

CKF Grading Policy

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Revised Oct 11, 2021 – change to iaido/jodo kata requirements

1 OBJECTIVES

Examinations for Dan (Degrees) and Shogo (Titles) are set for the purpose of encouraging advancement and improvement in Kendo, Iaido or Jodo.

It should be noted that the purpose of examination is not to screen or eliminate, but to encourage candidates to achieve a higher level of the arts of Kendo, Iaido and Jodo.

2 ORGANIZATION

2.1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EXAMINERS

There is a National Chief Examiner for each of the arts of kendo, iaido and jodo. The responsibility of the National Chief Examiner is to oversee all gradings and ensure consistency in standards and policy.

There are also Regional Examiners. The responsibility of the Regional Examiner is to oversee the organization and execution of gradings in their region. This includes recommending the members of the Grading Committee that evaluates candidates in that region to the President and providing guidance to that Committee. In the case where there is no Regional Examiner, this responsibility falls to the National Chief Examiner.

2.2 REGIONAL ZONES

Currently, there exist three zones for Regional Examiners. Gradings that are held in British Columbia, Alberta or Saskatchewan are the responsibility of the applicable Western Examiner. Gradings that are held in the remaining provinces are the responsibility of the applicable Eastern Examiner, except in Toronto. Gradings that are held in the Greater Toronto Area are the responsibility of the Central Examiner. In the case of Jodo, the Eastern Examiner is also the Central Examiner.

2.3 ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT

There is a National Grading Secretary whose responsibility is to ensure that the results of all gradings are properly maintained, to oversee the issuing of certificates and to handle any enquiries for lost certificates or letters.

The President oversees all arts. The National Chief Examiner, Regional Examiners and Grading Secretary are appointed or dismissed by the President with approval from the Board of Directors. The President has final approval for all certificates and letters for inquiries issued.

2.4 GRADING COMMITTEES

A number of committees are set up for the purpose of awarding dan and shogo. After examining the candidates, each grading committee will provide their recommendations to the CKF President for final approval and the granting of their dan or shogo. The President issues all grading certificates.

2.4.1 Ikkyu/Dan Grading Committees

There is a Written Examination Committee for each of the arts of kendo, iaido and jodo. These committees are standing. Their responsibility is to evaluate the written exam submissions and provide the results to the appropriate Grading Committees before the grading day. The Written Examination Committees are appointed by the President with approval from the Board of Directors.

There are Grading Committees for each of the arts of kendo, iaido and jodo. These committees are not standing but rather are organized for a particular examination day. The Grading Committees are recommended to the President and the National Chief Examiner by the responsible Regional Examiner. The President then appoints the committee with approval from the Board of Directors.

Grading committees are to be organized according to article 6 of the FIK guidelines, as per the table below. The normally appointed grading committees may award up to 7th dan, so long as their membership meets the FIK guidelines. Upon approval from the appropriate national chief examiner and the President, committees that do not meet FIK guidelines may be appointed. This might be done to allow a grading for lower ranks to proceed in a location where convening a full panel is not practical either financially or organizationally.

Dan Examined	Examiner Qualifications	Number of Examiners	Passing Vote
1 Dan	4 Dan & over	5	3/5
2 Dan	5 Dan & over	5	3/5
3 Dan	5 Dan & over	5	3/5
4 Dan	6 Dan & over	6	4/6
5 Dan	7 Dan & over	6	4/6
6 Dan	7 Dan & over	6	4/6
7 Dan	7 Dan & over	6	4/6

2.4.2 Shogo Grading Committee

There is one standing committee for awarding shogo. The committee shall consist of at least 3 people, including the President.

The President shall select and appoint the committee. [Question from Eric Tribe: one per art?]

2.4.3 Foreign Grading Committees

In the case where a CKF member has been invited to sit on a grading panel in a foreign country, permission must be obtained from the Chief National Examiner and the President.

3 KYU AND DAN

3.1 DEFINITION OF DAN

Dan are granted after assessing the candidate's level of skills along with an appropriate mental strength.

Ranks of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo Dan, 1st through 8th Dan, are granted according to the following merits:

1st Dan: The candidate has practiced and is able to demonstrate the basic skills.

2nd Dan: The candidate has learned the basic skills well and is able to demonstrate improvement.

3rd Dan: The candidate has mastered the basic skills and is able to demonstrate maturity.

4th Dan: The candidate must demonstrate refined basic skills as well as advanced skills of his own.

5th Dan: The candidate must demonstrate matured skills, both of basic and his own unique skills.

6th Dan: The candidate has understanding of the essentials of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo and demonstrates a high level of skill.

7th Dan: The candidate has acquired deep knowledge of the arts of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo and demonstrates superb skills.

8th Dan: The candidate has mastered the highest and deepest level of knowledge regarding the art of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo and demonstrates outstanding skills.

3.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR KYU AND DAN

The Kendo grading examination for kyu or dan consists of three components:

- i. Written Examination (1 dan to 5 dan only)
- ii. Jitsugi: observation of their shinai Kendo
- iii. Kata: observation of their forms

The Iaido and Jodo grading examination for kyu or dan consists of:

- i. Written Examination (up to 5 dan)
- ii. Kata: observation of their forms

The written examination is provided to the candidates in advance of each grading. Each candidate submits their answers for the written examination on or before the application deadline, and the examinations are evaluated prior to the day of the physical examination.

Specific details of the grading format, such as jitsugi components and time limits, are to be decided by the regional examiners.

3.2.1 Kendo Kata Requirements

Kendo Kata shall be examined as follows:

Kyu/Dan Applied for	Examination Subjects
1 st Kyu	Kendo Kihonwaza Keiko Ho 1 – 9 Hon
1 st Dan	Kendo no Kata Tachi 1 – 3 Bon
2 nd Dan	Kendo no Kata Tachi 1 – 5 Hon
3 rd Dan	Kendo no Kata Tachi 1 – 7 Hon
4 th Dan & Up	Kendo no Kata Tachi 1 – 7 Hon & Kodachi 1 – 3 Bon

3.2.2 Iaido Kata Requirements

Iaido Kata shall be examined as follows:

Kyu/Dan Applied for	Examination Subjects	Time Limit***
1 st Kyu & 1 st Dan	5 ZenKenRen* of candidate's choice	6 minutes
2 nd & 3 rd Dan	5 ZenKenRen* as selected by the examiners**	6 minutes
4 th & 5 th Dan	1 Koryu of candidate's choice 4 ZenKenRen* as selected by the examiners.	6 minutes
6 th Dan & Up	2 Koryu of candidate's choice 4 ZenKenRen* as selected by the examiners.	7 minutes

* Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei Iaido – All Japan Kendo Federation Iaido set

** ZenKenRen kata for 2 dan and up will be specified on the day of the examination. Koryu kata will not be specified.

*** Examination time commences from the bow to the Shomen after entering the examination area and ends when the candidate stands up holding the sword to the side after performing the final bow.

NOTE: Torei must be that used in ZenKenRen.

3.2.3 Jodo Kata Requirements

Jodo Kata shall be examined as follows:

Kyu/Dan Applied for	Examination Subjects
1st Kyu	First 3 Kihon, Seitei Kata* #1, 2, 4 Jo and Tachi side
1st Dan	Kihon**+Seitei Kata 2 - 6 both sides
2nd Dan	Kihon+Seitei Kata 3 - 7 both sides
3rd Dan	Kihon+Seitei Kata 4 - 8 both sides
4th Dan	Seitei Kata 5 - 9 both sides

5th Dan	Seitei Kata 6 - 10 both sides
6th Dan and up	6 Seitei Kata as decided by the examiners**

* Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei Jodo – All Japan Kendo Federation Jodo set

** Kihon (Tandouku) for 1-3 dan and Seitei Kata for 6-7 dan will be specified on the day of the examination

3.3 CARRY-OVER OF WRITTEN EXAMINATION AND JITSUGI RESULTS

Note that for kendo, iaido and jodo, if the candidate passes the written exam but fails overall, the written exam result is carried over to the next grading attempt. For kendo only, if the written exam and jitsugi are marked as passed but kata is failed, both the written exam and jitsugi results are carried over to the next grading attempt. Written exams that were assessed as a marginal pass are not eligible to be carried over.

In both cases the candidate must retest within one year of the failure and pay the full examination fee for the retest. Testing again at the same grading the following year counts as within one year.

3.4 APPLICATION PROCESS FOR KYU OR DAN

Anyone wishing to apply to challenge a grade at a CKF grading MUST meet the ALL of the following pre-requisites.

3.4.1 Pre-requisites:

1. The candidate must be a member in good standing of an FIK-affiliated national federation.
 - For CKF members, all membership fees, for the current year, and any outstanding years, must be up to date.
 - Foreigners must be up to date with their own national federation
2. The candidate must have the rank prior to the one being challenged.
 - CKF members who obtained their previous grade outside of Canada must first register as outlined in “CKF Registration of Foreign Grades” below.
 - Foreigners must provide proof of their rank – a high-quality scan or photocopy of their certificate sent in to the Grading Secretary in advance of the grading is required.
3. The candidate must be eligible to grade, based on the CKF time in grade requirements.
4. The candidate must have permission to grade.
 - For CKF members, permission is obtained from their club sensei.
 - Foreigners must provide written permission from their national federation president in advance of the grading.

CKF members may challenge a grade at any CKF grading that has the appropriate panel for the rank being challenged.

Applicants apply online through the CKF website, paying an examination fee and registration (certificate) fee in advance. If the candidate fails, the registration fee is refunded but the examination fee is forfeit. The deadline for application is in general one week before the examination, and is published well in advance. No late applications are accepted.

3.4.2 Application to Foreign Grading (FIK member nation)

To apply to a grading in another FIK member nation, the candidate must follow all rules and pre-requisites of that country. Required fees, including any required to register a CKF certificate will be paid by the candidate to the foreign grading authority. Candidates must be CKF members in good standing. Candidates must obtain presidential permission by submitting the required permission form and a \$20 fee. In the case of grading in Japan, the candidate must submit the AJKF out-of-country grading form to the CKF president for approval and signature. The CKF and AJKF forms are available on the CKF website.

3.4.3 Time in Grade Qualifications for Dan

Applicants (Kendo, Iaido and Jodo) must have the following periods of practice:

Dan/Kyu	Practice Periods	Minimum Age
1st Kyu		
1st (Sho) Dan	3 months after granting of 1 Kyu	13 Years and over
2nd (Ni) Dan	1 year after granting of 1st Dan	
3rd (San) Dan	2 years after granting of 2nd Dan	
4th (Yon) Dan	3 years after granting of 3rd Dan	
5th (Go) Dan	4 years after granting of 4th Dan	
6th (Roku) Dan	5 years after granting of 5th Dan	
7th (Nana) Dan	6 years after granting of 6th Dan	
8th (Hachi) Dan	10 years after granting of 7th Dan	46 Years and over

NOTE: up to one month's consideration is made for varying grading dates from year to year.

Applicants who are 60 years old or older and are applying for 6th dan or higher may have their wait time reduced, upon meeting the following criteria and applying to the President.

Dan/Kyu	Practice Periods
6th (Roku) Dan	2 years after granting of 5th Dan
7th (Nana) Dan	3 years after granting of 6th Dan
8th (Hachi) Dan	5 years after granting of 7th Dan

4 SHOGO

4.1 DEFINITION OF SHOGO

Over and above qualifications for dan, the candidate must be deemed an accomplished Kendo-ka, Iaido-ka or Jodo-ka, demonstrating leadership and great insight as well as high character.

Titles of Renshi, Kyoshi and Hanshi are granted to those who have attained the following qualifications:

Renshi: Fully skilled in Kendo, Iaido or Jodo and demonstrates good insight into the art.

Kyoshi: Masterful in Kendo, Iaido or Jodo skills and possesses profound knowledge of the arts of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo.

Hanshi: Highly accomplished in the arts of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo, exalts in reputation, and is a person of noble character.

4.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR SHOGO

The Kendo, Iaido or Jodo grading examination for shogo of renshi or kyoshi consists of:

- i. Essay submitted by the candidate
- ii. General evaluation of the candidate

The Kendo, Iaido or Jodo grading examination for shogo of hanshi consists of:

- i. General evaluation of the candidate

In the case of hanshi, the candidate's dedication to CKF is especially considered and a general consensus must be achieved across Canada.

4.3 APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SHOGO

In general, candidates for shogo must meet the same qualifications as those for dan and also hold rank for the times specified in the chart below.

4.3.1 Renshi and Kyoshi

Those who wish to apply for renshi or kyoshi should apply to the President and to the appropriate national Chief Examiner, with a copy to the Secretary. The Secretary will arrange for the appropriate fees to be paid. The following documents must be sent when applying for renshi or kyoshi:

1. Position of the applicant within the CKF
2. Major kendo activities to date
3. Accomplishments as a leader and referee in the organization
4. Records of attendance for official seminars held by CKF, FIK or any FIK affiliate

5. An essay of between 400 and 800 words in French or English. For guidance on the essay topics, please see Appendix A.
 - i. Renshi essay topic may be either “The Significance of Shinai” or “The Significance of Reiho”
 - ii. Kyoshi essay topic is “My Life-long Kendo/Iaido/Jodo”

The following requirements apply to kyoshi only:

1. Kyoshi applicants require a letter of recommendation from any CKF dojo leader
2. Kyoshi applicants may be required to write an exam regarding technical and teaching theory

Applicants for renschi or kyoshi are evaluated by the Shogo Examination Committee, with shogo awarded on the consensus of the committee. Candidates who fail the written portion of the exam may retake the exam.

4.3.2 Hanshi

Candidates for hanshi are nominated by the President and Board of Directors. Hanshi candidates must have three letters of recommendation, from dojo leaders in each of the three different zones.

Candidates for hanshi will be evaluated by the Shogo Examination Committee, with hanshi awarded on the consensus of the committee. There are no fees associated with the awarding of hanshi.

4.3.3 Time in Grade Qualifications for Shogo

Applicants (Kendo, Iaido and Jodo) must have the following periods of practice:

Shogo	Practice Periods
Renshi	Over 1 year after granting of 6th Dan
Kyoshi	Over 2 years after granting of 7th Dan, must hold Renshi
Hanshi	Over 8 years after granting of 8th Dan, must hold Kyoshi

4.4 CKF REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN GRADES

Registration of a foreign grading certificate for either dan or shogo is subject to a \$50 registration fee.

The candidate must provide proof of the grade in the form of a grading certificate and/or letter from the issuing federation president. Verification of grades up to and including 4th dan may be done by the Grading Secretary or the CKF President. Verification of grades 5th dan and above must be done by the CKF President.

In the case of shogo, the candidate must submit a brief essay introducing themselves and including their kendo history.

4.5 CKF EXAMINATION AND CERTIFICATE FEE SCHEDULE

Item	Examination Fees	Registration (Certificate) Fees	Japanese Certificate*
1st Kyu (junior)	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	N/A
1st Kyu	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	N/A
1st Dan (junior)	\$ 30.00	\$ 50.00	+ \$ 80.00
1st Dan	\$ 50.00	\$ 60.00	+ \$ 80.00
2nd Dan	\$ 60.00	\$ 90.00	+ \$ 80.00
3rd Dan	\$ 70.00	\$ 150.00	+ \$ 80.00
4th Dan	\$ 75.00	\$ 325.00	No additional charge
5th Dan	\$ 75.00	\$ 425.00	No additional charge
6th Dan	\$ 75.00	\$ 550.00	No additional charge
7th Dan	\$ 75.00	\$ 700.00	No additional charge
Renshi	\$100.00	\$ 500.00	No additional charge
Kyoshi	N/A	\$ 600.00	No additional charge
Hanshi	N/A	Waived	Waived
Registration of Foreign Certificate	N/A	\$ 50.00	N/A
Replacement Certificate	N/A	\$ 50.00	\$ 80.00
Letter confirming rank	N/A	\$ 20.00	

*All certificates for 4th Dan and up will be written in Japanese. All names on Japanese Certificates will be written in Roman alphabet unless otherwise specified on the application form.

4.6 REVOKING SHOGO AND DAN

The CKF president holds the right to revoke a granted Shogo, if granting is deemed inappropriate upon consultation with the Examination Committee.

The CKF president holds the right to revoke Shogo and/or Dan from a person who has committed a crime or equally dishonourable act upon consultation with the Examination Committee.

4.7 CKF EXAMINATION RESULTS REPORTING

The National Chief Examiner or the Regional Examiner who oversees the grading committee is responsible for submitting the results of the examination to the Grading Secretary, with copies to the President, National Chief Examiner and the Information Technology Committee. The results are to be submitted promptly, no later than one week after the examination date.

The Grading Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the results are properly recorded. Results are reported by submitting an electronic spreadsheet that contains the names of the judges on the committee, the date and place of the examination and for each candidate the following information:

1. Name
2. CKF membership number
3. Kyu, dan or shogo applied for
4. Result (pass or fail)

Appendix A: Shogo Essay Guidance

The topics for the essays for Renshi and Kyoshi are taken from the All-Japan Kendo Federation Official Guide for Kendo Instruction, available from FIK through their website. The relevant text from Chapter 2 is reproduced below.

“THE MINDSET OF KENDO INSTRUCTION” AND ITS EXPLANATION

剣道指導の心構え

The Significance of the Shinai

For the correct transmission and development of kendo, efforts should be made to teach the correct way of handling the *shinai* in accordance with the principles of the sword.

Kendo is a way where the individual cultivates one's mind (the self) by aiming for *shin-ki-ryoku-itchi* (unification of mind, spirit and technique) utilizing the *shinai*. The “*shinai*-sword” should be not only directed at one's opponent but also at the self. Thus, the primary aim of instruction is to encourage the unification of mind, body and *shinai* through training in this discipline.

Reihō - Etiquette

When instructing, emphasis should be placed on etiquette to encourage respect for partners, and nurture people with a dignified and humane character.

Even in competitive matches, importance is placed on upholding etiquette in kendo. The primary emphasis should thus be placed on instruction in the spirit and forms of *reihō* (etiquette) so that the practitioner can develop a modest attitude to life, and realize the ideal of *kōken-chiai* (the desire to achieve mutual understanding and betterment of humanity through kendo).

Lifelong Kendo

While providing instruction, students should be encouraged to apply the full measure of care to issues of safety and health, and to devote themselves to the development of their character throughout their lives.

Kendo is a “way of life” that successive generations can learn together. The prime objective of instructing kendo is to encourage the practitioner to discover and define their way in life through training in the techniques of kendo. Thus, the practitioner will be able to develop a rich outlook on life and be able to put the culture of kendo into use, thereby benefitting from its value in their daily lives through increased social vigour.

Appendix B: Examiners Guidance

B.1 Criteria for Awarding Dan Grades; 'Fuyo Kijun'

At a Dan examination, examiners evaluate candidates for promotion for each Dan grade based on evidence of an appropriate level of training, and the degree of technical proficiency and stability acquired through the course of their study. The acceptability criterion of each Dan 'Fuyo Kijun' is described as follows.

1. The central concern for Shodan, 2-Dan and 3-Dan is the level of 'Kihon' (basic techniques) demonstrated by the examinee. The examiner assesses whether the candidate has learnt and correctly acquired the basic skills.
2. The central concern for 4-Dan and 5-Dan is the level of basic techniques and advanced techniques (Kihon and Oyo). The examiner assesses whether the candidate has fully acquired and able to utilize basic and advanced skills.
3. The central concern for 6-Dan and 7-Dan is the ability to demonstrate 'Jiri' (technique and theory). Besides the basic and advanced techniques, the examiner assesses whether a candidate has acquired sufficient knowledge and understanding of Jiri, the techniques of Kendo, Iaido or Jodo accompanied with theory or principles.
4. The central concern for 8-Dan and above is whether or not the candidate has reached the highest stage of Jiri referred to as 'Jiri-Itchi' (total integration of Ji and Ri). The candidate will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate a profound understanding of Jiri-Itchi in addition to the aforementioned points for 7-Dan and below.

B.2 Kendo Points for Observation 'Chakugan-ten'

Each Dan examiner is required to make a decision after paying careful attention to the following points in accordance with the above criteria:

B.2.1 Shodan, Nidan, Sandan

1. The candidates appearance and whether they are correctly wearing the Kendo-gi and Hakama, and are holding the Shinai correctly (Chakuso);
2. Appropriate manners and deportment (Reiho).
3. Correct posture
4. Datotsu (strikes and thrusts) in accordance to the correct basic Kendo techniques
5. Strong spirit (Kisei).

B.2.2 Yondan, Godan

Same criteria as Shodan to 3rd Dan with addition of the following criteria:

1. Level of proficiency acquired in advanced Kendo techniques
2. Level of mental and physical discipline demonstrated
3. Strategic skills to control and win a match.

B.2.3 Rokudan, Nanadan, Hachidan

The Jitsugi examination for 6th Dan to 8th Dan will consider all the assessment points relevant to Shodan through to 5th Dan with the addition of the following two elements and an expected higher overall level of technical proficiency.

1. Understanding of 'Riai' (The candidate must be able to execute Waza and move in a way that is rational and purposeful.)
2. 'Fukaku' and 'Hinkaku' (Demonstrating one's own style which is dignified and elegant.)

The examiners are expected to make their evaluations and final decisions based on the abovementioned criteria within the prescribed examination time.

B.3 Iaido Points for Observation 'Chakugan-ten'

In addition to the criteria stipulated in B.1 the pass or fail result for examinations for 5th Dan and below should be based on elements for observation outlined in the "AJKF Iai Handbook for Shinpan and Examiners" with particular consideration given to the following factors.

B.3.1 Shodan to Sandan

1. Correct appearance and etiquette.
2. Precise Nukitsuke and Kiritsuke.
3. Precise Chiburi and [blade] angle.
4. Precise Noto

B.3.2 Yondan and Godan

Same criteria as Shodan to 3rd Dan with addition of the following criteria:

1. Mental composure.
2. Metsuke (gaze)
3. Kihaku (vigour)
4. The unison of Ki (spirit), Ken (sword), and Tai (Body).

B.3.3 Rokudan, Nanadan, Hachidan

The Jitsugi examination for 6th Dan to 8th Dan will take into consideration all the assessment points relevant to Shodan through to 5th Dan with the addition of the following two elements and an expected higher overall level of technical proficiency.

1. Riiai (Understanding of the rationale behind the techniques)
2. Fukaku, Hinkaku (Grace and dignity in deportment)

B.4 Jodo Points for Observation 'Chakugan-ten'

In addition to the criteria stipulated in B.1, the pass or fail result for examinations for 5th Dan and below should be based on elements for observation outlined in the "AJKF Jodo Handbook for Shinpan and Examiners" with particular consideration given to the following factors.

B.4.1 Shodan to Sandan

1. Correct appearance and etiquette.
2. Precise Nukitsuke and Kiritsuke.
3. Precise fundamental striking and thrusting
4. Replete spirit

B.4.2 Yondan and Godan

Same criteria as Shodan to 3rd Dan with addition of the following criteria:

1. Proficiency in timing, distance and angle
2. Proficiency in use of the sword (Jo)
3. Unison of Ki (Spirit), Ken (Jo), and Tai (Body)
4. The unison of Ki (spirit), Ken (sword), and Tai (Body)

B.4.3 Rokudan, Nanadan, Hachidan

The Jitsugi examination for 6th Dan to 8th Dan will take into consideration all the assessment points relevant to Shodan through to 5th Dan with the addition of the following two elements and an expected higher overall level of technical proficiency.

1. Riai (Understanding of the rationale behind the techniques)
2. Fukaku, Hinkaku (Grace and dignity in deportment)