

## Beginning in 2010, the following kendo examination methods shall be in effect:

- According to rank requested, applicants shall perform kendo *jitsugi* (practical skills), kendo kata (AJKF Kendo Kata) and a written test
- **6-kyu and 5-kyu** ranks will be issued by their individual dojo according to the recommended skill requirements in this document, pending final approval by the examination board.
- **4-kyu** applicants will demonstrate their skill level to an examination board using a prescribed set of drills with the assistance of a *motodachi* provided by SCKF
- **3-kyu through 3-dan** applicants will demonstrate their skills to an examination board by kendo *jitsugi* (twice)
- **4-dan** applicants will demonstrate their skills by kendo *jitsugi* (twice), plus demonstrate their ability to perform and receive kendo *kirikaeshi*
- **1-kyu through 4-dan** applicants will also demonstrate their skills of kendo kata to an examination board, according to the required number of movements
- **1-kyu through 4-dan** applicants will successfully complete a written exam according to the required issued questions

## Kendo examination criteria

- ❖ **Note:** during the course of *jitsugi*, not all the “additional recommended skills” may be able to be shown. However, any *waza* that is applied should show appropriate ability as well as improvement over lower skill levels.

- **6-kyu** (*Dojo recommendation plus examination board approval*)  
Recommended basic skill levels:
  1. Proper *reigi* – e.g.: cleaning of dojo, proper bows and addressing of instructors and senior students
  2. Knowledge of basic commands - *kamae, sonkyo, seiza, rei, mokuso, hajime, yame, etc.*
  3. Perform *kirikaeshi, kote, men, and doh* using the proper footwork and *kiai*
  4. Able to do *kakari-geiko* and *ji-geiko*
  5. Able to begin and end a *keiko* or *shiai* properly
- **5-Kyu:** (*Dojo recommendation plus examination board approval*)  
Recommended basic skill levels:
  1. Show improved basic skills of all 6-kyu rank requirements
  2. Put on and fold up their *dogi*
  3. Put on *dogu* without assistance
  4. Perform *nidan waza (kote-men)*
  5. Understand *maai*. (i.e. *issoku itto maai*)
- **4-kyu:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate basic skills with a motodachi for their examination*)
  1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
  2. Demonstrate basic skills with a *motodachi* provided by SCKF
    - a. Beginning and closing *rei* and *sonkyo*

- b. *Kirikaeshi* – two (2) times (a standard repetition)
  - c. Basic strikes – three (3) times each: *men-uchi*, *kote-uchi*, *doh-uchi*
  - d. *Nidan-uchi* (*kote-men*)
  - e. *Kakari-geiko*
3. Additional recommended skills: maintain and name the parts of the *shinai*
- **3-kyu:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination*)
    1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
    2. Additional recommended skills: *taiatari* and *harai waza*
  - **2-kyu:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination*)
    1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
    2. Demonstrate solid footwork and proper *kamae*
    3. Additional recommended skills: *hikiwaza*, ability to act as a *motodachi*
  - **1-kyu:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination, demonstrate kendo kata and complete a written exam*)
    1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
    2. Demonstrate proper *chudan kamae* with proper grip for the *shinai*
    3. Demonstrate proper posture and body movement
    4. Demonstrate proper distance (*maai*) and a sense of timing for attack
    5. Additional recommended skills: *debana waza*, *nuki waza*
  - **1-Dan:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination, demonstrate kendo kata and complete a written exam*)
    1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
    2. Demonstrate *ki-ken-tai-ichi*
    3. Demonstrate *datotsu-no-kikai* (*datotsu-no-kouki*) – opportunity for attack
    4. Demonstrate proper distance (*maai*) and a sense of timing for attack
    5. Additional recommended skills: *nidan and sandan waza* (*renzoku waza*-multiple strike attacks)
  - **2-Dan:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination, demonstrate kendo kata and complete a written exam*)
    1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
    2. Additional recommended skills: variety of *waza*
  - **3-Dan:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination, demonstrate kendo kata and complete a written exam*)
    1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
    2. Additional recommended skills: demonstration of ability to *seme* and the use of the *kensen* to initiate attacks and complete sharp *waza*

- **4-Dan:** (*Applicants shall demonstrate kendo kirikaeshi, kendo jitsugi (twice) for their kendo examination, demonstrate kendo kata and complete a written exam*)
  1. Show improved skills of all lower rank requirements
  2. Demonstrate the ability to have proper basic kendo including *reiho, chakuso, kamae*, striking with shinai, footwork and posture.
  3. Demonstrate the ability to perform and receive *kirikaeshi*
  4. Utilize seme and show a preparedness to attack with spirit and confidence, while showing an ability to use a variety of waza and complete yukodatotsu
  5. Demonstrate the leadership and skills to provide proper guidance and instruction

## **Kata Requirements:**

Beginning with 1-kyu, the memorization and understanding of the kata forms progresses, leading to all kata forms being required for 3-dan and 4-dan. At each level, there should be an improvement of the previous rank's skills as well as a better understanding of the reasoning (*riai*) for each kata.

At the 4-dan level, many of the kendo jitsugi criteria apply, as well as the timing, seme and *zanshin* of each kata form.

Other points for kata:

1. *Uchidachi* has the role of teacher (leader), *shidachi* the role of student. *Uchidachi* calls "*yah*", *shidachi* calls "*toh*"
2. From beginning to end there should be no relaxing of concentration. Proper *metsuke* (gaze) is maintained throughout the kata
3. *Ashi sabaki* (movement) generally moves forward with the leading foot and backward with the trailing foot. *Ashi sabaki* should be silent, with toes down
4. *Shidachi's* maai should be such that the *monouchi* (best cutting area of blade) reaches the target area
5. *Zanshin* should be asserted with strong *kigurai* (pride/confidence)

## **Notes to Head Instructors:**

### **Recommended Guidelines for Requesting Ranks**

1. Kenshi should be actively practicing kendo (regularly attending keiko at least once or twice a week)
2. Please avoid "throwing the decision to the examiners". The responsibility of the dojo's head instructor is to make a diligent assessment of the kenshi's attitude and sincerity in practicing kendo, as well as their skill level relative to other kenshi in the federation, and request a rank appropriately.
3. The head instructor should determine whether the kenshi has sufficient experience to warrant a rank. Although ages are listed, these are minimum age requirements. For example, they do not mean that a 10 year old must be 4-kyu; if he/she does not meet the skill requirements, then a lower rank is recommended.