

## GRADINGS AT BLOOMSBURY AIKIDO CLUB

### Aikido Practice and the Grading System

Bloomsbury Aikido Club meets to practise Aikido in the spirit of its Founder, O Sensei Morihei Ueshiba. The grading system is important to this practice in that it provides a structure to and recognition of an individual student's Aikido development. The system helps to ensure that training standards and technical correctness are upheld and that Aikido is passed down in its traditional form. However, gradings should be viewed in a proper perspective as a training tool and not as the reason for training. Aikido is more than a technical martial practice: it encompasses a spiritual aspect and a philosophy that needs to be expressed and encouraged in students.

There are various categories of practitioners: beginners, guests and visitors as well as the Club's own members, whether regular or occasional. All categories are welcome for training at my classes. However, where preparation for grading is concerned, there must be a commitment to regular practice, training steadfastly throughout the year and not just when you feel that it is about time that you should try to get your next grade. An extension of such a commitment is a commitment to your Club: to support your fellow practitioners and your teacher.

### Eligibility for Grading at Bloomsbury Aikido Club

Refs.: Goshinkai (GSK) Grading Syllabus and Minimum Grading Requirements.

I will hold Kyu grading examinations at the Club several times per year, depending on the readiness of candidates. If you wish to be eligible for grading at this Club, you need to become a regular student of mine, i.e. a Club member practising regularly (twice a week or more) at the Club throughout the year. You will willingly support other students who are preparing for gradings at different times to yourself, whatever their level. The form of this support should include attendance at class, doing your best to practise with flowing movement and blending with (not blocking) your practice partner, attending any mock gradings and the grading itself, either as observers or, if at a suitable grade, taking part in the examinations as uke.

Senior Kyu grades (3<sup>rd</sup> kyu and above) should attend some of the Goshinkai General Courses. The GSK annually holds several one day courses and a Spring and Autumn Weekend course. GSK Dan gradings are held at the Spring and Autumn weekends.

### Bloomsbury Aikido Club Kyu Grading Protocol

- Students who are considering applying for a grading should discuss their preparations in good time with the Head of Dojo.
- Permission to grade must be sought, in writing, from Head of Dojo. I need to be confident that the prospective candidate is of the required standard. If permission is given, it will be confirmed in writing.
- An examiner has the right to refuse permission for a grading.
- It is always good to thank your instructor(s) after a grading.
- The candidate should undergo more intensive training for 2 months before the test.
- The candidate should have attended the previous Club grading and, if appropriate, taken part as uke.
- Grading forms must be filled in correctly and submitted to the Head of Dojo, along with the GSK membership book complete with insurance slip, in good time before the grading.
- GSK membership and insurance must be valid.

### The Grading Test

- Potential fitness, age, disabilities and injuries are taken into account to ensure all students are given equal opportunity to develop and progress.
- The examiner (Head of Dojo) issues positive commands and clear directions. A clear definition is made between each change of technique so there is no overlap. Uke may be changed every 2/3 minutes, if necessary. Senior uke should be reserved for the senior applicants.
- The candidate is given the best chance of passing. The examiner is not looking for opportunities to fail the candidate.
- In the event of any misunderstanding or error on the part of the candidate, the examiner will halt the proceedings and correct what the candidate is doing.
- Full focus, commitment and attention all through the test is expected from candidate, uke and examiner. There should be no show of emotion, shaking of the head at bad technique, etc.
- In the event of a decision not to pass, the examiner will have a meeting with the candidate to explain the decision and to set out an action plan to prepare the candidate for a retake.