

Chushinkan Dojo Test Etiquette Guidelines

Test candidate's preparation

- Ensure all time and seminar requirements are met
- Submit application, any required essays, AAA or yudansha booklet and fees well in advance of test date
- Repair gi to be worn for test if necessary
- Have personal weapons ready at the side of the mat before test begins

Sensei's preparation

- Check that candidate meets all time and seminar requirements
- Check candidate's test paperwork to make sure it is correct and complete
- Sensei may conduct kyu tests alone or select a test committee from the highest ranking people available. If there are non-voting members, e.g. visiting yudansha from other organizations who are included as a courtesy, make it clear to them before the test that they are not expected to vote
- Provide copies of the testing requirements for the test committee
- Have candidate's paperwork available during the test

Test setup

- Sensei arranges the audience around the edge of the mat as follows:
 - Test committee to left of shomen wall
 - Test ukes (usually yudansha but may include others) to right of shomen wall
 - Lower ranked students or other non-ukes facing shomen wall
 - Candidate sits in line with peers
- From the left side of the mat, Sensei bows in, then returns to seat on the test committee
- Sensei calls the candidate's name
- Candidate says "Hai!" and walks briskly up to sit seiza in front of shomen wall (should make square corners to avoid walking diagonally across the mat)
- Candidate bows to shomen wall, then turns to face test committee and bows again. Bows should be performed with care as they create a first impression of the candidate's mindset
- Candidate turns back to face shomen wall
- Sensei announces, "This is a test for XXXX kyu/dan, correct?" and candidate acknowledges, "Hai, Sensei!" (or lets Sensei know if it's the wrong rank!)
- Sensei announces that the paperwork and test fee has been received

The actual test

After bowing in and confirmation of rank and paperwork

- Sensei may have a test committee member perform ki testing, ukemi, or other requirements not requiring an uke at this time (but tests usually do not start with weapons katas)
- When the first uke is called, the candidate will sit seiza facing and slightly to the left of the shomen wall, allowing space on the right for uke
- Uke sits seiza facing the shomen wall

- Candidate initiates bow to shomen wall, uke bows also
- Candidate and uke turn to face one another and bow
- Sensei says, "stand up", then announces technique very specifically – include directions such as omote/ura. Dynamic attack is assumed unless static is requested
- If candidate did not hear the technique or uke did not hear the attack they may ask for it to be repeated
- Uke does not attack until Sensei says, "hajime!"
- Candidate keeps performing technique until Sensei says, "yame!". For most techniques a specific variation is required. For kokyunage, after the primary technique has been performed, variations are expected
- If candidate is not performing as required, Sensei has discretion to explain what he wants to see
- If uke is to be retained, a new technique is requested
- If uke is to be replaced, the Sensei says "change uke". Candidate and uke sit in front of the shomen wall, candidate on left side, and bow to one another. Uke returns to original place in line
- For the next uke, candidate remains in place. Uke sits facing and they bow
- When weapons are required, candidate walks briskly to his weapons. Audience may hand them to him. One bow with the weapon to the shomen wall is performed coming onto the mat.
- When bowing to a partner from seiza with a weapon, weapons are placed on the left side, bokken and tanto with the blade facing out
- The Sensei has discretion whether to ask uke to remove weapons that are no longer required, e.g. at the end of tantotori

Ending the test

- If the test ends without randori
 - Candidate and uke sit seiza, candidate on left, and bow to one another
 - Sensei announces, "this concludes your test"
 - Candidate and uke both turn to face the shomen wall and bow
 - Both turn to face the test committee and bow – uke should reposition to have a clear view
- If the test ends with randori
 - At the end of randori, candidate and ukes return to randori starting positions and sit seiza, candidate on left, and bow to one another
 - Sensei announces, "this concludes your test"
 - Candidate and ukes all turn to face the shomen wall and bow
 - All turn to face the test committee and bow
- Candidate and uke(s) return to original positions in line
- After all tests are completed, Sensei bows out

The verdict

Depending on circumstances, kyu tests may be decided by vote, or solely by Sensei. If by vote:

- After all tests are completed, Sensei invites test committee to adjourn to a private area
- Voting is by blind vote

- Sensei does not vote unless a deciding vote is needed to resolve a tie
- Test committee members give individual comments and discuss the test(s)
- Candidate(s) may be invited to join the group one at a time to hear a summary of the comments, but they are not told the result
- Result is publicly announced either at the end of testing or at the next class
- A written result notice is posted

Performance guidelines

- Pinning:
 - Ikkyo through gokyo and kotegaeshi always require a pin
 - Pins are not done during free technique (jiyuwaza)
 - Pins and removal are always required during weapons techniques when uke retains hold of the weapon
- Weapons katas should be performed once with a count (candidate must count before moving) and once without. The counted performance should demonstrate clean strikes and strong movement, the silent performance may demonstrate more flow. Kiai are not included while counting

Considerations

- If tests are conducted at a seminar or before AAA Teaching Committee member(s), the most senior instructor will preside and decide who will conduct the test
- Multiple tests are conducted lowest to highest rank, alphabetically by surname
- If the test committee automatically joins in applause at the end of a test, candidates will assume they passed, which may not always be the case
- Some dojos allow the audience to yell support during randori, but this is not encouraged at AAA Headquarters and some Teaching Committee members may object
- Neither uke nor nage should stop doing techniques to fix gis that have come untied. If necessary the Sensei can tell them when to stop to fix their gis, and nage can adjust clothing while waiting for the next uke
- Neither uke nor nage should do anything that wastes time – walking to get weapons, fixing gis, etc. should all be done quickly
- It is not necessary for the candidate to do all techniques from the starting position to the left of the shomen wall. The candidate should feel free to use the mat space fully, returning to the original position to bow. Likewise, the exam board can request to see techniques from a different angle if necessary
- Individual testing is desirable for both candidates and test committee. If there are a lot of test candidates, consider doing group ki testing/exercises/ukemi and allowing candidates to perform their techniques individually
- Test content should always include a review of previous requirements
- It is unrealistic to expect students to remember the etiquette without having several rehearsals. This can be done as part of their exam preparation