



*Member  
United States Olympic Committee*

## **USA NATIONAL KARATE-DO FEDERATION RANK CERTIFICATION TESTING AND PROCEDURES**

The following is the testing protocol and statement of requirements for the rank (Dan) certification program. The goal of the program is to encourage a broad understanding of the techniques and styles which make up modern Karate-do. The USA-NKF certification program is based upon the requirements of the World Karate Federation program.

It is not the intent of the Dan Certification program to replace or promote any particular style of Karate-do. To that end, each candidate for certification must hold an equivalent rank in their own style, and must validate that ranking by either presenting a copy of their rank certificate or providing their instructor's validation of the candidate's current Karate rank.

### **THE TESTING PANEL**

The National Rank Certification Testing shall be conducted at or with the USA-NKF National Championships Tournament. The National Board of Examiners shall consist of at least five examiners from the Technical Committee of the USA-NKF.

The USA-NKF Executive Committee reserves the right to add or remove examiners from the Board of Examiners. The USA-NKF may establish regional Examining Boards from time to time, to administer testing between national championships.

The Board of Examiners may certify an applicant's rank from Shodan (1<sup>st</sup> Dan) to Hanchi-dan (8<sup>th</sup> Dan) according to the following requirements:

#### **Shodan (1<sup>st</sup> Dan) Level:**

- Minimum age is 16 years old
- Demonstrate/Perform one Kata from candidate's style with skill appropriate to the rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform one Shitei (Mandatory) Kata from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Kata with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate either Jyu Kumite (Free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step sparring) at the option of the candidate.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate

not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

**Nidan (2<sup>nd</sup> Dan) level:**

- Minimum age is 18 years old and at least two years at Shodan rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform one Kata from candidate's style with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform one Shitei (Mandatory) Kata from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Kata with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the demonstrated Kata from the candidates style and respond to questions on the application and principles of the Kata.
- Demonstrate either Jyu Kumite (Free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step Sparring) at the option of the candidate.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

**Sandan (3<sup>rd</sup> Dan) level:**

- Minimum age is 21 years old and at least 3 years at Nidan rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Katas from candidate's style with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform one shitei (Mandatory) Kata from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Kata with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the Shitei Kata performed and respond to questions on the application and principles of the Kata
- Demonstrate eight Jyu Kumite (free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step Sparring) at the option of the candidate.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

**Yondan (4<sup>th</sup> Dan) Level:**

- Minimum age is 25 years old and at least 4 years at Sandan rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Katas from candidate's style with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Shitei (Mandatory) Katas from the current world Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Katas with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the Shitei Kata performed and respond to questions on the application

and principles of the Kata.

- Demonstrate eight Jyu Kumite (Free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step sparring) at the option of the candidate.
- Pass Written Examination - 1 hour essay to one of five questions on general Karate principles and history.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

#### **Godan (5<sup>th</sup> Dan) Level:**

- Minimum age is 30 years old and at least 5 years at Yondan rank.
- Demonstrate/perform two Katas from candidate's style with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/perform two Shitei (Mandatory) Katas from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Katas with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the Shitei Kata performed and respond to questions on the application and principles of the Kata.
- Demonstrate eight Jyu Kumite (Free sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step sparring) at the option of the candidate.
- Pass Written Examination - 1 hour essay to one of five questions on general Karate principles and history.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

#### **Rokudan (6<sup>th</sup> Dan) Level:**

- Minimum age is 36 years old and at least 6 years at Godan rank.
- Demonstrate/perform two Katas from candidate's style and skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Shitei (Mandatory) Katas from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Katas with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the Shitei Kata performed and respond to questions on the application

and principles of the Kata.

- Demonstrate either Jyu Kumite (Free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step Sparring) at the option of the candidate.
- Pass Written Examination - 1 hour essay to one of five questions on general Karate principles and history.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

#### **Sichidan (7<sup>th</sup> Dan) Level:**

- Minimum age is 42 years old and at least 7 years at Rokudan rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Katas from candidate's style with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two shitei (Mandatory) Katas from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Katas with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the Shitei Kata performed and respond to questions on the application and principles of the Kata.
- Demonstrate eight Jyu Kumite (Free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step sparring) at the option of the candidate.
- Pass Written Examination - 1 hour essay to one of five questions on general Karate principles and history.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

#### **Hachidan (8<sup>th</sup> Dan) Level:**

- Minimum age is 55 years old and at least 7 years at Sichuan rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Katas from candidate's style with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate/Perform two Shitei (Mandatory) Katas from the current World Karate Federation (WKF) list of mandatory Katas with skill appropriate to rank.
- Demonstrate Bunkai of the Shitei Kata performed and respond to questions on the application and principles of the Kata.
- Demonstrate either Jyu Kumite (Free Sparring) or Ippon Kumite (1 Step Sparring) at the option of the candidate.
- Provide written materials summarizing Karate experience, history, and contributions to the Art.

NOTE: If the candidate opts to demonstrate free sparring, then the Board of Examiners will select an opponent from the candidate pool to spar with the candidate under examination. The free sparring bout will not exceed two minutes running time, and will not be stopped and scored. The candidate must demonstrate control, skill, strategy and technique appropriate to the rank.

If the candidate opts to demonstrate 1 step sparring, then the candidate shall bring a partner to demonstrate such sparring technique to the Examining Board. The candidate shall demonstrate not less than 6 nor more than 10 attack and defense techniques, which must include varied punching attacks to the head and midsection, and varied kicking attacks to the head and midsection.

### **EXAMPLE OF WRITTEN EXAMINATION QUESTIONS:**

Each candidate for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Degree Dan Certification must answer one question from the following list. The chosen question must be answered in English and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of Karate-do which is appropriate to the rank.

1. Briefly state the history and technique of Shotokan style Karate
2. Briefly state the history and technique of Goju style Karate
3. Briefly state the history and technique of Wado style Karate
4. Briefly state the history and technique of Shito style Karate
5. Briefly compare the principles and techniques of any two styles of Karate stated in questions one through four above.