

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY FEINBERG SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Surgical Residency Research Policy

Effective from July 31st, 2009

PURPOSE

The general surgical residency at Northwestern University encourages, but does not mandate, a period of research during the training years. Some residents will wish to perform research during training, others would rather perform research after the residency, and still others would rather forego formal research time and complete their clinical training in 5 years. Within each categorical year of the residency, we anticipate 3 or 4 residents being allowed to perform a two (2) year period of defined research outside of the clinical program. Furthermore, these two years will be completed following the PGY-3 clinical year. Should more residents wish to do research than there are slots available in a given year, all attempts will be made to provide the opportunity to perform a research period after completing the formal residency.

The number of residents chosen for research time in any given year will depend on several considerations, including being a resident in good standing according to the formal evaluations of training, proposal merit, and other relevant factors related to the research endeavor sought. The decision is a joint one between the Vice Chair of Research, the Program Director and the Chairman. It is the intent of the department to have 3 to 4 residents per year enter the laboratory in the middle of residency for a two-year commitment (i.e. 6 to 8 residents at any given time). The exact number may fluctuate depending on the needs of the residents and the department. To maintain flexibility, it is possible that a research resident may be able to stay in the laboratory for an additional year. Another element of flexibility is provided in the timing of research.

PERSONS INVOLVED

Surgery residents, lab mentors, Vice Chair of Research, Program Director and the Office of Surgical Education.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

In order to anticipate and be able to plan for the best experience, it is important that residents communicate their intention to engage in research to the Vice Chair of Research, and the Program Director as early as possible during their training. Applications for research positions are due to the Vice Chair of Research NO LATER THAN January 1st of the PGY-2 year for research that will start after the PGY-3 year. This will give second year residents 18 months to prepare with their mentors, including applying for extramural funding. A 2-page proposal should be sent to the Vice Chair of Research with a copy to the Office of Surgical Education. The

proposal should follow the format below. The proposal must be signed by the resident's research mentor to indicate his/her approval of the proposal.

Two Page Proposal Format

- Name
- Name of faculty mentor(s)
- Project Title
- Brief overview of project(s)
- The location of the laboratory
- Planned sources of application for extramural funding (e.g. ACS Research Scholarship)
- Reasons for choosing this laboratory
- Signature line for resident and mentor

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND TIMELINE:

1. A written proposal must be submitted to the Vice Chair of Research with a copy to the Office of Surgical Education by January 1st.
2. During the month of January, the Vice Chair and Program Director, together with the Research Committee will evaluate the proposals and score the scientific merit of each.
3. The program director will review residency program logistics and based on this information and proposal merit score, determine which residents will go into the lab.
4. Residents will be notified of the final decision approximately one month after the submission date, or in February of the same year (that is during the mid portion of the PGY-2 year for those who will be embarking in research at the end of their PGY-3 year). This lead-time is important in order for those selected to actively work with their mentors to apply for extramural funding.
5. The agreement to do research will be binding. The agreement to do research in a particular laboratory will also be binding. Given the planning required, both at the program organization level and for the mentor's laboratory activity and funding, requests for extension or shortening of the allocated research time and/or modification of the type of research (basic vs. clinical path) will only be considered under extraordinary circumstances.

FUNDING

The preferred source of salary support is extramural funding through research and training grants. All residents and mentors are expected to apply for external funding for resident salary support as soon as the research proposal has been approved (18 months prior to the research start date). This provides an excellent opportunity for the resident to work with his/her mentor for a substantial period of time in anticipation of the actual laboratory experience. If the sources mentioned above fall short of the assigned salary the department and divisions may provide, if funds are available, additional monies to bring the salary to the appropriate level.

PHYSICIAN-SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM (PSTP)

The Physician-Scientist Training Program is designed for individuals who are entering their graduate medical training with either a combined MD/PhD degree or an MD degree with a record of intensive research experience. Successful applicants will exhibit a commitment to a career in academic medicine/surgery as a physician-scientist. The seven year Program is designed to enhance the general training program with the opportunity for additional research-intensive training consistent with the needs of the individual and with Board requirements. At the completion of training the PSTP Scholar will be prepared and eligible to pursue a career as both a physician-scientist and a board-certified surgeon. Depending on the needs and interests of the Scholar, additional didactic training is available at Northwestern University. Scholars may participate in the programs of the Masters of Science in Clinical Investigation, Masters of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and the Integrated Graduate Program in the Life Sciences, or audit these courses. In addition to numerous other lectures and seminars available at Northwestern University, there are bimonthly seminars developed specifically for the PSTP Scholars, during which faculty members will discuss issues in biomedicine, their own work, or aspects of career development for academic physician-scientists. An annual meeting of PSTP participants will be held to afford senior trainees the opportunity to share their research progress.

Each participant in the PSTP will receive guidance from two members of the faculty. A Career Mentor will be chosen during the first few months in the program to offer support and guidance during the development of the Scholar's academic career. A Research Mentor will be chosen by the participant from among all faculty members at Northwestern University. The PSTP Scholar will receive appropriate guidance in these critical choices from the PSTP Steering Committee and the faculty member who has overall responsibility for research within the Department of the participant's program. Each Scholar will develop a mentoring committee consisting of the Research Mentor, the Career Mentor, and at least one other faculty member. The process of choosing mentors could begin as early as the first recruiting visit to the program, but likely will continue with a subsequent visit to meet with faculty of potential interest and, to permit time to identify the appropriate Research Mentor, well into the course of the program.