



FAQs

What the MAE program is and isn't

What is a Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)?

A Field Epidemiology Training Program, or 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. These programs train health workers in field epidemiology so that they can be the “boots on the ground” in the fight against diseases. Field epidemiologists examine diseases at their source and are often referred to as “disease detectives,” collecting, analysing and interpreting data to help government ministries of health and other agencies respond more effectively during outbreak

There are 3 levels of FETP program: Frontline (basic); Intermediate; and Advanced.

The [MAE Program](#) is Australia’s only FETP. The MAE Program is an Advanced Program and provides 22 months of supervised full-time training.

For more information on FETPs see: <https://www.tephinet.org/about/about-fetps>

What is a TEPHINET accredited FETP?

Founded in 1997, Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) is the global network of Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETPs). TEPHINET spans more than 75 programs actively training field epidemiologists in more than 100 countries. For more information on TEPHINET see: <https://www.tephinet.org/about/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, 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: <https://www.tephinet.org/tephinets-accreditation-program>

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 development of field epidemiology competence:

1. 70% Experience – Work-based experiential learning in your field placement over 36 weeks per year;



MASTER OF APPLIED EPIDEMIOLOGY

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 8 weeks of intensive coursework provided face-to-face at ANU in Canberra, whenever possible, and online when not.

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: Field epidemiology is never an easy career choice. In most cases a lot of our MAE Scholars have to have 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 MAE scholars have the courage to be an active part of their field placement, participating and learning outside of their projects required to meet the competencies of the MAE program.

Adaptability: Field epidemiology presents many challenges, and at any time you can be asked to drop everything to respond to a new acute public health emergency. MAE Scholars need to be flexible and adaptable to survive and thrive. You will not be spoon-fed, 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 and embarking on your first outbreak investigation can be a downright daunting prospect. However, the ideas of investigation an outbreak or analysing surveillance data should spark your excitement and sound like a lot of fun. If it doesn't, then this Program may not be right for you.

Collaboration: A field epidemiologist is first and foremost a member of a team. The MAE Program emphasises this at every opportunity. It's expected that MAE Scholars to collaborate not just with their supervisory panel but with their cohort, previous cohorts and other public health 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 have been 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 am I expected to know before I begin?



MASTER OF APPLIED EPIDEMIOLOGY

A working knowledge of epidemiology and biostatistics such as is taught in introductory MPH subjects is not required, but are highly recommended. We do cover these subjects again in the course block but rapidly. Have a basic understanding of these subject is beneficial.

What will I learn?

The MAE teaches a TEPHINET approved curriculum. We teach data analyses and epidemiological methods, but we also teach scientific writing, oral presentation, interpersonal skills, teaching, cultural competency 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?

The MAE is not an advanced epidemiological or biostatistical methods training program. You will not finish the program as a biostatistician! 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) 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 placements support.

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