

Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Educational Leadership

The Indigenous Educational Leadership Graduate Certificate at the University of Kansas is designed for professionals working in Indigenous education who want to strengthen their leadership skills and deepen their understanding of the unique systems and contexts that shape Indigenous learning environments.

Built around standards collaboratively developed by the Tribal Education Department National Assembly (TEDNA), this program prepares educators and administrators to lead with cultural awareness, policy knowledge, and practical expertise. Students connect with Indigenous education professionals from across the country through synchronous online courses, building a national network and learning community rooted in Indigenous perspectives.

This certificate is designed for professionals seeking career advancement in Indigenous educational leadership and wanting to build practical skills grounded in sovereignty, governance, and community partnership. The program prepares graduates for roles such as tribal education leader, Indigenous programs coordinator, and student-support specialist in both K–12 and higher education. It provides a flexible, efficient path to expand your impact and step into leadership positions that strengthen educational outcomes for Indigenous communities—all without completing a full graduate degree.

Graduate Admissions Requirements

Applicants must meet both the University and departmental admission requirements to be considered for the program.

University of Kansas Graduate Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.

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- A completed graduate application (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/>). Deadline is April 1.
- Application fee.
- Official transcripts of all degree-granting post-secondary institutions you have attended and an official transcript for each degree earned.
- Please upload a 1-2 page personal statement that addresses the following:
 1. What do you hope to gain out of the program?
 2. What are your past experiences working with Indigenous educational systems or contexts?
 3. What are your future professional goals as it relates to Indigenous educational leadership?
- Current resume or CV.
- No letters of recommendation are required.

Note: These are the admission requirements in place at the time this catalog content was published.

The graduate certificate in Indigenous Educational Leadership (IELC) is comprised of four core courses to be organized into three program categories: Foundations, Elective, and Practicum.

Code	Title	Hours
Foundations		
ISP 805	Critical Indigenous Histories & Philosophies in Education	3
ISP 810	Self-Determination, Sovereignty, and Systems of Indigenous Education	3
Elective		
ISP 815	Leadership, Advocacy, and Action in Indigenous Education (Or equivalent as approved by program director such as relevant credit through ISP 806: Directed Readings, ISP 804: Special Topics OR relevant speciality credit related to Indigenous educational contexts)	3
Practicum		
ISP 820	Applied Project for Educational Leadership for Indigenous Populations (OR Other relevant specialty credit related to applied projects or practicum in Indigenous educational contexts)	3
Total Hours		12

At least 50% of the coursework taken to fulfill the certificate requirements must be 700 level or above. The courses are intended to be taken in the order listed above.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of Indian education in the United States from pre-colonial versions of Indigenous education, to the development of the federal trust responsibility, and how these histories impact the current status of Indigenous education leadership.
- Demonstrate how to integrate the fundamentals of culturally based educational pedagogy, instructional programming, curriculum, and student assessment, including Native language education.
- Demonstrate leadership skills associated with tribal, federal, state, and local educational legislative processes most relevant to their locale.
- Demonstrate a foundational understanding of critical, Indigenous, and decolonizing research theories and methodologies, culturally responsive programs, and current issues relevant to educational systems.
- Demonstrate leadership skills associated with tribal, federal, state, and local educational budgetary processes most relevant to their locale.
- Demonstrate leadership skills relevant to tribal, federal, state, and local education data collection, data management, data analysis, and data reporting for their respective programming and locale.