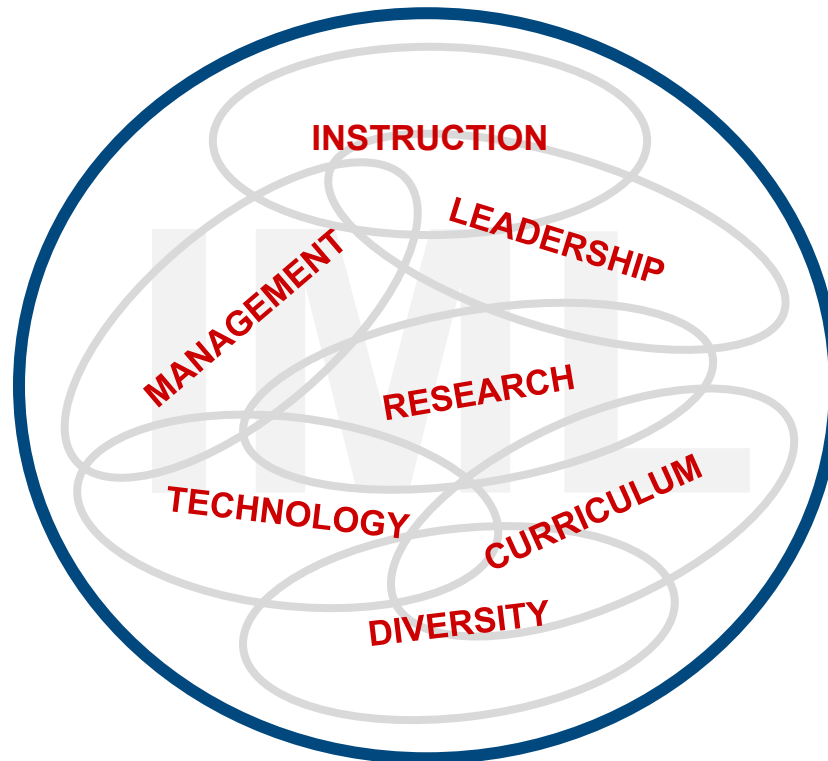


# ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies



**Instructional Management and Leadership  
Doctoral Program**

## **Policies and Procedures Handbook 2020-2021**

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16th Edition

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# Chapter 1: Admission Requirements and Procedures

## 1A. RMU Mission Statement

Robert Morris University seeks to be the gateway to engaged, productive, and successful careers and lives. (Source: <https://www.rmu.edu/about/strategic-plan>)

## 1B. RMU Vision Statement

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.  
(Source: <https://www.rmu.edu/about/strategic-plan>)

## 1C. School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies Mission Statement

The School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies (SNEHS) prepares students for professional licensure exams and the rewarding careers that follow. Through first-rate instruction combined with clinical or classroom experiences, future educators, counselors, and healthcare workers gain the knowledge they need for success, all under the close personal guidance and mentorship that Robert Morris University faculty members are known for.  
(Source: <https://www.rmu.edu/academics/schools/snehs>)

## 1D. Program Description

The Ph.D. Program in Instructional Management and Leadership (IML) is a three-year cohort model program designed to meet the needs of teachers, health professionals, military personnel, administrators, and corporate training professionals who wish to become better managers and leaders in the work place or who seek to pursue collegiate or other high-level teaching and administrative positions.

For administrators and supervisors, the program offers problem-solving strategies in the areas of curriculum, instruction, technology, and diversity that relate to leadership and management. It also provides a diverse yet highly specialized background in leadership, which can help professional candidates secure positions in higher education and in corporate settings.

The program is administered using a cohort model that builds professional and personal networks between students. Each summer for online doctoral students includes a one-week residency when students meet with faculty and engage in the dissertation process. Doctoral candidates learn to manage and lead in an education and workplace environment, understand the complex interrelationships in the instructional and leadership processes, and master research skills through professional presentations and scholarly writing that concludes with a dissertation.

## **IE. Program Outcomes**

*IML Doctoral Program graduates will:*

1. value research and understand how to conduct and critique research across fields of study
2. demonstrate strong writing and speaking skills necessary to advance in careers requiring publications and presentations for professional audiences
3. use leadership theory and management practices to transform the workplace in a positive and productive manner
4. apply the basic tenets of law and ethical practice as it applies to education in various workplace settings
5. value diversity and the importance of multiple international and cultural perspectives as a means to build harmony and trust in the workplace, through research and in professional practice
6. integrate technology when appropriate to improve teaching, learning, and problem solving in the workplace
7. serve as innovative and visionary leaders and managers of instructional and learning initiatives in the workplace
8. determine appropriate theory, methodologies, and analyses necessary to conduct both pure and applied research studies
9. develop a skill set that provides for life-long learning and builds on the importance to teaching, learning, and evaluating as applied in the workplace
10. work effectively with budgetary processes and the types of budgeting strategies implemented in the workplace

## **1F. Program Policies and Procedures Handbook**

The Instructional Management and Leadership (IML) Policies and Procedures Handbook for the Ph.D. program is designed to provide all on ground and online IML doctoral students with an organized reference to the policies and procedures of the doctoral program. Every effort has been made to present this information in a clear and concise form useful to students.

Handbook information is current as of April 2020 regarding the University and SNEHS organization, policies, and procedures followed in the administration and operation of the doctoral program. A policy of the University is to provide advance notice of change whenever possible to accommodate student adjustment. The University and the SNEHS reserve the right to modify the curriculum or to make changes in department or program policies and procedures. Such changes become effective as announced by RMU administration.

## 1G. Admission Requirements

The Doctoral Program consists of cohorts of students enrolled in a common set of courses and providing uniform experiences. The selection of new cohorts begins with an announcement that the SNEHS is accepting applications.

The decision to admit a student to doctoral work constitutes a major commitment from the IML program director and faculty of the program in the form of advising, teaching, chairing or serving on a dissertation committee, preparing and evaluating examinations, and guiding the successful completion of the dissertation.

**Minimum Admission Requirements:** For consideration as a member of one of the IML doctoral cohorts, the following minimum requirements must be met:

1. Master's degree from an accredited institution
2. Minimum graduate GPA of 3.25
3. Computer competency and access to a computer, the Internet, and a printer
4. Commitment to participate in the entire program of study as a cohort member
5. Participation in interviews with faculty members and submission of writing sample(s)
6. Submission of the Admission Application form and *all* required material.

The applicant should note, however, that the decision to admit students to the doctoral program is a collective professional judgment of the faculty and represents their determination of the likelihood of candidate success in all phases of the degree program. Thus, a candidate is not automatically admitted to the program on the basis of meeting the minimum admission requirements. Meeting minimum requirements only establishes eligibility for further consideration.

In order to maintain a reasonable cohort size acceptances are limited. Admission is based upon students' academic ability and fit of the degree.

Students admitted to the program will receive an official notification of acceptance. Students not accepted will also receive official notification.

International students applying to the program must provide scores from a test of English proficiency. **TOEFL minimum score – 80** and **IELTS minimum score – 7.0**.

*Note: Robert Morris University policy emphasizes institutional equity and reflects our continued commitment to a community where everyone is both valued and respected. Institutional equity encompasses racial, ethnic, gender and religious diversity, cultural perspectives, national origins, sexual orientation, physical ability, as well as socioeconomic contexts, and educational backgrounds.*

## **1H. Admission Procedures**

Applicants must provide all five items listed below, and send to:

Graduate Admissions  
Robert Morris University  
6001 University Blvd.  
Moon Township, PA 15108

1. A letter of application and the Admission Application Form.
2. Official undergraduate and graduate transcripts.
3. Three (3) current letters of reference submitted by professionals familiar with your academic or work experience.
4. A complete resume or vita that includes professional experience, education, certification, and other relevant information
5. A personal essay (maximum of five pages) on your career aspirations.

Upon receipt and review, candidates may be invited to participate in:

1. Writing Sample
2. Interview with the Director and Faculty

## Chapter 2: Academic Guidelines

### 2A. Policy on Instructional Modifications for Students with Disabilities

Students who may be eligible to receive learning support or physical accommodations need to contact the Center for Student Success at 412-397-6862 to schedule an appointment with a counselor and to learn more about accommodation procedures. Note that to receive accommodations, arrangements must be made each semester for each course through the RMU Center for Student Success.

### 2B. Residency Requirements and Time Limit

To meet the academic residency requirements for the doctoral degree, all doctoral students must register for two consecutive semesters with a minimum course load of 6 credits per semester and 6 credits during summer sessions. This coursework is exclusive of dissertation credit units.

Online doctoral students will be required to attend and complete three (3) summer residencies on campus. Housing options are available for those needing this accommodation. Those living near the campus may opt to commute daily but are required to participate in both class and other activities during the week of residency.

**Statute of Limitations:** All degree requirements must be completed within seven years from admission and three years from the date of advancement to candidacy, including any leaves of absence. The doctoral program design, however, provides students an opportunity to complete the program within a three-year period.

**Continuous Dissertation Policy:** At Robert Morris University, as is common practice, students must be enrolled in coursework during the semester in which they graduate. The Continuous Dissertation Policy requires all students who have not completed the dissertation, but who have completed all other required coursework and degree requirements, to register and pay the tuition fee for a one-credit continuous dissertation course (xxx) each semester, beginning the fall semester after third-year coursework is completed. This provided students the opportunity to work with their dissertation chairs and committee to finalize the dissertation. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Eligibility for August graduation that follows third-year coursework requires that students successfully defend their dissertation (final version submitted with all signatures) by August 1, and does not require an additional tuition fee.

Eligibility for a December graduation that follows third-year coursework requires that students successfully defend their dissertation (final version submitted with all signatures) by December 1, and requires registration and payment for a Fall semester one-credit dissertation continuation course – EDML9551 Dissertation Credit.



Eligibility for a May graduation that follows third-year coursework requires that students successfully defend their dissertation (final version submitted with all signatures) by April 1, and requires registration and payment for a Spring Fall semester one-credit dissertation continuation course – EDML9551 Dissertation Credit.

## 2C. Dissertation Chair Assignment

During the second year summer session, students provide a prioritized list of preferences for their dissertation chair (and other dissertation committee members). Assignment of chairs and committee members by the IML Program Director is dependent on faculty member availability and willingness to serve.

## 2D. Program of Study – Course Plan

The following is the 3-year course plan for the cohort program of study, outlining courses and seminars required each semester and summer session. Doctoral student are not permitted to take courses outside of his/her specific program. Online students must follow the online program course of study and on-ground students must follow the traditional face to face course of study.

### Year 1

SUMMER 6 credits	FALL 6 credits	SPRING 6 credits
EDML8240 Critical Readings in Educational Research (3 cr)	EDML8170 Instructional Leadership in Curriculum Planning (3 cr)	EDML 8240 Quantitative Research II (3 cr)
EDML8110 Applying Instructional Technology (3 cr)	EDML8230 Qualitative Research I (3 cr)	EDML8250 Statistics (3 cr)

### Year 2

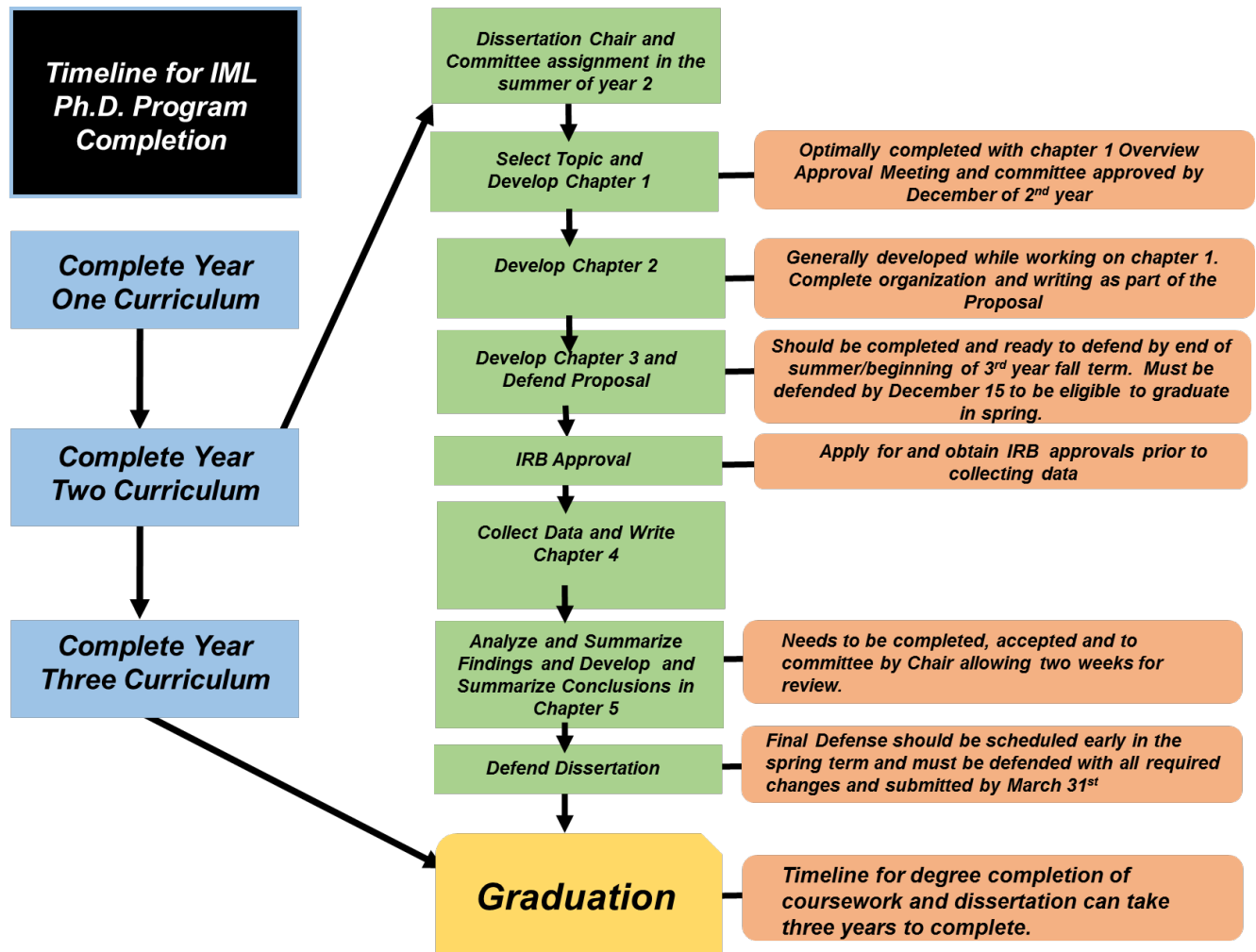
SUMMER 6 credits	FALL 7 credits	SPRING 7 credits
EDML9180 Intro to Dissertation (3 cr)	EDML8190 Law and Ethics in Educ (3 cr)	EDML8120 Leadership I (3 cr)
EDML8180 Program Evaluation (3 cr)	EDML8280 Teaching in Higher Education/ Techn, Curriculum, Ldrshp (3 cr)	EDML8150 Leadership II (3 cr)
	EDML9130 Dissertation Seminar I (1 cr)	EDML9140 Dissertation Seminar II (1 cr)

### Year 3

SUMMER 8 credits	FALL 8 credits	SPRING 6 credits
EDML8130 International Perspectives (3)	EDML8270 Writing for Publication (3)	
EDML8220 Managing the Instructional Environment (3)	EDML8200 Managing Finances and Budgets (3)	
EDML9150 Dissertation Seminar III (2)	EDML9160 Dissertation Seminar IV (2)	EDML9170 Dissertation Seminar V (6)

**Note:** It is important to remember that the successful completion of the prescribed number of course credits is no assurance that the degree will be conferred. Each student must prepare and successfully defend a dissertation to the complete satisfaction of a dissertation committee prior to the conferring of the doctoral degree.

## 2E. Program of Study – Timeline Flowchart



## 2F. Instructional Time Periods

RMU offers the following instructional time periods for the IML Doctoral Program.

Fall Semester (16 weeks)	August-December – one course each of two 8-week sessions
Spring Semester (16 weeks)	January-May – one course each of two 8-week sessions
Summer Sessions (16 weeks)	May-June (onground cohort) – two courses 1 <sup>st</sup> 8-week session July-August (online cohort) – two courses 2 <sup>nd</sup> 8-week session

## 2G. Required Semester Course Load

A doctoral student is classified as full time if registered for a minimum of six credits in each semester or summer. Students must follow the recommended program course sequence. A doctoral student must register for the required number of credits stipulated in the course outline.

Doctoral students who fail to successfully register (e.g., have not resolved academic or financial obligations) each semester or summer and are not on an approved Leave of Absence will be administratively withdrawn, per University policy.

## 2H. Attendance and Presence

On ground cohort students are expected to attend **all** classes, participate fully in class activities, and fulfill all course requirements. Online cohort students are expected to be “present” each week, participate fully in online class activities and discussions, and fulfill all course requirements. Professionalism is expected of all doctoral students.

Professionalism for on ground cohort students includes active participation, attendance at all class meetings, and avoidance of disruptive behaviors (such as using, answering cell phones, text messaging, or using computers for anything other than the current in-class activity or other disruptive behavior). Doctoral program faculty design classroom lectures and activities to allow for discussion, sharing of ideas, review of course requirements, and for individuals and teams to work together to integrate course content and required research. This makes routine class attendance or presence essential and mandatory.

Professionalism for online cohort students also includes active participation and avoidance of disruptive behaviors. An example of an online disruptive behavior is failure to participate in online discussions in a timely manner so others do not have an adequate opportunity to respond or posting inappropriate content. Doctoral program faculty design online instructional materials, assignments, and activities to allow for discussion, sharing of ideas, review of course requirements, and for individuals and teams to work together virtually to integrate course content and required research. Active participation and “presence” online each week is required of all online cohort students.

**Attendance Policy for On-Ground Students:** Student attendance in the IML Ph.D. on-ground program is an important part of the teaching and learning process. The opportunity to work closely with fellow cohort members, interact with guest speakers, work person to person with faculty, and engage in active learning, in the classroom are important components of this doctoral program.

Per Education Department policy, no student who misses more than two classes (25% of a course) can pass the course. Occasionally, an instructor may notify the IML Program Director that a student has been excused from a class due to dire emergency such as serious illness of the student or a death in the family. This will occur rarely.

Some instructors may permit a student who cannot attend class due to a personal or professional conflict to use a synchronous device such as Skype, Google Hangouts or other videoconferencing tool to participate in class or they may provide online materials in lieu of attendance. This session may be considered an excused or unexcused absence at the discretion of the instructor. Students are responsible for connecting with a mobile computer through a classmate, if permitted.

Students who have an unexcused absence will incur a 5% reduction in their final grade. Students who have a second unexcused absence will incur a 10% reduction in their final grade. Students who have more than two unexcused absences will fail the course.

**Attendance Policy for Online Students:** Student participation in the Instruction Management/Leadership online program is an important part of the teaching and learning process. The opportunity to work closely with fellow cohort members and the professor by engaging in weekly threaded discussions, group assignments, comprehensive exercises and self-reflective narrative assignments in the online course shell are important components of this doctoral program. Thus, on-going, consistent and timely participation is mandatory for all online students. In the event, however, if some serious illness, family emergency or other circumstance occurs which may make it impossible for you to participate in the course discussion, group assignments or other course assignments, you should notify your instructor immediately. It is understood that only an extremely serious and compelling reason would necessitate an inability to participate for a week – examples being emergency hospitalization or the death of an immediate family member. It is at the discretion of the faculty member to excuse or not excuse non-participation. There should be no more than one (1) excused non-participation period during any eight week course. If a student misses two (2) weeks, the student will fail the course. Also, a student who was not excused for a week of non-participation will automatically fail the course. A student who is granted an excused non-participation period would be responsible for completing materials and assignments during that period. However, the threaded discussion cannot be made up. Students who have an unexcused absence will incur a 5% reduction in their final grade. Students who have a second unexcused absence will incur a 10% reduction in their final grade. Students must follow the rules established for each class by the instructor of record of that particular course.

## 2I. Course Grades

Continuous enrollment in the Instructional Management and Leadership doctoral program is dependent upon a satisfactory evaluation of academic performance and progress toward the completion of the degree; that is maintaining a quality point average (QPA) of 3.25 or higher, based on a 4.0 scale.

Grade Description	Quality Points
A Excellent	4.00
A-	3.67
B+ Good	3.33
B	3.00
C Adequate	2.00

Unsatisfactory performance may be defined as the failure to maintain a 3.25 average in doctoral courses, an unsatisfactory evaluation of dissertation, failure of the research defense, or any other failure of a required component of the IML doctoral program of study. Any one or more of these may constitute the basis for dismissal from the program.

Students who drop below a 3.25 GPA will be placed on **Academic Probation** and have one term or semester to raise their GPA to a 3.25. Students unable to achieve a 3.25 will be dismissed from the program.

**Satisfactory QPA:** Students who drop below a 3.25 GPA will be placed on **Academic Probation** and have one semester or summer to raise their GPA to a 3.25. Students unable to achieve a 3.25 by the end of the following semester will be dismissed from the program.

## 2J. Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

**Academic Integrity.** Academic Integrity is valued at Robert Morris University. All students are expected to understand and adhere to the standards of Academic Integrity as stated in the RMU Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found on the RMU website at [www.rmu.edu/academicintegrity](http://www.rmu.edu/academicintegrity). Any student who violates the Academic Integrity Policy is subject to possible judicial proceedings, which may result in sanctions as outlined in the Policy. Depending upon the severity of the violation, sanctions may range from receiving a zero on an assignment to dismissal from the University. If you have any questions about the policy, please consult your course instructor.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, taking someone else's words or ideas and representing them as your own, is expressly prohibited by Robert Morris University, which can be found on as part of each course syllabi. and is further explained . The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Therefore, students have both a legal and ethical responsibility to cite works properly. Students who commit blatant acts of plagiarism will fail the course and may be required to present a defense to be allowed to continue in the program.

**Falsification of Academic Credentials:** A student admitted to a graduate degree program based in part upon a previously earned academic degree and is found to have intentionally misrepresented the degree information will be immediately dismissed from his or her program of study and will be barred from future graduate work at the University. A current student or a student who has recently withdrawn the university without completing a degree who then claims to have earned said degree will be immediately dismissed from the program of study (if applicable) and barred from future graduate work at the University.

## **2K. Graduation Requirements**

To receive the Ph.D. in Instructional Management and Leadership, you must:

1. Complete the program of study with a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher on a 4.00 scale.
2. Successfully complete all required coursework and obtain all required signatures for the Chapter 1 Overview Approval, Chapters 1-3 Proposal Defense, and the final Chapters 1-5 Dissertation Defense.
3. Submit electronic copy of the dissertation in its final form to your Dissertation Chair. The Chair will submit the Final Dissertation to the IML Ph.D. Program Coordinator. The Coordinator will then forward a set of instructions for uploading and printing two copies for the university through ProQuest.
4. Fulfill the University seven-year statute of limitation requirement.
5. Apply for graduation.

## Chapter 3: The Curriculum

### 3A. General Requirements

The Robert Morris University IML Ph.D. Program requires completion of 60 semester credit hours of coursework beyond the Master’s degree. All doctoral credits must be fulfilled at RMU in the prescribed course sequence, and completed following the 3-year program of study Course Plan. Coursework may be extended only under special circumstances and with the approval of the Doctoral Director. Program requirements are grouped as follows:

Instructional Management & Leadership	18
Research	12
Dissertation	15
Other Related Coursework	15
<b>Total Credits: 60</b>	

### 3B. Program Course Listing and Descriptions

All students are required to complete 60 credits in the Ph.D. Education program according to the regulations outlined in Appendix C. All on ground classes will be conducted during evening sessions with the exception of dissertation seminars which will be held once monthly on Saturday mornings. Online courses will be held using the RMU LMS and conducted asynchronously. Online students will also participate with dissertation seminars through and online asynchronous and synchronous modalities. All courses must be taken in the prescribed sequence. A student not able to complete a course will not be able to progress to the next course and will need to lay out and reenter only if there is an opening in the next scheduled cohort.

#### RMU Instructional Management and Leadership Program

##### CORE COURSES

**24 Credits Required**

EDML 8110	Applying Instructional Technology	3 credits
EDML 8120	Leadership I	3 credits
EDML 8150	Leadership II	3 credits
EDML 8170	Instructional Leadership in Curriculum Planning	3 credits
EDML 8180	Program Evaluation	3 credits
EDML 8200	Managing Finances and Budgets	3 credits
EDML 8280	Teaching in Higher Education	3 credits
EDML 8220	Managing the Instructional Environment	3 credits

##### RESEARCH/DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS

**27 Credits Required**

EDML 8140	Critical Readings in Educational Research	3 credits
EDML 8230	(Qualitative) Research I	3 credits
EDML 8240	(Quantitative) Research II	3 credits

EDML 8250	Statistical Methods I	3 credits
EDML 9180	Introduction to the Dissertation	3credits
EDML 9130	Dissertation Seminar I	1 credit
EDML 9140	Dissertation Seminar II	1 credit
EDML 9150	Dissertation Seminar III	2 credits
EDML 9160	Dissertation Seminar IV	2 credits
EDML 9170	Dissertation Seminar V	6 credits

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**9 Credits Required**

EDML 8190	Law and Ethics in Education	3 credits
EDML 8130	International Perspectives	3 credits
EDML 8270	Writing for Publication	3 credits

**Total Credits 60**

### **3C. Program Course Descriptions**

**EDML8110 Applying Instructional Technology** (3 credits): Provides participants with the knowledge and skills to achieve the basic unity of process in the arena of instructional technology. The course also reviews technology based strategies and techniques to achieve a desired learning goal in different learning situations. The focus is also on researching technology-based learning through software and hardware applications and the application of web based learning opportunities in an LMS environment to address diverse learner needs.

**EDML8120 Leadership 1** (3 credits): Concentrates on those theories, resources, and techniques critical to the development of effective leadership, communication, and management skills for those individuals destined to lead constituents within an educational, health related, or business setting. This course provides doctoral candidates with an opportunity to complete a leadership inventory and identify strategies and techniques that facilitates goal attainment in these diverse environments. Doctoral candidates are challenged to apply course topics to their specific work environments, to help them make an impact on student achievement and/or employee and instructional performance.

**EDML8130 International Perspectives** (3 credits): Addresses ways of infusing global perspectives in instructional and other societal contexts from a post-colonialist perspective. The course allows students a critical understanding of national and international debates on global education and global citizenship education. It will also explore discourses on neoliberalism, globalization, human rights, and empire.

**EDML8140 Critical Readings in Educational Research** (3 credits): Explores the methods and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative research in the areas of education and the social sciences. This course begins the process of understanding research methods and lays the foundation for future in-depth study of the qualitative, quantitative, and program evaluation approaches.



**EDML8150 Leadership II** (3 credits): Focuses on the continuing development of leadership and supervision crucial to success in an educational, medical, non-profit, business or other professional setting. The course builds on the knowledge and theories learned in EDML8120 through case study critiques, position statements on leadership style, and analysis of authentic application to current leadership practices. This course is part II of the leadership curriculum in the program.

**EDML8170 Instructional Leadership in Curriculum Planning** (3 credits): Investigates the philosophical, sociological, and historical foundation of curriculum design. Students will apply theories and informed practice in multiple curricular content areas. The concepts of scope, sequence, balance and integration will be included.

**EDML8180 Program Evaluation** (3 credits): Prepares leaders in education, non-profit management, and the corporate world to design and use program evaluations to assess the impact of intervention, training, and accreditation programs. Students will develop an evaluation plan for an existing program and evaluate the impact of program evaluation in continuous improvement models.

**EDML8190 Law and Ethics in Education** (3 credits): Focuses on the history of American public education, school organizations and structures, historical and contemporary political, economic, and social issues and policies affecting American public education, school law and the legal responsibilities of educational leaders, and integrity and ethical behavior for educational leaders.

**EDML8200 Managing Finances and Budgets** (3 credits): Develops an understanding of the strategic planning process, budgetary systems and budget preparation, funding sources, expenditure categories to ensure efficient and effective operational procedures.

**EDML8220 Managing the Diverse Instructional Environment** (3 credits): Focuses on the four domains of teaching responsibility: planning and preparation, instructional environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities within a diverse setting. Students examine various theoretical perspectives and critique the roles of social structures, ideologies, and identities in the larger social context and in managing the instructional environment.

**EDML8230 Qualitative Research 2** (3 credits): Promotes student understanding of various designs used in qualitative inquiry including Narrative, Phenomenological, Grounded Theory, Ethnographic, and Case Study. It also allows students to develop skills with both data collection and analysis.

**EDML8240 Quantitative Research 1** (3 credits): Focuses on quantitative research concepts, methods, and strategies that are typical to education and the social sciences. Reviews experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, causal-comparative and survey research. Examples of each research design will be presented for analysis.

**EDML8250 Statistical Methods I** (3 credits): Provides basic knowledge of descriptive and inferential statistical concepts. Topics covered in this course include frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, measures of variability, z-scores, sampling distributions, hypothesis testing and confidence intervals of one and two means, one-way ANOVA, multiple comparison procedures, correlational analysis, and simple linear regression. Chi square tests will be covered as time permits. This course will also include instruction in the use of the statistical software package SPSS.

**EDML8280 Teaching in Higher Education/Technology, Curriculum, Leadership** (3 credits): Prepares candidates for teaching in higher education with emphasis in the three major concentrations (managing technology, curriculum, and leadership/management) of the program.

**EDML8270 Writing for Publication** (3 credits): Provides an opportunity for students to enter the world of publishing from a call for proposals, reviewing articles, creating a bio, writing and submitting an actual article for publication, and writing a grant proposal. Several guest speakers from publishing companies including editors, reviewers, and sales reps, authors, and a grant writer will be presenting on the publication process.

**EDML9130, 9140, 9150, 9160, 9170 Dissertation Seminars I – V** (total of 12 credits): Upon completion of the initial four research course sequence, students focus their specific research interests toward a final dissertation project.

**EDML9180 Introduction to the Dissertation** (3 credits) - Acquaints students with what is required for a doctoral dissertation and the necessary associated research process. The course includes three (3) threads, or major areas of study. The first provides the structure and groundwork for a workable dissertation. The second focuses on identifying an appropriate topic of interest for a dissertation and beginning the development of a related and relevant review of the literature. The third course thread bridges viable dissertation topics with concise problem statements and potential research methods. Students complete an extensive annotated bibliography and a scholarly argumentative paper, both based on a viable dissertation topic approved by the course instructor. This course is a prerequisite for Dissertation Seminar I, dedicated to the process of writing Chapter 1 of the student's dissertation.

### **3D. Major Specialization**

The Ph.D. Program in Instructional Management and Leadership at Robert Morris University will provide a professional doctoral program of study for teachers, administrators, corporate trainers, and college faculty seeking the terminal degree who are interested in becoming better instructional managers and leaders in key areas of education.

### **3E. Program Format**

The IML doctoral program is structured using a 3-year cohort model, with cohorts formed annually. Semester and summer courses for on ground cohorts are scheduled in 8-week

sessions during evening hours one day per week. Some activities or seminar courses for on ground cohorts may require additional evening or Saturday meetings.

Semester and summer courses for online cohorts are schedule in the same 8-week sessions, using distance education delivery via a University sanctioned learning management system (LMS). Some activities or seminar courses for online cohorts may require scheduled participation in online synchronous meetings.

## Chapter 4: The Dissertation Process

### 4A. Description of the Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation is to be a publication of original, independent research in an area of educational significance. It must reflect the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the related literature and of the research methodology appropriate to the investigation. The dissertation in the form of an organized and completely written study should represent a contribution to the knowledge base in the candidate's field or area of specialization.

### 4B. Dissertation Research: Topic Relevance

The dissertation research conducted by doctoral students must be congruent with the IML doctoral program outcomes. Each student must secure the agreement of three faculty members who are qualified to guide the proposed research and willing to serve on the dissertation committee. Initial approval of the dissertation topic and outline is with the committee members' sign-off for *Chapter 1: Introduction* of the dissertation.

### 4C. Initial Work of the Dissertation Committee

The following steps are necessary in establishing, and outlining the necessary work of, the dissertation committee.

**Step #1:** Upon admission to candidacy (at the end of the first year), the student will have the opportunity to meet with all faculty teaching in the doctoral program and in conjunction with the doctoral director will identify faculty to work with as chair and two committee members. The decision is based on aligning the focus of research and faculty expertise. Additional considerations will be the number of requests and workload requirements of individual faculty.

**Step #2:** The doctoral student and dissertation chair jointly agree upon an appropriately focused dissertation topic. In determining a focused topic, the following criteria are used:

- A. The topic is of interest to the student.
- B. The topic is "researchable;" that is:
  1. One might reasonably predict (or expect) that a relationship exists between an independent and dependent variable.
  2. Logically appropriate research questions or hypothesis can be developed
  3. An acceptable research design can be used to address the problem statement and research questions/hypothesis.
  4. A meaningful purpose and significance of the study can be articulated.
- C. The proposed topic of study is feasible and able to be completed within a reasonable amount of time.

**Step #3:** The following guidelines are used in the selection of a dissertation committee:

- A. A dissertation committee must consist of at least three members, including the chair.
- B. Two committee members and the chair are required to be Education department faculty members who also regularly teach in the doctoral program.

- C. The committee must include at least one member with expertise in quantitative or qualitative research, as appropriate, and at least one member with expertise in the main content area the dissertation addresses.

**Step #4:** The dissertation chair meets with the student to plan the dissertation study. The chair will also be responsible for coordinating a meeting with the committee for approval of the dissertation topic and the conduct of the study.

**Step #5:** The doctoral student formally presents and discusses the proposed dissertation topic and outline with a Chapter 1 draft at a meeting of the dissertation committee members during the Fall semester of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. , resulting in approval of the . Chapter 1 sign-off required by all committee members.

**Step #6:** The dissertation chair keeps in close contact with the student and the committee, coordinating all interactions between the student and the committee members. The chair is also responsible for reporting progress to the IML Program Director and doctoral teaching faculty at monthly meetings.

This six-step process establishes, and outlines the initial work of, the dissertation committee that the student works with throughout the completion of the dissertation.

#### **4D. Additional Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee**

After initial approval of dissertation Chapter 1, additional responsibilities of the committee members include:

1. Review and evaluate the dissertation proposal (draft of Chapters 1-3) to determine completeness and quality of:
  - a. Research design
  - b. Proposed data collection and data analysis techniques
  - c. Analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application of knowledge
  - d. Organization of ideas and effectiveness of both written and oral communication
2. Review and evaluate the final dissertation (Chapters 1-5) to determine the completeness and quality of:
  - a. Data collection techniques used
  - b. Data analysis techniques used
  - c. Analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application of knowledge
  - d. Organization of ideas and effectiveness of both written and oral communication
  - e. Support of conclusions with salient research
3. Participate in the Oral Dissertation Defense to determine if the candidate demonstrates:
  - a. A thorough explanation of data collection and analysis techniques
  - b. Appropriate level of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application of knowledge
  - c. Organized and effective written and oral communication
  - d. Use of existing research to compare with findings and conclusions

- e. Articulation of appropriate inferences from collected data as supported conclusions
- f. An analysis of the level of contribution of the dissertation study to the field of related research

#### **4E. Dissertation Chapter 1**

All students are required to work with their dissertation chair to complete a Chapter 1 draft, which also acts as an overview, or topic proposal, for the dissertation. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to define a focused dissertation topic and to establish a proposed plan for conducting the research study. The components of Chapter 1 that must be included can be found in Appendix A: Dissertation Chapter Descriptions.

The dissertation committee **must sign off** – that is, formally approve – Chapter 1. If the committee does not grant approval initially, the doctoral student then works with the dissertation chair to revise and/or rewrite for approval. The student should not continue with work on subsequent chapters until Chapter 1 is approved. Chapter 1 approval is necessary to advance to the proposal stage of the dissertation, which includes Chapters 1 through 3.

**Note:** Subsequent work with drafting the literature review and methodology chapters may reveal necessary major or minor changes to the approved content of Chapter 1. Major changes may require dissertation committee re-approval of Chapter 1; minor changes may only require approval of dissertation chair. Discussion of the level of changes and implications with the dissertation chair is recommended.

#### **4F. Dissertation Proposal (Chapters 1-2-3)**

The doctoral student must provide a dissertation proposal that comprehensively describes each of the following: the problem investigated, a rationale or theoretical framework, a thorough review of the literature, the methodology/design used and instrumented, the plan for data analysis, procedures for protection of human subjects when appropriate, and probable contribution the results will provide to the field of study. The student **must not** begin data gathering until first the dissertation committee, and then the RMU IRB, has officially approved the proposal.

**Note:** Students are not permitted to use University stationery in conducting student research.

All work submitted for review at this stage of the dissertation process must reflect not only scholarship, but also concern for the technical details of format and style. Begin the proposal with a title page. Divide the body of the text into appropriate sections. Reference the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*.

After the formal dissertation proposal defense, the dissertation committee may recommend approval or disapproval. Your dissertation chair communicates the decision to the student, with specific reference to any required changes.

## 4G. Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines for the dissertation proposal, as provided in Chapters 1 through 3, is to provide an understanding of minimum expectations, and to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about the proposal.

**Guideline #1:** Make sure the problem addressed by your dissertation, as stated in the Problem Statement, is not a trivial one. Do not waste your time and that of others on confirmation of the obvious, nor on matters that have no important implications for understanding or for practice. The topic should be one in which you have an abiding interest and in which you are willing to become a specialist by reading all relevant literature.

**Guideline #2:** Thoroughly explain and justify the proposed study, making a persuasive case that there is a need for this particular study, and should be addressed in the manner proposed.

**Guideline #3:** All parts of the proposal must be logically coherent. That is, the Problem Statement must flow from a thorough review of the literature; the specific Research Questions must be congruent with the Problem Statement; and the design and methodology – in particular, the sample data or data gathered – must be appropriate to adequately answer the Research Questions.

**Guideline #4:** Include operational definitions, and explicitly state them in the proposal. While conceptual definitions are essential in a discussion of the problem, most studies at some point require operational definitions. These are definitions unique to the proposal and help to further define the research. Likewise, clearly articulate a description of the design of the study. Readers pay close attention to whether the proposed operational steps are appropriate to answer the questions stated conceptually in the description of the problem investigated.

**Guideline #5:** State the methodology, and statistical procedures if required for a quantitative study, with a degree of specificity that would allow the proposal to be sent to an independent researcher to conduct the study in the manner prescribed.

**Guideline #6:** Briefly indicate awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of instruments and/or dependent measures chosen. In the case of unpublished measures, contact the author(s) for information regarding normative data, reliability, validity data, etc. Likewise, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study design.

**Guideline #7:** The proposal should speak for itself. Thoroughly describe all matters of theory, sample, sources, and method necessary to understand the proposed study, not leaving any aspect to readers' interpretations. Vague promises to include such material in the final dissertation are not satisfactory.

**Guideline #8:** When using analysis of covariance, regression, discriminant analysis, or other statistical approaches which model a hypothesized relation among several variables,

clearly set forth the model to be estimated. For example, show the regression equation(s) to be estimated. Explain how results will be interpreted and how they bear on the Research Questions.

**Guideline #9:** Use correct, standard English. Dissertation committee members will reject proposals with numerous grammatical, spelling, or structural errors.

**Guideline #10:** Use standard citation, source referencing, and organizational style as stated in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), Seventh Edition*. The doctoral student learn and properly apply the standards.

#### **4H. Proposal Defense**

A Chapters 1-3 proposal document must demonstrate mastery of an area of specialization and a proposed investigation of a problem in an analytic, creative, and scholarly way. After completed to the satisfaction of your committee chair, the chair schedules a defense meeting of the dissertation committee. The defense must take place no later than December 15<sup>th</sup> of the third year of the program in order to be eligible for graduation the following May. Students should not wait until the end of the fall semester to complete work necessary for the proposal defense; instead, students should plan their time for a proposal defense to take place earlier in the term. Note that committee members must receive the complete proposal document for review at least two weeks prior to the defense meeting.

The doctoral student works with the dissertation committee chair to prepare for the defense meeting, at which the student provides a:

- Brief background and statement of the problem, demonstrating that a problem exists by citing evidence such as current events, the effects of practices and policies, trends, and/or statistics
- Review of how the problem or issue has been studied by previous researchers that includes discussion of dominant theoretical or analytical frameworks employed, as well as methods and results of prominent and relevant empirical research
- Explanation of rationale of proposed methodology, along with complete implementation plan for data collection and analysis

Doctoral students should allow two hours for the proposal defense, although most conclude in less than one hour. The meeting includes a formal student presentation, no more than 20 minutes and supported with electronic slides. An important part of the presentation includes answering the questions of the dissertation committee members, with ensuing discussion. Students should take careful written notes of any changes or corrections recommended by your committee members. At the conclusion of the meeting, the doctoral student leaves the room, or virtual session, while the committee deliberates.

The committee must indicate one of the following four actions:

1. approve with no substantive revisions (i.e., only style, grammar, etc. revisions recommended)
2. require minor substantive revisions
3. require major substantive revisions



#### 4. reject

In the case where substantive revisions are required, the chair confers with the doctoral student which results in a written statement of the required revisions, and establish a time schedule for completion of the revisions. The committee members sign the approval form after the revisions have been completed to the committee's satisfaction. In case of rejection, the committee chair communicates the reasons for rejection. Students may then attempt one more proposal defense at a later acceptable date. In the event the second proposal is rejected the student may not continue in the program.

When the dissertation committee approves the dissertation proposal, the committee members sign the approval form and the chair submits the form to the IML Doctoral Director.

Once the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended, the student works with the chair to develop and submit for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval form online. Only after IRB approval has been received, can the student begin data collection.

**Note:** The dissertation proposal defense and final dissertation defense cannot occur in the same semester. The dissertation must be defended at least one (1) semester after the semester in which the proposal defense was approved.

### **4I. Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

In order to conduct research, the student must obtain approval from the RMU Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to implementing the research design with data collection. The IRB is responsible for reviewing all applications for research design approval with respect to the protection of the study's participants. The student must submit the online IRB application form as soon as possible after successful defense of the dissertation proposal, and in accordance with the directions outlined on the RMU IRB web page. (<https://www.rmu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb>)

### **4J. Dissertation Evaluation Criteria**

The doctoral dissertation is a demonstration of the student's ability to bring theory and knowledge to bear on the solution of a significant educational problem.

For final evaluation, the dissertation must show evidence of:

- mastery of the English language
- comprehensive review of appropriate literature
- defensible methodology (appropriate research design and analysis)
- critical analysis and synthesis
- significant contribution to educational research and/or practice

## 4K. Dissertation Defense

When the final dissertation draft document that includes all five required chapters is completed to the satisfaction of the dissertation chair, the chair schedules a defense meeting. Committee members must receive the completed dissertation document for review a minimum of two weeks prior to approving the scheduling of the defense. For the student to graduate within the three years, the final defense must occur by March 31st in the year of graduation. No defenses are scheduled during the month of April.

The dissertation chair, in collaboration with the student and other committee members, establishes the date, time, and location of the meeting and informs the IML Program Director and the SNEHS Graduate Program Assistant. The RMU academic community is then invited to the defense. Note that the defense meeting is limited to members of the academic community.

Under the direction of the chair, the student must prepare a defense presentation (20-minutes, or length as recommended by chair) that includes a very brief overview of Chapters 1 through 3 content, followed by an explanation of the major findings, results, and implications of the research as articulated in Chapters 4 and 5. Students should allow at least two hours for the dissertation defense, although most meetings conclude in somewhat less time. Recommendation for the student is to take precise, written notes of any recommended changes or corrections that result from discussion with committee members. At the conclusion of the meeting, the candidate leaves the room (or virtual meeting) as the committee deliberates. The chair has the Signature Page forms ready for signature, should the dissertation be approved.

The committee must indicate one of the following four actions:

1. approve with no substantive revisions (i.e., only style, grammar, etc. revisions recommended)
2. require minor substantive revisions
3. require major substantive revisions
4. reject

In the case where substantive revisions are required, the chair will confer with the candidate to establish a written statement of the required revisions, and establish a time schedule for completion. The committee members sign the dissertation signature page after the revisions have been completed to the committee's satisfaction. In case of rejection, the committee chair communicates in writing to the student the reasons for rejection. The candidate may attempt a second dissertation defense at a later and mutually agreed upon date. In the event that the dissertation defense is rejected a second time, the candidate may not continue in the program.

When the committee has approved the candidate's dissertation and the members have signed the dissertation signature page, the dissertation chair submits the pages to the SNEHS Graduate Program Coordinator. The Graduate Program Coordinator will forward instruction for students to submit their final dissertation document to ProQuest for required

printing and publication through UMI. Following receipt of all required materials and revisions by the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline, the candidate **is permitted to participate in the May graduation ceremony.**

#### **4L. Dissertation Posting**

Upon completion of the 60 credits required for the degree and the approval of the candidate's dissertation, the Doctoral Program Director evaluates the candidate's academic record for degree completion and forwards to the SNEHS Dean for approval and signature.

Degrees are posted when ***all*** requirements have been fulfilled. The date of the defense of a dissertation has no bearing on the degree posting. Candidates must submit all required documents with all the proper signatures before the degree is posted. There will be no exceptions. The IML Program Director must be provided ample time to review and process the dissertation.

Failure to complete the required dissertation procedures in a current semester requires the student to register for one-credit dissertation course in the following semester, as students must be an active student (registered from one or more credits) in the semester the degree is conferred.

**Policy on Announcements of Dissertation Defense Results:** Doctoral students who successfully defend their dissertation must submit the final dissertation document with all required corrections/edits approved by the dissertation chair and must secure all required signatures before ***any*** congratulatory notice is announced. This policy is necessary to encourage completion of corrections/edits in a timely manner and expedites final submission of the dissertation for printing and publication through ProQuest and UMI.

## **Appendix A: Dissertation Chapter Descriptions**

The set of dissertation chapter descriptions on the following pages acts as a guide to assist with formatting and writing the final version of the dissertation. Each chapter overview is followed by a list of questions to consider. Note that not all questions are applicable for all types of dissertations. Each doctoral student works with the dissertation chair to develop the structure and content of dissertation chapters, using the chapter descriptions and questions to assist with the process.

### **Important Notes:**

- The initial version of Chapter 1 serves the dual role as both a dissertation approval document as well as a major component of the Chapter 1-3 Proposal Defense and the guiding chapter of the final dissertation. As such, requires that the text use future verb tense throughout. After the data is collected and chapter 4 and 5 are written, the tense is changed to past tense.
- The first three chapter descriptions below are provided for consideration as the doctoral student initially prepares these chapters for the Chapter 1-3 Proposal defense, and as such some sentences, formatted for the proposal, are written in future and/or present tense.
- For the final version of the dissertation submitted to the committee for review prior to the Dissertation defense, the doctoral student must revisit Chapters 1 and 3 and change all future tense verb structures to past tense. At that time, it may also be necessary to make minor adjustments to the text of those chapters based on the results of the completed the study.

# Chapter I

## Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter 1 typically addresses the following items: an introduction section, a brief review of the literature that helps define the proposed study, a theoretical and/or conceptual framework, stated purpose of the study, the problem addressed, a set of research questions and/or hypotheses statements as may be appropriate, explanation of why the study is significant, an overview of intended methodology, a list of limitations, delimitations and assumptions in the study, and a list of definitions of terms particular to understanding the study. Chapter 1 generally comprises approximately 15% of dissertation text in the five chapters.

### Background Section:

The first section of Chapter 1, the Background section, must provide the reader with a contextual understanding of the nature of the problem addressed by the dissertation study. This section includes a brief summary of important research directly related to the topic of the study, and is not intended to be a complete analysis of all uncovered with the throughout analysis of the literature. A complete analysis and synthesis of previous research that relates to the study's problem is provided in Chapter 2 – the Literature Review.

### Chapter I Questions to Consider:

#### Background section:

1. Do you begin with a real world description of the phenomenon of interest to your study?
2. Do you present an overview of the major theoretical and empirical contributions to our understanding of the phenomenon or phenomena of interest to your study?
3. When you present the main ideas/findings/conclusions of a given source, do you inform your reader about the underlying rationale or empirical basis for such ideas/findings/conclusions? An example: “Based on a multiple regression analysis of data, Smith and Jones (20xx) conclude...”
4. Do you critically consider and comment on adequacy and/or inadequacy of the theoretical and empirical contributions – both individual and collective – that relate to the phenomenon or phenomena of interest?
5. Do you assess and explain to your reader the adequacy and/or inadequacy of the previous work in this area discussed in terms of conceptual, theoretical, and methodological strengths and weaknesses?
6. Do you identify where the “gaps” in the theoretical and/or empirical knowledge relative to the phenomenon/phenomena of interest?
7. Do you present the information in this section as an orderly progression of ideas? Are the different points presented in sequence with a minimum of repetition?

8. Do you avoid alluding to the purpose of the study or the research design until the appropriate Chapter 1 section?
9. By the end of this section, have you helped the reader to develop an awareness of an issue or problem that is important for the body of knowledge and/or field of practice of instruction, management and leadership that logically leads to the research questions and hypotheses if appropriate – not just for a particular organization?

**Note:** If you have difficulty preparing the initial version of Chapter 1 as a proposal to include what the reader would immediately recognize as a “well developed introduction chapter or dissertation proposal,” consider the possibility of suspending the preparation of this section in favor of moving ahead with a *more comprehensive* and *more extensive* literature review first.

### **Problem the Study Addresses:**

1. Do you present a clear and concise problem statement that encapsulates *what* problem specifically your study addresses?
2. Do you make clear that the problem is worth pursuing as research?

### **Purpose of the Study:**

3. Do you present a clear and concise purpose statement that encapsulates *why* you want to conduct the study? An example might be: The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which “margin” influences the nature and level of participation in self-directed professional development activities of continuing education administrators.
4. Does the specific *research problem* that is clearly identified as part of your problem statement tied to your purpose for conducting the study?
5. Does your statement of the purpose of your study address the “gaps” in the existing literature that you describe in the Chapter 1 Introduction section?
6. Does the research problem statement and purpose statement both “flow” from the points presented in the Chapter 1 Introduction section?
7. Do you avoid referencing the research design in this section, including sampling frame, and instead reserve such information for a subsequent Chapter 1 section such as “Overview of the Methodology, or “Research Design?” or “Method”?
8. Do you avoid “localizing” the research problem to one specific setting with which you happen to be familiar, thus missing the more important research problem of which a particular setting is but one instance? If you are going to conduct your study in a specific setting, save that information for the Chapter 1 section on research design.

### **Hypotheses/Research Questions:**

1. For a quantitative study, is/are the hypothesis(es) stated in such a way that implications for measurement are clear?

2. For mixed methods and qualitative studies, are the research questions directly related to the problem statement, and stated so that the reader can identify the focus of the study?

**Significance of the Study:**

1. Do you discuss *who* will benefit for the research study results, and *how* – explaining the possible significance in terms of its central focus, proposed research design, and/or anticipated findings?
2. Do you distinguish between *theoretical* and *practical* significance?
3. Are you sufficiently circumspect (humble or realistic) in stating the possible significance of the study?

**Research Design:**

1. Do you present an *overview* of the overall research design of the study prior to description of specific parts (such as “Participants”) of the research design?
2. Do you present an *overview* of the population from which your sample was drawn, the sampling design, operationalization of key variables and measurement, and a very brief overview of how data will be collected and analyzed?

**Assumptions:**

1. Do you present a clear statement of each of your assumptions relative to the problem selected for study, the sampling frame, research design or other pertinent aspects of your study? Assumptions that underlie your study are not directly tested.

**Limitations and Delimitations:**

1. Are you honest/realistic in recognizing the inherent limitations of your study, given the limited resources available to support the study?
2. Do you distinguish between limitations and delimitations?
3. Do you address any biases inherent to your study or that you as a research may have?

**Definition of Terms:**

1. Do you present *nominal* or *constitutive* definitions of each of the key terms vital to the reader’s understanding of your study?
2. Do you avoid discussions of implications of the terms themselves or of the theoretical and/or empirical literature that bears on their underlying concepts – saving such discussions for subsequent chapters?

**Summary:**

1. Do you present a synthesis of information presented in major sections of the chapter?

2. Do you help the reader anticipate what is in the chapter immediately to follow this one?
3. Are you confident that a lay reader can obtain a clear understanding of what you have written?

## **Chapter II: The Literature Review**

Note that Chapter 2 is referred to as either “Literature Review” or “Review of the Literature.” Similar to the Chapter 1, Chapter 2 also provides context for the reader. However, in Chapter 2, you explain not the overall purpose of the study at hand; but instead, where this study fits in the context of the “current literature,” or previously published research. The student researcher must read widely in the related discipline to uncover what work on the dissertation topic has been already accomplished, and how this past research can possibly inform the current study. Note that not every text you read during the secondary research process should be included in the Literature Review. The Literature Review is not simply an annotated bibliography of all tangentially related articles, books, dissertations, etc. There should be a direction and synthesized flow of the cited material and always relate to the current dissertation study undertaken. The student should summarize and provide critical commentary on the value of these past studies, as well as note any gaps. Past studies that may contradict the researcher’s own study must be addressed as well.

Material considered for inclusion in the Literature Review must be kept current throughout the completion of the dissertation. Despite the fact that many researchers conduct the Literature Review as a starting point for their study, this does not mean that the Literature Review becomes a static document once it is “completed.” These same researchers must continually update the Literature Review as needed during the data collection, analysis, and discussion parts of their studies. In fact, student researchers should conduct one last search for newly published material to possibly include in the Literature Review as the last step in the dissertation writing process to ensure currency. In a way, the Literature Review is a historical narrative that provides the reader with a chronological or thematically organized story of past work. This intellectually prepares the reader to better understand the overall context of the dissertation study. Chapter 2 generally comprises approximately 25% of the dissertation text in the five chapters.

### **Chapter II Questions to Consider:**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Do you begin the chapter with an introductory paragraph that establishes the link between the purpose of the study and central focus of this chapter – the review of relevant literature?
2. Do you follow the initial paragraph in the Introduction section of Chapter 2 with an overview of the contents of your literature review, the individual components of which constitute the major sections and headings?



3. Prior to beginning the first of your major sections, do you clearly explain to your reader the rationale for the way in which you divide your literature review?

**Major Sections:**

1. Does your literature review include the most important theoretical and empirical contributions relative to your research problem from which you can subsequently draw in presenting the theoretical framework undergirding your own study?
2. Do you divide the theoretical and empirical literature relating to your research problem into a manageable number of major sections, for which there are corresponding major headings?
3. Do you describe what others have said about this topic? What are the theories that address it and what do they say? What research has been done previously?
4. Do you highlight and/or explain the points for which there are consistent findings as well as where theorists and researchers disagree?
5. In presenting the findings and/or conclusions of contributors to the literature, do you provide sufficient information about the underlying rationale and/or method to enable the reader to assess the adequacy of the findings and/or conclusions you summarize?
6. Do you discuss flaws in the body of existing research and gaps in the literature that you feel you can remedy by your research?

**Summary:**

1. Do you present a synthesis of the information presented in the preceding sections of the chapter and help the reader to anticipate the next chapter (in which you present your methodology)?

## Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter is one of the first points in the dissertation where the dissertation changes focus from providing the reader with an overall theoretical and contextual background necessary to understand the study to describing the structure of the study. Detail exactly how the research will be conducted – the theoretical, practical, and logistical issues faced during the design and implementation stages. In addition to basic procedural descriptions, justify why the chosen research design and methods of inquiry are appropriate for the nature of the dissertation study. This chapter is normally comprised of several sections. Certain sections described below may be unnecessary and other sections more appropriate, depending on the specific study design.

**Research Design:** This section consists of a detailed description of the chosen research study design. The design may be qualitative, quantitative, or a mixed-methods approach that combines aspects of the other two into a third type of hybrid design. This section should also describe the rationale behind for the chosen research design and justify its appropriateness in answering the research questions.

**Participants or Subjects:** This section describes and justifies how human subjects, if part of the study, were selected to become part of the population or sample.

**Data Collection and Measures:** This section provides a comprehensive description and justification of how data was gathered. It also describes all instruments used to gather and analyze the data, such as survey instruments, interview schedules and questions, psychological tests, or rating scales. Note that this section may also include justification for use of the chosen measures.

**Data Analysis:** This section explains and justifies the methods used to analyze the data gathered. Data analysis techniques include, but are not limited to, data coding or statistical analyses.

**Note:** In preparation for the Proposal Defense, it is recommended that you develop and present a proposed schedule for the various stages of remaining efforts – obtaining IRB approval, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; and writing Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 3 generally comprises 20% of the dissertation text in the five chapters.

### Chapter III Questions to Consider:

#### Introduction

1. Do you begin the chapter with an introductory paragraph that establishes a link between the purpose of the study and central focus of this chapter – the research method for the study?
2. Do you follow the initial paragraph in this section with an overview of the research design and remaining major sections of the chapter?

### **Research Design**

1. Do you describe the nature of the research design selected for this study?
2. Do you present a logical rationale for your choice of research method?
3. Do you identify and thoroughly describe the units of analysis (individuals, groups, organizations, social artifacts)?
4. Do you identify the points of focus (characteristics, orientations, or actions) for the study?

### **Operationalization**

1. Do you identify the key variables in the study?
2. Do you present operational definitions – how you actually measured the variables under study?
3. Do you explain how the validity, reliability, and objectivity of each of the measures used in your study is established?
4. In the event your study involves a qualitative research design, do you explain what you will do to establish the trustworthiness of your research?
5. Is a copy of all measurement devices used included as an appendix of the dissertation?

### **Population and Sampling**

1. Do you describe the nature of the population for the study?
2. Do you identify the type of sampling method used, and explain the sampling procedure?
3. Do you describe a plan to reach the sample?

### **Data Collection**

1. Do you detail the procedures planned to make observations or interpret the phenomenon or phenomena of study? In other words, how will you collect data for analysis and interpretation?
2. What are your plans for obtaining permission from the RMU IRB, or IRB's of other institution if necessary?

### **Analysis**

1. Do you describe how you will transform the data collected into a form appropriate to manipulation and analysis?
2. Do you include a plan for how you intend to analyze your data and draw conclusions?
3. Do you justify your choice of analytical approach(es)?

4. Do you identify what specific quantitative and/or qualitative analytical techniques you will employ to make sense of your data?
5. Do you identify any possible confounding variables your analysis will consider, and how will you know if you have explained variations adequately?

### **Summary**

1. Do you present a synthesis of the information presented in the preceding sections of the chapter and help the reader to anticipate the next chapter (in which you present the results or findings)?

## **Chapter IV: Results**

This chapter of the dissertation reports on the data that the research study yielded. Tables and figures are often used to facilitate data presentation. Note particularly that the only purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a summary of the data. Reserve discussion concerning the meanings of findings or any conclusions based on findings for Chapter V, which is the focus of that chapter. Alternate names to consider for Chapter IV are “Findings” or “Systematic Presentation of the Data.” This chapter generally comprises 25% of the dissertation text in the five chapters.

### **Chapter IV Questions to Consider:**

#### **Introduction**

1. Do you begin the chapter with an introductory paragraph that establishes the link between the purpose of the study and central focus of this chapter – the findings or results of your study?
2. Do you follow the initial paragraph with an overview of the major topics (identified with the major chapter sections headings) that correspond to the way in which your findings are presented?

#### **Findings sections:**

1. Do you begin with a description of how you actually carried out the data collection phase of your research? What actually happened?
2. Do you have a plan for how to organize the sections of the chapter that detail the results or findings?
3. Do you begin by describing the sample in terms of the fluency of their responses to the various questions? In other words, do you begin with a presentation of univariate statistics – or the equivalent description information about your sample if you conducted a qualitative study?
4. Do you follow presentation of univariate statistics or the description of the respondents with presentation of bivariate statistics that reflect relationships between variables of importance to the study?
5. Do you follow what Babbie (1995) refers to as the elaboration model to analyze the relationships that exist among the variables of importance to your study?
6. Did you reserve detailed discussion of the meaning of your findings for the discussion to this final chapter?

#### **Summary**

1. Do you present a concise overall summary of the findings?
2. Do you anticipate for the reader the content and/or purpose of the next chapter?

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

Findings or results of the study are evaluated and interpret the findings or results of the study within the prism of the original research questions/hypotheses in this chapter. Note that another title often used for Chapter 5 is “Interpretation of the Results.”

Include the following as part of Chapter 5:

- Discussion of any patterns or themes that emerged during the analysis process
- Differences or similarities between the study findings and information discovered during the literature review process
- Meaning of results, inferences from results, and justifications for their importance to the field of study
- Additional limitations discovered as the study was conducted
- Recommendations for future research based on the study findings
- Final summary statement

### **Questions to Ask Yourself**

1. Do you restate your problem statement and research questions and or hypothesis(es) discuss how you answered your research questions?
2. Do you discuss how your findings support, refute and/or build on the current literature associated with your findings?
3. Have you made sure that your chapter focus and organization is not just a reiteration of chapter 4?
4. Does your chapter summary discuss the key points and summarize the overall chapter and dissertation to leave the reader with a focused understand of the salient points.

Chapter 5 generally comprises 15-20% of the dissertation text in the five chapters.

### **Additional Sections**

The References pages immediately follow Chapter 5, and any appendices follow the References pages.

## Appendix B: APA and Other Formatting Requirements for Proposal and Dissertation

The following is a non-inclusive list of requirements consistent with APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition guidelines that doctoral students must adhere to when formatting proposal and dissertation documents. Students should discuss any questions or concerns related to the formatting requirements with the dissertation chair.

- 1. Introductory pages:** The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* does not provide complete formatting guidelines for a dissertation's introductory pages that include the title page, the copyright page, the signature page, the Dedication page, the Acknowledgements page (optional), the Table of Contents pages, the List of Tables page(s), and List of Figures page(s).
- 2. Abstract:** Position the dissertation abstract page immediately after the signature page and before the acknowledgement page. The abstract text should be kept short, between 150 and 250 words, written as only one paragraph, double-spaced, and with no paragraph indentation. Provide a list of keywords at the end of the text. Title for the page includes the word "Abstract" centered at the top of the page in bold. (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)  
**Suggestion:** See *APA 7 Professional Paper* example provided by the Purdue Online Writing Lab at: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/apa\\_sample\\_paper.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_sample_paper.html).
- 3. Table of Contents:** Position the table of contents page for the dissertation immediately after the acknowledgement page and before the first page of chapter 1. Do not include entries in the table of contents for any pages preceding the table of contents or the table of contents itself. Title for the page includes the words "Table of Contents" or "Contents" centered at the top of the page in bold, and only on the first page of the contents if the contents continues to more than one page.
- 4. Running head:** The page title (if fewer than 50 characters including punctuation and spaces) or a shortened title (if the full title is greater than 50 characters) is included in the header of every page, left justified, all caps, and with same text font as the document text. (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)  
**Note:** The words "Running Head" are no longer required on any page with APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition, as was required previously on the title page with APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition.
- 5. Page numbers:** All pages prior to the first content page of chapter 1 (introductory pages) require lower case Roman numerals as page numbers, centered in the bottom margin. Number all content pages consecutively, starting with the number 1 in the upper right corner of the heading of the first page of chapter 1.
- 6. Page margins:** Left margin must be 1½ inches. All others – top, bottom, and right – must be 1 inch.
- 7. Text fonts:** Choose from, and consistently apply, Time New Roman 12pt, Calibri 11pt, Arial 11pt, Lucida Sans Unicode 10pt, or Georgia 11pt. (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)
- 8. Line spacing:** Double-space all lines of text within and between paragraphs and section headings on all pages including the dedication page, acknowledgements page, table of

contents pages, list of tables page(s), list of figures page(s), all chapter pages, and reference page. (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)

- 9. Spacing between sentences:** Include only one space after the period ending each sentence. (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)

**Note:** Two spaces after the period ending each sentence was required previously with APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

- 10. Paragraph indentation:** Paragraph indentation throughout the paper is ½ inch. (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition)

- 11. Heading levels:** Format all headings and subheadings consistently throughout the chapters of the dissertation, as outlined explicitly in the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition publication manual.

- 12. In-text citations:** Format in-text citations as outlined explicitly in the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition publication manual.

- 13. Tables and figures:** Format all tables and figures as outlined explicitly in the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition publication manual. Referencing the table or figure and briefly explaining the table or figure content precedes the table itself. At a minimum, provide the reader with some, but not excessive, written context immediately before the table. Separately number tables and figures consecutively and in the order they appear in the dissertation.

- 14. References:** Position the references page for the dissertation immediately after the last page of Chapter 5. Title for the page includes the word “References” or “Works Cited” centered at the top of the page in bold, and only on the first page of the references if the references continue to more than one page. Format each work cited as outlined explicitly in the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition publication manual.

- 15. Appendices:** Position any appendices immediately after the reference page(s). Begin each appendix on a separate page, and title for each page includes the word “Appendix,” followed by a capital letter (e.g., Appendix A), centered at the top of the page in bold, and only on the first page of each appendix when the appendix continues to more than one page. Note that you cannot place copyrighted material in an appendix without permission. However, if any instrument used as part of the dissertation is available publicly, then there is generally no need to include it as an appendix.

For more information about APA 7, refer to the text copy of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* ... or the American Psychological Association’s **Style and Grammar Guidelines** website at <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines>.



## **Appendix C: FAQ – Online IML Doctoral Program**

**The following are questions asked frequently by both prospective and active IML doctoral students:**

***Is there a difference in tuition for the online program?***

The tuition is the same as for the on ground program, and is fixed for all three years.

***How many people are in each cohort?***

Cohort sizes typically range from 10 to 15 students, with a target size of 12.

***Can I work full time and still complete this program?***

Yes, all previous applicants have typically held full-time positions.

***Are there any scholarship opportunities?***

The *George Semich Scholarship* is available on an annual basis and is awarded to one or two Ph.D. Candidates who articulate financial need.

***Are the residencies required?***

Yes. All online students have three (3) yearly residences during the last week of June each year.

***How many people graduate within three years?***

Between 80 - 90% of graduates complete the program in three years.

***Who teaches in this doctoral program?***

Those who teach courses in the IML Program are RMU full-time faculty members with terminal degrees, publish, have experience teaching online, and have expertise with the content for courses assigned to teach.

***How are dissertation chairs and committee members selected for dissertations?***

Students will have the opportunity to meet with all faculty and discuss their dissertation ideas, then each will be provided a preference sheet which will be used in conjunction with the IML Doctoral Director to assign chairs. The director will make every attempt to provide students with their preference but this will be based upon area of research, faculty availability with number of chairmanships and schedule

***How are the required interviews conducted?***

All interviews are conducted by phone or by using video conferencing software, such as Google Hangouts Meet.

***What technology is required for coursework required for this program?***

- Mac or PC with an Intel Core i3 processor or equivalent WINDOWS 10 or later, or MAC equivalent
- No less than 1 Gigabyte of Random Access Memory (RAM)
- High-speed Internet connection (Fiber or Cable)
- 250GB or more Hard Disk Drive

- USB Jump Drive for external file storage
- A webcam and microphone, whether they are integrated or external.

In terms of software, the only required software is Microsoft Office Home and Student Edition. This edition comes with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. This is the only required software.

In terms of your web browser, RMU Online strongly suggests that you use Google Chrome when working in Blackboard. It has proven to be the best browser in terms of functionality. Also, you should ensure that you have Java, Flash, and Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer and it should always be kept up to date.

Some of the courses you take at RMU may require additional software specific to the course that you are taking. To ensure that you have the required software, review your syllabus and discuss any required software with your instructor.

***How long has RMU had a PhD program in leadership?***

RMU's fully accredited on ground doctoral program was first offered in 2004, and the online program began in 2016.

***Where do IML PhD students advance after graduation?***

Many obtain promotions at current places of employment, or secure a position in higher education.

***What are the costs and accommodations for the summer residency?***

The five-day residency lodging is at Yorktown Residential Hall, formerly the Holiday Inn in Moon Township. There is no additional cost for the week. Rooms have separate bathroom facilities. Breakfast, and some lunch and dinner meals, are provided. Doctoral students living near the RMU Moon Campus are not required to spend nights at the Yorktown Hall, but are responsible for travel to and from campus.

***What is the start date for the online program each year?***

Students in the online program begin each year with residency week during the final week of June or beginning of July depending on calendar. On ground students start courses the first week of May.

**Note:** Questions about the online program (or on ground programs) should be directed to Rhonda McFadden (412-397-6807), Assistant to the IML Program Director or the IML Program Director, Dr. Richard Fuller (412-397-6029).

## Appendix D: Faculty Teaching Doctoral Courses

Faculty's Name	Title	Email Address
Richard Fuller, D.Ed.	Interim Director of IML Doctoral Program & Professor	<a href="mailto:fuller@rmu.edu">fuller@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6029
Mary Ann Rafoth, Ph.D,	Provost and Professor of Education	<a href="mailto:rafoth@rmu.edu">rafoth@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6020
George W. Semich, Ed.D.	Interim Dean & University Professor	<a href="mailto:semich@rmu.edu">semich@rmu.edu</a>
Carianne Bernadowski, Ph.D.	Professor	<a href="mailto:bernadowski@rmu.edu">bernadowski@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-5463
James Bernauer, Ph.D.	Professor	<a href="mailto:bernauer@rmu.edu">bernauer@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6028
Vicki Donne, D.Ed.	Education Department Head & Professor	<a href="mailto:donne@rmu.edu">donne@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-5465
Draper, Jason, Ed.D.	Research Associate	<a href="mailto:draper@rmu.edu">draper@rmu.edu</a>
Frank Flanegin, Ph.D.	University Professor (Business)	<a href="mailto:Flanegin@rmu.edu">Flanegin@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6361
Mary Hansen, Ph.D	Professor	<a href="mailto:hansen@rmu.edu">hansen@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6213
Shelly Haser, Ph.D.	Professor	<a href="mailto:haser@rmu.edu">haser@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6023
Gregory Holdan, Ph.D	Professor	<a href="mailto:holdan@rmu.edu">holdan@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-4055
Robert McDonald, Ph.D./JD	Faculty at Franciscan University/Private Law Practice & Adjunct Faculty	<a href="mailto:mcdonaldr@rmu.edu">mcdonaldr@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6807 (Rhonda)
Susan W. Parker	Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:parkers@rmu.edu">parkers@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6245
Nathan Taylor, PhD.	Assistant Professor	<a href="mailto:taylor@rmu.edu">taylor@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-5917
Lawrence Tomei, Ed.D.	Professor	<a href="mailto:tomei@rmu.edu">tomei@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6229
John Zeanchock, Ed.D.	Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:zeanchock@rmu.edu">zeanchock@rmu.edu</a> 412-397-6034

## Appendix E: Education Resources at the RMU Library

**Research Assistance:** Librarians are available to assist students with the research process during most hours of the RMU Library's operation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Assisting students in locating sources of information, such as books, eBooks, articles, studies, reports, and statistics
- Instructing about relevant databases
- Advising on search strategies
- Recommending resources
- Finding the full text of specific articles and books.

Immediate in-person research assistance is given on a first-come-first-serve basis at the RMU Library Help Desk. Students can also contact the librarians by phone, e-mail, or IM:

- **RMU Library, Help Desk:** Patrick Henry Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- **Phone:** 412.397.3272
- **E-mail:** [library@rmu.edu](mailto:library@rmu.edu)
- **IM:** Available on the RMU Library website

**Librarian Liaisons:** Every academic department has been assigned a librarian liaison. This librarian works closely with the students and faculty of the department in order to assist with the research process. Librarian liaisons and their contact information are listed on the RMU Library website. Doctoral students are welcome to contact their library liaison for in-depth research assistance.

**RMU Library Website:** The RMU Library website contains a plethora of RMU Library-related information including RMU Library policies, hours, research guides, and the RMU Library faculty and staff directory. The RMU Library Web site can be accessed via the main RMU website or directly at the following URL: <http://library.rmu.edu>.

**Research Resources:** The RMU Library maintains a number of research resources to support doctoral students with their classwork and dissertation work. These resources include, but are not limited to, print books, eBooks, databases, eJournal collections, dissertation collections, and streaming media. Most resources are available via the RMU Library website. When off-campus, students can log in with their RMU username and password in order to authenticate and access the resources.

**Interlibrary Loan:** Often students will come across citations for books and articles to which the RMU Library does not have immediate access. In cases like these, the RMU Library recommends interlibrary loan. The RMU Library is part of a number of regional and national library consortiums that share information. Often, RMU faculty, staff, and students can request and obtain books and articles from these other academic libraries. More information about interlibrary loan is located on the RMU Library website.

**Remember!** Please ask the RMU Library faculty and staff for research assistance when needed. We are here to help!