



## Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

900 Fort Street Mall ■ Suite 1300 ■ Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Phone: (808) 441-1300 ■ Fax: (808) 441-1385

U.S. Toll-free Phone: (800) 377-4773 ■ U.S. Toll-free Fax: (888) 512-7599

Email: [askprel@prel.org](mailto:askprel@prel.org) ■ Website: [www.prel.org](http://www.prel.org)

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# Regional Education Master's Online Training in Evaluation (REMOTE) Program

## BACKGROUND

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Through funds provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) and the University of Hawai'i College of Education have developed a distance learning graduate program specializing in evaluation. The purpose of the Regional Education Master's Online Training in Evaluation (REMOTE) is to build the capacity of leaders and practitioners in the Pacific to conduct program evaluations and use their results. REMOTE is designed specifically to meet the needs of evaluators in the geographically vast and culturally diverse Pacific region. Because programs and their effects are best understood through the lens of the cultures within which they operate, REMOTE was developed using local input and cultural examples.

Students were nominated by state education agency (SEA) chiefs and institution of higher education (IHE) presidents from islands across the U.S.-affiliated Pacific, including American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei), Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau. An initial cohort of 15 students were competitively selected and provided full funding for tuition, travel, and related educational expenses.

## CURRICULUM

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REMOTE incorporates a specialization in evaluation to an existing master's degree program within the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Department of Educational Foundations. The 2-year program of study requires completion of 30 credit hours over the course of six semesters, as follows:

Semester	Course
Summer 2007 (in person)	Introduction to Evaluation Educational Statistics
Fall 2007	Introduction to Educational Research Social and Cultural Contexts of Education
Spring 2008	Survey Research Design and Analysis Foundations of Evaluation Theory
Summer 2008	Directed Research
Fall 2008	Seminar in Educational Psychology: Educational Evaluation Seminar in Educational Foundations
Spring 2009	International Development Education Directed Research (Evaluation Project)
Late Spring 2009	Graduation

Courses are offered in a hybrid distance learning format, using both asynchronous and synchronous technologies. Instruction is self-paced within the constraints of assignment deadlines, and students interact with faculty and other students through an in-person orientation, online course platforms, Web-based conferencing, teleconferencing, and

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site-based learning groups. Students convened in person during the first semester's orientation (summer 2007) to meet the instructors, receive training on distance learning instruction, facilitate future communication among faculty and students and between students, and work toward the completion of their first two courses.

## **PROJECT IMPACT**

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An evaluation of the impact of the online distance learning project is also an integral part of the REMOTE project plan. The evaluation will track the progress of the cohort of students enrolled in the program throughout the six semesters. The evaluative focus will be on the quality and utility of the program based on student feedback provided through individual and group interviews. The evaluation will address three questions: (a) *How successful was the program at graduating the original student cohort?* (b) *What were the strengths and weaknesses of the program?* and (c) *What did the students think about the quality and utility of the courses?* The results of this evaluation will be used both to improve implementation of REMOTE and to guide future efforts to develop and administer online distance learning courses in the Pacific region.

In the end, it is anticipated that REMOTE will benefit the discipline of evaluation in the Pacific region by sharpening the concepts, skills, and techniques used by regional practitioners. This increased capacity to conduct evaluation and use its results will improve the timeliness of information about the implementation and outcomes of regional programs, leading to improvements in both efficiency and effectiveness of educational efforts. These improvements in the quality of the educational experience provided by REMOTE will improve educational opportunities for citizens of the Pacific region.

## **CONTACT**

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For more information, contact Ms. Kavita Rao, Specialist, at [raok@prel.org](mailto:raok@prel.org).

*Marshallese crafts, like this wall hanging, make use of native plants and shells and are famous throughout the Pacific.*