

Dan Promotions (Third Version, August 2013)

General Time Conditions:

Candidates for 1st dan to 4th dan:

1. Must attend the Summer School at which they intend to take the practical test, including training in all the classes taught by the Technical Adviser at the Summer School.
2. Must attend the Lent/Spring Seminar immediately prior to the Summer School at which they intend to take the practical test, including training in all the classes taught by the Technical Adviser.

1st Dan

Specific Time / Training Conditions:

A good general record of training at Lent/Spring Seminars and Summer Schools.

1 year (200 days) of training since receiving 1st kyu

Practical Test

1. Ability to perform empty-handed:

Suwari-waza, hanmi-handachi-waza, tachi-waza, with the following attacks:

Shomen-uchi,

Yokomen-uchi,

Katate / Morote / Ryote – dori,

Kata-dori,

Kata-dori with Shomen-uchi,

Tsuki

(all the above including attacks from behind, where relevant)

Plus:

2. *Tanto-dori*

3. Empty-handed *waza* against two attackers (of at least 1st kyu in rank)

2nd Dan

Specific Time / Training Conditions:

A good general record of training at Lent/Spring Seminars and Summer Schools.

Training in both the Lent Seminar and the Summer School at least once since receiving 1st Dan.

'Training' here means training in all the classes given by the Technical Adviser

2 years (300 days) of training since receiving 1st dan.

Practical Test

1. Ability to perform empty-handed:

All the *suwari-waza*, *hanmi-handachi-waza*, *tachi-waza*, required for 1st dan, plus

Hiji-dori,

Mune-dori,

Sode-dori,

Eri-dori,

Kubi-shime (including chokes, grabs to the shoulders and upper arms)

(all the above including attacks from behind, where relevant).

2. *Tanto-dori*

Plus:

3. *Jo-dori*, *tachi-dori*

4. Empty-handed *waza* against three attackers (all *yudansha*)

3rd Dan

Time / Training Conditions:

A good general record of training at Lent/Spring Seminars and Summer Schools.

Training in both the Lent Seminar and the Summer School at least twice since receiving 3rd Dan.

'Training' here means training in all the classes given by the Technical Adviser

3 years (450 days) of training since receiving 2nd dan

Practical Test

1. Ability to perform empty-handed:

All the *suwari-waza*, *hanmi-handachi-waza*, *tachi-waza*, required for 1st dan and 2nd dan

(selection of *waza* to be made by the examiner):

2. Preferred *waza* and difficult *waza* (to be chosen by the candidate);

Plus:

3. *Tanto-dori*, *jo-dori*, *tachi-dori* (done in succession),

4. *Kaeshi-waza*,

5. Empty-handed techniques against four attackers (all yudansha)

Essay:

6. Short essay concerning aikido (topic to be chosen by the examiners).

Note (1): The essay topic will be announced by the Technical Adviser during the Lent Seminar preceding the examination and must be submitted by the first day of Summer School. The essay may be written in Dutch or English.

4th Dan

Time / Training Conditions:

A good general record of training at Lent/Spring Seminars and Summer Schools.

Training in both the Lent Seminar and the Summer School at least three times since receiving 3rd Dan.

‘Training’ here means training in all the classes given by the Technical Adviser

At least **4 years (600 days)** of training since receiving 3rd dan

Practical Test

1. A portfolio of empty-handed *waza* put together by the candidate,
2. *Waza* against kicks,
3. *Henka-waza*,
4. *Kaeshi-waza*
5. *Tanto-dori, jo-dori, tachi-dori* (done in quick succession, with three attackers on the *tatami* at the same time),
6. Empty-handed techniques against four attackers (ALL *mudansha* and relative beginners),
7. Empty-handed techniques against five attackers (ALL *yudansha*),

Plus:

8. One class taught during the Lent Seminar or Summer School (with the Technical Adviser in attendance),
9. Interview, based on the above class.

Essay:

10. Short thesis concerning aikido (topic to be chosen by the examiners).

Note (1): The portfolio of *waza* should be a record of achievement, similar to the paintings submitted by an artist at an exhibition. It is intended as an illustration of the candidate’s aikido—at that moment—and also the degree of originality that the candidate brings to aikido. Of course, technical proficiency is taken for granted.

Note (2): *Tanto-dori, tachi-dori* and *jo-dori*, done in quick succession with three attackers, means that the candidate is in a circle surrounded by three attackers, having *tanto, jo, and tachi*, respectively, who attack in a rapid sequence. Each time the weapon must be taken away: it must NOT be kept to aid the next attack.

Note (3): Candidates who are already instructors may choose to add to their 3rd dan examination the

demonstration of teaching ability required for 4th dan.

Note (4): With respect to the requirement for empty-handed *waza* against four *mudansha* attackers, the attackers should be beginners, who are not so proficient at taking *ukemi* as the *yudansha*. The candidate should demonstrate sensitivity to this, even though there are four attackers.

Note (5): Examiners can omit the teaching requirement from those candidates who have already chosen to do this for their 3rd dan. However, examiners shall have the liberty to require an additional teaching test from 4th dan candidates, if they so choose.

Note (6): The thesis required as part of the 4th dan test is designed to be different from the essays required for 3rd dan. The thesis must be the result of some study and research and should present argued conclusions on a particular topic.

Examples:

In what sense is aikido essentially a Japanese budo?

To what extent is weapons training essential in aikido?

Is aikido a general martial art, available to everybody, or is it exclusive, requiring the time and commitment of an *uchi-deshi*?

To what extent can aikido change, while still retaining its essential features?

How is aikido best taught?

The thesis topic will be given to the candidate by the Technical Adviser by the time of the Lent Seminar prior to the Summer School at which the test is to be taken and must be submitted by the first day of Summer School.

Additional Conditions for Dan Promotions by Examination

1. Since the candidate needs to request to take the test by the Lent Seminar preceding the Summer School at which the test is to be taken (and have the request considered), training at this Lent Seminar is required.)

2. In order to cover everything required, appropriate time scales for dan examinations are:

1st dan: 20 minutes

2nd dan: 30 minutes

3rd dan: 40 minutes

4th dan: 50 minutes – 1 hour.

However, examiners may vary these time scales and include or omit required *waza* as they think fit.

3. It is very important that the syllabus and techniques requested are common to the entire AKN. Even though the AKN is an organization devoted to the study of aikido through training, and different ways of training and teaching in the three sections of the AKN (Bushi Dojos, Wago-no-michi, Ima Juku / Mumonkan) are a distinctive feature of the AKN, dan examinations are held at Summer School, which is a gathering of all the dojos, and the techniques requested should be accessible to all candidates regardless of dojo affiliation.

4. Dan examinations are NOT intended as a test of stamina and endurance. Candidates should be requested to demonstrate *waza* executed slowly and precisely, as well as *waza* executed at speed.

5. The examiners should monitor the quality of the candidate's practice during the Lent seminar and Summer School.

5. In all cases, attackers will be chosen by the examiners, not by the candidate.

Dan Promotions by Recommendation

1. Dan promotions by recommendation are given in January each year at Kagami-biraki from 1st Dan upwards.
2. Dan promotions by recommendation have a different fee structure.
3. There are no practical tests for dan promotions by recommendation, but the following are time conditions (reproduced from the Hombu Regulations, with one extra year added from shodan till rokudan).

Shodan: At least three years after becoming a member of the Aikikai.

Nidan: At least three years after receiving shodan.

Sandan: At least four years after receiving nidan.

Yondan: At least five years after receiving sandan.

Godan: At least six years after receiving yondan.

Rokudan: At least seven years after receiving godan. Minimum age: 33

Nanadan: At least twelve years after receiving rokudan. Minimum age: 45

Hachidan: At least fifteen years after receiving nanadan. Minimum age: 60