



FAQs

The MAE program

What is a 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 or conditions 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.

Why is it important that the MAE program has TEPHINET accreditation?

The [MAE program](#), inaugurated in 1991, 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 98 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 a field placement over 36 weeks per year;
2. 20% Exposure – Social learning from the 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.



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What will I learn?

The MAE teaches a TEPHINET approved curriculum comprising five courses comprising of 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](#)

How does this program differ to other epidemiology programs and degrees?

Field epidemiology training (MAE) is very different to any Master level degrees in epidemiology. The MAE is not an advanced epidemiology or biostatistics methods training program. This program is not intended to train you as a biostatistician! Now does this program intend to train you in deep epidemiological research methods skills. We will introduce you to some advanced methods and concepts and provide pathways for further development, but our focus is on developing applied epidemiology skills. These skills are aimed to upskill you to be an operational epidemiologist in a state health department or similar. 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 work during the MAE program?

The MAE is a full-time program. The MAE program is an intensive program and while scholars in some cases may be able to undertake paid employment in the earlier stages, we often find that balancing both commitments may become difficult over time. If you are intending to undertake any additional work during your program, please discuss directly with your field placement.



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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.

Can I do MAE fully remote/work-from-home?

MAE has compulsory on-campus intensive course blocks in Canberra twice per year. These are as 2X 2-week blocks in year 1 and then 2X 1-week blocks in year 2. Field placements typically require scholars to work onsite five days per week. Any hybrid working arrangement would be at the discretion of the field placement.

Can I bring dependent/s to course blocks on-campus?

Attendance at course blocks on the ANU campus are a compulsory part of the MAE program. We recognise, that people have family and caring responsibilities which may make being away from home for up to 2 weeks challenging. In previous years, scholars have brought families to course block to help facilitate attendance of parents with young children. Scholars have also in some instances, travelled home on weekends during course block at their own cost.

ANU is an accredited Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace and there are multiple parent rooms on campus. Further information can be found: <https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/diversity-inclusion/families-and-carers/a-breastfeeding-friendly-workplace>

Is there support available to develop my academic skills?

Yes, the ANU Library has a range of academic support services available to improve your academic skills and gain confidence in writing, researching, editing, publishing, presenting, and more. More information about resources available can be found here: [Academic skills | Australian National University](#)

Please contact us for more information

If there are any additional questions you have about how you can do the MAE in your circumstances and/or the support ANU and the MAE Program is able to provide, please contact the MAE team. We aim to make the Program accessible and inclusive and are happy to answer your questions. Please email: mae.nceph@anu.edu.au.