



ILYOKWAN

BLACK BELT ACADEMY

일여무도관
검정벨트편람

BLACK BELT
HANDBOOK



ILYOKWAN
BLACK BELT ACADEMY

Black Belt Handbook

Please ensure you read this document thoroughly.

**When you submit your application for Black Belt testing
you confirm that you fully understand these requirements.**

If you are unsure about any point please ask for further advice as soon as possible.

Black Belt Requirements: 2023/24

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The Black Belt

“The quality of a person’s life
is in direct proportion to
their commitment to excellence,
regardless of their
chosen field of endeavour.”

- *Vince Lombardi*

A Black Belt is not just another coloured belt.

As a Black Belt candidate it is essential that you understand the relevance of this next stage in your training. The promotion to Black Belt is probably the most significant step in any martial artist's career and it is one which must be treated with the respect it deserves.

The rank of Black Belt is recognised internationally within the martial arts, and has a status commanding respect within the wider community. As such the wearer must hold themselves to the highest standards. You must understand that with the rank come a number of responsibilities, not only to yourself, but also to your school, your fellow students and to the integrity of the martial arts.

Our primary consideration, even before any testing begins is that we must be confident that the student understands the importance of the Black Belt and that they do not see the belt as simply a 'trophy' to be won, but instead that they understand that it is an honorary rank which they must earn and then maintain through their ongoing commitment to martial arts excellence.

We must be sure that the candidate is fully committed to maintain their training to the highest standard and to act as an ambassador for the martial arts and as an inspiration to their peers and lower graded students. If we believe that they are not committed to this as a long-term goal we cannot consider their promotion to black belt.

You must remember, the rank of Black Belt is only valid whilst you are actively training in the martial arts and hold a current membership of the Academy.

Black Belt is just the beginning...

To achieve the rank of black belt is a major goal for any student, but you must always remember, it is not the end of your training - it is just 'the end of the beginning'...

For a first degree it is the recognition that your apprenticeship is over and that you are now ready to move on to the next stage of your training, the real learning where you put many years of academic study into context and make that knowledge work for you. For the higher dan grades it is a measure of your continued commitment and another milestone in your lifetime journey towards personal excellence.

This document details the **minimum** conditions required for consideration of a candidate for promotion to Black Belt or higher ranks.

Clearly, a person aiming for promotion to Black Belt should be aiming to show their very best efforts, not just to settle for the bare minimum.

“A Black Belt will do today
what others won't,
so that tomorrow they can do
what others can't”

General Expectations of a Black Belt Candidate

- The rank of Black Belt represents a student who has demonstrated a significant and consistent commitment to the Martial Arts.
- They will have shown a consistent, pro-active approach to their training.
- Their attendance, attitude and dedication to the martial arts should set an excellent example to others.
- The candidate will have demonstrated a high degree of loyalty to the Academy, including an excellent attendance record, a willingness to assist others and support for Academy events and activities.
- The candidate will have demonstrated a commitment to their further development as a black belt and as a long-term martial artist.
- It must be very clear that the candidate understands the importance of the Black Belt rank and that their preparation for the test reflects this.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they have properly prepared for the Black Belt examination. When submitting an application you acknowledge that you fully understand what is expected of you. If you are unsure then ASK.
- The black belt candidate will have made a significant commitment to their own physical fitness and conditioning. The final Black Belt testing will take several hours and the candidate's fitness level will be a significant factor in their successful promotion.
- We have a specific status of a Black Belt Candidate, this is indicated by the promotion to a Black Belt with a Red Stripe. From the moment a student attains this rank they are considered to be under grading conditions. Their attitude, effort and contribution during this time will have a significant influence on the outcome of their Black Belt assessment.
- A black belt is not a trophy to be won. It is a privileged status within the Martial Arts community. It is an esteemed rank, which must be earned and maintained.
- The status of Black Belt is only relevant when actively practising the Martial Arts. If a dan grade does not maintain their regular training, then they will lose their black belt status.
- If a Black Belt holder acts in a way which could damage their reputation, or that of their school, instructor or the martial arts in general then this will be considered a very serious matter which may result in the suspension or revocation of Black Belt status..

Black Belt Classifications

There are three classifications of Black Belt, based on the students age:

Cadet: Under 11 years.

At this age the students cannot yet attain a 'full' black belt, but may attain the 1st poom junior rank which is indicated by a black belt with white stripe.

Please ask for further details.

Junior: 11-15 years

At this age the student is considered a junior black belt and whilst the syllabus is largely the same as the adults the timeframe is shorter and the technical requirements are somewhat less stringent.

On reaching 16 the student will need to be examined again in accordance with the adult requirements in order to have their status recognised as an adult rank.

Adult: From 16 + years

Minimum Age / Training Requirements

Rank	Minimum Age*	Minimum time at present rank**	Minimum total experience***	Fee	Notes
1st Dan	11	6 months	3½ years	£150	
2nd Dan	13	18 months	5 years	£225	
3rd Dan	17	24 months	7 years	£300	
4th Dan	21	3 years	10 years	POA	By invitation only.
Per tradition, grades of 5th Degree and higher will be awarded at the discretion of the Master Instructor and verified by a panel of senior black belts.					

* Age at the time of the initial application.

** Minimum time assumes student has been training consistently with attendance of at least 75% of all available classes and that they achieved at least a full pass at their last examination.

*** Candidate must have been training consistently during this period. Consideration may be given for prior experience in another style or art at the discretion of the Chief Instructor.

For exceptional students the above guidelines may be subject to the discretion of the chief instructor.

Membership Requirements

Black Belt status is only valid whilst you are actively training in the martial arts and hold a current membership of the Ilyokwan Black Belt Academy.

We will only consider an application for Black Belt assessment when we are confident of their ongoing commitment to the martial arts.

All potential candidates must have a valid membership agreement that covers at least 12 months past the intended examination date. If their current membership does not meet these criteria then they will need to renew or upgrade their program before their final application is accepted.

There will be no exceptions to this requirement. If we believe that a student is only seeking black belt as a 'trophy' and they are not committed to ongoing training they will not be permitted to test.

Associate members

Those students who are not currently training at the Academy, perhaps due to relocation to university and who wish to maintain their Black Belt status are able to maintain an associate membership with the Academy. They will be required to attend six-monthly black belt review or to provide sufficient evidence of their continued regular training in another school order to keep their Ilyokwan Black Belt status.

Black Belt Status

The rank of Black Belt is an honorary status within the martial arts, and as such it is conditional upon the holder actively maintaining regular training, and continuing to uphold the highest example to their peers.

Failure to keep up regular training may result in the holder's status being suspended, in the first instance, or withdrawn after 12 months of inactivity.

The holder of a Black Belt rank is expected to maintain their high standards and to uphold the reputation of the Academy, their Instructors and of the Martial Arts at all times. If they do not, their rank could be suspended or revoked without notice.

On successful completion of the black belt examination itself any certificates or belts issued remain the property of the Academy and must be returned on request.

Black Belt Registry

We publish an official Black Belt registry on our website where current Black Belt status can be confirmed by a third party on request.

This can be viewed at the address shown here:

<https://www.blackbeltacademy.info/about/black-belt-registry>

*“To wear the Black Belt is a privilege, not a right.
It is something that must be earned,
and then maintained.”*

Black Belt Reviews

All Black Belt members are required to undertake regular reviews of their progress to ensure they are maintaining their standards and commitment.

The review consists of two parts:

- A written self-appraisal of the dan grade's current training progress, and a brief summary of their ongoing training goals.
- They will attend a scheduled grading examination alongside the current adult experienced students where they will be assessed formally by the examiner to provide feedback on their technical progress.

All Black Belt holders must attend at least two reviews each year, regardless of their intention to test themselves. The scheduled reviews are normally held at the spring and autumn examinations as per the scheduled black belt examinations. These dates are consistent every year so absence due to "other engagements" is not considered a valid excuse for missing a review. If you know in advance that you will be unable to make a specific date then you must arrange for a review at another grading examination or seminar.

Review Applications

Students should apply for your Black Belt review using the same application form used for coloured belt gradings. A fee will apply as per the normal coloured belt grading examination.

Failure to undertake a review

If a student does not undertake a review when due, there will be three-month grace period, after which if they do not undertake a review at the next examination their Black Belt status will revert to probationary and they may be required to wear a red-stripe belt. Should the student fail to submit for a review within a further three months their Black Belt status will be automatically suspended.

In the event a newly promoted (probationary) black belt fails to complete a review, their probation will be deemed unsatisfactory and their black belt promotion cancelled.

Restoration of suspended ranks

There are a number of circumstances in which a black belt's status may have been suspended:

- Disciplinary suspension
- Failure to submit for a Black Belt review
- A lapse in membership

Should a black belt return to regular training following the suspension or a lapsed membership they will be required to undergo a probationary period of not less than six months, and a further review before their status is restored. During this time they will be required to wear a red-stripe belt.

Following a lapse in membership/training any 'time-in-rank' accrued towards a further promotion will be forfeit and will start again from the date the Black Belt rank is restored.

Loss of status over time

Should a former black belt holder cease active training for an extended period of time their eligibility for a restored rank may be reduced. This is proportional to their period of inactivity, as compared to the expected minimum time required for black belt advancement.

e.g. Should a former second degree holder return to training after a two-year break, their rank could be reduced to first dan level.

This will be at the discretion of the chief instructor, and would normally be determined by an assessment and interview upon them returning to training.

Black Belt Testing

Parts of the Black Belt Exam

The process of testing for black belt ranks is a continual process which begins formally several months before the final examination.

The actual Black Belt test comprises several different parts. Each must be completed to the satisfaction of the grading panel in order for the candidate to be promoted:

- The minimum time in rank & overall training requirements must be met.
- A set of clear written goals, which will form part of the assessment.
- A personal thesis or research project.
- A written training plan for the pre-grading period covering all aspects of the exam.
- A regular written journal of their preparation for the examination
- A detailed written analysis of a pattern of the candidate's choice (adults only)
- A written examination paper
- A short personal demonstration of the candidates own choice
- The final physical grading examination

Additional Requirements

In addition to the above, we also require all adult black belt candidates to obtain a DBS check and basic first aid qualification.

Examination Dates

The Academy holds two black belt gradings each year, in March and Sept.

March Grading

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Adults	Apply	Pre-grading cycle						EXAM
Juniors				Apply	Pre-grading review		EXAM	

September Grading

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Adults	Apply	Pre-grading cycle						EXAM
Juniors				Apply	Pre-grading review		EXAM	

Application for Black Belt Testing

To be considered for black belt testing a candidate must submit an agreed application prior to the start of the formal pre-grading cycle.

This pre-grading period is six full calendar months for adults and three months for junior candidates, not including the testing month itself.

During this formal 'pre-grading review' the candidate will be under continual assessment during which time they are expected to demonstrate a consistent attitude that clearly proves their respect for the grade and their full commitment to the testing process.

Initial Application

The initial application must include the following:

- A brief letter with a formal request to be considered for Black Belt testing
- Initial Application form (part 1)
- A set of clearly defined goals to be completed as part of the examination
- An outline training plan covering the time up to the final examination
- The proposed thesis/project topic
- Choice pattern to be studied for the written analysis (adults only)
- Any specific circumstances which the candidate feels may be require consideration
- The examination fee

Examination Fees

The examination fees are paid with the initial application and will apply to the specified examination date only.

Should the candidate not complete the pre-grading requirements, or the final examination the fee will be forfeit. Any subsequent application will be subject to a further examination fee.

If the candidate has to postpone their examination due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control then the fee may be credited towards a future examination date. This must be agreed in writing.

The requirements of each area are detailed in the following sections.

**Each of these must be agreed with your instructor in advance of the application.
Failure to do so could result in the application being rejected.**

Final Submission

The final submission of all written material must be submitted no less than 14 days prior to the final exam.

This must include:

- The final application form (part 2)
- Completed thesis/project
- Evidence of completed goals
- Description / plan of the personal demonstration
- Written pattern analysis (adults only)
- Copy of the candidates training journal
- The completed exam paper

Late submission without prior approval from the chief instructor will result in automatic exclusion from the examination. Any fees paid will be forfeit.

Examination Results

Candidates will be informed of the result of their examination in writing, within 7 days of the examination date.

Successful candidates

- A probationary Black Belt Certificate will be presented at graduation, and the Black Belt itself will be supplied by the Academy.
- Any certificates and belts issued remain the property of the Academy and must be returned on request.

Unsuccessful candidates

- Unsuccessful candidates will be given a full review of their assessment with specific guidance on what is required before they can re-apply.
- Candidates are required to wait for the applicable minimum period before testing again and must meet all the grading requirements as detailed in this document, however there is some flexibility with respect to the application and initial submission as this will normally continue from the previous attempt and therefore the usual application deadline will not apply.
- Acceptable written material from an previous examination may only be carried over with the permission of the chief instructor/examiner.

Deferred promotion

- If the examiners feel that a candidate has come very close to meeting the required standard and is perhaps only lacking in a couple of specific areas then they may receive a deferred/conditional promotion.
- If this is the case the examiner will inform the candidate of the specific expectations to complete their promotion. This will usually require the candidate to either complete or amend one or more aspects of their goals, or to demonstrate an acceptable improvement by an agreed date to coincide with a future grading examination date.

Probationary Period

Following the successful completion of the initial Black Belt test, the student's rank will be considered probationary for a period not less than six, up to a maximum of twelve calendar months after their promotion.

The full black belt rank will only be awarded on successful completion of a formal Black Belt review after this period.

During the probationary period the student is expected to maintain the same high standards and attendance (at least 75%) which they demonstrated prior to their testing and to attend each quarterly examination for a review of their progress. If they do not, their promotion may be suspended or revoked.

In the event that a student is absent from training due to illness or injury they may apply for an extension of the probationary period. This must be agreed in writing before the expiration date on the probationary certificate.

If the candidate does not complete the probationary period satisfactorily their promotion will be cancelled and their rank will revert to candidate status.

In this case they will be required to return the probationary certificate and black belt to the Academy.

Expectations for Junior Candidates

Whilst the Black Belt testing process is largely similar for all ages, obviously the expectation of what will be completed by junior candidates is somewhat simpler.

The aim is really help them learn the value and the basics of forward planning to achieve a future goal, to recognise the value of small consistent efforts over time, reviewing one's progress and making adjustments where needed.

Primary differences

- Junior candidates are not required to complete a **pattern analysis**
- **Goal Setting** - It is important that the juniors still go through the goal setting and regular reviews etc as this is intended to help develop a proactive attitude to ones personal development, but it is not expected that they set unreachable goals. The important part is that they do a little something on a regular basis towards achieving something meaningful.
- **Thesis / Project** - juniors are not expected to produce an academic style thesis. They may prefer to do a more creative project relating to the martial arts, and that is fine providing they do something on a regular basis towards their goal

Defining Your Goals

“If you don’t have a clearly defined goal
then you are not playing football,
you are just kicking a ball around a field”
- Geoff Thompson -

Why Set Goals?

A very important aspect of the Ilyokwan philosophy is to recognise that our students are all individuals, and whilst there is a core aspect to our technical syllabus we do not believe in a 'one size fits all' approach to our training. This is therefore reflected in our black belt testing too.

We recognise that each individual martial artist will have different interests and personal goals within their training. Therefore, in addition to the core technical requirements, part of the black belt test is based on the candidate achieving certain goals which they have defined themselves.

What is a Goal?

Please remember a goal must be something which is specific, measurable and something which you can accomplish within the timeframe of the black belt testing cycle.

So, for example your fitness goal couldn't just be *'I'd like to get better at running'*, but it could be something like *"over the next 12/24 weeks I will follow a specified programme, running 2-3 times each week and by 'X' date I will aim to complete a 5 mile run in less than 'Y' time"* or for example *"on March 10th I will complete a 10k race at ... "*

Breaking your goals into manageable stages

As part of your initial application you will include a simple outline plan of how you intend to achieve your goals. You will need to be able to break your goals down into manageable sections, monthly or even weekly. You will be reviewing your progress towards your goals in your weekly journal.

*"A journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step"*

- Lao Tzu -

You are required to set at least one goal in each of the following areas:

Martial Arts

Your goal should include at least one significant achievement in your martial arts training, something which you cannot currently do, and which is not simply expected as part of the Black Belt Handbook. This could perhaps be to gain a degree of proficiency in an area you have not previously studied, to master a difficult technique, or to demonstrate a measurable improvement in a certain skill such as flexibility or kicking.

Fitness

You should define some measurable goals for your personal fitness and set a target for when you want to achieve them. This might include training towards a specific event, following a particular training schedule, completing a set number of exercises etc.

Contribution

You are required to define one goal relating to your own personal contribution to the Martial Arts. This can be anything that benefits other students in some way or involves your personal contribution to the Academy.

For adults this could be to take a key role in a specific aspect of the school, perhaps it might be to help develop a new training programme or to assist with coaching others. Maybe you could help to recruit some new members?

Personal Goal

You are required to define at least one goal outside of your martial arts training to demonstrate that you are maintaining a balance in your lifestyle. This can be related to anything except martial arts or fitness training.

You may add further goals if you wish to include them in the process.

Example Goals

These examples are all real goals which were set and achieved by Ilyokwan black belt graduates over the past few years.

Fitness

- (Adult) To undertake a program of running for fitness culminating in the completion of the Stroud half-marathon
- (Adult) To create, and follow a structured training schedule out of academy time including 2 sessions dedicated to cardiovascular training and 2 days dedicated to resistance and weight training.
- (Adult) - To maintain a regular programme of walking for fitness towards a personal goal to complete a walk along the 'Cotswold Way'
- (Junior) To be able to run 1 mile non stop and to complete a 5km (3 miles) 'Race for Life.'
- (Junior) To follow a fitness program at the Shokkwave gym and to complete a 'bi-athlon' event at Dursley swimming pool
- (Junior) To run 1.5 miles and achieve a better time each month.
- (Junior) To complete a total of 50 miles on my mum'

Technical

- (Adult) To perform a destruction technique at chest height with five different kicks, including at least one jumping kick.
- (Adult) To be able to perform a confident jumping back kick with the weaker leg and break a board
- (Adult) To improve my leg strength to the point I can hold a balanced side kick with either leg at sternum height (6" improvement from beginning).
- (Junior) To perform a jumping 360° turning kick, with both feet off the floor.
- (Junior) To do a jump side kick over a bar and hit a target the same size as a breaking board.

Contribution

- (Adult) - To enrol in the Academy Leadership team and to assist with coaching a minimum of two classes per week covering both adult and junior classes.
- (Adult) - To maintain a regular personal 'blog' about the journey to black belt which might inspire other students to realise that this is something attainable by a 'normal' person.
- (Adult) - To publish a series of regular book reviews and create a recommended reading list for martial arts students.
- (Adult) - To gain a recognised coaching qualification and first aid certificate

- (Junior) A 'show & tell' presentation to a junior school all about training in the martial arts
- (Junior) To create a printed martial arts comic book designed to encourage less confident children to take up the martial arts.
- (Junior) A guide for red belt students to help them organise their time when preparing for the black belt test.

Personal

- (Adult) - To achieve grade 8 on the guitar
- (Adult) - To learn to create a website from scratch and to use these skills for their contribution goal to publish a guide to help beginner students with some tips on fitness, flexibility and basic training.
- (Adult) - To pass the Institute of Advanced Motorists driving test
- (Adult) - To finish the long-overdue renovation of an old camper van

- (Junior) To achieve 3 specified guide badges within the 12 week pre-grading period
- (Junior) To regularly complete a set of household chores without being reminded.
- (Junior) To strip-down and rebuild a BMX bike as a present for a younger brother and then to help him learn to ride it by the end of the summer.
- (Junior) To make a video game using the 'GameMaker' programme

Your Training Plan

"It's not the plan that is important,
it's the planning."
- Graeme Edwards -

Your Training Plan

Your training plan should define the way you intend to organise your time and your training in preparation for your black belt testing.

It is entirely up to you how you choose to prepare for your examination but the plan you submit should include all the aspects of your test requirements including your fitness and martial arts training, and the work on your goals and written material.

It should be broken down into clear blocks of time and should reflect the goals you have set.

The initial plan you submit with your application should be blocked out into clear monthly goals and then at the beginning of each month you must submit a more detailed plan outlining weekly goals for the month ahead.

"First you write down your goal; your second job is to break down your goal into a series of steps, beginning with steps which are absurdly easy."

- Fitzhugh Dodson -



You can download simple training plan templates from the members section of the Academy website

How much detail should you include in your plan?

The plan doesn't have to break down every minute detail, just the very broad outline. For example at the main outline level for an adults thesis, it could be as simple as this:

Month	Activities/Goal
1	Basic research, find some internet sites and books for ideas and information. Goal - Know basic contents to include and find appropriate sources to read up on.
2	Information gathering, rough notes & bullet points for each section. Goal - Write Introduction & have all needed information ready to write up.
3	Working on the main body of the thesis Goal: Complete one main section per week
4	Find or take some photos to illustrate each section, re-visit each section to check and possibly expand. Goal - all main sections complete.
5	Write summary and add the references section. Goal - All information complete, final proof-reading, get it checked by someone
6	Final checks, tidy up. Print and prepare for submission Goal - Completed and two copies printed ready for submission by end of month

Then, for each month you should have a similar plan with a basic overview week by week.

Don't leave the planning until the last minute!!

Your training plan is a very useful tool to ensure you are properly prepared for your exam, and by the time you submit your initial application you should be fully prepared and ready to begin. With a proper plan that should be easy as you know exactly what to do each step of the way.

Sample Training Plan Summary - Adults

	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept
General								
Thesis	Agree topic with Master Olpin	Basic Research	Rough notes/ Bullet point each section	Main body of thesis. s section / week	Photos for each section.	Summary and intro. Get it checked.	Final tidy up, print and submit.	Review thesis before exam
Pattern Breakdown								
Goal 1 – Technical								
Goal 2 – Fitness								
Goal 3 – Academy								
Goal 4 – Personal								
Personal Demo								
Fitness Training								
Technical Training								

Note - The examples only show a typical entry for one aspect, obviously your actual plan should cover all aspects of the Black Belt Handbook.

Sample Monthly Plan - Adults

	Week 1 _/_/_	Week 2 _/_/_	Week 3 _/_/_	Week 4 _/_/_	Week 5 _/_/_
General					
Thesis	Spend an hour on google searching for relevant web sites	1 hour, review all bookmarked sites and decide which are best	1 hour, decide which topics are most important to include in thesis	Rough set of topics to include. Draft table of contents.	
Pattern Breakdown					
Goal 1 – Technical					
Goal 2 – Fitness					
Goal 3 – Academy					
Goal 4 – Personal					
Personal Demo					
Fitness Training					

Note - The examples only show a typical entry for one aspect, obviously your actual plan should cover all aspects of the Black Belt Handbook.

“Plan your work, work your plan”

Sample Training Plan Summary - Juniors

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
General					
Thesis	Discuss and agree topic with Master Olpin	Get some library books and make notes for sections	Write up notes and take photos for each section	Write up final project and get ready to hand in	
Goal 1 – Technical					
Goal 2 – Fitness					
Goal 3 – Academy					
Goal 4 – Personal					
Personal Demo					
Fitness Training					

Note - The examples only show a typical entry for one aspect, obviously your actual plan should cover all aspects of the Black Belt Handbook.

Sample Monthly Plan - Juniors

	Week 1 _/_/_	Week 2 _/_/_	Week 3 _/_/_	Week 4 _/_/_	Week 5 _/_/_
General					
Thesis					
Goal 1 – Technical					
Goal 2 - Fitness	Do my circuit on mon, wed, fri	mon, wed, fri Add 5 reps per set	mon, wed, fri Add 5 reps per set	mon, wed, fri Add 5 reps per set	
Goal 3 – Academy					
Goal 4 – Personal	Practice my guitar at least 10 mins per day	Practice my guitar at least 10 mins per day	Practice my guitar at least 10 mins per day	Practice my guitar at least 10 mins per day	
Personal Demo					
Fitness Training					
Martial Arts Training	Attend 2 classes, practice all patterns at weekend	Attend 2 classes, practice all patterns at weekend	Attend 2 classes, practice all patterns at weekend	Attend 2 classes, practice all patterns at weekend	

Note - The examples only show a few typical entries, obviously your actual plan should cover all aspects of the Black Belt Handbook.

Training Journal

Training Journal

The candidate is expected to make full use of the whole pre-grading period (3 months for juniors, 6 months for adults) and not to leave everything to the last minute.

To encourage this and to assist them in monitoring their own progress the candidate is required to keep an online journal on the Academy forum.

This should chart their progress in relation to your training plan and discuss both the success and the challenges that you meet along the way.

Your weekly review

Your journal must include at least one entry as a formal review of your week which should include at least the following:

- A general overview of the past week
- Your progress in relation to your training plan.
- Notable successes this week
- Challenges you have met
- Your fitness and martial arts training over the past week
- The work you have done on your pattern breakdown, thesis etc.
- Your plan for the next week, any changes to your original plan
- Any other notes or observations you feel appropriate.

You may start your journal prior to your initial application and in fact this is actively encouraged to record your progress in setting your initial goals.

Recording your journal online

Candidates are required to keep an on-line version of their journal on the Academy discussion forum. Each candidate will have a personal thread in the Black Belt candidates section of the forum where they can submit their entries. It is expected they will make regular entries to help chart and focus on their progress.

You must make at least one journal entry each week, to be submitted no later than 9pm on the Sunday evening at the end of the week. You are however reminded that this is the absolute minimum and **candidates for black belt would be expected to aim for much more than the bare minimum**. You should note that the effort made and example set to others will have a bearing on the final assessment.

This is not an optional component. The journal is a very important part of the process so if for any reason you are unable to post a required journal entry you must let us know.

There is a strict 'three-strikes' rule applied, and the consequences of not maintaining your journal may result in the candidate being excluded from the examination.

Final submission - printed journal

You are required to submit a printed copy of your journal with your final submission so you should also keep a copy on your computer.

Your submission should be a properly formatted document, not simply a print out from the forum posts. We recommend that you keep this up to date each time you update your journal.

Don't leave this until the last minute in case of problems with the forum!

Training Journal Template

This is an example of the structure of a typical journal entry. Whilst you are not required to duplicate this exactly you should include all the information

Summary: A brief overview of the week from a personal perspective.

Achievements Detail anything of note that you have achieved this week

Challenges: Challenges you have faced and what you have done or intend to do about them.

Goals:

Martial Arts What have I done towards this goal this week?
Have I achieved what I planned to do?
If not what am I going to do about it?

Fitness What have I done towards my goal this week.
Have I achieved what I planned to do?
If not what am I going to do about it?

Contribution What have I done towards my goal this week.
Have I achieved what I planned to do?
If not what am I going to do about it?

Personal What have I done towards my goal this week.
Have I achieved what I planned to do?
If not what am I going to do about it?

Thesis/Project What have I done towards my goal this week.
Have I achieved what I planned to do?
If not what am I going to do about it?

Training

Give a brief overview of the training you have done this week, both in class and at home

Next week:

Give a brief overview of what you plan to achieve next week. What does your plan say? Do you anticipate any challenges along the way?

Notes:

Anything else you want to add,

Be Honest - with yourself!

Your training journal should be an honest appraisal of your progress, good or bad.

It is not a case of writing what you think 'we' want to hear, it's about the process you go through to plan, review, and adapt your actions along the way to hold yourself accountable for your progress towards your goals.

It's important to recognise the challenges as well as the successes, and figuring out how to overcome the things which didn't go as well..

You should make reference to your training plan and include any periodic adjustments you may need to make to keep you on track.

Sample of an Adult's Journal Entry

Summary:

Quite a tough week really as work has been crazy and I've been travelling a lot so lots of early mornings, late nights and not much of time for training, though sitting in hotel rooms I had plenty of time to work on my thesis!

Achievements

As I've been stuck in a hotel for a couple of nights with nothing to do I managed to get a lot done on my thesis and manages a couple of workouts in the hotel gym too. Had a good chat on zoom with Master Olpin about my thesis and that really helped to clarify a few points I was stalled on.

Challenges this week

As I've been on the road all week I only managed to get to class one time which was a bit frustrating as I need to work on my kicking goal

Martial Arts

Didn't get to the open session this week so I wasn't able to work on the bags this week, though I did manage some leg strength drills in my hotel room so I did achieve most of my planned 3 sessions of strength and focus drills. I'm home all week next week so I should be on target for 3 good sessions.

Fitness

*Being in the hotel this week was great as I was able to get a couple of good workouts in *and* run through the fitness test exercises twice which was on track with my plan so I'm very happy with that. Next week I'm aiming to get to the gym on Wednesday and Friday evenings to use the treadmill, aiming to do 5k each session.*

Contribution

On Monday evening I helped with an intro for a junior student and then took part of the adult beginners class. Used the opportunity to work on 'looking at the technique from alternative views'. Thankfully the adult beginners are very keen and make things pretty easy in this respect!

Master Olpin has given me some notes on 'classroom management' and some info about best practice in how to use the 'praise/correct/praise sandwich' when making corrections in class so next week I'm going to be putting this into practice in the children's classes.

Personal

My ongoing plan includes 15 minutes guitar practice every day but unfortunately with my work commitments I didn't get to practice much at all this week, I only managed a couple of short sessions which meant I didn't make a lot of progress on the piece I'd been learning for my lesson. This means next week I'll be working on the same piece again but I've also booked in a double lesson for Saturday afternoon to try and catch up a bit and no trips planned for work so I should be able to practice every day.

Thesis

I'm really happy with my progress this week. I had two evenings when I was stuck in the hotel so I got two really good editing sessions and I'm happy now that I have all the text content in place. With the tips I got from Master Olpin I was able to complete the section I was stuck on last week which is great as I'm now well ahead of my plan. This is where I wanted to be by the end of the month so I'm going to use this for a bit of bonus time to make a list of some additional illustrations I could use and will get some photos to show the application of the techniques with a partner.

Training This Week

Although I only got to class one time I still managed to do some training each day and managed all the planned training for my goals.. I managed my daily reps every day and did all three planned leg strength sessions too.

Plan for the next week

Next week I should be able to get to class all three evenings and gym on weds and friday too. Have asked a couple of the others to get together on Tuesday for a patterns session to give each other some critique and hopefully tidy everything up a bit.

As my thesis is ahead of plan I'm going to take a few days rest from that and get some more guitar practice in. Having a day out with the family on Sunday too so I'll probably do my weekly review post on Saturday evening this week, but will be checking in most days to see how everyone else is doing too!

Progress Reviews and Mentoring

All candidates are expected to liaise with their instructors on a regular basis to discuss and show examples of their progress in relation to their plan, and to seek advice and feedback on their black belt goals as necessary.

A fundamental expectation of a Black Belt is that they take a degree of personal responsibility. It is therefore important that the candidate demonstrates a pro-active approach to this and asks for such advice rather than reminding their instructor to be reminding them or chasing them for updates.

Candidates are encouraged to make good use of the Academy discussion forum and discord chat group to ask questions and discuss their progress with other students, Black Belts and Leadership Team members.

Monthly Review Meetings

Regardless of any other discussions, at the end of each month all candidates are required to meet with their instructor for a brief progress meeting.

At this meeting they should be able to:

- Summarise their progress over the last month
- Show examples of ongoing work towards their goals
- Submit an outline plan for the next month

Availability

There are a number of opportunities to meet with Master Olpin at the school:

- **Open Training sessions:**
Monday 18:00 - 18:45 (*by prior arrangement*)
Tuesday 20:00 - 21:00
- **Adult Black Belt review:**
Monday 21:00 - 21:15

Master Olpin is also available outside class times via email or telephone at any time, and is happy to do a review via zoom during office hours. We also have our 'Discord' chat available 24/7 to chat to other members at any time.

Thesis / Project

Overview

All candidates are required to complete a thesis or personal project relating to the study of the martial arts. It is intended that the thesis will represent your own personal interests and therefore you should choose a topic which is genuinely interesting to you and which you would like to study further.

This is a major contribution towards your final submission and will have a significant bearing on your promotion.

Overview The expectations for adults and juniors are rather different, though in both cases the subject matter must to be agreed with the chief instructor, prior to submitting your application.

Adults: Adults will produce a written thesis or research project related to the study of Martial Arts. Your application should include a brief overview of what you are going to write about, and why. Remember, you need to be able to back up what you say with facts and evidence of where you got the information from.

Juniors: Junior students are not expected to produce an academic style thesis (though they may if they want to). They may prefer to produce a more creative submission including pictures etc which is perfectly acceptable providing the final submission demonstrates they have made a consistent effort towards it.

Length For adults it is expected that the thesis will be a minimum of 5000 words (2000 for 12-15 years).

There is no minimum word count for juniors under 12.

It should be clear for all candidates that the content of the project demonstrates a serious commitment.

You have at least six months from the date of your 1st Kup promotion, it should be clear that you have used this time wisely and not left your thesis to the last minute.

References Your Thesis must be properly referenced. This means you must list fully any books, magazines, websites (including the full web address) or any other materials that you use. You should list the pages etc you have referenced. This will be checked.

e.g. Information for "The Method of Testing Your Potential to Do a Front Split" was taken from: "The Science of Sports Training. Kurz, Thomas. 3rd Ed. p 60 -> 86". and the website http://www.stadion.com/column_stretch3.html

Plagiarism Remember, you are expected to present your information in your own words. Whilst it is quite acceptable to use short quotes/facts etc from published sources (for example to illustrate a specific point), if you do so then they must be clearly labelled and referenced as above.

If there is any evidence of plagiarism of another work (including other theses, books or web sites) the candidate will be excluded from the examination, and may face further disciplinary action.

Questions Make sure you understand what you are writing about. In the final examination you may be asked detailed questions about your thesis topic.

Copyright The Academy reserves the right to store or publish the thesis, in its entirety or in part, either in printed or electronic format. In the event of publication in any form, full credit will be given to the author of the work. Copyright of any submitted thesis will be shared equally between the Ilyokwan Black Belt Academy and the submitting author.

Submission The thesis should be typed and submitted as both a printed version and supplied in an electronic format (via email or USB) suitable for reading on a desktop computer.

Juniors may receive assistance with typing of the thesis, but if they do they should include all their original hand-written work as evidence they did it themselves. Parents should not be doing it for them!

Examples of previous thesis topics:

Adult: The evolution of the Martial Arts from East to West
The history behind the Taekwondo Pattern Names
A comparison of traditional martial arts & military combatives
Applying sports science to traditional martial arts
The link between pressure points & western medicine.
Flexibility training for the martial arts practitioner.
Mind, Body and Spirit in the martial arts, what, how, why?
Martial arts is all in the mind.
Martial Arts and the older Adult - A personal view
Visualisation in the Martial Arts: Harnessing the power of mental imagery for Taekwondo students

Junior: The history of Taekwondo
The history behind the Taekwondo Pattern Names
A comparison of different martial arts from around the world
A study on Taekwondo kicks and how to train them
Martial arts weapons from around the world
Martial arts in the movies

Pattern Analysis

(adults only)

"I seek not only to follow
in the footsteps of the men of old,
I seek the things they sought."

Overview

Establishing a deep understanding of traditional techniques is a very important part of our training, and this is a foundation of black belt training in almost all martial arts. As such our adult Black belt candidates are required to undertake a deeper study of the techniques which make up a pattern of their choice, and to submit both a written analysis and a demonstration of their findings.

Basic Requirements

The purpose of the pattern breakdown is to demonstrate that the candidate has made an in-depth study of the applications of the techniques within the form and can demonstrate multiple applications in context.

Your analysis should include at least two applications for EVERY move in the pattern, to include a basic explanation suitable for a beginner student who is first learning the technique, plus as many advanced applications as you can.

You should remember that each technique can be interpreted in many different ways and that every part of the move can be effective in it's own right, not just the 'snapshot' implied by the name of the technique or a photograph in a book.

In your submission you may further illustrate your work with any photographs or diagrams if you feel they help the explanation..

You should record the time spent in preparation of your pattern breakdown in your journal

Choice of Pattern

1 st dan	Won Hyo or higher
2 nd dan	Hwa Rang or Higher
3 rd dan	Any Black Belt form

Going Beyond the basics

Credit will be given for additional explanation of combinations, intermediate movements, stances, posture etc. You should include anything you think relevant.

Remember:

Any part of the body, in any part of the movement could be doing something, but you do not have to explain every part of the movement in every technique, just the part which applies to each particular application demonstrated.

Final Examinations

The grading examiner may select a number of techniques from your chosen pattern and you will be required to demonstrate your understanding of these during the final examination.

It is expected that you can clearly explain and demonstrate every technique effectively with a semi-compliant partner to prove you have practiced them and fully understand their application.

You may be asked to demonstrate your techniques with more than one partner so please practice them thoroughly with more than one person!

Choice Technique

You will be given an opportunity to demonstrate one 'featured' section of the pattern of your own choice. Typically this would be at least one full combination of 3-5 moves which is representative of that particular pattern.

It is suggested that you choose a section which you can explain thoroughly and prepare suitable demonstrations of your applications for that part.

For this part you can prepare your demonstrations with a specific partner prior to the examination if you wish.

Written Paper

Overview

Approximately two weeks before the submission date, the candidate will be given a written examination paper.

The examination will consist of approximately 20 questions on all aspects of training including:

- Martial arts history and philosophy
- Ilyokwan history and philosophy
- Aspects of our traditional Taekwondo training
- Theory and principles relating to the Ilyokwan cross-training syllabus
- Your preparation for the exam and your final submission
- Your strengths and weaknesses
- Your current goals and future training plans
- Your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a black belt holder.

The candidate can complete the examination in their own time using any research means at their disposal.

The answers must be in the student's own words, any evidence of plagiarism will result in the candidates exclusion from the Black Belt testing.

The answers must be typed and returned with the final grading application.

During the final assessment phase, questions may be asked on the answers given.

It is expected that you will keep the contents of this examination private and not share them with other students as this would give them an unfair advantage at future examinations.

Personal Demonstration

Overview

Candidates are required to prepare a short personal demonstration to be performed at the black belt grading and selected elements will be demonstrated at the subsequent graduation event.

This demonstration should give the candidate an opportunity to showcase their own personal style and 'personality' in their martial arts.

The demonstration should be planned in a similar manner to the type of display we might perform at a public demonstration - *i.e. It is intended to be an entertaining display of the candidates martial arts skill rather than an educational or instructional lesson.*

Compulsory Requirements

The demonstration should be at least 5 minutes, maximum 15 minutes in duration and must include at least the following compulsory elements:

- **Traditional** Martial Arts (i.e. some element of basics / forms etc)
- **Self Defence** against one or more simulated opponents
- A **weapons** display (either traditional forms and/or self-defence)
- **Power** or Destruction Techniques (on bags/pads or wooden boards)

Optional Extras

- You may choose to demonstrate additional material if you wish and credit will be given for doing so. Examples might include further partner drills, kicking / pad drills, creative forms etc.
- Music may be used if you wish, though it is not expected.
- Credit will be given for demonstrations which are clearly well organised & rehearsed, and which would be suitable for public displays.

Preparation for your demonstration

You are required to submit a plan for your demonstration with your final application so we can see it has been clearly thought through and not just made up on the spot.

The demonstration is to be fully prepared and rehearsed by the candidate prior to the grading. You should start well in advance of the grading date to allow time to arrange suitable assistants (if required) and to properly rehearse your demo.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to organise your assistants. If you need time to practice with other students you need to allow plenty of notice and flexibility for them to fit this in around their own training time. Remember: *They are doing you a favour so it's only polite to ask nicely and to work around them.*

It is your responsibility to organise all equipment needed for you demo so if you need wooden boards for breaking etc please order these well in advance as if we have to order them in from our suppliers and they may take some time to arrive.

You should include your preparation for the demonstration in your training plan and journal entries.

Demonstrations at the Grading & Graduation

To be fair to all candidates the order in which the demonstrations are performed will be drawn at random on the day.

If a student is unsuccessful in their grading examination they will not be expected to perform a demonstration at graduation, but of course will be very welcome to do so if they wish.

The Black Belt Examination

Final testing

The final physical Black Belt examination consists of two parts each lasting approximately two hours.

1 – General Syllabus Examination

All candidates, including juniors, will first attend the regular coloured belt examination appropriate to the adult masters students.

They will perform all the same requirements as the lower grades and during this stage they will be assessed on their technical proficiency in all areas of the grading syllabus.

They may be asked to perform additional material individually at any point during this assessment, or to assist with the coloured belt candidates as required.

Theory questions

As a black belt it is reasonable to assume that other students may look to you for advice and inspiration in their own training. We must be sure that not only can you perform the techniques required but also that you have a sound understanding of the theory behind them therefore throughout the grading candidates will be asked a number of questions about theory and techniques from both the traditional taekwondo, our own syllabus requirements and the philosophy and aims of the Ilyokwan Black Belt Academy.

After this first section is complete and the lower grades have been dismissed we will have a short 15-20 minute break for refreshments.

2 – Individual Assessments

This section will also include additional advanced testing, plus the assessment of those specific requirements which only apply to Black Belt candidates, including:

- Personal Demonstrations
- Advanced self-defence (multi opponents / weapons (adults only) etc.)
- Destruction / Power tests
- Further theory questions
- Testing/demonstration of successful goals
- Pattern breakdowns (adults only)
- Questions relating to your personal thesis and written examination.

**This stage of the examination is strictly confidential and is held in private.
The nature of this assessment must not be discussed
with anyone outside of the examination.**

Syllabus Requirements

Traditional Taekwondo Syllabus

Although we have a very open ended training system, we believe it is important to maintain a solid grounding in a traditional art within our syllabus. Therefore, Black Belt candidates are expected to meet the basic syllabus requirements of the traditional Chang-Hong Taekwondo syllabus to black belt standard.

You should be both technically competent and show confidence in all the following areas:

Fundamentals All stances, blocks, strikes and kicking variants

Pairwork 3 step sparring
2 step Sparring
1-step sparring

Patterns All taekwondo patterns to the current grade
1st Dan Chon Ji, Dan Gun, Do San
Won Hyo, Yul Gok, Joong Gun,
Toi Gye, Hwa Rang, Choong Moo
2nd Dan Kwang Gae, Po Eun, Gae Baek
3rd Dan Ko Dang, Eui Am, Choong Jang

Self Defence Both traditional and practical vs single or multiple attackers

Free Sparring With confident technique and excellent control throughout. Including 2 vs 1

Power (optional) All four limbs.
Credit will be given for difficulty of technique.
Juniors will demonstrate on bags/pads,
Adults will perform power tests on breaker boards.

Theory

History & Tradition

You should be able to explain the history of Taekwondo including names of important people and the dates of key events.

Tenets of Taekwondo

You should be able to explain the Tenets and how they relate to your own personal training.

Belt Colours

You should know the meaning of all the Belt Colours and why they were chosen.

Patterns

You should be able to explain the meaning behind each pattern name. Black belts should be able to provide significantly more information than the 'text book' answers recited by junior students.

Korean Terminology

You should be able to name every technique that you perform, whether in basics, set-sparring, patterns etc. Including all stances, blocks, punches, strikes, kicks etc. In addition, you should be confident in the general terminology applicable to the art of Taekwondo, including the names of equipment, commands etc.

Other Syllabus

Kali / Panantukan

Footwork, basic striking and blocking, trapping, flow drills, destruction techniques

Kali / Escrima

Single/double stick fundamentals, single stick form, single/double stick pairwork

Self defence, disarms and counters

Hapkido

Basic principles of control & restraint

Arm bars & Joint locks, including defences

Takedowns and ground control

Torite Jutsu

Adult candidates should have a basic knowledge of the concept of TCM 'pressure points' and how they apply in a martial arts context

Candidate should be familiar with the DSI core syllabus and pairwork drills

Additional requirements

Ilyo Mu Do Kwan

As a Black Belt within the Academy you should be able to explain the history of the Academy, and it's fundamental principles.

You should understand what 'Ilyo' means and how that philosophy is reflected in our training style.

Principles

You should have a solid grounding in the concept of principles-based training, which we commonly refer to as 'players to the game' and be able to explain how that style of training differs from other schools with a traditional syllabus.

You should be able to explain many of these principles and how they apply to our training.

Weapons

Adult candidates should be able to demonstrate an understanding of self defence principles and appropriate techniques against a variety of weapons, including knives and edged weapons, short sticks and firearms.

Personal Development

The successful candidate will have demonstrated an understanding of the principles of personal development and how we can apply those principles both in our martial arts training and in the rest of our lives.

Requirements for higher Black Belt promotions

Leading by Example

In the martial arts the Black Belt is a universally recognised symbol which carries with it the responsibility to maintain its value and integrity at all times.

Clearly the holder of a black belt rank has a perceived position of leadership & influence over the lower ranked students. The example you set can have a significant bearing on the attitudes of those who look up to you, and therefore it a significant factor in your consideration for an advanced promotion.

It is expected that you take a very pro-active approach to both your own training, your support for the Academy and your fellow students.

We expect to see consistently excellent attendance at class and regular support for Academy events, online forums, promotional activities etc.

The key word is pro-active, you should be taking the initiative rather than having to be asked or reminded to do things.

Promotion beyond 1st Degree

For promotion above first dan our fundamental expectations do not change, we are simply looking for a much deeper level of understanding, and a clearly higher level of natural proficiency across all aspects of the curriculum.

For ranks up to third degree the grading process is identical, but obviously the expectations of your technical standard, background knowledge and commitment are significantly higher.

Promotion to fourth degree and higher ranks will be strictly by invitation only and the format and requirements will be agreed in advance with the Master Instructor and examination panel.

The wearer of the Black Belt should command respect by the example they set, and should be seen to aim for the highest personal standards at all times.

Syllabus requirements.

A big part of the Ilyokwan philosophy is that we do not believe that simply learning more techniques 'parrot fashion' is beneficial, rather it is better to focus on developing a much deeper understanding of our techniques and the principles and 'players' used in their application. The goal is not to keep adding more techniques but to make them work for us much more effectively, subconsciously and reliably.

All candidates should be able to explain the application of their techniques and demonstrate them confidently in a variety of applications. For higher black belt ranks it is expected that the level of understanding and variety of applications would be significantly improved and that will be reflected in your ability to 'think on your feet' and analyse something new.

Higher Patterns

The only specific additional syllabus for higher black belt promotions is the practice of additional patterns as defined in the traditional Chang-Hon style of Taekwondo.

These are:

2nd Dan

Kwang-Gae, Po-Eun and Ge Baek

3rd Dan

Ko-Dang, Eui-Am and Choon-Jang

Gaining a Black Belt does not qualify you to teach!

It is important to remember that the black belt is a recognition of your personal martial arts progress, but it does not confer any qualification or authorisation to teach others.

To be an instructor requires further training, formal coaching qualifications, vetting checks, insurance and many hours of supervised coaching practice.

If you are interested in coaching there are opportunities to do so within the Academy, but you must only do so under the authority and supervisions of a qualified instructor.

This is very important from a safeguarding, legal and insurance perspective, so you must never offer any form of instruction to others without proper authority to do so from a fully qualified instructor.

**Please ensure you have
read these notes thoroughly.**

When you submit your application for Black Belt testing you confirm that you fully understand and agree with these requirements. If you are unsure about any point please don't make assumptions or take anything for granted, you should ASK for further advice as soon as possible.



“A black belt will do today
what others won't,
so that tomorrow they can do
what others can't”