



# Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association

## Guidelines and Regulations

The following guidelines & regulations relate to Full Members and their students once they have joined the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association. The main aims of the guidelines & regulations are to ensure quality is kept throughout the association, both now and in the future as the association grows.

All new Full Members have up to 1 year to align their schools within the guidelines and parameters of the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association. However, until full commitment is made, no Dan grades will be issued or endorsed by the association, even though schools are free to host their own Dan gradings during this period.

This information booklet is made up of the following sections:

- I. Basic Requirements:** *These are the basic requirements that a new school needs to adhere to upon joining the association*
- II. Dan Grade Regulations:** *These are the regulations concerning Black belt ranks within the association*
- III. Dan Gradings:** *These are the regulations concerning an actual Dan grading under this association*
- IV. Purpose of the Verification Panel:** *This is a description of the role and purpose of the verification board*

**Upon joining all instructors and their schools agree to follow the guidelines & regulations listed below:**

## A. Basic Requirements

The Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association is opposed to telling Instructors what they can and can't teach at their own clubs, but also understand the need to incorporate specific types of training to keep all members working from the same page towards the same goals and to accomplish this will use the *Key Stages* criteria. Though the Association won't dictate any member schools syllabus, we do ask that **Full Member** clubs fulfil the following **basic requirements**:

1. You teach Tae Kwon Do
2. Grading times are a minimum of 3 months for 10th to 5th kup and 6 months for 4th to 1st kup.
3. All patterns/forms are taught in the correct order and must be cumulative at all levels (i.e. green belts must perform white, yellow & green belt patterns/forms. When performed solo they are of a good standard.
4. Destruction is part of your syllabus (especially the elements involved/required for Dan gradings)
5. Potential Dan gradee's grade via an official Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association panel set up of no less than 3 examiners (*One of which may be the club instructor if they are the appropriate grade, in addition to any guest examiners*).
6. The *Key Stages* are incorporated into your clubs syllabus.
7. Instructors attend regular (once or twice per year) *group training* sessions and encourage senior students to do likewise.
8. Correct theory (Appropriate to your style/school) is also taught as standard.
9. The regulations regarding Dan grades are adhered to
10. The regulation regarding Dan gradings are followed and adhered to

## B. Dan Grade Regulations

The following regulations relate to Dan grades and the issuing of Dan grades for all Full members once they have become part of the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association. New member schools have up to 1 year to format their syllabus in line with the association requirements. Those that do not fall within these boundaries prior to joining are taken into consideration

1. The minimum age that a child can grade for Junior Black belt is 12 years old.
2. Black Belts of 15 years or younger are referred to and acknowledge as '*Junior Black belts*' or in the case of WTF style schools they may be referred to a '*Poom*' grades.
3. All Junior Black belts to wear a Junior Black belt and not a full black belt, to signify their status as 'Junior'. This is a Black belt with a white stripe down the middle or a half black/half red poom belt.
4. The maximum grade a Junior can grade to is Junior 1<sup>st</sup> Degree/Dan. Poom grades, irrespective of number will be ranked 1<sup>st</sup> Degree/Dan upon turning 16 years of age following a successful re-grading for the Adult Dan grade (see point 5).
5. Junior Black belts retest for an Adult Dan Grade following their 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday and upon passing, only then have the right to wear a full black belt. A re-grading is not required and thus optional if the student took their Junior Black belt grading at 15 years of age, providing the grading was almost identical to that of an Adult Dan grading (except for contact levels), where upon turning 16 they can be issued a full adult Dan grade/black belt – though a new certificate will not be issued if this is the case.
6. The minimum age for a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree black belt is 18
7. The minimum age for a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt is 25
8. In order to grade for 4th dan, one must submit written request to test. Request must consist of (at a minimum): name, age, promotion test history from white belt and entire Tae Kwon Do and any other martial arts training history. Pioneer Tae Kwon Do will provide 3-5 FULL member instructors that will

read and approve request. Response will be returned in writing (or email of acceptance to grade). Please note on average a 4<sup>th</sup> degree should be 30 years or older.

9. 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Degree/Dan must be aged over 45 years old
10. A physical performance grading is required for all Dan gradings up to and including 6<sup>th</sup> degrees. The criteria of which is defined by the association.
11. 7<sup>th</sup> degree and above are time honoured grades
12. Dan grading times must fulfil the age criteria. The length between each is appropriate to the grade they wish to achieve. I.e. 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> degree is a minimum of 5 years
13. No Dan certificates for any grade will be issued until a student has graded via the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association guidelines and criteria, following the format and regulations for Dan gradings. However, following a successful Dan grading a certificate can be issued.
14. All new Full Members have up to 1 year to align their schools within the guidelines and parameters of the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association. However, until full commitment is made, no Dan grades will be issued or endorsed by the association, even though schools are free to host their own Dan gradings during this period.
15. Following the 1 year period (or sooner if a school can commit), all Dan gradings should follow the format, guidelines and regulations as set down by the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association. Full Members who host dan gradings outside this rule will not have the results recognised by the Association and will forfeit their membership of the association, with no refunds given
16. Those that decide not to continue with the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Association during or after the 1 year period will not receive any refunds.

## C. Dan Gradings

Dan grading structure is decided between those groups of instructors that will form the examination panel, as well as those that have students actually grading within it. However, all the 'Key Stages' must be a required part of the grading. Please see the example Dan Gradings at the end of this document to help decide on an appropriate set up or ask for help/advice from association instructors. Other areas to be graded, such as competition type sparring should be decided amongst the examiners themselves, prior to the actual grading.

The following regulations are in place regarding Dan gradings:

1. A non black belt student must have been at the previous level for a minimum of 6 months prior to the grading date for 1<sup>st</sup> Dan.
2. Dan grades must have been at their level for the appropriate amount of time relating to the grade they are going for and must be the correct age for the grading required.
3. All elements of the grading should be discussed and agreed by the examiners and instructors involved. This includes, but is not limited to, the type and number of rounds of sparring required, the destruction elements within the key stages, what the theory element will involve, how the grading will be marked etc.
4. Key Stages implementation is not optional and must be part of each grading.
5. A Dan grading can be open or closed to spectators and should be decided amongst the examiners prior to the grading.
6. Ideally, gradings should not follow a particular order ie. Patterns, self defence, sparring, breaking. They should be a mix of all the elements, changing frequently, as this keeps the students on the edge and ensures everything is ingrained, rather than just memorised. Fatigue can be taken into account for the latter stages of a grading, but just a little.
7. All gradings should be physically intensive. Short breaks are permitted, but students should push themselves. Medical conditions (such as asthma) should of course be taken into account.

8. Age should also be taken into account. 30 years and under should perform a full on physical grading. Over 30 should perform a grading that is hard, but is in line with their age/fitness levels.
9. Apart from the above, no part of the grading should be separated on a “skill level”. All students should be marked equally, there is no “based on skill level” marking, as all skills should be of a good standard for a black belt grading and lower skill levels in certain areas may cause a student to fail.
10. At gradings, the gradees should spar/perform against black belts or other gradees only, unless this is defiantly not possible due to numbers.
11. Junior Dan gradings will mimic a senior grading as much as possible, taking into account the students age for safety reasons
12. All gradings will have been approved by the ‘*Verification Board*’ (see purpose of verification board below) the first time the structure is used. Thereafter it does not have to be approved unless major changes are implemented
13. The examiners should number a minimum of 3, of which at least two should be official Full Member Association instructors of 3<sup>rd</sup> degree or higher. Leeway is possible for schools that are far away from others to implement this procedure.
14. Each examiner should ideally from different schools.
15. Outside examiners (i.e. those not Full members of the association) are welcome at the gradings with the approval of all other examiners. If marking, there marks are held in equal regard to all other examiners and their results cannot be overturned.
16. Multiple examiners from one group, (i.e. the same organisation or club) are not allowed unless the rest of the examiners outnumber them and find it acceptable, as this is not a fair representation of judging and marking and is open to abuse.
17. A single instructor cannot examine his own students unless there are no other options available. Providing this is agreed by the ‘*Verification Board*’ a grading of this type will be expected to submit a video of the grading following its completion.
18. If the above regarding examiners cannot be fulfilled, variations to this set up can be used, but please ensure it is approved by the ‘*Verification Board*’ first.
19. Lower Dan ranks can be utilized if needed to ensure a fair panel, however it is suggested that for a Dan grading, these are at least 2<sup>nd</sup> degree and a last resort option.
20. All examiners have equality in a grading, irrespective of grade.
21. Gradings work on a majority decision as well as a marking/scoring system. For example, with 3 examiners, at least 2 must be happy to pass the student (hence why it’s important that examiners are not from the same groups). However, it is hoped that in most, if not all cases, examiners would be in agreement of whether a student passes or fails overall, though they may have differing opinions on what parts of the grading were good/bad/medium.
22. All examiners must understand they have the right to pass or fail a student without prejudice.
23. The students school instructor can be one of the panel, or, if agreed and there are enough examiners, school instructors can choose not to examine/mark their own students.
24. The results and marks of the examiners should never be discussed or given to the student in an identifying way. A students instructor may make statements (following a grading) such as “*some of the examiners felt your self defence focused too much on wrist locks*” as opposed to “*Mr Smith felt your self defence focused too much on wrist locks*”. For arguments sake, when describing such a thing it is better to simply use the panel as a collective and say something like “*The examiners felt your self defence focused too much on wrist locks*”
25. Gradings should also work on a score system for each section – if the minimum levels are not attained, then a student automatically fails. If this is the case, no examiner has the right to override a failed result due to low levels of scoring.
26. Examiners do have the right to make *executive & last chance* decisions, providing all the grading panel agree. An example of an executive decision would be that a student has performed really well and then

messed up a breaking technique (for example) and because the rest of the grading has gone really well, the panel decide to give another attempt at the technique rather than fail them solely on that. Executive decisions should only be issued if the grading was good to excellent overall and not just to give a second chance to get things right ie. They should be rare.

27. A *last chance* decision can be given if for example a student has performed reasonably well (i.e. Well enough to pass) but has (as an example) messed up a pattern/form. At the end of the grading, the student would be informed that its their last chance to get it right and that it could mean the difference between a pass or a fail. After a few minutes to allow the student to prepare, they perform. However, should they fail this section again, they must fail the grading.
28. Instructors are free to charge what they feel is appropriate for Dan gradings, as they may have to cover extra costs like belts, extra certificates etc. However, basic set up costs (ie. Hall hire) should be divided amongst all those with students grading.
29. The first grading will be videoed and submitted to the '*Verification Board*'. This is a quality control measure and is required following the first grading only to ensure it has run within the regulations and standards of the association. It is not a 'video grading' and the verifiers will not be marking any students, but rather simply overseeing that the grading fulfilled the standards the association requires. No students results will be changed by this process, but advice will be given to the examination board if need be and if it pertains to a lot of changes a video of next grading may be asked for to ensure any changes have been implemented.
30. All dan gradings and videoed and stored for the records. These do not have to be submitted, but rather stored by one of the examination panel in case any of the association's issued Dan grades are ever called into question.
31. A video of any Dan grading may be requested at any time by the '*Verification Board*'. This will be a random selection and failure to comply may mean expulsion from the association. This is a continue quality control measure only.
32. Should the video be requested show that a grading has fallen way below the accepted standard; the verification board has the right not to endorse the current grades given, as well as any future grades/gradings until the standard is met again.

## **D: Purpose of the Verification Panel**

The verification panel is there to ensure certain standards are met and maintained. It is made up by Full member instructors who can commit the time and effort to the tasks involved and their job is to:

1. Over see new members to ensure the association is made up of quality schools
2. To help new member schools adjust their processes in line with the Pioneer Tae Kwon Do Associations guidelines and policies
3. To view and give feedback on the first Dan grading a new member school may host
4. To ensure quality by randomly reviewing Dan gradings (via video)
5. To deal with an issues or problems members may have