



South Africa Field Epidemiology Training Programme

Call for applicants for 2026

Contact details

For enquiries please contact the following people

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Closing date for applications:

1 July 2025

Background

The South African Field Epidemiology Training Programme ([SAFETP](#)) is now accepting applications for the 2026 class, from qualified health professionals with an interest in public health and a commitment to public service.

Field Epidemiology Training Programmes ([FETPs](#)) have been established in many countries around the world to provide training and develop competencies that are essential for effective disease detection, investigation, control, and prevention, with a goal of enhancing the health security of communities. FETP trainees spend a maximum time (75%) in the field, and 25% in the classroom, where they develop practical skills to collect, analyse, and use data to address priority public health issues and inform policy.

The South African FETP is hosted by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, a division of the National Health Laboratory Services for the National Department of Health. SAFETP offers a full-time two-year residency programme, which provides training and practical experience in applied epidemiology, and aims to develop specialist skills to evaluate and strengthen public health surveillance systems, investigate and control outbreaks, and conduct field studies to address public health priority issues. Training is provided mainly through on-the-job service provision and learning activities. A trainee who successfully completes the programme is awarded a Master of Science (MSc) degree in Field Epidemiology from either the University of Pretoria or the University of the Witwatersrand.

The next cohort of trainees will begin in January 2026 and end in December 2027. Qualified professionals who are interested in joining the cohort should submit their applications before 01 July 2025. Applicants who are funded by their employers must ensure that this funding covers their salaries/stipends, as well as university registration and tuition fees for the two-year training period. Applicants currently working within the South African government at various levels, who plan to take study leave to participate in the programme and afterwards return to their workplace, must have written approval from their departments. A limited number of bursaries/scholarships may be available for selected applicants fulfilling predefined criteria.

Limited places may be offered to applicants from selected Southern African countries who meet the entry requirements, and are supported by their governments. Such applicants must be eligible for the required visa/permit to study in South Africa. The applicant must also ensure that their employer/government has agreed to fully cover the costs related to their participation in SAFETP for the two years of training - including salaries/stipends, university registration and tuition fees, living expenses while studying in South Africa.

SAFETP



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND
JOHANNESBURG



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Application Requirements

Work experience requirements

- ✓ At least 2 years of professional experience in a health field or other fields relevant to health
- ✓ Experience working in a public health system is desirable
- ✓ Experience in health-related research will be an advantage

Educational Requirements

- ✓ Medical, veterinary or dentistry degree; OR
- ✓ Doctorate degree in a medical/health related field; OR
- ✓ Master's degree in a medical or health related field; OR
- ✓ Honour's/bachelor's degree with prior research experience

Other Key requirements

In addition to work and educational requirements, the applicant must:

- ✓ Be registered with their respective professional bodies
- ✓ Be fluent in spoken and written English
- ✓ Be computer literate and proficient in Microsoft office suite for communication, word processing, analysis, presentation and report generation.
- ✓ Knowledge of a statistical package will be an advantage
- ✓ Have a valid driver's license and be willing to drive a hired car
- ✓ Provide proof of current physical residential address for future purposes of **Domicilium citandi et executandi**.

Please note the following additional information regarding educational requirements:

All degrees should be in a human/animal health or public health-related field from an accredited university.

A Bachelor of Technology (B-Tech) degree without an additional postgraduate qualification does not fulfil the minimum educational requirements of the University of Pretoria, the University of the Witwatersrand and the SAFETP.

The University of Pretoria is designed to offer a BSc (Hons) Epidemiology and Biostatistics degree in Year 1 and an MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics degree in Year 2. Applicants who have already completed an appropriate Honours or Masters degree that includes **at least two full courses in epidemiology and two courses in biostatistics** qualify to enrol directly into the MSc programme.

How to apply

Applying to SAFETP

If you meet the requirements you can complete an online application using this link: [Click here](#)

You will need the following documents to complete the online application process:

1. Certified copies of qualification certificates
2. Certified copies of transcripts from the universities
3. A concise two-page CV
4. Statement of Purpose: In 500 words or less describe your career goals and your interest in applying for the SAFETP residency
5. Two completed reference forms using this link: [Reference Form](#)
6. Proof of application to each of the universities
7. Qualifications that were obtained outside South Africa must be accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority ([SAQA](#)).
8. Non-South Africans from non-English speaking countries are expected to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language ([TOEFL](#)) when accepted onto the programme

Applying to the University

In addition to completing the online application to SAFETP, you should also complete applications to **BOTH**, the University of Pretoria and the University of Witwatersrand, as follows:

University of Pretoria:

[click here](#) access the UP-application page. Select to apply to study BSc (Hons) with specialisation in Epidemiology and Biostatistics as your first choice and MSc in Epidemiology and Biostatistics as your second choice. Applicants who already have BSc (Hons) with specialisation in Epidemiology should apply for MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

University of the Witwatersrand:

[Click here](#) to access the Wits online application page. Select to apply to study Masters of Science in Epidemiology, and then select "Field Epidemiology" as the field of study.

You can also [Click here](#) to visit the following page to get more details about the Master of Science in Epidemiology degree together with discipline-specific requirements.

- ✓ *It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit the completed online application; incomplete applications or those submitted after the closing date will not be considered.*
- ✓ *SAFETP residency is highly competitive. Each applicant will go through a rigorous selection process. The outcome of an application is determined by the **quality of the application, performance on in-person interview, and any other assessments that will be offered***
- ✓ *Correspondence will be made with shortlisted candidates only. If you have not heard from SAFETP within 10 weeks of the final closing date, please consider your application to be unsuccessful. For further information, please visit the website: <https://www.safetp.ac.za>*

Please note: While SAFETP works closely with both the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand to coordinate candidate selection processes, acceptance into a degree programme offered by the university does not guarantee acceptance into SAFETP, and also does not guarantee that the applicant will register with that institution if accepted into SAFETP.