

# Australian Naginata Federation Kyu Grading Standards and Eligibility

by the ANF Technical Committee, 2026

## 1. Rationale

This document is the first time the kyu grading standards, and kyu grading timeframes, have been put into writing in detail. It is our hope that these guidelines will assist instructors in making appropriate judgements about grading timeframes, eligibility and standards, whilst supporting ANF students through the maintenance of high expectations for kyu grades.

Whilst this document attempts to clarify these standards, there may be times where there is confusion or disagreement in interpretation. Should this be the case, questions and further clarification about kyu grading procedures and content are to be decided by the ANF Technical Committee.

## 2. ANF Standard Gradings

The standards which follow set out the requirements for 'ANF Standard Gradings.' From time to time, there may be reasons to deviate from these standards, for example, when a visiting senior Japanese instructor presides over the grading, or when a grading is to be conducted remotely. In circumstances such as this, the ANF Technical Committee is to advise the membership as early as practical that the grading will be non-standard. Any requests for modification to a standard grading must be submitted to the ANF Technical Committee as early as possible, preferably no less than one month prior.

## 3. Grading Eligibility

Instructors will require that a person engages in frequent and regular training, over a period of time, before that person can be eligible to attempt a grading. If a person attends training only sporadically or infrequently, or does not apply themselves during training, then that person is not to attempt a grading. A grading attempt is the culmination of a person's consistent effort and discipline over a period of time, not merely a technical benchmark. Similarly, if a student has not demonstrated the required technical proficiency during training, they must not be put forward for grading. The periods of frequent and regular training required of each kyu grade are as follows:

- 10th kyu (children only) - 3 months
- 9th kyu (children only) - 3 months
- 8th kyu (children only) - 3 months
- 7th kyu (children only) - 3 months
- 6th kyu - 3 months
- 5th kyu - 3 months
- 4th kyu - 3 months
- 3rd kyu - 3 months
- 2nd kyu - 3 months
- 1st kyu - 6 months

Therefore, an adult training regularly and frequently in Naginata could attain 1st kyu in 21 months. A club may hold up to 4 kyu gradings per year. Where possible, these gradings should fall around January, April, July and October. Some flexibility in timeframes is allowed for practical scheduling of gradings, so '3 months' does not strictly need to be exactly 90 days, but may be slightly less.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Awarding Grades

Grades are awarded exclusively based on the candidate's display of technical level at the grading. Whilst a student's effort, discipline, engagement and progress are considered for their grading eligibility, these factors are not to be taken into consideration when awarding a grade. Nor are prior training, personal situations, relationships and contributions to be considered. The grading examiner or panel is to closely observe the technical level of the candidates during the grading, and award or deny a grade based on this alone.

The required skills to be demonstrated for each grading are as follows:

Grade	Basic Skills (kiso)	Waza	Equipment	Special Note
10-7 kyu	Men-uchi, Uchi-kaeshi (forward only)	Shikake Oji 1 & 2	Naginata only. No armour.	
6 kyu	Joge buri, Ashi sabaki Datotsu: men-uchi Uchi-kaeshi	Shikake Oji 1 & 2	Naginata only. No armour.	
5 & 4 kyu	Joge buri, Ashi sabaki Datotsu: men-uchi, sokumen, sune-uchi Uchi-kaeshi	Shikake Oji 1 & 2	Naginata only. No armour.	
3 kyu	Joge buri, Ashi sabaki Datotsu: men-uchi, sokumen, sune-uchi Uchi-kaeshi	Shikake Oji 1, 2 & 4	Naginata only. No armour.	
2 kyu	Joge buri, Ashi sabaki Datotsu: men-uchi, sokumen, sune-uchi, do-uchi, kote uchi Uchi-kaeshi	Shikake Oji 1-5 inclusive	Naginata only. No armour.	
1 kyu	Joge buri, Ashi sabaki Datotsu: men-uchi, sokumen, sune-uchi, do uchi, kote-uchi Uchi-kaeshi, Kakari-geiko	Shikake Oji 1-5 inclusive.	Naginata only. No armour.	Kakari-geiko is with 'motodachi' who is in armour.

## 5. Required Standard

When deciding whether to award a grade, the examiner or panel must maintain high expectations of the candidates, with an understanding that each kyu grade represents a level of improvement from the previous one. Positive aspects of a candidate's technical proficiency during the grading should be noted and taken into account. However, if a candidate does not meet the required standard, the grade must not be awarded. If there is any doubt or confusion about the required standard, or a candidate's performance, technical ability or suitability, advice may be sought from one or more senior ANF instructors.

The following standard is required of a successful 1st kyu candidate, to be demonstrated for the duration of the grading:

### Uniform and Appearance

- Clean white keiko-gi and black (preferred) or navy hakama
- Uniform worn correctly
- Hair worn neatly
- No jewellery
- Tattoos to be covered where possible
- Allowances are to be made for items which must be worn for a genuine religious reason

### Technique

- Correct posture
- Correct hand position
- Correct distance
- Correct gaze
- Reasonably good hanmi
- Minor to non-existent nusumi-ashi
- Correct hasuji
- Strikes are on target with the mono-uchi
- Strikes are received at the correct distance, using the mono-uchi

### Kiai

- Hassei should be clear, strong, short, and in time with each strike.

### Kakari-geiko

- Minor errors are tolerable, but an emphasis is placed on hitting the opponent safely and correctly.
- No strikes to unprotected areas, such as feet, knees, elbows and shoulders.

Recipients of 1st kyu must be able to demonstrate a consistently high degree of competency across the requirements of shodan, so that there is no doubt about their readiness when they are presented to shogo-level examiners for their first dan grading. The remaining 6 months of training time before a shodan grading should be spent on reinforcement and further development of kiai, zanshin, timing, etc.<sup>2</sup>

## **6. Notifying the ANF**

The ANF President, Vice President, Secretary, and members of the Technical Committee, must be notified of a planned grading, and of subsequent grading results, as early as is practical. As a guideline, it would be appropriate to advise the ANF, via the Secretary, of a planned grading with 4 weeks notice, and grading results should be reported within 1 week. The examiner in charge is to update the Grading Result Form.

### Footnotes

1. This reflects a break from the traditional 6-month time required between each kyu grading, to allow beginners a more immediate goal towards which they can train. In Japan, where training for 15 hours per week is not uncommon, it is more usual for it to take 30 months to reach 1st kyu.
2. It is not practical to list requirements for every single kyu grade, because it is impossible to account for all the variations in technique that can appear in each potential grading candidate at each level. However, it is appropriate to maintain high expectations during all kyu gradings with the purpose of achieving the aforementioned capabilities by the time the person is ready to grade for 1st kyu.