



New students who have a prior rank:

- New students who have achieved a Shotokan rank at a different dojo can retain their current kyu/dan rank, but they need to meet WSA's requirements for their rank and all previous ones before they can take their first exam with WSA. Students should email info@washingtonshotokan.com verification of their rank (copy of a certificate, or email from their previous dojo are acceptable) to have it updated in ZenPlanner and then they will be able to wear the appropriate colored belt to class (which may be a different color than what their previous dojo for used for that kyu rank).
- New students who have a rank from a different style of karate should start by wearing a white belt to class. Students should email info@washingtonshotokan.com verification of their rank (copy of a certificate, or email from their previous dojo are acceptable) and then their recommending instructor will evaluate them and determine where the student falls within WSA's ranking system. They should continue wearing a white belt to class. After 2-4 months and the student has met the minimum required hours for white belts to test, the student will test at the next available exam to confirm that rank. All applicable exam and belt fees will apply.
- New students who have a rank from a different style of martial arts (taekwondo, judo, etc) will start at white belt and follow the normal sequence of ranks with WSA.

If there are any questions, please feel free to speak to your recommending instructor.

Thank you!

Washington Shotokan Association

info@washingtonshotokan.com (425) 454-6633



Transferring to the Adult Program:

Congratulations, you have achieved the rank of 4th Kyu (second purple), this is the highest rank in our youth program! To continue your training, you will have to join our adult program, regardless of your age. If you train at one of our community center dojos you might have to switch to the main Bellevue dojo if there are no adult classes at your community center. Before you can train in our Bellevue adult classes you will have to switch to the adult monthly dues, unless you are already on one of our family plans. If you need to check or change your dues, please email us at billing@washingtonshotokan.com. After your dues have been changed, you can start attending the adult classes. We suggest that you go to the adult general classes for a month or so to get familiar with the adult classes, and then you move to the adult advanced classes when you are ready.

When you move to the adult program, you will need to learn some extra material before you can test for the 3rd Kyu rank (first brown). Youth students have one fewer kata and several fewer techniques than the adults at the same rank, so you will have to catch up on those. Plus, you will have to learn all the kata and techniques for 3rd Kyu. Most students take about a year to reach the same level as the adult 4th Kyu's and master all the skills needed to pass their 3rd Kyu exam. You can find all the requirements for your next rank at <https://washingtonshotokan.com/exams>.

You may need to change your recommending instructor when you move from youth to adult classes, as most of our youth instructors do not teach adult classes. Please talk to your current recommending instructor and find out who you should switch to, depending on which adult classes you want to attend.

If there are any questions, please feel free to speak to your recommending instructor.

Thank you!

Washington Shotokan Association

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Transferring to the Adult Program:

Congratulations on your new rank! When a student turns 12 years old, they can take one final exam with the youth program before they must join the adult program to continue their training. If you train at one of our community center dojo's you might have to switch to the main Bellevue dojo if there are no adult classes at your community center. Before you can train in our Bellevue adult classes you will have to switch to the adult monthly dues, unless you are already on one of our family plans. If you need to check or change your dues or sign up for classes at the main Bellevue dojo, please email us at billing@washingtonshotokan.com. After your dues have been changed, you can start attending the adult classes.

When you move to the adult program, you will need to learn some extra material before you can test for the next rank. Youth students have one fewer kata and several fewer techniques than the adults at the same rank, so you will have to catch up on those. Plus, you will have to learn all the kata and techniques for your next rank. Most students take about a year to reach the same level as the adults for their rank and master all the skill needed to pass their next exam. Lower ranks (yellow-blue) can sometimes make this transition faster. You can find the requirements for your next rank at <https://washingtonshotokan.com/exams>.

You may need to change your recommending instructor when you move from youth to adult classes, as most of our youth instructors do not teach adult classes. Please talk to your current recommending instructor and find out who you should switch to, depending on which adult classes you want to attend.

If there are any questions, please feel free to speak to your recommending instructor.

Thank you!

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Washington Shotokan Association Black Belt Testing Guidelines

Becoming a WSA Black Belt is a significant accomplishment that represents many years of hard work and dedication. It is a designation that will be held for the rest of one's life. There are ten levels of Black Belt that represent advanced levels of achievement, loyalty, and giving back to the art and dojo. Dan level members are particularly encouraged to participate in teaching as it provides the opportunity to deepen one's understanding of Shotokan Karate. Below are the guidelines that the Black Belt Committee will take into consideration to qualify candidates for the honor of testing for Dan ranks.

Please note that these are minimum requirements that must be completed to be considered for recommendation by the Black Belt Committee to the WSA Board of Directors. It is anticipated that most Dan candidates will require more than the minimum years of active training to be considered for their next exam.

Shodan-Ho Candidates:

1. Achieve the 1-kyu level at least nine months prior to the Shodan exam.
2. Recommendation by the Black Belt Committee and invitation to test by WSA Board of Directors.
3. Attend an average of six Advanced Classes per month in the nine months leading to the Shodan exam. At least two of these advanced classes must be at the Monday 7:30 PM class.
4. Regularly train with peer group testing candidates under the mentoring of one or more ranking Sensei. These exam-specific training sessions **DO NOT** count towards the Advanced Class attendance requirement.
5. Pass the Pre-Shodan examination approximately 2 months prior to the Shodan exam. The Pre-Shodan exam will be the full Shodan exam in its entirety. Exam fee applies.
6. Please note that attending required practices will typically earn a candidate eligibility to take the Pre-Shodan exam but each candidate is required to display competency and ability sufficient to satisfy the graders for a successful Pre-Shodan exam.

Full Shodan:

All who pass the Shodan exam will be awarded a **plain** Black Belt. To be awarded a Black Belt with red writing requires 12 months at the Shodan-Ho level and the following:

1. Attend a minimum average of four Advanced Classes per month. At least two of these advanced classes must be at the Monday 7:30 PM class.
2. Continue to sign up in Zen Planner to track training hours.
3. Participate in a manner that gives back to the dojo (assisting in teaching duties, or volunteering for other activities that support the dojo).
4. Approval by WSA Board of Directors.

Nidan Candidates:

1. Recommendation by the Black Belt Committee and invitation to test by WSA Board of Directors.
2. Minimum of three years training and active commitment to the dojo (volunteering/teaching) after achieving full Shodan rank. Continue to sign up in Zen Planner to track training hours
3. For the twelve months leading up to the exam:
 1. Attend a minimum average of four Advanced Classes per month. At least two of these advanced classes must be at the Monday 7:30 PM class.
 2. Regularly train with peer group testing candidates under the mentoring of one or more ranking Sensei. These exam-specific training sessions **DO NOT** count towards the Advanced Class attendance requirement.
4. Pass the Pre-Nidan exam approximately four months prior to the Dan test. No Exam fees.

Sandan Candidates:

1. Recommendation by the Black Belt Committee and invitation to test by WSA Board of Directors.
2. Minimum of four years training and active commitment to the dojo (volunteering/teaching) after achieving Nidan rank. Continue to sign up in Zen Planner to track training hours
3. For the twelve months leading up to the exam:
 1. Attend a minimum average of four Advanced Classes per month. At least two of these advanced classes must be at the Monday 7:30 PM class.
 2. Regularly train with peer group testing candidates under the mentoring of one or more ranking Sensei. These exam-specific training sessions **DO NOT** count towards the Advanced Class attendance requirement.
4. Pass the Pre-Sandan exam approximately four months prior to the Dan test. No Exam fees.

Yondan and Above (Sensei) Candidates:

1. Recommendation by the Black Belt committee and invitation by the WSA Board of Directors
2. Minimum of testing rank plus one years of training and actively teaching after achieving last rank.
3. There will not be a pre-exam for Sensei level examinees. Candidates will be invited to officiate the kumite portion of the pre-Shodan exam so they can receive feedback on officiating.

APPROVED BY BLACK BELT COMMITTEE: 5/31/26

APPROVED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS: 6/13/26

WSA POLICY REGARDING USE OF DOJO FLOOR AND FACILITIES:

The Dojo floor and/or facilities may be used in any of the following conditions without approval:

1. By any member (blackbelt) and student in good standing to train regularly scheduled classes and events as established through the WSA board or WSA committees. Setup/tear down/clean up is included in the regularly scheduled class. As is warm up/cool down up to 20 min before /after any regularly scheduled class.
2. Any member (blackbelt) instructor in good standing is extended the privilege to use the Dojo floor and/or facilities for solo training for Shotokan based kihon, kata, and kumite provided that the Dojo floor is not being used for another approved purpose at same time. The use of the Dojo Floor for solo training is a privilege for members that are instructors, and is not included as part of the benefits of membership. The privilege for the use of Dojo floor for solo training under this subsection may be revoked by the WSA Board of Trustees at any time at its sole discretion.

Any use of the Dojo floor and/or facilities by a WSA Member (blackbelt) other than for a regularly scheduled class or event established through the WSA board or WSA committees or solo instructor training must be approved in writing (confirming email is acceptable) by the WSA President or two members of the WSA Board of Trustees. The following conditions must be met:

1. At least one adult black belt present on the dojo floor.
2. Training must take place entirely on the dojo floor. Use of the makiwara/mat room or any other facilities of the dojo is prohibited. Instructor needs to bring equipment onto floor on their own.

No instruction or training outside of a regularly scheduled class or event shall occur under any of the following conditions:

1. With only one blackbelt and one minor (under the age of 18 years old) student of any rank present in the dojo without their parent or supervisor present.

Approved August 2022

Policy for Instructor/Student Complaints:

- 1) Incoming complaint (email or voice mail) will be circulated amongst board members. If a board member is a subject of the complaint, they will not receive the complaint. The complaint will be deemed confidential and board members will use all reasonable means not to further disseminate the information contained in the complaint or the identity of any of the parties to the complaint.
- 2) Two members of the Risk Management Committee and one member of
 - a) the black belt committee if the complaint is against a blackbelt;
 - b) the adult committee if the complaint is against adult student;
 - c) the youth committee if the complaint is against a youth student.will form a confidential investigative committee to take the following action:
 - i) Request the complainant (and/or parents if a minor) fill out a form to be created by the Risk Management Committee which sets forth the details of the complaint, the contact information for the complainant, and any other information that the Risk Management Committee would deem useful in its investigation.
 - ii) Make the determination if the subject of the complaint should have their access to the dojo restricted in any manner, whether based solely on the allegations of the complaint while the investigation is taking place, or at any time during or after their investigation.
 - iii) Make the determination when and if the nature of the complaint and the identity of the complainant should be disclosed to the subject of the complaint.
 - iv) Draft a confidential report to the board setting forth the results of the investigation and suggestions as to what actions, if any, should be taken by the board.
 - v) Present the confidential report at executive session of a board meeting once the investigation is completed.

Approved by BOD 8/13/2022

WSA Policy Regarding Re: No Firearms Allowed on Premises

In the interest of the general safety for all present at the Washington Shotokan Dojo, the Washington Shotokan Board of Trustees hereby adopts a "No Firearms Allowed on Premises" Policy.

- 1) Possession, storage, or use of any firearm is strictly prohibited anywhere within the premises of the Washington Shotokan Dojo.
- 2) Firearm is defined as any handgun or rifle of any caliber.
- 3) Washington Shotokan Association reserves the right to search company property (lockers, cubbies) and personal items (bags, backpacks, purses, etc.) to enforce this policy, within legal limits.
- 4) In the event a firearm is found on the premises, or on the person of anyone on the premises:
 - a) Whomever discovered the firearm will immediately notify the WSA board via email at board@washingtonshotokan.com. If an individual is carrying the firearm they will be advised of the dojo policy and asked to remove the firearm from the premises.
 - b) If the firearm was brought into the dojo by a student or a member, or a friend, family member, or acquaintance of a student or member, the WSA Board, at its sole discretion, will determine whether any further action against the student or member should be taken. Board action will include but not be limited to revoking any and all rights and privileges as a student or a member, cancelling their admission to any WSA classes or programming, and determining whether the student or members' revocation of rights will be temporary or permanent.

Adopted by BOD 4/4/2026