



DAN (BLACK BELT) GRADING PROCEDURES

Updated 2 December 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

As a service to its members, the AFTK offers the ability to convene, at the discretion of the AFTK Management Committee, a Grading Panel to evaluate a member for a dan (black belt) grade in Karate or Kobudo. Such panels are formed at the total discretion of the AFTK Management Committee following submission and approval of an AFTK Dan Grading Application from a member.

Applications for a Dan Grading will only be accepted from member organisations that do not have Dan Grading obligations elsewhere by virtue of their affiliation or membership to other organisations/entities.

The AFTK offers two services: *Grade Ratification*, where the AFTK ratifies a member's grade where it comes from an authentic and verified organisation/source (per the Management Committee's discretion), and *Grading Assessment*, where the AFTK conducts the grading for a member or member school where they do not have another body to issue their grade.

2. GRADE RATIFICATION

Where a member has obtained a grade from an authentic and verified organisation/source, as determined by the Management Committee, the AFTK may issue a grading certificate that ratifies the member's grade.

The member will be required to submit a copy of their certificate, and a copy martial arts resume or training history, that includes:

- a. A list of all grades achieved and under the instructor and organisation that they were issued.
- b. A list of the applicant's styles, instructors, and years they have actively trained under them.

Grade Ratification does not require the formation of a Grading Panel and will be issued at the consideration of the Management Committee.

Special Note:

- a. AFTK Members may only apply for grading ratification after being a member in good standing of the AFTK for 12 months.

3. GRADING ASSESSMENT

The timing and location for AFTK Dan Grading Panel assessments rests exclusively with the AFTK Management Committee.

3.1. PANEL MEMBERS

Make up and membership of any AFTK Dan Grading panel rests exclusively with the AFTK Management Committee and will be formed of certain member/s who are Dan Ranked Karate or Kobudo practitioners sufficiently experienced to conduct and sit in judgement of each Dan Graded level applied for.

3.2. PROCEDURES





All AFTK Dan Gradings will be conducted in accordance with Member Dojo Dan Grading Syllabus and in accordance with the AFTK Ranking Criteria. The AFTK does not set the specific requirements (ie kata) for each dan level. The AFTK Management Committee will provide all applicants with Grading Criteria once an application for Dan Grading has been received by the AFTK Management Committee. Once approval is given by the Management Committee to accept the application, a Grading Panel will be formed of suitable members.

Once a grading application is submitted, the Management Committee will request from the candidate, as per their supplied syllabus, that a pre-assessment be conducted prior to the formal grading. This pre-assessment may be requested through the submission of videos (where there is no qualified examiner in the local area), or in person (where there is a qualified examiner in the area). This allows the Management Committee, and subsequently the Grading Panel, to best inform and prepare the candidate for their formal assessment.

Special Note:

- a. The AFTK Management Committee must accept and approve all Dan grading applications prior to any other action being taken.
- b. The AFTK Management Committee must satisfy itself that the details provided for and accompanying all applications for a Dan grading are valid, true and correct, and that they satisfy the requirements of the AFTK.
- c. If an application does not satisfy (b) above, or if for any other reason the AFTK Management Committee is unable to approve an application for a Dan Grading; that decision must be relayed to the applicant within 14 days of the Committee's decision.
- d. If (c) applies; applicant/s are to be given the opportunity to clarify and respond to such a decision; upon receipt of any such further information from an applicant; the AFTK Management Committee will reconsider the application.
- e. If the Management Committee and/or the Grading Panel determine that the candidate does not perform to the standard of the required applied for grade during the pre-assessment, the Grading Panel agrees to provide feedback to the candidate with the opportunity to resubmit the pre-assessment grading material within 6 months. If this re-submission does not satisfy the Grading Panel's requirements, then the application will be considered unsuccessful.
- f. Grading criteria shall contain, but not be limited to; Names/Titles/Dan level of panel members, date time and location of the Dan Grading panel assessment and any other requirements of the applicant for the Dan Grading Panel assessment.
- g. AFTK Members may only apply for grading assessment after being a member in good standing of the AFTK for 12 months.

3.3. THESIS

Where applicable, an applicant thesis must be based on technical or historical research connected to traditional Karate or Kobudo. It is considered more favourable if the thesis/research has been published. All such submissions must be in printed form and meet the minimum requirements as set out in the "Typical Regular Rank Standards" for the respective grade.

3.4. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

All successful applicants will be presented with an AFTK Registered Dan Grading Certificate. Their grade will also be recorded in the records of the AFTK and listed on the official AFTK website.

3.5. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS





If the applicant does not achieve the rank promotion then the applicant will be:

- Provided with a written explanation of the Dan Grading Panel's decision.
- Provided with an agreed time period to rectify any concerns listed by the Dan Grading Panel.
- Allowed to complete the criteria free of charge after such a recommended time period has expired.
- If the applicant does not then pass the subsequent attempt at the rank first applied for; any subsequent attempts to grade at that same level; will attract a fee of half the normal grading fee applicable to the grade attempted.

Special Note

- All grading fees (per *Attachment B*) must be paid at the time an application for Dan Grading is lodged.
- If a Grading application is received, and the Management Committee determine that it does not meet the requirements and therefore does not approve the application, the fee will be refunded minus a \$50.00 administration fee.
- Once the AFTK Management Committee approve and accept the grading application, grading fees (per *Attachment B*) are NON-REFUNDABLE regardless of successful or unsuccessful outcome.

3.6. GRADING ASSESSMENT - STANDARDS

Each applicant must submit, with their grading application, a detailed copy of the grading syllabus for their school and/or style. The AFTK reserve the right to review the grading syllabus and either accept it as the primary grading syllabus, reject it or make recommendations/additions. The AFTK Management Committee will provide a written explanation of the reasons for any rejected syllabus within 14 days.

In the event that the applicant is unable to provide an appropriate and acceptable grading syllabus for their style, the AFTK will apply the following grading syllabus during the grading assessment.

See *Attachment A* for an outline of relevant requirements of grade.

4. TIME AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

The following age and time intervals requirements apply to Dan Grades within the AFTK.

Grade	Minimum years of training at previous grade	Minimum total years of training/grade	Minimum age
1 st Dan (Shodan)	n/a	3	16
2 nd Dan (Nidan)	2	5	18
3 rd Dan (Sandán)	3	8	21
4 th Dan (Yondan)	4	12	25
5 th Dan (Godan)	5	17	30
6 th Dan (Rokudan)	6	23	36
7 th Dan (Nanadan)	7	30	42
8 th Dan (Hachidan)	8	38	50
9 th Dan (Kyudan)	9	47	59
10 th Dan (Judan)	10	57	69
Shihan	n/a	5 th Dan	30

Special Note





- a. Time and age requirements are as a guide.
- b. An AFTK Grading Assessment Panel can, with the unanimous support of the AFTK Management Committee, approve an applicant to a certain Dan level should the applicant's circumstances warrant such a decision.

5. GRADE TYPES

5.1. Regular Grade

- a. The stage of progress of the human character as reached through physical and spiritual training.
- b. Awarded at the discretion of the AFTK.

5.2. Honorary Grade

- a. An award of grade as a result of one's support of the development of traditional karate or kobudo.
- b. In general, candidates must have the respect of the community by virtue of their good character and indirect or direct support of the goals of Traditional Karate or Kobudo.
- c. Has applied oneself by hard work, through continuous practise to achieve a high level of development in karate or kobudo, however there is a physical limitation or handicap.
- d. Has provided distinguished service through instruction and continued practise but is limited or lacking in technique for respective grade.
- e. Has fulfilled necessary regular ranking requirements but through circumstances has been unable to be evaluated under required grading.
- Any other circumstance other than that described above and has contributed to the advancement of karate or kobudo, such as research, development, practice, etc.





ATTACHMENT A – REQUIREMENTS OF GRADE

1st Dan (Shodan)

This stage requires the personal assimilation and performance of all basic body movement and technique to such a degree that their execution is in accord with the demands of the candidates own body.

Assessment Criteria:

- Kata: Performance of syllabus kata or a kata of adequate difficulty and complexity
- Kihon: Performance of individual technique and basic combinations.
- Plus at least one of the following:
 - Kumite: The ability to use a variety of techniques for offence and defence; and/or
 - Bunkai/Oyo: Demonstration of a number of applications from the syllabus Kata.

2nd Dan (Nidan)

This level necessitates a further maturation of abilities. All basic body movements with hand and leg techniques can be applied with extended force and proper application in basic combinations.

Assessment Criteria:

- Kata: Performance of advanced Kata.
- Kihon: Combination of all basic techniques.
- Plus at least one of the following:
 - Kumite: The ability to use a variety of techniques for offence and defence; and/or
 - Bunkai/Oyo: Demonstration of a number of applications from the syllabus Kata or a kata of appropriate difficulty and complexity in the context of real life situations (ie defences against common domestic attacks of physical violence)

3rd Dan (Sandan)

At this stage, the individual has acquired the understanding of the underlying principles in all basic body movement and technique. Moreover, this understanding can be demonstrated in the application of techniques under varied circumstances and conditions.

Assessment Criteria:

- Kata: Performance of advanced kata.
- Plus at least one of the following:
 - Kumite: The ability to use a variety of techniques for offence and defence; and/or
 - Bunkai/Oyo: Demonstration of a series of applications from the syllabus Kata or a kata of appropriate difficulty and complexity in the context of real life situations including a range of common attacks. The applicant must demonstrate a good understanding of the underlying principles of the Kata.

4th Dan (Yondan)

The individual attaining this level has exemplified understanding of the underlying principles of body movement and techniques. Moreover, this candidate has also cultivated a profound understanding of the defensive application of Karate or Kobudo technique under varied circumstances. Developing a working knowledge of both theory and practice, the Yondan candidate is capable of imparting such learning to others.

Assessment Criteria:





- Kata: Performance of advanced Kata including an explanation and demonstration of the principles.
- Written Test: 500 - 1000 word essay, with topic decided of the AFTK Dan Grading Panel.

5th Dan (Godan)

This is the level wherein associated research has been completed in some limited area. Such research must include its application in a manner that is both relevant and applicable to the individual's particular physique.

Assessment Criteria:

- Kata: Performance of advanced Kata with all required factors combining both physical and spiritual.
- Research: Presentation of favourite technique, with an explanation of theory and practice must accompany the demonstration, or as otherwise determined by the AFTK Dan Grading Panel.

6th Dan (Rokudan)

The attainment of this level necessitates a contribution to Karate or Kobudo that by its nature has a universal benefit to the art. The applicant must present a record of continued attachment through instructing and/or participation in Traditional Karate or Kobudo.

Assessment Criteria:

- Evidence of a continued attachment to Karate or Kobudo through instructing, participating, research or other contributions.

7th Dan (Nanadan)

At this level a candidate has made significant and long term commitments and contributions to Karate or Kobudo and is actively involved in the art on a regular basis, either through research, instruction, participation or any other form of contribution.

The applicant must present a record of continued attachment through instructing and/or participation in Traditional Karate or Kobudo.

Assessment Criteria:

- Evidence of a continued attachment to Karate or Kobudo through instructing, participating, research or other contributions.

8th Dan (Hachidan)

At this level a candidate has made significant and lifetime commitments and contributions to Karate and Kobudo and is actively involved in the art on a continual basis, either through research, instruction, participation or any other form of contribution.

Assessment Criteria:

- Evidence of a continued attachment to Karate or Kobudo through instructing, participating, research or other contributions.

9th Dan (Kudan) and 10th Dan (Judan)

The requirements for this level call for an uncommon dedication and commitment to Karate or Kobudo for an extended period of time to the areas of individual achievement and development of the highest order. Moreover this accumulated knowledge and expertise must have been utilised in the general service of Karate or Kobudo development.





Assessment Criteria:

- Awarded for exceptional lifetime achievement in Karate or Kobudo.

Shihan (師範)

The Shihan (or 'model teacher') appellation recognises an instructor who is highly proficient in both their own training and in the instruction of others. The instructor must have conducted extensive research into the practical and theoretical aspects of karate or kobudo. The applicant must have shown significant and long-term commitments and contributions to karate and kobudo, in particular to the development of other instructors.

Appellations can be applied independent of, or alongside of a Dan Grading, however, are considered separate and must be applied for as such. The AFTK also reserves the right to award other appellations to those eligible qualified candidates who meet the above requirements and criteria as determined by a qualified Assessment Panel, and the requirements of the Management Committee.

The AFTK reserves the right to revoke any appellation should the awardee behaviour inappropriately or unbecoming of the appellation.

Assessment Criteria:

- Evidence of a continued commitment to the promotion of karate or kobudo.
- A minimum grade of 5th Dan that is recognised by the AFTK.
- Evidence of development of other instructors.
- A 3,000 word thesis (Academic or Reflective) on the aspect of instructing, coaching or teaching in karate or kobudo, with references and citations included; or a method of assessment of the ability to instruct, coach or teach as determined appropriate by the Assessment Panel.
- Written endorsement and character reference from two other instructors who hold the Dan Grade of at least 5th Dan.
- And any other criteria determined by the Assessment Panel or Management Committee.





ATTACHMENT B - FEES

All grading applications attract a grading fee. The Grading fees as at April 2023 are outlined below and may be subject to change without prior notice. Grading fees are used to sponsor Grading Panel members/examiners and cover the costs of facilitating such an event.

All gradings have a non-refundable administration fee of \$50.00 (included in the total fee). Grading Ratification fees are non-refundable in total.

Grade	Fee (\$AUD)
Grade Ratification	\$75.00
1 st Dan (Shodan)	\$150.00
2 nd Dan (Nidan)	\$200.00
3 rd Dan (Sandan)	\$300.00
4 th Dan (Yondan)	\$400.00
5 th Dan (Godan)	\$500.00
6 th Dan (Rokudan)	\$600.00
7 th Dan (Nanadan)	\$700.00
8 th Dan (Hachidan)	\$800.00
9 th Dan (Kyudan)	\$900.00
10 th Dan (Judan)	\$1000.00
Shihan	\$500.00

