In the NAMA Program, You can learn how to...

...revitalize, maintain, and document indigenous languages

...provide skills and expertise for to develop teaching grammars and other educational materials

...promote understanding of indigenous peoples' educational issues at every level of policy making

...enhance and promote understanding of complex factors leading to language choice, language shift and language loss

...work with archival media to enrich the language record and to produce viable teaching materials

"NAMA reignited my interest with Hawaiian and fostered an academic environment where I was surrounded by faculty and students with a passion to revitalize and maintain Indigenous languages."

Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla, Ph.D.
Assistant professor
Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

Contact Information

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NAMA Homepage:
linguistics.arizona.edu/NAMA
What is NAMA?

The NAMA degree program is designed for the indigenous community activists who wish to train in the skills needed to work on maintaining, revitalizing, documenting, and teaching their community’s indigenous language.

The specialized nature of this degree means that we focus on personalized supervision and on developing the practical skills of the student.

What do NAMA studies include?

The NAMA program is designed to be completed in as little as 15 months, and begins as a summer admit program: during the first summer session the student completes coursework in the American Indian Languages Development Institute (AILDI).

In the fall there is a core NAMA course, which consists of lectures, laboratory work and literature study on the indigenous languages on indigenous languages and linguistics. This also gives the student the opportunity to apply these studies and techniques on his or her heritage language.

NAMA students also take courses in Anthropology, Education, and American Indian Studies, which provides the opportunity to expand his or her knowledge base, and to interact with students with similar interests. The main outcome of the program is a thesis.

Potential topics of the thesis include:

* Brief grammar sketches or descriptions,
* Language planning projects or language policy development
* Short surveys on different topics on the language
* Language teaching methods and materials
* Studies and rebuilding of legacy or historical materials.

What can I do with a NAMA degree?

The NAMA graduates often work for their tribe’s language program or institutions of higher education, in teaching or administrative positions, for tribal language programs.

Several NAMA alumni have gone on to complete PhDs in related fields and are now faculty at universities teaching and doing research in language maintenance and revitalization.

What are the academic requirements?

There are two major requirements to be admitted to the NAMA program:

1. An undergraduate degree: this can be in an field of study and should be awarded by the start date of the NAMA program.
2. Previous experience or studies in their own native language as a second language or being a native speaker or a native language.

There is no ideal background or age limit

Many NAMA applicants are non-traditional students who come from diverse educational backgrounds and life experiences, and many of our students have already had careers and professions in other areas.

We encourage mature students to apply!