

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## Guidelines for ITA Black Belt Testing

### Purpose of this document:

This document is designed to be a guideline for all candidates preparing for the black belt testing as well as their instructors and examiners.

### Contents

Topic	page
1. What is the black belt a measure of?	1
2. Standard for ITA Black Belt Gradings	1
3. Venue and general information	2
4. Criteria for selection for Examiners Panel	2
5. Dress code for black belt testing	2
6. Narrators	3
7. Pass/Fail criteria	3
8. Eligibility to grade	3-4
9. The grading layout	4
10. Fundamental Movements	4
11. Kicking	4
12. Patterns Section	5
13. Self defense	6-7
14. Step Sparring	7-8
15. Free Sparring	8
16. Special Technique	8-9
17. Power Breaking	9-10
18. Theory section	10

### 1. What is the black belt a measure of?

The black belt is understood to symbolise many things including but not limited to; proficiency in the technical sense, ability to defend oneself, an individual who exemplifies the tenets of Taekwon-Do. This being said the black belt grading must be an objective measure and will evaluate a candidate's proficiency in a range of areas with a minimum standard being required to pass. It will be the club instructors responsibility to develop as best they can the character of the student.

### 2. Standard for ITA Black Belt Gradings

The weighted marking system will allow for candidates to have areas of strength and weaker areas while allowing for a balanced reckoning of their standard. The association must set the bar for the minimum acceptable level, however this should be set at an achievable level with competition separating the good from the elite.

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## 3. Venue and general information:

The venue for the black belt grading's each year will be decided at the AGM. The black belt grading must be held in a hotel (or similar facility), with adequate facilities, and the capacity to have two grading's running simultaneously. The floor of the grading area must be matted for the safety of the candidates testing. The venue will be rotated as fairly and equitably as possible to different areas from grading to grading. The region with the responsibility of hosting the grading will have two weeks following the AGM to book the venue and inform the Secretary General of the details.

The host region must organise the black belt grading in accordance with the I.T.A. policy document "Organising an I.T.A. Black Belt Grading".

The black belt grading will be conducted using the official I.T.A. weighted black belt exam marking system following the I.T.A. Black Belt Weighted System Guidelines document.

The exam will be carried out according to the examination requirements for particular Taekwon-Do grades as laid out in the Irish Taekwon-Do Association (I.T.A.) Dan Grade Syllabus.

There will be two black belt tests per calendar year.

Where possible five (5) examiners will sit on the black belt testing panel. The examining panel for the black belt testing will consist of examiners chosen by the technical & instruction committee prior to each black belt testing.

## 4. Criteria for selection for Examiners Panel

- Must be an ITF certified black belt with a minimum of 4<sup>th</sup> Dan
- Must have an up to date ITF Instructor Plaque Certificate
- Must have an International Instructor Certificate
- Must have attended an IIC within the past 3 years

All those applying to be an examiner at an ITA black belt test must have completed a preliminary black belt testing in their region using the ITA black belt grading weighted system

Applications must be sent to the technical director through the secretary general by the stated deadline.

## 5. Dress code for black belt testing

All black belts, instructors and examiners attending the black belt grading should dress formally in a dark 2 piece suit, white shirt, official I.T.A. tie with colour appropriate to their grade, dark shoes, ITF black belt pin.

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## 6. Narrators:

At each ITA black belt grading there will be a narrator. The narrator will call the techniques and disciplines to be performed.

- Narrators to issue commands in Korean.
- Narrators to clarify in English only if required.
- Call sheet to be provided in Korean and English.
- Examiners to account for individuals who do not understand the commands in Korean in the theory section of the scoring system.
- Candidates lose up to 10 points from their theory test score if they do not know their Korean terminology.
- Applications for the position of narrator must be sent to the technical director through the secretary general by the stated deadline

## 7. Pass/Fail criteria

- Students must achieve at least 300 marks or 60% to pass.
- Failure to pass the patterns section will result in an automatic retry.
- Students who fail to pass 3 or more sections will result in a discussion at the end of the testing where the examiners will decide whether or not the candidate will be allowed to pass.

Directly following each black belt grading the examiners panel will discuss the results of each candidate in detail before announcing the official results to those present. This will allow the examiners time to ensure they are happy with the marks assigned to each candidate and to make any amendments they deem appropriate.

## 8. Eligibility to grade:

- The minimum age for testing for 1<sup>st</sup> Dan in the ITA is 13 years of age
- All candidates must have passed a preliminary black belt grading prior to the test
- Only candidates who apply with all the necessary documents by the deadline will be eligible
- Only those who pay their full fees prior to the grading will be eligible
- Only those who meet the requirements as outlined in the ITF and ITA Bylaws will be eligible
- The preliminary black belt testing will be a mandatory testing for all those who wish to go forward to the official black belt testing, whether internal or external to the Irish Taekwon-Do Association e.g. at International Instructor Courses.
- The preliminary testing will be conducted on a regional basis, by the examiners in that region; prior to each of the two (2) black belt testing's each year.
- Preliminary testing's for those testing abroad e.g. at International Instructors Courses will be arranged as necessary and will be

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



conducted by a panel of examiners chosen by the technical and instruction committee.

- All fees should be paid in cash (Euros) or cheque/draft made payable to Irish Taekwon-Do Association.
- Failure to present all items may result in the candidate being disqualified from testing.
- Unsuccessful candidates will be refunded the certificate application fee.
- Applications must include fully completed application form. Please indicate on the form if the candidate is retrying for this grade, has an injury or other impediment. Any issues will be highlighted by the technical director to the grading panels before the grading.

## 9. The grading layout

Each group will perform in rotation, groups will be announced in advance of the test. The candidates are tested in a number of areas; fundamental movements, kicking, patterns, step sparring, free sparring, power test, special technique, theory.

## 10. Fundamental Movements:

Fundamental movements section will be marked on the following criteria:

- Preparatory position and hand trajectory
- Sine wave and body transition
- Stance
- Power
- Breathing
- Finish position

Hand techniques will be called by the grading narrator but the techniques will be called in a different order for each group

## 11. Kicking:

Kicking Techniques will be marked on the following criteria:

- Preparatory position and leg trajectory
- Tool and target
- Power and leg strength
- Breathing
- Balance
- Ability to kick in the air

Foot techniques will be called by the grading narrator but the techniques will be called in a different order for each group.

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## 12. Patterns Section:

This is the most heavily weighted section of the grading. If a candidate does not pass this section it will result in an automatic retry of the black belt exam for that candidate.

The candidates are marked on technical content, breath control, rhythm, power and balance.

A more detailed description of faults are as follows: calling incorrect pattern name, shouting ki-hap at end of pattern, not calling pattern name, incorrect height for technique, loss of balance, hesitation, lack of power, inaccurate stance, stepping errors, incorrect sine-wave, incorrect breathing, incorrect preparation for a technique (chamber), incorrect motion,

Performing incorrect stance in place of correct one (i.e. performing gunnan sogi in place of niunja sogi) performing the wrong technique in place of correct technique (ie. Performing forearm guarding block where it should be outerforearm low block), forgetting a movement, returning to starting position with wrong foot, not withdrawing a snapping technique immediately after execution.

Stopping completely, not finishing pattern, mixing patterns, starting pattern in wrong direction or to wrong side, performing a different pattern to the one designated, forgetting more than one technique.

Only if the pattern cannot be completed will a zero score be given.

Examiners should endeavour to score the criteria listed fully and avoid grading to the averages. If there is no error in breath control for example the full 5 marks should be given. Equally if there is consistent and significant technical errors then technical content should be heavily penalised.

Candidates will be given an opportunity to repeat a pattern if a movement is omitted, if they fail to complete the pattern or if they substitute movements or sections for others.

If necessary the candidate will be given 2 attempts at each pattern. They will be allowed to leave the floor to compose themselves if necessary.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Kup

Candidates will perform the pattern of their grade, plus one optional pattern and two patterns designated by the narrator.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Degree & above

Each candidate will perform the patterns of their grade plus one pattern designated by the narrator.

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## 13. Self defence

The self defence required for black belt testing is subject to the following criteria:

- Effectiveness of defensive technique
- Appropriateness of response to level of threat

The narrator will tell the attacker what attack to use in each scenario.

Candidates must be able to defend an attack from long, medium and close range and from different angles.

Candidates may be asked to deal with single and multiple attackers

Candidates will be asked to defend against a number of attacks, for example: straight and swing punches, grabs, chokes, headlocks, bearhugs, defending from the ground, stick attacks, knife attacks.

Candidates may not be penalised according to the philosophies of another system of self defence as the self defence will be marked with the following principles in mind:

Self Defence Situations such as punches, chokes, headlocks should be tested from different directions as well as different distances including:

- Long range – where the attacker is outside attacking range,
- from kicking range,
- from hand striking range
- from close range - within hand striking range
- when the attack has been applied.

### Self Defence Principles

Defensive techniques used should be in accordance with these principles. All the principles should be applied as a whole rather than individually.

- The level of response from the Defender should match the level of threat presented from the attacker(s) at all times during the defence
- Where possible, the Defender should stop the attack at the earliest stage possible with least need for aggression & physical contact
- The defensive solution applied should be effective, easy to use under stress and not overly complicated

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



- The defender should block / prevent / avoid the attack and apply appropriate counter attacks to neutralise any follow up threat from the attacker and exit the situation as early as possible
- Where possible, the initial defensive technique should not place the defender in any unnecessary further danger (e.g. when possible blocking a strike should not place the defender into the path of a second strike).
- The defensive technique applied should minimise the need for physical size & strength on the part of the defender
- When fallen, the defender should defend & return to standing as soon as possible to reduce the chance of serious injury

## 14. Step Sparring:

Step sparring will be marked on the following criteria:

- Power/Timing
- Stances/Distance
- Attack Techniques
- Defense Techniques
- Counter Attacks

Techniques must be applied with realism. Techniques must be performed with the correct application.

The student testing may choose to bring a partner with them to the testing from their club/region with whom they have prepared 3, 2 & 1 step sparring. The partner must present in full dobok and will only perform for the step sparring aspect of the grading

### Sambo Matsogi (3 step sparring)

- The students must show that they can correctly measure the distance for each scenario and follow the protocol for three step sparring. The defender should choose an appropriate defence and counter attack following the principles of 3 step sparring.

### Ibo Matsogi (2 step sparring)

- The grading narrator will designate the attacks
- In keeping with the rules of 2 Step Sparring, there will be one hand attack and one foot attack on each occasion. The defender should choose an appropriate defence and counter attack following the principles of 2 step sparring.

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## Ilbo Matsogi (1 step sparring)

The defender will tell the attacker what to attack with and must choose an appropriate defence and counter attack following the principles of 1 step sparring.

## 15. Free Sparring

Candidates will be marked on the following criteria:

- Movement
- Hand Technique
- Foot Technique
- Defense
- Attack

Candidates will perform 3 rounds of sparring, each round being of 2 minutes duration.

Free sparring will be performed with full safety equipment on.

Full safety equipment according to ITF rules must be worn i.e. hand pads (open palm), foot pads, shin pads, head guard, gum shield, groin protector (male).

## 16. Special Technique

1<sup>st</sup> Kups will choose one special technique to be tested. 1<sup>st</sup> dan and above will choose 2 special techniques to be tested.

2 attempts will be given if necessary

There will be no deduction if the break is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt. If the protocol is breached the deduction will take place in the execution, the break will not be forfeit. Candidates will be scored on execution i.e. technique, protocol, tool, ability to reach target, and break.

The heights set will be relative to the physique/height of the candidate, the candidate may lower or shorten the height but risk losing up to 50% of the marks

### Option 1:

Twimyo nomo yopcha jirugi (length) : Obstacles 50cm tall spaced the height of the individual apart

Twimyo nopi apcha busigi : Board placed at height of extended arm (fingertips)

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



Twimyo dollyo chagi : Target will be placed immediately above the candidates head

Two dolmyo yopcha jirugi : Board will be at the candidates upper chest level

Twimyo bandae dollyo chagi : Target will be placed immediately above the candidates head

## Option 2:

Suspended (speed) break

## Option 3:

Two target break (must be off the ground)

## Breaking material for special technique:

Candidates to provide own material for breaking

- 2cm of timber for senior
- 1cm of timber for junior

Exceptions process to be implemented for individuals who have a genuine impediment to completing the above options. These will be addressed on a case by case basis.

## Protocol for special technique

- Guarding block to start and finish.
- A single measure is permitted.
- Allowed to touch board on measure.

## 17. Power breaking

- 2 attempts will be given if necessary
- There will be no deduction if the break is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt
- If the protocol is breached the deduction will take place in the execution, the break will not be forfeit. Execution will focus on protocol, technique and tool.

## Protocol for power breaking:

- Guarding block to start and finish.
- A single measure is permitted.
- Allowed to touch board on measure.

# IRISH TAEKWON-DO ASSOCIATION



## Female Junior

- Choice of hand technique 1 red padded board & 1 blue padded board together (or 1 timber board, which must be supplied by the candidate)
- Choice of foot technique 1 white board (or 1 timber board, which must be supplied by the candidate)

## Female Senior

- Choice of hand technique 1 white board (or 1 timber board, which must be supplied by the candidate)
- Choice of foot technique 2 white boards (or 2 timber boards, which must be supplied by the candidate)

## Male Junior

- Choice of hand technique 1 white board (or 1 timber board, which must be supplied by the candidate)
- Choice of foot technique 1 white board (or 1 timber board, which must be supplied by the candidate)

## Male Senior

- Choice of hand technique 2 white boards (or 2 timber boards, which must be supplied by the candidate)
- Choice of foot technique 2 white boards (or 2 timber boards, which must be supplied by the candidate)

## Breaking materials

Candidates may choose between wooden boards and plastic rebreakable boards

If wooden boards are chosen they must meet the following specification:

- They must have a minimum thickness of 20mm
- The candidate must arrange for holders

## 18. Theory section

Theory from ITA Training Manual and Taekwon-Do encyclopaedia appropriate to the candidate's grade (1999 ed.) can be tested.

Please be aware that a deduction of up to 10 marks can take place in theory if candidates do not know their Korean terminology in the fundamentals and kicking sections of the grading.