

## Grading

A grade is a measure of the level of attainment of a karate student. Each grade is signified by a different coloured belt, starting with the white belt and progressing to black. Below the black belt, grades are referred to as Kyu and black belt grades are called Dan.

A grading is when students get to show an assessor that they have reached a competent level with their current techniques and are ready to move on to learn and develop more advanced techniques and skills. Successfully accomplishing a grade is accompanied by the award of a particular colour of belt. All students start with a white belt, and progress through the sequence. The coloured belt gradings are like stepping stones on the path to a student's goal of black belt, signifying their growth and development.

Whilst it is not mandatory for students to go through the grading system, it is a great way for both adults and children to measure and recognise their progress. Gradings are open to all club members over the age of 5, with the agreement of their instructor. A student's journey through the grading system is a personal one, there is no definitive answer as to how long it takes a student to reach his or her black belt. There are 10 Kyu grades up to black belt and a dedicated student can take early gradings every three months or so. The higher levels will take longer to learn, but black belt standard is possible within 3 years of first starting to study karate with regular dedicated training.

Gradings comprise three key elements of karate kihon (basic techniques), kata (a formal sequence of movements and techniques against an imaginary opponent) and kumite (putting into practice the attack and defence techniques learnt in the katas against a real opponent). These are assessed by an independent examiner from outside the club and according to a syllabus, so ensuring consistency across all Karate Union of Great Britain clubs.



At Hale Karate Club grading takes place roughly every 3 months, although not every student grades every time.

All club members are encouraged to take part in the grading system, but it is not compulsory. Gradings take place in the dojo in place of the usual training sessions.

Students grade when instructors feel they are sufficiently skilled to demonstrate to the examiner that they have reached the required standard and when the students themselves feel confident to undertake the grading.

Irrespective of skill or confidence levels, all students must have completed at least 26 hours training since their previous grading in order to qualify for the next grading (16 hours for first grading).