

OKINAWAN KARATE ACADEMY

ELIGIBILITY FOR BELT TESTING

OKA's belt system and rank requirements are designed to build students' sense of accomplishment by allowing every student, even the youngest Little Tigers, to test for belts two to three times per year. Belt testing eligibility is based on time in rank, class attendance, and technical requirements.

Time in rank is generally four months for all ranks up to purple belt, and six months for brown & junior black belts. Class attendance, loosely based on two classes per week, are 32 classes required for all ranks up to purple belt, and 48 classes for brown & junior black belts.

For technical requirements, each colored belt is divided into three levels. Each of the three levels has one required item. Learning these three items might take some students a full year. If that's the case, the student may still test up to three times as they progress through the year. However, more capable students may advance more than one level at a time. With this arrangement, we can gradually raise the level of the challenge that each student experiences, while keeping it appropriate for the student's age and ability.

When children are invited to a belt test, they should understand that Sensei will ask them to "show what they know" — in a manner very similar to an everyday class — and the belt they receive will depend on their demonstration of that material.

For example, if, at his first belt test, the white belt student demonstrates basic proficiency in the Fifteen Basics drill, he will earn the white/orange belt (white belt with an orange stripe running through it). If the student demonstrates the Fifteen Basics and the *Zenshin Kotai* drill, the orange/white belt (orange belt with a white stripe) will be awarded. If the student demonstrates all three required items (Fifteen Basics, *Zenshin Kotai*, and *Kihon Kata*), the solid orange belt will be awarded. Similarly, the student with the white/orange belt will progress toward either the orange/white belt or, if they can demonstrate all three required items, the solid orange belt. The student with the orange/white belt will test for the solid orange belt. A similar arrangement is used for each of the six colored belt levels.

Please refer to OKA's youth rank requirements. You can download the rank requirements at www.okadojo.com (click on "Rank Requirements") or ask for a copy at the dojo.

Please note: Students with less than the required time in rank and/or class attendance who feel that they can satisfy the technical requirements for belt testing may ask for special consideration from their instructor.

Years of experience and thousands of students have taught us that the rate at which the beginner student learns karate is quite unimportant in the long run. Many students who were slow starters have later blossomed into the finest young black belts. Students are reminded often that karate requires only two things of them; showing up and working hard. Progress may be slow in some stages, but with plenty of encouragement and the genuine sense of accomplishment brought about by attaining each small step of advancement — these ingredients will assure a successful training experience.

Feel free to contact OKA anytime with any questions you may have about rank requirements and belt testing.