



FAQs

What the MAE program is and isn't

What is MAE program and Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)?

The Master of Philosophy in Applied Epidemiology (MAE) program is an advanced level Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) which provides 22 months of supervised full-time training. An FETP, is a program that builds capacity in health service agencies (for example, ministries of health or national public health institutes) by training the public health workforce in field epidemiology, and other public health competencies in the context of health delivery systems. Field epidemiologists examine diseases at their source and are often referred to as “disease detectives,” collecting, analysing and interpreting data to help Public health authorities and other agencies respond more effectively to public health threats and issues.

For more information on FETPs see [TEPHINETs about FETPs](#).

What is a TEPHINET accredited FETP?

The [MAE program](#) is Australia's only accredited FETP. Founded in 1997, Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) is the global network of Field Epidemiology Training Programs which spans more than 80 programs actively training field epidemiologists in more than 200 countries and territories. For more information see [TEPHINET Who we are](#).

In 2016 TEPHINET introduced an accreditation process for Advanced FETPs. Accreditation ensures a country's FETP curriculum contains critical public health coursework (for example, epidemiology methods, public health surveillance, outbreak investigation, and scientific communications), and it requires each FETP graduate to complete 68 weeks of mandated fieldwork over two years.

The MAE Program achieved TEPHINET accreditation in 2018. For more information on FETPs see [TEPHINET Training programs](#).

How does learning in the MAE Program work?

The MAE Program works on a “Learning by doing” platform using a 70:20:10 framework which demonstrates the greatest impact on the development of field epidemiology competence:

1. 70% Experience – Work-based experiential learning in your field placement over 36 weeks per year;
2. 20% Exposure – Social learning from your cohort, previous cohorts, and public health networks throughout your candidacy; and
3. 10% Education – Formal University teaching over 6 weeks of intensive coursework at ANU.



What is the MAE Program looking for in applicants?

This can be best elaborated through discussion of our MAE Program Core Values: Courage, Adaptability, Passion, Fun, Collaboration, and Growth.

Courage: In most cases MAE Scholars need the courage to uproot themselves, move to a field placement in a new state or territory and inject themselves into a new workplace all while learning new skills. In addition to this, it's expected that you have the courage to be an active part of your field placement, participating and learning outside of your projects required to meet the competencies of the MAE program.

Adaptability: As an MAE Scholar, you need to be flexible and adaptable to survive and thrive. Health threats can happen anytime, anywhere. You may be requested to respond to an acute public health emergency at inconvenient times. Not every outbreak or surveillance system functions the same way, you will need to be creative in your adaption of knowledge and experience to apply to the problem you are addressing. You need to work with your field and academic supervisors to develop a plan for your learning and it is up to you to manage your progress with their support and the support of your cohort.

Passion: MAE Scholars come from all walks of life and this diversity is a great strength of the program. What unites all our diverse Scholars is a passion for public health.

Fun: Not everything you encounter during the MAE Program will be fun. However, the idea of investigating an outbreak, analysing surveillance data, and seeing direct impacts of your work on population health policies should spark your excitement and sound like fun. If it doesn't, then this Program may not be right for you.

Collaboration: Within public health or a health emergency, a field epidemiologist is first and foremost a member of a team. The MAE Program emphasises this at every opportunity. It's expected that you collaborate not just with your supervisors, but with your cohort, previous cohorts, other public health and public health adjacent professionals to build a learning network that will support you throughout your future career. Many MAE Alumni say the friends and networks they made through the program were the most important part of the program.

Growth: The MAE Program is not for those just seeking more letters after their name, it should be a transformative process. By the end of the program you should not be the same person you were when you went in.



What will I learn?

The MAE teaches a TEPHINET approved curriculum comprising five courses such as outbreak investigation, public health surveillance, analysis of public health data, research design and methods, and issues in applied epidemiology. We also teach research communication, interpersonal skills, teaching, and teamwork. You will finish the program ready to work as a field epidemiologist in a state/territory or national public health agency.

For more information on our curriculum see: [MAE courses | ANU College of Health & Medicine](#)

What won't I learn?

Field epidemiology training (MAE) is not the same as Master level degrees in epidemiology. The MAE is also not an advanced epidemiology or biostatistics methods training program. You will not finish the program as a biostatistician! You will not finish the program with high level epidemiological research methods skills. We introduce you to some advanced methods and concepts and provide pathways for further development, but our focus is on developing applied epidemiology skills. If you wish to learn a particular statistical package or biostatistical method to complete a project to meet one of your competencies, then we encourage you to do so. However, this will be outside of scheduled course blocks and must be with the full agreement of your field and academic supervisors.

Can I do another degree/masters whilst I'm undertaking the MAE program?

No. Under the Research Awards Rules a student enrolled in a program for a research award (which includes the MAE program) must not undertake, or continue to undertake, any other studies which are equal to or above Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level 5. This means you are unable to undertake other forms of study while the student is enrolled in the MAE program.

Please see [Research Awards Rule 2021 \(legislation.gov.au\)](#) for further details.

Can I do the MAE program part-time?

At present, the MAE program is full-time. However, if you would like to discuss the potential of doing the program in part-time capacity please contact the MAE team. Please note as the MAE program is built around field placements, undertaking the program part-time will require field placement support.

If you have any unanswered questions, please email mae.nceph@anu.edu.au.