



# KUMU

# CAREERS

BUILD A BETTER WORLD. BE A KUMU.



[kanaeokana.net/kumu](http://kanaeokana.net/kumu)

## What is a kumu?

### We're not talking about the fish

In the Hawaiian language, the word “kumu” has many meanings. It can mean the base of something such as the trunk of a tree, a source, and a reason. In this sense, a kumu is the source or foundation.

Kumu is also the general term for “teacher” because in the Hawaiian worldview, teachers are the source of knowledge. As one of many occupations in the field of Hawaiian education, a kumu is usually a teacher of Hawaiian culture at a school, or other learning environment.

Although there are different types of kumu such as a kumu kula (classroom teacher) or kumu 'ike Hawai'i (Hawaiian Studies teacher), if a person is called a kumu, it often means that this person possesses Hawaiian knowledge which they share by providing instruction to learners of all ages. To be called a kumu is like a badge of honor because it means you have an important role in the transmission of 'ike Hawai'i- Hawaiian knowledge and culture.

Often, kumu are speakers of 'ōlelo Hawai'i. This is an important kumu skill because the Hawaiian language is itself a source of knowledge and it forms the building blocks of 'ike Hawai'i. Kumu are considered important people in our community because they play a vital role in passing on Hawaiian cultural knowledge to others. Kanaeokana Kula Hawai'i Network seeks to ensure that new kumu are trained and

licensed so we have enough kumu every year to meet the growing demand for Hawaiian Culture Based Education in public, charter, and independent schools in Hawai'i.

## Why be a kumu?

**Impress the heck out of everyone by telling them that what you are going to do after high school is build a new world.**

Kumu are the foundation of Hawaiian culture based classrooms and 'āina based learning environments because they are responsible for teaching students the Hawaiian culture, language, and worldview. Kumu play an important role in educating Hawai'i's school children about aloha 'āina, how to maintain cultural practices like makahiki, 'ōlelo Hawai'i, wa'a voyaging, food sustainability, and performing arts like hula, music, and chant. Kumu tap into ancestral knowledge of the Hawaiian people through sharing of mo'olelo- stories. These mo'olelo give us insights to solve many of the problems that we face today in terms of how to manage our land, water, ocean, and people.

Being a kumu is a professional career like physician or scientist and it requires a university degree, a license from the State of Hawai'i, and many hours of training (teaching practice) before being hired and teaching your own students. Because being a kumu often takes a significant period of a person's life and provides many opportunities for growth and learning, it is considered a career, and not just a “job.”

Having a career means you belong to a professional group of people with similar skills, education, and passion. Having a fulfilling career will require that you continuously improve and grow in the profession over a long period of time. This means staying current in your skills and knowledge and striving to get better at teaching. Kumu do this by teaming up with other kumu to plan and learn, attending professional conferences, doing research, traveling throughout Hawai'i and beyond to learn, and seeking out kupuna (elders) to learn from.

Most of all, many people become kumu because they feel they have a kuleana: a responsibility and obligation to positively impact their community and ensure the perpetuation of the Hawaiian culture. Part of this kuleana means serving lāhui so that Kanaka Maoli have access to their ancestral knowledge in Hawai'i's public and independent school systems.

## Who can be a kumu?

Anyone who is motivated, possesses the determination to fulfill kuleana, and has the appropriate dispositions can be a successful kumu if they pursue the proper training and learning opportunities. Because kumu usually specialize in certain topics of Hawaiian culture (e.g. food preparation, lei making, history, art, poetry, etc.) based on their own talent areas, some kumu choose to specialize in a particular skill or body of knowledge while other kumu are generalists and are able to teach a wide breadth of Hawaiian knowledge. Often, kumu at the elementary level are trained to be generalists - able to teach a

wide variety of topics, and kumu at secondary schools and those who teach adult learners are specialists because they need to be highly qualified and certified in a certain subject area.

## How to be a kumu

There are many ways to begin the process of becoming a kumu right now while you are a high school or middle school student. The following are some suggestions on how to begin exploring Kumu as Career.

### Take Classes at Your School:

- Modern History of Hawai'i
- Hawaiian Studies topics
- Hawaiian Language
- Hawaiian Chorus, Chant, Dance
- Elect to be in your high school's teacher academy
- Human & Public Service
- Career Pathway Academy

### Seek Out-of-School Learning:

- Join the Hawaiian culture or language club at school
- Volunteer at lo'i, loko i'a, and Hawaiian cultural events
- Spend time with kūpuna- watching, listening, learning
- Participate in makahiki celebrations
- Join a hālau hula in your community

- Attend Hawaiian music concerts and hula events
- Read books on Hawaiian history and culture
- Take an online Hawaiian language course (e.g. Duolingo)

### University Degree Programs

Becoming a kumu will require you to pursue a college degree in education or Hawaiian Studies/Hawaiian language. To work in a public school, you will also need to complete a State Approved Teacher Education Program (certification) and secure a teacher license from the Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board. These requirements are important to make sure we have highly qualified kumu teaching in our schools. Along the way, there is help available to navigate this journey to be have a career as kumu.

### The following schools hire kumu:

#### Hawai'i Island:

- Kanu o ka 'Āina
- Waimea Middle
- 'Alo Kēhau o ka 'Āina Mauna
- Nawahītokalani'ōpu'u
- Ka 'Ūmeke Kā'eo
- 'Ehunuikaimalino
- Kua o ka Lā
- Kamehameha- Kea'au Campus

- Pūnana Leo 'o Hilo
- Pūnana Leo 'o Waimea
- Pūnana Leo 'o Kona

#### Maui Island:

- Hāna High & Elementary School -Kula Kaiapuni
- Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kekaulike
- Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kalama
- Kula Kaiapuni 'o Pā'ia
- Ke Kula 'o Pi'ilani
- Kula Kaiapuni 'o Nāhi'ena'ena
- Lahaina Intermediate School- Kula Kaiapuni
- Kula Kaiapuni 'o Lahainaluna
- Pūnana Leo 'o Maui
- Pūnana Leo 'o Hāna

#### Lāna'i Island

- Lāna'i High and Elementary

#### Molokai Island

- Molokai High School- Kula Kaiapuni
- Molokai Middle School- Kula Kaiapuni
- Kualapu'u School- Kula Kaiapuni
- Pūnana Leo 'o Molokai

## O'ahu Island

- Kamehameha Schools Kapālama
- Hālau Kā Mana
- Kamaile Academy PCS
- Hakipu'u Learning Center
- Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Ānuenuē
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i 'o Kahuku Academy
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Hau'ula
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Pū'ōhala
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Waiau
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Nānākuli
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Mā'ilikūkahī
- Kawaihae'o Church School
- Kūlaniākea
- Blanche Pope Elementary

## Kaua'i Island

- Ke Kula Niihau O Kekaha
- Kula Aupuni Niihau A Kahelelani Aloha (KANAKA)
- Kawaikini
- Kanuikapono

## Ni'ihau Island

- Kula Ni'ihau

There are scholarships and programs that are out there to help people become kumu. Here are a few:

## Scholarships

[Kamehameha Schools Post-High Scholarships](#) - There are various resources available to Hawaiians who want to continue their learning.

[Ho'okawowo Scholarship](#) - This scholarship encourages students seeking degrees in education, Hawaiian language, and Hawaiian studies to enter Hawaiian culture-based and Hawaiian medium-immersion teaching careers.

## Teacher Training Programs

[Kahuawaiola, University of Hawai'i Hilo](#)

[UH Mānoa: Be a Hero, Be a Teacher](#)

[Institute for Teacher Education](#)

[Aloha 'Āina Education and Leadership](#)

## Hawaiian Language Learning Opportunities

If you're just beginning your 'ōlelo journey, here are some useful resources that can help you get started:

[Duolingo](#)

[Kulaiwi](#)

[oleloonline.com](#)

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