

Understanding What It's All About

Part 1: Kyu Grading.

In our *Honbu Dojo Rules*, on the back of your annual membership application form, the requirements for the opportunity to attempt a kyu grading assessment are listed, but it is important to have the correct perception and attitude to grading:

- Grading is a personal matter and aimed at giving you an indication of your own progress.
- Every individual has his/her own personal reasons for practicing karate - your own '**Why**' - all of us are differently talented, of unequal ability.
- Grading is important in the sense that you are placed in a 'stress' situation, away from your comfort zone, maybe similar to an assault or confrontation in a civilian environment.
- It's aimed at helping you break through personal 'barriers' that will ensure your future progress, maturity and development.
- It's you against yourself - never try to 'compete' with fellow karate ka.
- Don't attempt grading when you have not prepared for it - it's counterproductive for your own esteem and motivation.
- Achievements in Tournaments have no bearing on grading assessment.

Realities:

- A person who trains more than the minimum two sessions per week, puts more effort into every session, self-trains regularly, tries endlessly to correct his/her technique, will, at some stage or another, progress faster - it's your own decision/choice, based on your '**Why**'
- You need to goal set for a grading and feel ready and confident when it comes around, this implies an additional effort from your side in the period before the grading. (*This is why we have a Dojo schedule available in the beginning of the year - to help you plan!*)
- A grading can be failed! You still need to produce on the day. We are moving in a society or culture where failing is impossible and dysfunctional productivity is the norm, unfortunately, not in the Martial Arts, 'not on my watch!'
- Kyu **grades are reversible** and can be forfeited in total in the event of none training - see your grading assessment form and black membership book. In the event of non- or minimal training, whatever reason, a white belt is worn until you reach the required level again.
- Instructors do not '*push*' a student to attempt a grading - a student needs to put up his/her hand!
- You can make excuses or you can make progress!

Extracts from 'General rules for kyu gradings' as per Membership Application Form:

Grading. Grading assessments are conducted on merit. A member's progress will depend on regular attendance of classes and special seminars or Gashukus, presented from time to time. It is accepted that a person training four times per week will progress faster than a person attending the normal two classes per week. The general SAGA regulations regarding gradings are as follows:

1.1 **Yellow to Blue Belt.**

Members training twice weekly can grade three (3x) times annually:

- A minimum of **25 scheduled classes** have been attended in the period between grading **continuously** – non-attendance of classes for one calendar month or more entails that a person is back to '*square one*'! Attendance of a Regional Gashuku gives a member credit for five (5) classes.
- All membership and affiliation fees must be paid up.

Members training once a week (juniors) can grade twice (2x) annually, provided:

- A minimum of **18 scheduled classes** have been attended in the period between grading **continuously** – non-attendance of classes for one calendar month or more entails that a person is back to '*square one*'! Attendance of a Regional Gashuku gives a member credit for five (5) classes.
- All membership and affiliation fees must be paid up.

Note that Blue Belt gradings are only done at Regional level at a Gashuku.

1.2 **Brown Belt**

Members training twice weekly can grade twice (2x) annually, provided:

- A minimum of **45 scheduled classes** have been attended in the period between gradings **continuously** – non-attendance of classes for one calendar month or more entails that a person is back to *'square one'*! Attendance of a Regional Gashuku gives a member credit for five (5) classes.
- All membership and affiliation fees must be paid up.

Members training once a week (juniors) can grade twice (2x) annually, provided:

- A minimum of **25 scheduled classes** have been attended in the period between gradings **continuously** – non-attendance of classes for one calendar month or more entails that a person is back to *'square one'*! Attendance of a Regional Gashuku gives a member credit for five (5) classes.
- All membership and affiliation fees must be paid up.

Note that Brown Belt Gradings are only done at Regional level during a Gashuku (See Dojo Calendar) and the SAGA Fitness test must be passed to qualify.

1.3 **General**

- Grade expiries: There are specific conditions regarding the expiry of kyu grades – see the grading assessment form you receive after your grading.

1.4 **Black Belt Grading:** A member is required to have attended a minimum of three Regional Gashukus during his/her Brown belt period to qualify for Shodan grading. Note that Gashuku requirements apply to all Dan grades – consult your instructor.