

Background: Resident research training is a priority for the Department of Surgery. As training programs expand, the research years need to serve the varied research interests of the residents and appropriately foster career development in a fiscally sustainable manner. These research pathways will allow the Department of Surgery to optimize the use of fiscal resources to support resident research training.

Pathways: Academic endeavors are expected throughout residency, regardless of pathway. The following pathways will encourage residents to understand how research activities support their long-term interests and career goals and plan dedicated research experiences earlier during residency.

Academic Pathway

- Resident does not pause clinical training and conducts academic endeavors throughout residency
- 5-year training program
- Research funding is not required
- All residents will start on this pathway and need to apply to transition to the Scientist or Scholar Pathway
- Residents who opt to stay in the Academic Pathway after the PGY3 year do not need to submit an application

Scholar Pathway

- Resident pauses clinical training and commits to one year dedicated to research after the PGY3 year
- 6-year training program
- Research funding is required
- Application is required

Scientist Pathway

- Resident pauses clinical training and commits to two or more years dedicated to research after the PGY3 year
- 7-year (or longer) training program
- Research funding is required
- Application is required

Proposed schedule: Residents should spend their PGY1-2 years developing and refining their personal vision and meeting with potential research mentors. In the PGY2 year, residents should decide on a pathway, solidify the mentor(s) and research project(s), and apply for the Scholar or Scientist Pathway (if applicable). PGY2 residents who plan to be on the Scholar or Scientist Pathway should also identify, in close collaboration with the mentor(s), potential research funding sources and start applying for these during the PGY2-3 years, depending on funding application deadlines.

Communication of research plans: All residents must discuss their research plans with the Director of Resident Research (Dr. Karen Ho), regardless of planned pathway.

Application to the Scholar or Scientist Pathway: This application should be completed by the resident in close collaboration with the research mentor(s). The following items should be compiled into a single PDF.

1. Application form*.

2. A one-page cover letter outlining the resident's short and long-term career goals and plan for academic development during the research year(s).
3. Resident's *curriculum vitae*. Use the Northwestern University faculty CV template, which is available for download [here](#).
4. Title, Abstract, and Research Plan (no more than 4 pages, single-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman 11 pt font, 1" margins).
 - a. Title should be descriptive and pertain to the research theme of the dedicated research year(s).
 - b. Abstract should be written in lay language (200 words or less).
 - c. Research Plan should have these sections: significance and innovation of the project, preliminary data (if available), the hypothesis, experimental design and methods, and plan for defining and evaluating success.
5. Literature cited (no page limit).
6. Funding plan (no page limit)*. Provide a detailed description of how the research year(s) will be funded. The funding plan needs to cover resident salary and fringe benefits and anticipated (or estimated) research needs, conference attendance, travel, and publication fees. If funding has not yet been secured, provide a description of the funding opportunities that the resident or mentor will apply for, including the amounts of the awards and the application deadlines.

Please note the following McGaw trainee salaries negotiated through AY30:

Year	Effective 7/1/26	Effective 7/1/27	Effective 7/1/28	Effective 7/1/29
PGY3	\$84,333.06	\$86,9863.05	\$89,468.95	\$92,153.01
PGY4	\$89,096.50	\$91,769.40	\$94,522.48	\$97,358.16
PGY5	\$92,697.20	\$95,478.11	\$98,342.46	\$101,292.73
PGY6	\$95,567.99	\$98,435.03	\$101,388.08	\$104,429.73
PGY7+	99,276.90	\$102,255.21	\$105,322.86	\$108,482.55

Fringe benefits: \$16,613 (includes benefits, admin fee, and McGaw payroll/benefits fees)

7. Training plan from research mentor(s) (no more than 3 pages per mentor, single-spaced, Arial or Times New Roman 11 pt font, 1" margins). This letter should include the mentor's research qualifications, the structured mentoring plan, and milestones and expectations for the dedicated research year(s). The mentoring plan should include how often they will meet with the resident, how progress will be monitored, and plans for publications, abstracts, and grant submission.

** The Application Form and Funding Plan template are provided as Word documents.*

Review: All applications will be reviewed by a committee of faculty and Department of Surgery leadership. The decision of the review committee will be communicated by email to the resident and mentor(s).

Submission Deadline:

- Dec 1, 2026 for PGY3s in AY 2026-2027
- March 1, 2027 for PGY2s in AY 2026-2027

Questions and completed applications (a single PDF file containing all components of the proposal) should be emailed to:

Karen J. Ho, MD
 Director of Resident Research
 kho1@nm.org