

GRADING PROTOCOL
27/06/2014

AFSA RULES ON GRADING

1. **THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

- 1.1 In terms of the AFSA Constitution the AFSA Technical Committee consists of senior ranked members within AFSA, appointed annually by the AFSA Technical Advisor in consultation with the AFSA Sekininsha, to present the AFSA in technical matters within each region of the Aikido Federation of South Africa (AFSA).
- 1.2 The members of the Technical Committee shall be of Yondan level and higher, unless no such ranked person is available within a specific region, in which case a person of lesser rank may be appointed if so required.
- 1.3 The Technical Committee is regarded as the conscience of the federation and considers on behalf of AFSA all matters of technical, philosophical or international consequence, in order to safeguard the interests of Aikido at large.
- 1.4 The Technical Committee is a separate body from the Grading Panel that consists of Shidoin and Fukushidoin. The Technical Committee supervises and oversees the operation of the Grading Panel in light of the Technical Committee performing all the tasks and duties of a Grading Committee within AFSA.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF THE GRADING PANEL**

- 2.1 The Grading Panel is not a committee but a group of AFSA Club Instructors annually charged with the powers to perform certain grading examinations within AFSA according to the needs of the federation.
- 2.2 The operation of the Grading Panel is supervised and overseen by the Technical Committee that performs all the tasks and duties of a Grading Committee within AFSA.
- 2.3 The Grading Panel consists of Shidoin and Fukushidoin. These are AFSA officers that are appointed to fulfill the needs of the organisation and not as an accolade to such members.
- 2.4 AFSA Shidoin and Fukushidoin are senior AFSA members charged with the powers to perform grading examinations recognised by AFSA according to certain rules and principles as defined by AFSA and applying the grading syllabus as approved by AFSA.
- 2.5 The requirements that makes an AFSA member **eligible** for an appointment as AFSA Shidoin and Fukushidoin within the AFSA grading system is that such a person must, to the satisfaction of the Technical Committee, at least be a –
 - a Sandan
 - b for at least 1 year
 - c who is the club instructor of an AFSA affiliated club

- d who has attended at least 1 AFSA national seminar, alternatively 2 AFSA regional seminars during the preceding year, and
 - e whose administration with AFSA and Hombu is up to date on 31 March of the preceding year.
- 2.6 The AFSA Technical Committee in its sole discretion can waive any of the above conditions after having received a written recommendation to do so in a specific case.
- 2.7 From those eligible persons the AFSA Technical Advisor, in consultation with and on recommendation by the AFSA Technical Committee, then appoints the AFSA Fukushidoin for the following year and announces them at the end of the preceding year.
- 2.8 From the appointed Fukushidoin who are Yondan or above the AFSA Technical Advisor in consultation with the AFSA Sekininsha then, in their sole discretion, appoints one or more AFSA Shidoin for the following year, who shall have the power to conduct AFSA regional seminars during that year.
- 2.9 A charge as Shidoin or Fukushidoin is handed only to AFSA Club Instructors situated in areas where there exist a need for AFSA to do so. Appointments are made anew on an annual basis. No AFSA member has any right or expectation to be so appointed, even if such an appointment had been made to such a member in the past.

3. GRADING POWERS

- 3.1 AFSA Shidoin and Fukushidoin shall possess the following powers of grading:
- a Sandan – up to 4th kyu
 - b Yondan – up to 1st kyu
 - c Godan – up to Shodan
- 3.2 Dan grading examinations are conducted by the AFSA Technical Advisor and the AFSA Sekininsha or someone empowered by them to do so such as the AFSA Shidoin.
- 3.3 All Ikkyu (1st kyu) gradings and higher can only be conducted at a national AFSA seminar in front of all the participants to enable the entire Aikido community in AFSA to witness the event and to observe the standards which are being applied and demonstrated. An AFSA national seminar includes an official AFSA regional seminar.
- 3.4 An AFSA Shidoin can once a year and with 3 months advance notice to AFSA, hold an official AFSA regional seminar where such Shidoin has the power to perform dan grading examinations. This arrangement is made especially to afford alternative opportunities to attend Dan grading examinations to senior kyu-graded students who find it difficult to attend a national seminar. The following conditions apply:
- a Examinations of up to Shodan only can take place at an AFSA regional seminar;
 - b A Shodan grading by an AFSA Shidoin must preferably be conducted in a panel.
- 3.5 It is recommended that all grading examinations be performed in a panel when possible.

4. GRADING ENDORSEMENT SYSTEM

- 4.1 The Federation shall follow a 6-level Kyu grading system wherein 6th Kyu, 5th Kyu and 4th Kyu are considered as junior Kyu grades and 3rd Kyu, 2nd Kyu and 1st Kyu are considered as senior Kyu grades.
- 4.2 The grading panel shall award grades according to the Rules on Grading as decided upon by the Federation and as published from time to time in a Protocol that shall accompany the AFSA Constitution.
- 4.3 Standard grading requirements, as established by the Technical Committee in collaboration with the Technical Advisor and as published by the Federation in a syllabus, shall apply.
- 4.4 The only officially recognised Kyu grades shall be those grades awarded by the Federation's grading panel or those accepted by the Federation's Technical Committee. The only officially recognised Dan grades shall be those legitimated by the Aikido Doshu and shall be valid only from the date of registration thereof at the Hombu (Aikido World Headquarters).
- 4.5 An aikidoka cannot apply to partake in a grading examination but is encouraged and endorsed to do so by the AFSA Club Instructor of such a student by handing a filled-in grading endorsement form to the student when that instructor considers that student to be ready to undergo such an examination. The student then completes his personal particulars on the endorsement form whereafter the form is presented to the examiner.
- 4.6 Grading examinations shall be held regularly and each club shall publish and display for all aikidoka practicing there to see, a program of the dates when grading examinations for the upcoming year shall take place. These dates shall be communicated to the AFSA Technical Advisor and the AFSA Technical Committee in advance.
- 4.7 Ikkyu (1st kyu) grading examinations and higher can only be conducted at AFSA national seminars and at official AFSA regional seminars.
- 4.8 Dan grading examinations are conducted only at AFSA national seminars and at official AFSA regional seminars by the Technical Advisor and/or the AFSA Sekininsha or by anybody empowered by them to do so, such as the Shido-in.
- 4.9 Kyu grades will be registered centrally with AFSA and Dan grades both with AFSA and with the Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.
- 4.10 To be eligible to take part in an official AFSA grading examination an AFSA member must:
 - a be a paid-up AFSA member in the year of the examination for at least 3 months;
 - b already have paid over the prescribed grading fee to the club treasurer or the Treasurer of the Federation, whichever the case may be;
 - c already have supplied the examiner with his/her AFSA card, which must display:
 - i.) a photo and the personal particulars of the aikidoka
 - ii.) the AFSA number of the aikidoka

- iii.) an AFSA stamp for the current year
 - iv.) an up to date record of previous successful gradings, and
 - v.) an up to date record of seminars and national courses attended;
- d in the case where the candidate is a yudansha, already have presented to the examiner his/her up to date international yudansha book with a current photo of that aikidoka,
- e already have supplied the examiner with a current official grading endorsement form that carries an undersigned certification by the AFSA Club Instructor of that candidate stating and endorsing:
- i.) the amount of training in hours and in months such aikidoka had done since the previous successful grading examination or since enrolling as an AFSA member in the case of a first grading examination for that aikidoka, and
 - ii.) whether the instructor considers that aikidoka to be well-prepared to attend the forthcoming grading examination, and
 - iii.) whether the instructor encourages that aikidoka to attend the forthcoming grading examination; and
 - iv.) whether the candidate is a paid-up AFSA member for at least 3 months;
- f already have personally filled in and undersigned on the endorsement form the full particulars and information required from the candidate to be examined.
- 4.11 In the event where the candidate attending a grading examination is an AFSA Club Instructor and/or does not consider anyone in the Federation to be his/her instructor due to his/her seniority, then that person must personally supply the particulars and information regarding point 4.10 f above on the said form and must place his/her signature thereunder. That person must also certify him/herself regarding the endorsement explained under point 4.10 e i.)-iv.) above BUT MUST NOT undersign that part. The signature of the Technical Advisor or the Chief Instructor is needed under the certification referred to in point 4.10 e to make that candidate eligible to attend the grading examination.
- 4.12 No aikidoka shall be allowed to take a grading examination from another club instructor than his own without the written endorsement of his/her club instructor, except when such grading examination is performed at a national seminar in a case as provided for in point 4.11 above.
- 4.13 No fees are returned in the event of an aikidoka failing a grading examination.
- 4.14 An applicant for a grading examination to Shodan and higher must submit a CV and an essay to the Technical Committee within the time limit set at the time that the grading examination date is advertised.
- 4.15 An applicant who wants to undergo a dan grading examination at a national AFSA seminar, must have attended 3 national seminars (including the one where the grading shall take place) within the 24 months that precedes that seminar where the grading examination shall take place.
- 4.16 An applicant who wants to attend a grading examination at a national AFSA seminar (which includes an official AFSA regional seminar) must attend and participate in all the

classes on every day of the entire seminar, also those after the grading examination has taken place. The reason for this is to afford the examiners to scrutinize the applicant, both on technical ability as on the student's etiquette, attitude, conduct and approach to Aikido in general.

- 4.17 The fees payable for a grading examination are those fees as determined from time to time by the AFSA National Committee and/or by the Aikikai Foundation, whichever is applicable.

THIS PROTOCOL WAS PROMULGATED AT PORT ELIZABETH ON THIS 27th DAY OF JUNE 2014.

**CHAIRPERSON
AFSA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRPERSON
AFSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**