate Policies and Procedures](#).

### **B. Robert Morris University**

The following link provides access to the Robert Morris [University Graduate Policies](#)

## **V. Practicum Information**

## **A. Health Insurance**

All students in the nursing program are required to carry health insurance while enrolled in the graduate nursing programs. 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 Policy](#)

## **B. Health Evaluation**

An initial health evaluation is required prior to the start of the first practicum course. The Department of Nursing requires a separate health evaluation to comply with Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing regulations as well as contractual agreements of clinical agencies where students are assigned.

- Initial Health Evaluation (first year)
- Annual Health Evaluation (every year thereafter)

Original forms completed by the healthcare provider are submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (Lynn Gaydosik6001 University Blvd, Moon Twp, PA 15108.) The original forms must be used and all information must be completed as required.

Students will receive due dates in writing one semester prior to deadlines. It is important to keep a personal copy of the documents for your records. No student will be permitted to attend clinical practicum activities until this requirement has been fulfilled.

[\[Robert Morris University - Nursing Program, Student Health Evaluation Forms\]](#).

## **C. Appropriate Attire for Clinical Practicum Experiences**

It is expected that graduate students will dress professionally and wear lab coats and student identification name tags during their clinical practicum experiences. However, agency requirements will supersede school requirements related to appropriate attire.

## **D. Clinical Clearances**

Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY113), Pennsylvania Criminal Record Check Clearances (SPA-164) and FBI Criminal History Background Check are due prior to starting practicum experiences. You will receive detailed information packets regarding essential clearances, health forms, and renewal dates. You are strongly encouraged to read all materials carefully as failure to adhere to mandated clearances may result in delays and/or exclusion from clinical sites. Instructions and forms to apply for the clearances can be obtained from the following websites:

- Forms for the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History and Pennsylvania Criminal

Record Check Clearances can be obtained at the following website:

<https://www.dpw.state.pa.us/>

- Criminal Record Check can be obtained quickly online: <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>  
*Payment by credit card is required for a clearance obtained through epatch...*
- FBI Criminal History Clearances are obtained by submitting requested identifying information, a set of fingerprints on a special set of cards, and a certified check or money order payable to the “US Treasury” for \$18.00 in US Funds. Alternatively a credit card can also be used to obtain the FBI Clearances. [FBI Clearances](#)

**Submit all clearance information to Lynn Gaydosik, Graduate Coordinator, at [gaydosik@rmu.edu](mailto:gaydosik@rmu.edu) or via mail at 6001 University Blvd, Moon Twp, PA 15108.**

**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.**

## **F. Professional Liability**

Students are covered by a group policy through the Department of Nursing. A copy of this policy is available from the Graduate Nursing Coordinator.

## **G. Academic Integrity**

The Academic Integrity Policy for the SNHS is consistent with the University Academic Integrity Policy and can be found at [Academic Integrity Policy](#). It is expected that all written work is original and all documentation of clinical hours is accurate. Group work should be collaborative and final group projects should reflect “team effort.” Plagiarism may result in course failure or dismissal from the program. Written coursework will be subject to review using “TURNITIN.”

## **H. Cognitive / Sensory Requirements**

Each nursing student must be able to meet the cognitive and sensory requirements necessary to function as a professional nurse. Your healthcare provider will assure that these can be met when completing the health appraisal forms:

[Robert Morris University - Nursing Program, Cognitive and Sensory Requirements](#)

## **I. CPR Certification**

Current CPR certification is required prior to the first practicum course. The certification required is the American Heart Association “Healthcare Provider” Level or the American Red Cross “Professional Rescuer.” Students are responsible for the cost of certification. A copy of the CPR card is submitted to the Graduate Nursing Coordinator by the given designated dates and is kept in the student file. The student keeps the original.

## **J. International Experiences**

Nursing students are given the opportunity to travel internationally. Dr. Carl Ross serves as Director, International Activities. The following link provides helpful information regarding this innovative program: [Robert Morris University - SON - International Activities](#)

## **K. Simulation Lab**

The Department of Nursing incorporates the use of High Fidelity Human Patient Simulators in the educational process. This innovative technology allows students the ability to demonstrate the nursing role in a safe, controlled environment. The following link provides information regarding this innovative instructional technique. [Robert Morris University - Simulations Lab](#)

# **VI. Student Resources**

## **A. Center for Student Success**

The Center for Student Success provides services that include but are not limited to counseling, tutoring, and disability services. If you need assistance in classes, please contact your faculty member in addition to the Center for Student Success.

[Robert Morris University - Center for Student Success](#)

## **B. Student Advising**

Students are assigned an academic advisor as they begin their graduate program. Doctoral students will be assigned a Capstone Advisor in addition to their academic advisor following their overview of their Capstone topics.

## **C. Scholarship and Financial Aid Information**

Scholarship & Financial Aid information [www.rmu.edu/finaid](http://www.rmu.edu/finaid) and [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org)

## **D. Student Email**

Email is used by the nursing advisor as well as the faculty to contact nursing students with important information. RMU student email should be read daily. **NOTE: If you have another email address, that you currently use, you may have your RMU student email forwarded to that address. Please contact the RMU IT Help Desk for assistance.**

## **E. RMU 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. He may be reached at [Johnston@rmu.edu](mailto:Johnston@rmu.edu). An overview of the library system at RMU can be found at: [Robert Morris University - About the Libraries](#)

## 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 each year. 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. Note: Students who complete all courses for their degree by the end of the summer session following the May commencement are to attend the May ceremony. **Students must apply for graduation in the first two weeks of the semester in which they will graduate. Please see the website for details.**

## VIII. Extracurricular Activities

### A. RMU Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI)

This group promotes scholarship in the profession of nursing. It is an honor to be selected for membership and there are specific criteria for selection. *Upsilon Phi* is a chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the international honor society of nursing. For students who become eligible and are invited, membership is strongly encouraged.

### B. RMU Committees

Graduate students are welcomed and encouraged to serve on university or school committees and provide valuable information. Please contact your academic advisor for more information about how you might participate.