



AKR NATIONAL KENDO DAN GRADING – GENERAL INFORMATION

Dear Australian Kendo Renmei (AKR) members,

The AKR Kendo Board, in collaboration with the *Queensland Kendo Renmei (QKR)*, will hold a Kendo Dan grading examination (from 1st to 5th Dan) in Gold Coast, Queensland, following the *48th Australian Kendo Championships (AKC) 2026*.

Venue: Tallebudgera Recreation Precinct, Gold Coast QLD.

Date: Tuesday, 7 April 2026.

Schedule:

- 8:00am • Hall opens
- 8:15am • Candidates registration + submission of hand-written essay
- 9:30am • Grading commences
- 12:30pm • Announcement of grading results
- 2:00pm • Hall closes

The grading examination will be conducted under the AKR procedures and guidelines, available on the website (https://www.kendoaustralia.asn.au/content/?page_id=801). Please refer to:

- AKR Manual of Documents, specifically Sections 1.5 and 2.3.
- AKR Dan Exam application and information.
- AKR Standard Procedural Guidelines Dan Grading Examinations.
- AKR Standard Grading Rules.

All candidates must familiarise themselves with the above procedures and guidelines, in particular the procedures for entering and exiting the court for the *jitsugi* examination.

The next sections in this document cover the grading format, written examination guidelines, and written examination questions.

Please feel free to contact the Grading Manager and/or Kendo Board if you have any queries.

Thank you,

Bernard Yehuda on behalf of the *Australian Kendo Renmei's Kendo Board*

KendoBoard@KendoAustralia.asn.au (group e-mail) / Bernard.Yehuda@gmail.com (personal)

GRADING FORMAT

The grading will be conducted in three sections: *jitsugi* examination, *kata* examination, and written examination. Candidates must pass each section before they may progress to the next one.

Any candidates with special needs (e.g. unable to kneel) should inform the *dōjō* steward, who will liaise this information to the grading panel.

Jitsugi Examination

1. Each candidate will have two (2) *jitsugi* examinations.
2. In order to promote fairness, where possible, candidates are grouped by age.
3. Each *jitsugi* will be 60 seconds in duration, starting from *rei* (bowing).
4. The procedures will be:
 - a. *Dōjō* steward will call the candidates to line up.
 - b. For each group, the first *jitsugi* will begin with a call for “*rei*”. The timer begins here.
 - c. Once candidates are in *sonkyo*, “*hajime*” will be called.
 - d. When the timer has signalled, “*yame*” will be called.
 - e. “*Sore made*” is called. Candidates are to *sonkyo*, and exit the court.
 - f. The next pair of candidates are to bow and enter the court into *sonkyo* without prompts from the *dōjō* steward. The timer begins at the point of bowing.
5. Where appropriate, a *motodachi* (i.e. a volunteer who is not a candidate) may participate.

Kata Examination

1. *Dōjō* steward will inform candidates regarding which sides will be the *uchidachi* and *shidachi* prior to the examination.
2. The procedures will be:
 - a. *Dōjō* steward will call the candidates to line up.
 - b. There will be a call to signal the sides for *uchidachi* and *shidachi*.
 - c. “*Hajime*” will be called. Candidates to perform the opening *reihō*, until the point where they are both in *ai-chūdan* at 9-paces apart.
 - d. Once all candidates are ready, *dōjō* steward will call each *kata* individually, i.e. *ippon-me*, *nihon-me*, *sanbon-me*, etc. After each *kata*, candidates are to wait in *ai-chūdan* until the next *kata* is called.
 - e. Upon the conclusion of the final *kata*, candidates are to *sonkyo* and perform closing *reihō* without prompts from the *dōjō* steward.
 - f. Once all candidates have finished, *dōjō* steward will dismiss the candidates.
3. Where appropriate, a *motodachi* (i.e. a volunteer who is not a candidate) may participate.
4. In the case where there is an interruption (e.g. someone makes a mistake), candidates should try their best to continue and finish the *kata* regardless. After all candidates have finished, the grading panel may decide to call the relevant candidates and request a repeat of specific *kata*.

Written Examination

1. Candidates are required to submit their written examination paper at the time of grading registration, in the morning of the event.
2. Candidates’ submission must satisfy the assessment criteria described in the next section.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

The purpose of the written examination is to encourage and challenge candidates to seek information and deepen their knowledge of Kendo, outside of physical training.

The assessment criteria for a satisfactory (pass) will be as follows:

- Candidate submits their answer on paper during the allocated timeslot (i.e. in the morning of the grading day), accepted by an appropriate grading officer.
- Candidate has answered two (2) questions out of the available three (3), appropriate for the grade they are attempting.
- Each answer's word count is approximately 150 words, and not over 200 words.
- The answers must be written in English, aside from terminologies relevant to the answer.
- The submitted paper fulfils the following formatting criteria:
 - The candidate's information is clearly written at the top of the page.
 - Both answers are printed or written on a single page.
 - For printed answers, Kendo Board suggests a font size of at least 11.
 - Handwritten answers will only be accepted if it is clearly legible and easily readable.
- The submitted paper contains the following information:
 - Candidate's examination ID number (provided when they register in the morning).
 - Date and location of the grading.
 - The grade that the candidate is attempting.
 - The questions that the candidate is answering.
 - The paper must NOT contain the candidate's name, club, affiliation, or AKR ID.
- The candidate has answered the questions adequately for the grade they are attempting. This can be satisfied, for example, by:
 - Demonstrating an understanding of Kendo principles, concepts, terminologies, etc.
 - Providing examples in support of the answer.
 - Using Japanese or Kendo terminologies correctly.
- The answers must be the candidate's own work, i.e. not written by another person or AI-generated. While candidates may discuss their answers with their instructors, fellow club members, or even other candidates, the paper that they submit must be their own writing.

Candidates should note that this is not an academic examination, and they are not required to cite sources or provide references.

If an answer template is provided (e.g. by the Kendo Board), it is not mandatory to use it, as long as the submission fulfills all of the above criteria.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Questions for candidates attempting **Shodan or 1st Dan**:

- 1A: Explain the purpose and benefits of practising *kirikaeshi*.
- 1B: Explain the importance of *reiho* (etiquette) in Kendo.
- 1C: Describe the "*concept of Kendo*" as defined by the *All Japan Kendo Federation*, and its significance in Kendo practice.

Questions for candidates attempting **2nd Dan**:

- 2A: Explain the roles of *motodachi* and *kakarite* in Kendo practice.
- 2B: Explain the principles of *ki-ken-tai-no-icchi*.
- 2C: Describe the criteria for a *yūko-datotsu* as per *The Regulations of Kendo Shiai and Shinpan* issued by the *International Kendo Federation (FIK)*.

Questions for candidates attempting **3rd Dan**:

- 3A: Explain the purpose and benefits of practising *Bokutō ni Yoru Kendo Kihon Waza Keiko-ho*.
- 3B: Define the meaning of *maai* in the context of Kendo, and describe its importance.
- 3C: Describe opportunities for making a strike (*datotsu*).

Questions for candidates attempting **4th Dan**:

- 4A: Explain the purpose and benefits of practising *Nihon Kendo Kata*.
- 4B: Describe the responsibilities of a *shinpan* (referee) and the importance of the role.
- 4C: Describe important teaching points when instructing how to perform *shikake-waza* (opening techniques) and *oji-waza* (counter-attack techniques).

Questions for candidates attempting **5th Dan**:

- 5A: Explain the purpose and importance of *Article 1* of *The Regulations of Kendo Shiai and Shinpan* issued by the *International Kendo Federation (FIK)*.
- 5B: Explain the importance of the roles of *uchidachi* and *shidachi* in *Nihon Kendo Kata*.
- 5C: The motto of the Australian Kendo Renmei is "*in skills opposed, in spirit united*". Explain how this applies to Kendo practice.

Candidates' submission must satisfy the assessment criteria described in the previous section.