



# Littleover Taekwon-Do Club Grading Policy

Gradings are an important aspect of Taekwon-do, as they are with many other martial arts.

They broadly serve the following aims:

- Gradings provide a structured and standardised way of measuring a student's progress and skill level as they progress through the syllabus.
- Gradings provide visible recognition, a sense of accomplishment and motivation for the student.
- Gradings help maintain quality and standards.

The club adopts the following principles for gradings:

1. All students are individuals, and different abilities progress at different rates. Notwithstanding that, training time is a key factor in progressing in Taekwon-do.
2. We aim to create four grading opportunities per annum.
  - a. Students should not expect to be ready to grade at every opportunity.
  - b. From yellow belt to red belt, an average student will likely progress two grades a year (see contextual note at the end of this policy).
  - c. We aim to spread the gradings out through the year. We do not adhere to a strict schedule so there is some flexibility on timings.
3. Students are only put forward to grade when the instructor is confident the student is comfortable performing at the level to achieve the grading standard. The student will have consistently demonstrated performance at the desired level in the period leading up to the decision to put forward for grading.
4. Being put forward for grading is not a guarantee of a pass. The student is still required to perform at the necessary level during the grading.
5. We recognise students are often disappointed if they want to grade but are not put forward.
  - a. When an instructor puts a student forward for a grading the instructor is attesting to the student's performance (as per point 3).
  - b. Our experience is that the disappointment of not being put forward is easier to cope with compared to the alternative of being put forward for a grading and not being successful. This is even more applicable for our younger students.
  - c. Instructor's decision is final. The student is welcome to respectfully discuss their performance and areas to improve with the instructor at an appropriate time.



- d. We never put forward students who are not ready to avoid disappointment or give in to pressure.
6. We aim to involve external examiners to provide an independent view. For logistical reasons this may not be possible for every grading, but typically an external examiner will be involved in at least alternate gradings.
7. Gradings may be held at the usual training location (Heatherton), or elsewhere (e.g Sutton Bonington, or Sleaford). Arranging gradings (location, date / time, examiner and instructor availability) can be logistically challenging at times so students should be prepared, wherever possible, to travel to take advantage of the opportunity.
  - a. There is of course no obligation to travel, but the student must recognize they may have to wait for the next grading opportunity.
8. Grading decisions by the examiner are final.
  - a. Gradings outcomes are Pass, Deferred, or Fail.
  - b. Pass - students will receive feedback. This may be given individually or collectively in class.
  - c. Deferral (rare, but occasionally offered if there is one notably weak area in an otherwise good performance) – the student will be advised individually what area they need to improve and given time to do so. The student will then be given an opportunity to re-demonstrate that specific area.
  - d. Fail - the student will receive individual feedback via their instructor.

#### General notes:

For students under 18, instructors are happy to also discuss student progress and performance with parent / guardian.

Students should at all times remember the Taekwon-do oath and tenets:

- I shall observe the tenets of Taekwon-Do.
- I shall respect the instructor and seniors.
- I shall never misuse Taekwon-Do.
- I shall be a champion of freedom and justice.
- I shall build a more peaceful world.

The tenets of Taekwon-Do are Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control, and Indomitable Spirit



Training time (provided for general context).

There is a wide range of martial arts styles and organisations, and inevitable differences occur in terms of approaches to gradings, including training time requirements. It's important to note though that progress is linked to actual time spent training, not elapsed time.

The Taekwon-Do condensed encyclopaedia (5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1999), which was originally produced by General Choi Hing Hi, gives a suggested programme of 30 months from beginner to black belt, training for an hour and a half, three times a week (585 hours).

A more common 'real world' standard for Taekwon-do is 3 years from beginner to black belt, based on training twice a week for an hour and a half (468 hours). Typically, at this rate of training, an average student would grade every 3 months up to red belt (2<sup>nd</sup> kup), then 6 months to black tag (1<sup>st</sup> kup) and 6 months to black belt (1<sup>st</sup> degree).

Thus when training once a week the timeline unavoidably lengthens.

We don't seek to measure performance of training time alone, but we do seek to abide by the principle that it does take a certain amount of training time to acquire and embed the skills being taught (building muscle memory) to be able to execute them to the required standard.

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