



Shitoryu/Shukokai Karate Grading Syllabus

This is the syllabus of requirements for grading examinations

8th KYU YELLOW BELT

Front hand punch - (mae ken tsuki). Pull the outstretched leading hand sharply back at about shoulder level and punch out at face level. Note that the fist makes only a part turn and finishes with the thumb on top.

Back fist strike - (uraken uchi). Hold both hands loosely in front of the chest and snap out at face level striking with the back of the fist.

Elbow strike - (hiji-ate). Circular strike using the bony part of the elbow. Swing the elbow in an arc, shoulder relaxed and pull the opposite hand back to the side in the usual way. (Keep the shoulder down).

Knife hand block - (jodan shuto uke). Block using the edge of the hand. At impact point, the edge of the hand is in line with the opposite shoulder at face level. Be certain to block straight across and not downward. Fingers should be straight and hand braced, palm turned towards your face.

Standard stance - (zenkutsu dachi). Correct standard stance requires the front leg to be bent, so that the knee is over the toes and the foot pointing straight ahead. To find the length of the stance, simply kneel on the rear knee so that it is alongside the back of the front heel. The correct width is to place the rear foot (pointing forward at 45°) between one and two fist widths to the side. In other words, if you drew two parallel lines four inches to eight inches (100mm-200mm) apart, the inside edge of the front foot would be on one and the edge of the rear heel on the other.

Standing in standard stance (zenkutsu dachi) demonstrate:

Reverse punch - (gyaku tsuki). Twist your hip sharply and snap the rear hand forward at chest level.

Step-in punch - (oi tsuki). Step (or jump) forward with the rear foot and punch with the hand on the same side, i.e. if you step forward with the right foot, you punch with the right hand, and vice versa. Make sure you finish with the back leg straight, the front hip fully forward, and outward tension on the front knee. Try to feel the 'connection' from the rear foot to the punching hand.

Front hand punch - (mae ken tsuki). Move the front hip sharply in a whip-like manner and punch to the face with the 'guard' hand, e.g. if you have your left hand and foot leading, you punch with the left hand from the outstretched position. You must work to develop 'snap' in this technique. Again try to feel the 'connection' between fist and rear foot.

Front kick - (mae-geri). Keep your back straight, twist your hip and lift your knee to hip level, stretch as you kick and remember to pull the foot back quickly. Shift your weight above your supporting foot and keep good control of your balance at all times.

Step-in side kick - (sokuto geri). Start off with a side-facing stance with the kicking leg in front. Move the rear foot behind the front foot and drop the hips by bending both legs. Make sure you pick up the knee of the kicking leg and arch your back as you drive the foot to the target. You must hit the target with the heel if the kick is to be effective. At point of impact, the heel should be higher than the toes. (Make certain you pull the toes back towards the shin).

Shukokai Basic Combinations - numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4a.

Punch Pad - On the punch pad, demonstrate the power of your reverse punch, front kick and roundhouse kick.

7th KYU ORANGE BELT

As you take each new grade you are required to perform or demonstrate all that was required for your previous grades, plus the requirements for the grade you are now attempting.

Standing in parallel stance (yoi dachi) perform:

Close punch - (ura tsuki). Short-range punch, elbow bent at right angles and locked against the side, hands palm up.

Palm heel strike - (teisho uchi). Straight thrust as in the basic punch but striking surface is the palm-heel, fingers uppermost.

Knife-hand strike - (shuto uchi). Strike with the edge of the open hand, (the classic 'karate chop'). Note the difference between this technique and shuto uke, the knife-hand block.

Standing in standard stance (zenkutsu-dachi) perform:

Spinning back kick - (ushiro geri). Start the turn still looking at the target and as you kick, look in the opposite direction. Make sure you strike with the heel and arch your back, head up. The kicking foot should brush your supporting leg on the way to the target.

Shukokai Basic Combinations - numbers 1 to 9.

Kata Pinan Nidan - You will also be asked to explain the meaning of the movements in the kata (bunkai).

Kihon Kumite - (prearranged sparring). All attacks and defences are prearranged before sparring practice commences. All blows are controlled.

Demonstrate 3 defences against a punch to the face.

Demonstrate 2 defences against a kick to the midsection.

Punch Pad - Demonstrate step-in sidekick (sokuto geri). Make sure you arch your back and impact with the heel. Remember that the 'stepping' foot goes behind the kicking leg.

6th KYU GREEN BELT

By now you should be familiar with the Japanese names for the techniques. You may be required to demonstrate anything from previous belt tests plus the following stances: Heiko dachi, Musubi dachi, Musubi dachi heiko, Shizen dachi, Shizen dachi heiko, Naihanchi dachi, Shiko dachi.

Standing in yoi dachi demonstrate:

Tsuki age - Punch up and out at 45°, palm of the hand towards the face. This is the karate equivalent of the uppercut.

Ago uchi - Literally 'chin strike', it is very similar to the jab in boxing, hands are held back towards the face and snapped at the target, palm down (no twist).

Shukokai Basic Combinations from 1 to 9

Shuto-uke - (in neko ashi dachi). This block is performed by crossing the arms and blocking outwards, quite different from the block required for 8th kyu. As for stance, the front heel is raised and about 70% of the weight is on the rear foot.

Gedan barai - (in shiko dachi). Downward block in straddle-leg stance. Weight must be 50/50 and body upright.

Kata Pinan Shodan - Explain the meaning of the kata (bunkai).

Punch Pad - Ushiro geri (spinning back kick). You must be able to hit the pad while looking in the opposite direction.

Kihon Kumite - (prearranged sparring). Various defences against kicks, punches and strikes.

5th KYU BLUE BELT

By now we expect to see some real 'snap' to your techniques. Better stances, better balance, better form and good 'separation', between hip and shoulder. Free style sparring now becomes important.

You may be required to demonstrate anything from previous belt tests plus:

Standing in yoi dachi demonstrate:

Tettsui uchi - (hammer fist strike). Strike with little-finger side of clenched fist.

Kage tsuki - (hook punch). Short-range punch, arm bent about 90°.

Haito uchi - (ridge hand strike). Roundhouse or circular strike with index finger edge of hand.

Throws - Demonstrate at least one throw and one lock or hold down.

Kata Pinan Sandan - Explain the meaning of the kata (bunkai).

Punch Pad - sokuto geri and gyaku tsuki with pad moving towards you.

Ju Kumite - (free sparring). You must exhibit good control and effective karate technique.

4th KYU PURPLE BELT

As for previous tests plus: In yoi dachi

Haishu uchi - (back hand strike). Strike with knuckles of open back hand.

Nihon nukite - (two finger spear-hand).

Mawashi tsuki - (roundhouse punch).

Shukokai Basic Combinations - in either left or right hand forward stance. In other words you must be able to demonstrate the combinations to either side and not strong side only as previously.

Kata - All five Pinan - without error.

Punch Pad - In addition to demonstrating effectiveness in single strikes, you must now demonstrate your ability to deliver multiple powerful strikes against two or three simulated opponents to your front side and rear.

3rd KYU BROWN BELT (one black tab)

Now you are in serious training for your black belt and must be prepared to train at least three times per week or more. You must be able to perform techniques and combinations with noticeable improvement, demonstrate any of the five Pinan kata without making mistakes and the kata Bassai Dai.

Throws - Demonstrate two throws or sweeps, and two locks or strangles.

Ju Kumite - Your free fighting should now be co-ordinated and effective.

Punch Pad - Multiple strikes.

2nd KYU BROWN BELT (two black tabs)

As for 3rd kyu with the addition of the kata Annanko.

1st KYU BROWN BELT (three black tabs)

Your next test will be for the black belt itself and you should now be demonstrating techniques showing understanding of the power of the 'hara' or stomach. You must be able to perform the kata Seienchin competently.

SHODAN-HO (provisional black belt)

You must know the Japanese terminology for a wide range of techniques and should be competent in both kata and kumite. In addition to previous kata, you must now know Jiin and Matsukaze. You must be able to demonstrate power and shock (in proportion to your bodyweight) on the punch pad with a wide variety of techniques. All of your past performance is now taken into account, your spirit, etiquette, loyalty, helpfulness, attitude to others, regularity of training and many other factors go towards this most prestigious award.

SHODAN/1st DAN BLACK BELT

Since the award of Shodan-Ho you have been on probation. You should have trained regularly and hard. You must know in addition to all previous kata, Saifa and Seipai. You should have a basic knowledge of first aid, particularly in regard to typical karate injuries such as fractures, dislocations, lacerations, trauma, and so on. You should be capable of carrying out resuscitation techniques. A first aid certificate is acceptable. You should hold at least a kumite judge's certificate at Association level.

However, attaining your black belt should be looked upon as another beginning, not the end. You now have the experience and knowledge to embark on the next stage of your journey through life; you have served your apprenticeship. Welcome to the world of journeymen martial artists.

NIDAN/2nd DAN BLACK BELT

You must have trained regularly three times per week on average for the last two years. You should have completed a coaching award and should have upgraded your kumite judge qualification to referee. In addition to the previous requirements, you should now be familiar with the katas Bassai Sho and Kosokun Shiho.

SANDAN/3rd DAN BLACK BELT

At least three years must pass before attempting Sandan. During this time you will have demonstrated your ability to teach, your willingness to work for our association and your loyalty to our club. You should be familiar with the katas Kururunfa, Seisan, Rohai, and Shisochin.

YONDAN/4th DAN BLACK BELT

You are now a senior instructor and many qualities will be demanded of you. You must be familiar with the katas Suparimpei, Nipaipo, Sanseiru and Unshu.

GODAN/5th DAN BLACK BELT

This is the 'Master' grade and not many people achieve it. You will have been practising for twenty years or more and in order to be awarded 5th Dan you must have given exceptional service to our association and to karate-do in general. You must have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of karate-do including the other major katas of the style such as Niseishi, Seiryu, Jion, Tensho, Sanchin, Chinto, Naifanchin, Sochin, Kosokun Dai and Kosokun Sho.

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