



## **EKF Rules for Dan Grading Examinations and Shogo<sup>1</sup>**

Dear Friends,

May we ask you to read this document every time before you are planning and/or implementing a grading examination as, for your information, the standard procedure for the organization and registration of examinations is described hereafter from start to finish, see also the ANNEX. As before, we suggest uniform subscription and registration amounts.

### **1. Basic principles:**

EKF does not organize Kyu examinations, this falls in the full authority and responsibility of the Member Federations. In general, the standard for Grading Examinations is according to International Kendo Federation (FIK): "Standard Guidelines for Dan/Kyu Examinations" approved by the FIK General Assembly.

#### **1.1.National gradings:**

Every Member Federation can organize grading examinations from 1 up to 5-Dan, respecting the FIK Standard Guidelines and all rules mentioned herein.

#### **1.2.EKF gradings:**

On the occasion of a national grading exam, EKF can add a 6 & 7-Dan according to the principles mentioned hereunder.

On the occasion of EKF events, like the Referee Seminar, Kendo, Iaido & Jodo Championships, etc., an examination from 1 to 7-Dan may be organized by the EKF with a jury composed according to the FIK Standard Guidelines and the present Rules.

---

<sup>1</sup> As approved at the EKF General Assembly in Novara on May 23rd, 2012, amended 2015-05-02 (BO), 2019-05-23 (GA) and 2024-07-03 (GA).



## **2. Examination Juries.**

**2.1.** Examination Juries have to be composed according to the guidelines hereafter. In exceptional cases when it is impossible to appoint the required number of qualified and suitable examinees for 4-Dan or higher Dan examinations, the number of examiners may, with the approval of the EKF Technical Director, be reduced to 5 (five). In this case, the consent of a minimum of 4 (four) examiners will be required for the decision of passing. No examination will be valid without the explicit and prior verification by the EKF Technical Director (TD). This agreement is given via the EKF website.

**2.2.** The **examination jury** is to be composed according to the FIK Standard Guidelines (examiner's qualifications, the number of examiners required and the minimal quorum for approval):

Dan examined:	Examiner:	Number:	Criteria:
1-	4-Dan and over	5	Consent of min 3
2-	5-Dan and over	5	Consent of min 3
3-	5-Dan and over	5	Consent of min 3
4-	6-Dan and over	6	Consent of min 4
5-	7-Dan and over	6	Consent of min 4
6-	7-Dan and over	6	Consent of min 4
7-	7-Dan and over	6	Consent of min 4

**2.3.** The **applicant's qualifications** shall abide by FIK Standard Guidelines, stating that all applicants shall be registered members in their Federation and have at least the following practice periods and age:

Dan:	Shortest practice period:	Minimal age:
Shodan	3 months after the ikkyu exam	13
Nidan	1 year after the shodan exam	
Sandan	2 years after the nidan exam	
Yondan	3 years after the sandan exam	
Godan	4 years after the yondan exam	
Rokudan	5 years after the godan exam	
Nanadan	6 years after the rokudan exam	

If an applicant for a 6, 7 or 8-Dan examination is 60 years old or older on the day of the examination, the following practice periods shall be sufficient:

Rokudan:	Two years or more after godan.
Nanadan:	Three years or more after rokudan.
Hachidan:	Five years or more after nanadan.



**2.4.** The treatment of the grades higher than 7-Dan is mentioned in Article 7 of the FIK Standard Guidelines.

### **3. Authorization by the President.**

**3.1.** Members of another National Federation must provide the **authorization of their President** (See Article 08.01 of the EKF Statutes) to the organization holding the grading.

**3.2.** In examinations organized by the EKF or a Member Federation, when registration to the examination is made through the registration tool on the EKF website by the Member Federation concerned, this registration serves as the authorization mentioned above.

### **4. Administrative procedure for all examinations.**

**4.1.** Every national examination is to be announced to the EKF at least two months in advance by entry of the exam in the EKF online system and shall be published by the Member Federations in the European Calendar (online); this method gives everyone in Europe the possibility to participate.

**4.2.** For practical reasons it is strongly advised to use the EKF online system for registration, as the necessary data is presented, and practice periods are checked. Such entry is an equivalent for the required written permission.

**4.3.** The candidate's personal data need to be included into the EKF database, which registration needs to include a personal email-address of the candidate.

**4.4.** The information to the EKF (in the online system) on an exam must include the composition of the jury, keeping in mind the FIK Standard Guidelines, to give the EKF TD the opportunity to approve it, as decided in the Budapest GA in 2004, together with the maximum level of the grades which may be obtained.

**4.5.** The '**yellow cards**' (optional) of the successful applicants (other than Shodan) can be signed by the responsible grading officer (national or EKF, depending on the case) after the examination. The yellow cards of successful shodan candidates will be sent by the EKF to successful candidates (EKF exams) or can be printed by national grading officers. The Member Fed-



erations shall keep the online Dan-Grading register updated. For details, see the relevant documents on the EKF website.

**4.6.** As for **application and registration fees**, independent of the fact if it is an examination held under the authority of the EKF or not, an application fee should be paid beforehand, whereas the registration fee is to be paid immediately after the examination by successful candidates; the organizing federation decides on the amounts, but EKF suggests that the fee amounts asked are based on the ones shown below.

**4.6.1.** For **national examinations**, the organizing federation retains both the application and the registration fees.

**4.6.2.** For EKF examinations, the following application fee is to be paid to the EKF bank account before the exam or in exceptional cases to the EKF representative before the examination at the examination venue. Refund of prepaid application fees will only be made upon showing of credible good reasons for the absence before the exam has started:

**Dan applied for: Amount:**

1 Dan	€ 15,00
2 Dan	€ 20,00
3 Dan	€ 30,00
4 Dan	€ 50,00
5 Dan	€ 70,00
6 Dan	€ 100,00
7 Dan	€ 130,00

**4.6.3.** At EKF exams, the following registration fees will have to be paid after successful examinations to the EKF:

**Dan applied for: Amount:**

1 Dan	€ 20,00
2 Dan	€ 30,00
3 Dan	€ 50,00
4 Dan	€ 70,00
5 Dan	€ 100,00
6 Dan	€ 130,00
7 Dan	€ 170,00



## **5. Provisions for Kendo Examinations**

### **5.1. National Examinations.**

These examinations are to be held according to the FIK Standard Guidelines.

### **5.2. EKF Examinations.**

5.2.1. The **examination subjects** are the following:

Dan applied for:	Examination subjects:
1-Dan up to 7-Dan	Matches & Kata.

5.2.2. The **Kata examination** is organized as follows:

Dan applied for:	Examination subjects:
1-Dan	Tachi ippon- to gohonme (1-5);
2-Dan	Tachi ippon- to nanahonme (1-7);
3-Dan and over	Tachi ippon- to nanahonme and Kodachi sanbon (1-10).

**5.3.** Note: If an applicant fails in the Kata test, he is allowed to take that subject again, and one time only, at an examination held afterwards within twelve months. The candidate shall receive for that purpose a certificate which he/she shall present in original version at his/her second attempt.

## **6. Provisions for Iaido & Jodo examinations.**

**6.1.** For **Iaido**, the examination subjects are:

Dan applied for:	Subject:
------------------	----------

**1 to 3-Dan:** 5 Shitei-waza from the ZNKR-Iai-Kata; (Note: the first of the Shitei-waza may be replaced by one free choice Koryu-Kata, if so decided by the organizing federation). Time limit 6 minutes.

**4 to 5-Dan:** 5 Shitei-waza from the ZNKR-Iai-Kata; (Note: the first of the Shitei-waza may be replaced by one free choice Koryu-Kata, if so decided by the organizing federation). Time limit 6 minutes.



**6 to 7-Dan:** 6 Shitei-waza from the ZNKR-lai-Kata; (Note: the two first of the Shitei-waza may be replaced by two free choice Koryu-Kata, if so decided by EKF). Time limit 7 minutes.

From 6-Dan onwards, the use of a *shinken* is obligatory, unless *Force Majeure* (including legal restrictions) prevents such use.

*Torei* (protocols for sword etiquette) must be those of ZNKR lai.

In case that an examinee is not capable, due to medical reasons, to perform ZNKR laido kata 1-4 from a sitting position, the respective standing version of ZNKR laido kata 1-4, should be performed. A medical certificate, confirming examinee's medical issue, should be presented before the exam.

Examination time commences with the order "*Hajime*" and ends when the candidate returns to *keito shisei* after performing the final bow.

When EKF is the organizing federation, the option of *koryu kata* will be applied for examinations of 4 to 7-Dan. In 1 to 3-Dan examinations, the examination subjects will be ZNKR lai only.

**6.2.** For **Jodo**, the examination subjects are the following:

Dan applied for: Subject:

1-Dan to 5-Dan 5 *Shitei waza* from the ZNKR-Jodo-Kata,

6-Dan & 7-Dan 6 *Shitei waza* from the ZNKR-Jodo-Kata.

As a general rule, the candidates will be organized in grading groups of three or four according to grade and age. The partner for each candidate will be appointed in following manner:

In groups of three:

- 1 tachi >< 2 jo,
- 2 tachi >< 3 jo,
- 3 tachi >< 1 jo.

In groups of four:

- 1 tachi >< 2 jo,
- 2 tachi >< 3 jo,
- 3 tachi >< 4 jo,
- 4 tachi >< 1 jo,



## **7. Shogo**

According to Art. 08.07. of the EKF Statutes each Member Federation may award the Shogo titles (*Renshi, Kyoshi & Hanshi*) to persons registered with this Member Federation of outstanding personal qualities and similar achievements especially in teaching and administration. The shogo titles will be registered after the Member Federations' Shogo Rules have been forwarded to the EKF Technical Director for approval in agreement with two members of the SCG selected by the GA. For each shogo title entered into the EKF register a fee of EUR 100.- shall be paid to the EKF.

If you have remarks about the administrative aspects, please feel free to send them to the EKF SG. As for technical matters such as Jury composition, please consult the EKF TD.

Approved,  
The EKF Board of Officers:

Dieter **HAUCK**  
President

Spiros **DROSSOULAKIS**  
Vice-President

Jean-Pierre **LABRU**  
Technical Director

Donatella **CASTELLI**  
Treasurer

Kathryn **CASSIDY**  
Secretary-General



**ANNEX: Guidelines for organizing Kendo, Iaido or Jodo grading examinations**



## **ANNEX:**

### **Guidelines for organizing Kendo, laido or Jodo grading examinations**

#### **1. Purpose of this Annex**

The purpose of this Annex is to provide guidelines for organizing grade examinations. Based on the 'EKF Grading Rules' document concerning regulatory aspects, this document details a simple and appropriate way to organize an examination.

#### **2. Logistics**

- 2.1. Organizers should choose a date that works best for as many people as possible. Usually, grading examinations will be held at the end of a competition or seminar.
- 2.2. The hall and venue should be suitable to the practice of the discipline and large enough to accommodate all the candidates, officials and if possible, room for members of the public or spectators.
- 2.3. No members of the public or anyone else other than EKF or national officials overseeing the examination should be situated behind or above the jury panel or approach it during the examination. EKF allows for videos to be taken and encourages other organizing federations to do the same. Such videos are for any individuals private use and shall not be shared on social media. Furthermore, such videos can only be taken from a location in front of the panel of jury members.
- 2.4. Flash photography is strictly forbidden.
- 2.5. The tables and chairs provided for the jury members must be practical, comfortable, and preferably the tables should be covered by white paper or cloth down to the floor. Name cards for jury members are useful. The head of the jury shall be placed at the center of the table. Under normal circumstances it is recommended to provide water and cups for the members of the jury panel. Depending on the duration of the examination, one or more breaks may be organized, where the members of the jury panel may retire for a short time.
- 2.6. A table for administrative personnel calculating and documenting the results and a separate table for the President of the organizing federa-





tion or of EKF shall be situated near the jury table. For these tables the rules of separation from the members of the public (see 2.3) apply.

- 2.7. For Kendo examinations, a taped cross or X must be placed on the floor between 7 and 10 meters from the head of the jury of the panel. The lines for the *Sonkyo* positions of the candidates can also be added.
- 2.8. For Jodo and Iaido examinations, the starting line for candidates shall be marked.

### **3. Planning of the Examination**

The organizing federation should strive to evaluate the size and duration of the examination based on the number of participants and the different Dan grades and categories involved (i.e. 1 to 3, 1 to 5....). They should also plan how many jury panel members to invite in accordance with the EKF's Grading Rules document.

### **4. Registrations**

- 4.1. Organizing an examination in an EKF country requires that examination to be registered on the EKF website for verification. Registrations are usually administered electronically by the organizing federation's representative. This can be its President, or an official designated with that responsibility.
- 4.2. Notification of any such examination taking place **MUST** be registered on the database **NOT** later than 2 months before its start date and can be closed up to one week before the actual date of the examination at the choice of the organizing federation. Only in special circumstances and upon the choice of the organizing federation, will registrations be open until the day of the examination, however, for expediency's sake the general rule will be as described above.

### **5. Jury Members Invitations**

- 5.1. Firstly, the organizing federation of all examinations for Kendo, Iaido, and Jodo will choose a Head of Jury. This person must be widely experienced in grading exams and by grade or seniority, shall be the Senpai of the other members of the jury (this is not obligatory but pre-



ferred and recommended). The number and grades of the jury members are specified in the most current 'EKF Grading Rules' document.

- 5.2. In the sense of what a grading examination panel is, the members must be chosen according to their individual value in the discipline, their open-mindedness and coming from different dojos, *Ryuha* (schools), Countries, etc. The plurality of the jury supports the value of the Dan (grade) awarded.
- 5.3. Each member of the jury is autonomous in her/his decision-making. No one can give them direction or advice on how they should judge. Their responsibility is to demonstrate their belief in each candidate's ability. Members of juries are selected for their level, experience, and open mindedness. They have lived the experience of that discipline, have interacted with numerous other teachers, and have established their own conception of that discipline (Kendo, laido, Jodo). Individual points of view on the various aspects of each discipline must be respected so long as there is a solid basis founded in reality and truth. Therefore, when acting as a jury member the vote is an individual one which may or may not follow by other jury members.
- 5.4. It must be remembered that in the final consolidation all the points of view expressed by members of the jury contribute towards the true value of the grade awarded.
- 5.5. If a jury member is registered with another EKF or FIK Federation, the organizing federation shall obtain special permission from the President of that Federation concerned. The respective function of the EKF online system can be used.

## **6. Conduct of the shinsa**

Below are the EKF's recommendations regarding the conduct of a shinsa:

- When the candidates are ready, the members of the jury come and sit down at the table.
- They can use their own pen, or the organization will provide one.
- Jury members must write their name and sign each scoring sheet.
- The scoring papers are collected by the organization as soon as the shinsa or part of the shinsa is completed.
- The counting of O's and X's is done at the organization table without the presence of the members of the jury.



- Before the second part of the shinsa (between keiko and kata for Kendo for example) the organization returns, to the jury table, the score papers listing the successful candidates of the first part.
- The results of the first part of the shinsa are announced to the candidates.
- After the second part of the shinsa, the score papers are collected by the organization.
- The final count of O's and X's is done at the organization table without the presence of the jury members.
- The final shinsa results are announced to the candidates and the public.

## 7. Assistants (Tachiai)

Assistants are essential to manage the flow of candidates during the exam. Organizers must select and appoint these assistants, in an appropriate number per jury panel. They must be chosen according to their level, their experience, and their ability not to add stress which is already omnipresent in an exam. It is recommended that all assistants speak a common language with the president of the jury, or otherwise interpreter shall be available. Depending on the discipline and the level of the exam, these assistants can in turn be those who give the start and end commands, who organize the candidates and thus make the organization more fluid, or even, who check the candidates' outfits.

## 8. Grading Examination Documents

- 8.1. A **consolidated list of all candidates**, containing all individual information and sorted i) by rank starting from Shodan and ii) by age starting with the youngest. From the time of commencement until the announcement of the results, those candidates remain anonymous and are only identifiable by the number allocated at the grading registration.
- 8.2. The **grading number identifier** for candidates will be affixed to the keikogi for laido and Jodo and on the tare for Kendo (front or side). Where these identifiers take the form of stickers, care should be observed to ensure additional securing by safety pin or tape such to ensure they do not fall off during the examination. In Kendo examinations, it is permissible to write clearly with chalk the candidate number on the Tare. Any method so employed must meet with the requirement that the jury members are clearly able to see the numbers.
- 8.3. **Jury scoring papers** are the forms on which jury members record their decision, where numbers are listed. These forms must already be formatted according to the marking rules applied for the exam. The format should be clear so that all jury members may complete the



forms in the same way so that the results may be more easily consolidated. Each grade category will have a separate form allowing results to be collated as the examination progresses. A circle, O, marks a PASS and an X marks a FAIL.

- 8.4. The **age list** is the list of candidate numbers with their individual ages. This information can be equally integrated into the jury scoring papers or placed separately on the jury table.
- 8.5. The **consolidation paper** is the form where the results are consolidated. No candidate name must be shown on this form, only candidate numbers. The examination organizing team should have a minimum of two designated people, who are responsible for collecting, aligning the scoring forms, and counting the passes (O = pass X = fail). The EKF's grading rules document outlines the majority requirements for all successful candidates.
- 8.6. The **results papers** are the sheets that will be used to display the results of all successful candidates. These results may also be announced orally.
- 8.7. In most cases there is also a **list of payments** where the registration and validation fees for candidates are shown for the examination.
- 8.8. The **examination report** is used to report the results of the examination to the organizing federation. It may contain statistics and summary, or detailed results tailored to the purpose of the report. The EKF requires that ALL results of successful candidates shall be entered in the EKF grade database.
- 8.9. Except for the public announcement of the successful candidates the above-mentioned jury papers shall be kept confidential by the organizing federation, However, it is permissible to inform after the exam non-successful candidates or jury members on the number of pass-votes a specific candidate has received.

## **9. Some Judging Guidelines for Jury Members**

- 9.1. Each member of the jury is autonomous in her/his decisions. No one can give her/him directions or advice on how he should judge. The member of the jury is chosen for her/his level, for his experience and his open-mindedness. The juror has a live experience of the discipline



and has met many different sensei who have built her/his conception of the discipline (Kendo, Iaido, Jodo).

- 9.2. We all have a certain point of view on every aspect of our discipline, through which a certain picture of reality, of truth, is seen. We must keep our own point of view to judge. Only the consolidation, the addition, the complementarity of all the points of view of all the members of the jury, produces the true value of the Dan awarded.
- 9.3. Some say we can only judge what we can do ourselves. We think this is not true if, and only if, we decide to open our minds to difference and then evaluate value not by similarity to ourselves but by objective value. Ask yourself: "What if I were facing this candidate, how would I feel about his real level?"
- 9.4. Therefore, when you are a member of a jury, do not primarily strive to make your decision identical to the majority or other jury members, because this reduces the value of your voice.
- 9.5. When you are sure that, according to your vision of the discipline, the candidate deserves the Dan or not, there is no discussion: give or don't give! But when you have trouble deciding, it means that the candidate has put you in a difficult position. The candidate moved your concepts and left you uncertain, that means there is value. So, in this case, we recommend that you give your positive vote. If, in the end, this candidate convinced or challenged the majority of experienced sensei, he deserves his Dan.