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 maa)

- **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: *deban 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.