



**NURSING**

**DNP & PMHNP Certificate**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2019-2020**

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**Robert Morris University**  
**School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies**  
**Department of Nursing DNP & PMHNP Certificate**  
**Student Handbook**

## **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, Education and Human Studies (SNEHS) website is rich with information to assist you in achieving success in the program. Please visit the SNHS website for more information.

[School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies](#)

## **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 four academic units. Degrees are offered in the School of Business; School of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science; School of Informatics, Humanities and Social Sciences; and the School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies. Deans of the four schools report to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Robert Morris University offers baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

## **A. Mission Statement**

### University

To be the gateway to engaged, productive, and successful careers and lives.

### School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies

The SNEHS develops engaged, productive and successful healthcare professionals through experiential learning, inspiring faculty, and worldwide opportunities.

## **B. Vision Statement**

### University

RMU will be big enough to matter, yet small enough to care. As a student-centered institution, Robert Morris University transforms lives by building knowledge and skills, and by providing the foundations of engagement and well-being.

### School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies

As a student-centered school of excellence, we aspire to lead, co-create, and transform healthcare education through innovative programs that build relationships, knowledge, and skills.

### DNP Program Outcomes

- 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.

- Apply theory, research, 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

The educational objectives of the **PMHNP Certification program** are 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, interprofessional teamwork to ensure safe, patient-centered care;
- Demonstrate culturally competent care in the provision of treatment to individuals across the lifespan experiencing acute and chronic psychiatric disorders.

## C. Academic Calendar

The academic calendar has important dates, including dates for registration, tuition payment, course withdrawal, and semester start and end. Click on the following link to view the RMU Academic Calendar:

[Academic Calendar](#)

## **D. Course Catalog**

The course catalog contains information regarding courses, dates, and times which are helpful when scheduling. The following link provides access to the RMU course catalog:

[Course Catalog](#)

## **E. 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 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:

[Faculty and Staff](#)

### **F. DNP Program Contact Information**

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## **G. Accreditation and Approval**

The baccalaureate degree in nursing, master's degree in nursing, post master's/post-doctoral PMHNP certification, and the doctor of nursing practice at Robert Morris University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

[Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#)

## **H. Registration**

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.

## **I. Curriculum**

The RMU Department of Nursing offers several areas of focus for the DNP program, including BSN-to-DNP, Master's-to-DNP, and certificate options.

[DNP Program Information](#)

## **J. 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. Please follow this link for more details about the policy:

[Transfer Students](#)

## **K. 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 academic standing:

[Acceptable Academic Status-DNP Program](#)

### **III. Policies / Procedures**

#### **A. Nursing**

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

[RMU - SNEHS Graduate Policies and Procedures](#)

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

The following link provides access to the graduate academic policies and procedures of RMU:

[University Graduate Policies](#)

#### **C. DNP Project Policies**

Students should be familiar with and adhere to the guidelines and policies related to the DNP project. Policies for the DNP project for BSN-DNP and Masters to DNP students are available at:

[DNP Project Policy](#)

### **IV. Practicum Information for BSN-DNP and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certification Students**

#### **A. 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](#)

## **B. 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.

## **C. 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. Beginning in 2013, SNHS contracted with Castle Branch (CB) to facilitate the process of clinical clearances and health information. You will receive detailed information regarding access to CB. Students are strongly encouraged to read all materials carefully and adhere to all CB requirements. Failure to adhere to mandated clearances and other documentation may result in delays and/or exclusion from clinical sites. Costs for the use of CB are the responsibility of the student. **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.

[CastleBranch](#)

**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.*

## 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. 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](#)

## H. Simulation Lab

The Department of Nursing incorporates the use of high fidelity human patient simulators and standardized patients in the educational process. This innovative technology allows students the ability to practice and demonstrate the advanced practice nursing role in a safe, controlled environment. The following link provides information regarding this innovative instructional technique.

[Robert Morris University - Simulation](#)

## I. Professional Liability

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

## J. Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Policy for the SNEHS 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.” **Violation of academic integrity may result in course failure or dismissal from the program.**

## V. Student Resources

### A. Student Advising

Students are assigned an academic advisor as they begin the DNP or PMHNP certificate program. DNP students will be assigned a DNP project advisor in addition to their academic advisor following the overview of their DNP project topics.

### B. Scholarship and Financial Aid Information

[Scholarship Information Financial Aid](#)  
[www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org)

### C. Student Email

Email is used by academic advisors and by faculty to contact students with important information. Students should read their RMU student email daily. **NOTE: Students may have the RMU student email forwarded to different email address. Please contact the RMU IT Help Desk for assistance at 412-397-2211 or [help@rmu.edu](mailto:help@rmu.edu).**

### 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. An overview of the library system at RMU can be found at:

[Robert Morris University - Library](#)

## VI. Graduation Information

### 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 at: <https://rmu.edu/academics/commencement>**

## VII. Extracurricular Activities

### A. RMU 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. More information about STTI is available at: <http://www.nursingsociety.org/default.aspx>.

### B. RMU 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.