



CANADIAN AIKIDO FEDERATION TECHNICAL POLICY

Identification

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Application: This policy applies to all dojos in the Canadian Aikido Federation (CAF).

Enquiries: Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be directed to the CAF Secretary. The Secretary email and mailing information can be found on the CAF website: <http://www.canadianaikidofederation.ca/index.php>

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Introduction

This policy is intended to provide direction as to all technical aspects of Aikido with regards to structure of the Examination Committee, testing, promotions, the Shidojin System and Shihan nomination.

Context

Aikido is a Japanese Martial art which is hierarchical in nature. Students of Aikido progress through the different levels of rank by passing required tests as laid out in the CAF Testing Requirements, and at senior levels (5th dan and above) by recommendation. Students can be promoted by recommendation at levels below 5th dan but these situations occur only where the Aikidoist is unable to test.

Definitions

CAF Aikidoist – Is an Aikidoist of any level practicing in any dojo which is a registered with the Canadian Aikido Federation.

Examination Committee – The term Examination Committee refers to the combined Examination and Technical Committee. From this point forward, the term Technical Committee will cease to be used in favour of Examination Committee.

Remote Dojo – For the purposes of this document, “remote dojo” refers to a dojo that is not within a practical driving distance from a major city centre (other than the community where it is located) where seminars or camps are held at least fairly frequently. Dojos wishing to have remote dojo status must apply to the CAF Board of Directors through the CAF Secretary.

Shidojin – For the purposes of these TORs the term “Shidojin” is used to refer to both Active and Inactive CAF Shidojin exclusively, not for Shidojin from other organizations. For more information on Active and Inactive Shidojin, please refer to the Shidojin System for Canadian Aikido Federation document.

Shihan – An honorific title meaning Master Level Instructor.

Chapter 1 - EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide an explanation of the composition of the Exam Committee and its responsibilities.

Examination Committee Structure

The Examination Committee is a permanent committee of 6th dan and higher members CAF Shihan or Shido-in, appointed by, and serving at the pleasure of, the Technical Director. Under the leadership of the Technical Director, it is the primary source of technical direction to the CAF. Its roles are to ensure that the examinations are conducted in accordance with the CAF requirements, to suggest modifications to those requirements to the CAF Board of directors if advisable, vet promotions by recommendation for approval by the CAF Technical Director, and provide members to sit on Grading Panels for specific Examinations. The Examination Committee is limited to a maximum of 12 members. Nominations are not permanent and senior Canadian Aikidoists may rotate through the Committee as the Technical Director sees fit.

Examination Committee Role

As stated above, the Examination Committee is a permanent committee established by the CAF Board of Directors. The Examination Committee will submit a report on its activities annually, either in person or to the CAF Secretary electronically, summarizing its discussions on tests over the previous year. The committee members should also be prepared to discuss all aspects of testing with the Technical Director at his pleasure.

Examination Committee Responsibilities

- To observe and track the quality of tests of CAF members.
- To provide insight and advice with regard to the CAF grading requirements and grading expectations to CAF members.
- To provide an annual report to the CAF Board of Directors on the quality of tests over the previous year.
- To consider all requests for promotion by recommendation as described in the “Promotion by Recommendation” policy and, if approved, forward them to the Technical Director for final signature. (All requests for promotion by recommendation should be sent to the CAF Secretary who in turn forwards the request to the Examination Committee. All requests must be received by the CAF Secretary no later than Sept. 30th, and by the Technical Director no later than Oct. 31st.)

- In the absence of the Technical Director, to serve as the authority on all technical aspects of Aikido, including, promotions, the Shidojin System and Shihan nominations and to provide members for Grading Panels.

Grading Panel Structure

Grading Panel Structure Grading Panels are ad-hoc groups formed for the purpose of conducting Examinations for 1st, 2nd and 3rd dan testing in the absence of the Technical Director. (1st kyu tests may be conducted by instructors who have attained the rank of 4th dan who are testing their own students; however, Grading Panels may be called upon to perform 1st kyu tests, especially for students of instructors under 4th dan). Grading Panels shall typically be formed of no less than three members of the Examination Committee.

In the case of remote dojos or at seminars where only one Examination Committee member is available to conduct grading for 1st dan tests, one or more CAF Shidojin may be selected to sit on the Grading Panel in consultation with the Examination Committee member on the Grading Panel.

For 2nd dan tests in remote dojos or at seminars where only one or two Examination Committee members is available, two CAF Shidojin may be selected to sit on the Grading Panel in consultation with the Examination Committee member. The CAF Secretary will not process senior tests where the Grading Panel does not meet these criteria. 3rd Dan tests will be conducted under a Panel composed of 3 Exam Committee members.

For a more in-depth description of testing, and who can perform tests for different levels, please see the CAF Testing Policy.

Grading Panel Formation

- When a seminar organizer is not certain that enough Examination Committee members to form a suitable Grading Panel will be available at seminars where senior exams are to be conducted, it is the responsibility of seminar organizers to make a request through the CAF Secretary to the Examination Committee for the formation and attendance of a suitable Grading Panel. This request should be made a minimum of one month prior to the seminar.
- If required, it will be the responsibility of the seminar organizers to cover the travel costs of the Grading Panel where they are attending the seminar for the sole purpose of conducting the tests. Other remuneration may also be offered at the discretion of the hosting dojo.
- As the Grading Panel is an ad-hoc group formed from Examination Committee members only for the purpose of conducting senior level testing, the Grading Panel will only be in existence for the duration of the tests for which it was convened.

Grading Panel Responsibilities

- To conduct fair and unbiased testing using the CAF Grading Requirements as their baseline for techniques to be performed, and using notes provided by the Technical Director and the Examination Committee.
- To provide verbal feedback to the CAF member being tested, if requested.
- To provide a pass or fail decision by majority vote, to be rendered as soon following the test as is reasonable.
- To provide insight and advice with regards to the CAF grading requirements and grading expectations to CAF members.
- To provide feedback to the CAF Examination Committee as a framework for areas in which the CAF Examination Committee should be making particular efforts when providing instruction or guidance to CAF members.

Chapter 2 - SHIDOIN SYSTEM

Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide direction as to the composition, roles and responsibilities of the CAF Shidoin.

Policy Statement

In accordance with Hombu requirements, the CAF awards the title of “shidoin” or senior instructor to certain members, as selected by the Examination Committee and the Technical Director. The title can be revoked at the sole discretion of the Examination Committee and the Technical Director.

Group A shidoin

All persons who served a term as shidoin before 2018, as well as other persons of fifth dan and higher who have not served as shidoin previously and were nominated by the Examination Committee and the Technical Director in 2018, are classified as Group A shidoin.

The title of Group A shidoin is a significant honourific title recognizing years of contribution to Aikido in Canada through instruction.

Group B shidoin

Group B shidoin are normally “emerging” senior instructors, appointed for each province. The goal is to build their expertise in teaching, familiarity with the Aikido community and knowledge of issues affecting Aikido in their province through regular, personal visits to dojos.

Appointments as Group B shidoin last two years. It is expected that they monitor and provide technical support as required to the dojos in their purview. These visits are supportive in nature and must not be conducted in the spirit of an inspection, audit or investigation.

Group B shidoin must be prepared to communicate their insights to the Examination Committee and the Technical Director as required. The relevant dojocho should be fully aware in advance of the content of any such remarks.

Group B shidoins are expected to work within their provincial associations. Where more than one Group B shidoins has been appointed, they should divide the dojos geographically among themselves to make travel most efficient and minimize expense.

Appointment

Ideally, at least one shidoins who meets the minimum Hombu requirement of fourth to fifth dan and has been approved by the Examination Committee and confirmed by the Technical Director should be named as a Group B shidoins for each provincial or territorial association.

The CAF Secretary will formally ask each Provincial/Territorial Association to submit every two years a list of qualified individuals they recommend for appointment as Group B Shidoins for the consideration of the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee may add other suitable candidates to the list at its discretion. The Technical Director will make the final decision on who is to be named Group B shidoins.

In cases where no provincial association exists, an existing shidoins or shihan may put forward an individual for consideration. These proposals would go to the Examination Committee, which would then assemble a master list of possible shidoins and submit it to the Technical Director for his consideration and appointment. The process behind making these decisions should remain confidential.

At the end of the two-year term, Group B shidoins automatically join Group A and retain their title of shidoins. In cases where a suitable individual cannot be found to serve as a Group B shidoins, another individual from Group A may be nominated, at the discretion of the Examination Committee and the Technical Director.

Normally, a former Group B shidoins is expected to remain in Group A for two years until being reappointed, if necessary, to Group B. If it is necessary for the Examination Committee to ask a Group B shidoins to continue in the role for another term, the appropriate provincial association will be consulted.

Each Group B Shidoins appointed by the CAF must have current certification in first aid and CPR or obtain such certification immediately after being appointed. The CAF executive strongly believes that this represents “due diligence” in safety on the part of our organization.

Teaching

If the shidoin is asked to teach a class or seminar in addition to the visit, any fee for such instruction should be agreed upon in advance by the host dojo and the shidoin.

Group A or B shidoin have the authority to sign yudansha books at seminars they are teaching where the seminar is a minimum of one full day of classes for a gathering of Aikidoists from more than one dojo and the yudansha has attended at least three hours of classes at the seminar.

Testing

To conduct a test in any dojo other than his/her own, an examiner must be a CAF Group A or B shidoin or Examination Committee member. In such cases, the dojocho must notify the CAF Secretary in advance by email and obtain confirmation. Emails must be received by the Secretary a minimum of one week in advance of the test.

Group A and B shidoin may conduct kyu tests as described and permitted by the Technical Director. (See Chapter on Testing, page 9 and the chapter on the Examination Committee, page 2 for more information on CAF testing).

Where a dojocho of second or third dan is normally grading his/her own students, they must invite a CAF Group B Shidoin to visit the subject dojo a minimum of once per year.

While yudansha tests normally must be conducted by the CAF Technical Director, or in the absence of the Technical Director, by a CAF Grading Panel, exceptions may be made in the cases of remote dojos. Due to the problems and expense of travel for remote dojos, a person testing for first dan may be graded by a panel consisting of at least one Examination Committee member and one Group A or B shidoin. A person testing for second dan may be graded by at least one Examination Committee member and two Group A or B shidoin.

Expenses

It is hoped that the CAF will subsidize any expenses involved in visits by Group B shidoin to remote dojos in the same province. Reasonable travel expenses including automobile mileage should be submitted to the CAF for a decision in such cases.

We hope that visits by current, authorized Group B shidoi would be subsidized. The CAF may also subsidize other visits, including interprovincial visits by shihan and Group A shidoi, at its discretion.

Chapter 3 - TESTING

Introduction

This Chapter is intended to provide direction to all CAF dojos for the testing or promotion of CAF Aikidoists.

Policy Statement

The CAF is committed to providing timely and accessible opportunities for examinations at all levels to member dojos and their students. Examinations up to 3rd dan will be available a minimum of two times a year in various Canadian locations. In situations where it is impractical for a three member examination panel to travel to conduct higher level exams, alternative arrangements can be made by applying by email to the CAF Board, emails should be directed to the CAF Secretary and received a minimum of one month prior to the tests. In all cases, the CAF test requirements and expectation of consistent high technical standards will be respected.

All testing is to be done within the structure of the Canadian Aikido Federation and performed as per the requirements laid out in the Canadian Aikido Federation Testing Requirements. The only exception to this rule is for tests done under Yamada Shihan. In these situations, the USAF Testing Requirements may be used. All testing done within the structure of the Canadian Aikido Federation

for levels of 1st dan through 4th dan is to be conducted by the CAF Technical Director. In the absence of the Technical Director, a Grading Panel will be convened to conduct the tests on his

behalf, with the exception of 4th dan tests which must be conducted by the Technical Director. The Grading Panel will be made up of members of the Examination Committee.

Guideline for kyu students transferring from other Hombu organizations.

The student must show his/her kyu certificate. If this is not available, a reference must be obtained from the previous instructor. Even though the rank is acknowledged, the CAF instructor will determine the length of time needed for the next promotion.

If the student is not from a Hombu dojo, the instructor will assign a rank.

Kyu testing

- 5th and 4th kyu tests may be conducted by a student's instructor who is 2nd dan and above.
- Chief instructors of 3rd dan rank may test their own students up to 2nd kyu.
- 3rd, 2nd, and 1st kyu tests may be conducted by a student's instructor who is 4th dan or above.
- Where an instructor of 2nd or 3rd dan is grading his/her own students they must invite a CAF Shido-in to visit the subject dojo a minimum of once per year.

- Only instructors 4th dan and above may conduct 1st kyu tests and these are limited to those in their own dojo. Other 1st kyu tests must be conducted by a member of the CAF Examination Committee. (See the Examination Committee chapter page 2”
- If an examiner is conducting a test in any dojo other than their own, he/she must be a CAF Shido-in or Examination Committee member. In such cases the CAF Board must be notified in advance by email and confirmation obtained. Emails should be directed to the CAF Secretary for permission and received a minimum of one week in advance of the test.

Dan Testing (Yudansha)

- Tests for 1st dan and above are conducted by the CAF Technical Director, or in the absence of the CAF Technical Director, by a CAF Grading Panel (see the Examination Committee chapter page 2” for more information).
- The exception to this is in the cases of remote dojos. The CAF recognizes the problems and expense of travel for remote dojos, and therefore in remote dojos a person testing for 1st dan may be graded by at least one Examination Committee member, and one Shido-in. A person testing for 2nd dan may be graded by at least one Examination Committee member and two Shido-in.
- 3rd Dan tests may be conducted by a CAF Grading Panel of 3 Exam Committee members in the event the Technical Director is not available.
- 4th dan tests must be conducted by the Technical Director, except under exceptional circumstances, for example where the Technical Director has been unable to travel to Canada for more than one calendar year.
- The CAF Secretary is not to process tests that do not meet these criteria.

Testing at seminars

- All dan tests must be done at seminars publicized well in advance (with the possible exception of 1st and 2nd dan tests in remote dojos as noted above).
- Prior to the tests, the following must be provided by each test candidate: the required testing fees; The CAF and Hombu testing application forms filled in and signed by instructor and candidate; and the candidate’s Yudansha book (2nd dan test and above).

- Dojo Chief Instructors may not recommend themselves for testing. The space for the instructor's signature for such candidates must be signed by the dojo's supervising Shido-in or a member of the Examination Committee recommending the test.
- Generally, all candidates for dan tests must provide documentation demonstrating that they have attended at least two seminars/camps per year since their last promotion. For test candidates of 1st dan and higher, this typically would be a Yudansha card containing seminar records.
- Tests shall be conducted by the CAF Technical Director, or in his absence, by a CAF Grading Panel (see the Examination Committee chapter page 2 for more information).
- The Grading Panel will normally be formed as per the chapter on Examination Committee page 2. Requests for the formation of a Grading Panel must be sent by email to the CAF Board. Emails should be directed to the CAF Secretary and received a minimum of one month prior to the seminar when a qualified Grading Panel is not available locally.
- Exception may be made for 1st dan and 2nd dan tests if there are reasonable circumstances such as remote dojos which make the assembly of a full Grading Panel difficult. In such cases the hosting dojo must send an email, at least one month in advance of the tests, to the chair of the Examination Committee and CAF Secretary requesting that the tests be held with a smaller Examining Panel. The email should include the reason that the formation of a traditional Grading Panel is not practical. If the Examination Committee authorizes an examination for 1st dan, then a panel consisting of at least one
- Examination Committee Member and one Shido-in may be substituted for the full Grading Panel. In the case of 2nd dan tests, there must be at least one Examination Committee member and two Shido-in.
- An Examination Committee member may not test his/her own dan candidates without the presence of another Examination Committee member on a Grading Panel.
- In the absence of the Technical Director, any testing results reached by the Grading Panel are final.
- Decisions by the CAF Grading Panel are reached by a majority vote.

Chapter 4 - PROMOTION BY RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide instructions for nominating CAF Aikidoists for promotion by recommendation rather than by testing.

Policy Statement

The following instructions are the only means by which CAF Aikidoists shall be nominated for promotion by recommendation. If these instructions are not followed explicitly, the nomination will not be forwarded to the Technical Director through the Examination Committee for approval.

Instructions for Nomination for Promotion by Recommendation:

1. Nominations for promotion by recommendation shall only be made by Chief Instructors. Where the nominee is himself/herself a Chief Instructor, a nomination may be made by an Examination Committee Member, or a Shido-in currently affiliated with the nominee's dojo. The chair of the EC will choose candidates based on the latest CAF yudansha list, and discuss them with all other EC members if the candidate qualifies for promotion. If a majority of the EC agrees, the chair of the EC will send out an invitation to the candidate to apply for promotion. The CAF Secretary will receive the names of all applicants.
2. Nominations for promotion by recommendation must be emailed before the deadline to the CAF Secretary and the chair of the Examination Committee (email address found on the CAF Webpage). The application should include:
 - a) a scanned image (.pdf) of the candidate's yudansha book, showing (i) the Aikikai Registration number, (ii) the list of previous dan promotions (where applicable); (iii) the list of all seminars / camps attended; (iv) a photograph of the candidate
 - b) an electronic format letter of reference from the nominee's Chief Instructor;
 - c) a scanned and completed copy of the CAF Promotional Recommendation Form (found on the CAF Website), submitted electronically in pdf format.

Where the nominee is himself/herself a Chief Instructor the letter of reference may come from an Examination Committee member, or a Shido-in.

Please Note, all documentation must be received by the CAF Secretary and the chair of the EC in electronic format, .doc.,pdf, etc. Hard copy documents will only be accepted if approved in advance. Handwritten documents will not be accepted.

3. Criteria for consideration include all of the following:
 - (α) Nominees have been, and continue to be, actively and regularly engaged in teaching and practicing Aikido over a number of years;
 - (β) Continued participation in a dojo;
 - (χ) Continued participation at Aikido camps/seminars (several of which shall be outside the candidate's own dojo);
 - (δ) Contributions to the Aikido community;
 - (ϵ) References from the candidate's Chief Instructor (where appropriate);
 - (ϕ) 4 dan above: Endorsement from at least two CAF Examination Committee members or Shido-in

It is important to note that nominations must be received by the CAF Secretary and the chair of the EC no later than September 30th.

4. Following receipt of the request, the CAF Secretary reviews the application to ensure that none of the required information is missing. Following the review of the request, the CAF Secretary sends the package back to the initiator requesting further information if it is needed.
5. The CAF Examination Committee reviews the application and either approves or denies the request. If the request is denied by the Examination Committee, the nomination package is returned to the CAF Secretary accompanied by a letter from the CAF Examination Committee indicating the reasons for the denial. The chair of the EC communicates the reason for denial to the nominee. If the recommendation is approved by the Examination Committee, they notify both the CAF Secretary and the President of the approval. **All decisions by the Examination Committee are final and must be agreed upon by the majority of the Examination Committee.**
6. Once the Secretary receives approval of the Examination Committee, the Secretary informs the nominee and requests submission of CAF and Hombu Dojo promotion application forms as well as the appropriate payment.
7. The nominee completes the forms and returns them along with the appropriate payment to the Secretary.
8. The CAF Secretary then forwards the Hombu Dojo promotion application form to the CAF Technical Director for final approval or rejection.
9. Once the forms have been processed by Hombu Dojo, the nominee will be notified by the CAF Secretary.

Chapter 5- SHIHAN NOMINATION

Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide instructions for nominating a senior CAF Aikidoist to Shihan status.

In Aikido there are also honorific titles, Fukushidoin, Shidoin and Shihan. Shihan is the highest honorific title which can be bestowed upon an Aikidoist. (For more information on Fukushidoin and Shidoin see the Shidoin System chapter page 5).

The title of “Shihan” is best translated into English as “exemplar”. This is not a literal translation, but it captures the sense of the Chinese characters (kanji) used to write the term in Japanese. It refers to someone who is a role model in technique, teaching and character. It is honorific and carries no power or privileges. The title is granted by the Aikikai Foundation (Hombu Dojo) at the request of a recognized organization such as the CAF, and it applies only within the organization.

The purpose of this directive is to outline the instructions for nominating a senior Aikidoist for the title of Shihan.

Policy Statement

The following instructions are the only means by which CAF members shall be nominated to Shihan status. If these instructions are not followed explicitly, the recommendation will not be forwarded to the Technical Director through the Examination Committee for approval.

Instructions for Nomination to Shihan Status:

1. Shihan candidates can only be nominated by the current Technical Director
2. Shihan Status can only be requested for Aikidoists who have attained the rank of at least 6th dan, have been at that rank for a minimum of 6 years and who meet all of the *Hombu Rules for Appointment of Shihan* found at ANNEX A pages 16 and 17.
3. Nomination for Shihan status must be sent to the CAF Secretary (email address found on the CAF webpage). The application should include a photocopy or scanned image of the candidate’s yudansha book, a letter of reference from the relevant Provincial Organization where practical or an Examination Committee member. The letter must include such information as years instructing, past and present contributions to Aikido, and any other relevant information.
4. The following minimum criteria shall apply in considering Shihan nominations:
 - 6th dan or higher (for a minimum of 6 years);
 - Age 50 or older;
 - Two years or more as Shidoin with a record of successful instruction outside of one’s own dojo;
 - Significant contribution to regional and/or national activities in addition to teaching;
 - Character references from at least three CAF members (from more than one dojo) holding the rank of 4th dan or higher.

ANNEX A

Hombu Rules for Appointment of Shihan

1. Rules for Appointment of Shihan

These Rules for appointment of Shihan has been developed based on the provisions of Paragraph 15 and 16 of the Aikido World Headquarters' International Regulations (found at <http://www.aikikai.or.jp/eng/regulation/international.htm>), and are intended to supplement the said International Regulations.

2. Shihan

Shihan is the title of Aikido instructor defined in Paragraph 15 and 16 of the International Regulations.

3. Appointment of Shihan

The Hombu appoints Shihan at its discretion pursuant to Paragraph 16 of the International Regulations.

4. Recommendation for Title of Shihan

- (1) An Aikido organization which has been given Official Recognition by the Hombu can recommend any of its instructors who meet the qualifications as a candidate for Shihan.
- (2) To be qualified as a candidate for Shihan, he or she must fulfill the following conditions.
 - In principle, have more than six years of experience teaching aikido in his or her organization after obtaining 6th dan.
 - Be proficient in the practice and instruction of Aikido.
 - Be of good personal character.
- (3) An individual person cannot recommend himself or herself. The recommendation should come from that person responsible for the relevant organization and be in written form. Recommendations can be submitted at any time of the year.
- (4) For recommendation of a candidate, the form attached to these Rules must be used. (This form will be sent to the candidate following approval of the recommendation by the Examination Committee)
- (5) The Hombu shall notify the relevant organization upon receipt of the recommendation, and inform the organization of the schedule for the examination of the document submitted. Upon immediate review of the submitted documents, the Hombu may judge a candidate as not qualified at this time for being considered for title of Shihan, and in this case will notify the relevant organization accordingly.

5. Examination and Examination committee for Appointment of the Title of Shihan

- (1) The Examination of candidates based on the document submitted shall be conducted once every year at the Hombu. The date of the examination will be determined by the Hombu. The examination shall be comprised of a review of the submitted documents and a personal interview, if necessary.

- (2) The Examination committee for appointment of Shihan shall be established by the Hombu.

6. Notification and Certificate of Appointment

After the examination, the Hombu shall notify, in written form, the relevant organization of the result of the examination. To the person appointed as Shihan, the Hombu will send a Certificate of Appointment.

7. Re-recommendation

After a two-year interval, an Aikido organization can re-recommend, as a candidate for Shihan, a person who did not pass an examination.

8. Cancellation of Title of Shihan

The Hombu may cancel the title of Shihan if the Hombu deems it necessary to do so, including the following cases.

(1)

When the organization, which recommended the candidate, is dissolved or ceases its activities

(2)

When the appointed Shihan leaves his or her organization

(3)

When the appointed Shihan behaves in a manner unbecoming of a Shihan

9. Effective Date

These Rules for appointment of Shihan shall be put into effect on June 1, 2001.