



A sub-group of the
Shotokan-Ryu Karate Kyokai Kokusai

Grading Syllabus - Kobudo

What Is Kobudo?

Kobudo is the name given to martial art forms that were born before the reinstatement of imperial rule in Japan under King Meiji, an event that is also known as the Meiji restoration. Literally translated, the Japanese word “Kobudo” encompasses all kinds of martial traditions, with weapons or without the use of weapons in the ancient era of the Okinawa islands of Japan. In the modern context, Kobudo describes the traditions and weapons of the Japanese Ryukyu Islands. Okinawan Kobudo literally translates to ‘the old martial way of Okinawa’. The term was coined in the nineteenth century, and refers to the weapon systems of the Okinawan martial art forms.

Okinawan Kobudo weapons as practiced within SKKK Dojo include the following:

Bo: It is a staff six feet in length, and may or may not taper at any one of the two ends. This weapon is believed to be a modified form of the farming tool tenbin, which is a stick positioned across the shoulders with sacks or baskets hanging from the two ends. It was also possibly utilized as a handle of a shovel or a rake. According to historians, the bo could also have been developed from walking sticks commonly used by monks or other travelers. It is considered the epitome of all Kobudo weapons. It is traditionally carved from white or red oak. Hanbo and jo are its shorter variations.

Sai: It is a truncheon made of three prongs. Its appearance is similar to a short sword but traditionally blunt and not bladed. Sai is made up of metal and the length of the truncheon is dependent on the length of the user’s forearm. Trapping the opponent’s weapon is possible by using the two short prongs on both sides of the main shaft. A sword is usually broken this way. Sai can have multiple variations-one of them, the Nunti Sai has its two short prongs pointing in opposite directions, and Monouchi in place of a grip.

Nunchaku: It consists of two wooden parts connected by a chain or a cord. Okinawan nunchakus were octagonal and were originally connected by horse hair. Many variations of the weapon exist, from the three sectional staff to the smaller sized multi-section nunchaku. It was a popular weapon of the film star Bruce Lee and visible in a number of his films.

Training as with Shotokan Karate consists of three parts: The first being basic technique (Kihon), in which the class forms lines and advances up and down the training hall (Dojo) practicing their techniques. This is followed by combination techniques, where several individual movements are performed as part of a sequence. Secondly there is formation training (Kata). This is the name given to an extended series of combination techniques that represent symbolic defences against multiple assailants using the weapon. The third and final part of Karate training is sparring (Kumite). There are many parts to Kumite, starting with the basic attacks and defences leading up to the very advanced.

Basic Training Information

General grading information

The Kobudo grading syllabus for the SKKK is based on a number of Japanese and Okinawan systems but developed around Shotokan Karate. It is taught in a specific manner following a carefully ordered programme consisting of basics (Kihon), forms (Kata) and sparring (Kumite). These three elements are reviewed in detail at every grading examination. As the student improves his/her skills, the syllabus becomes more complex.

Grading examinations are normally held every 6 months (two per year) depending upon the availability of the Chief Instructor. The Chief Instructor may appoint a qualified examiner in his absence.

A student may be put forward for examination by his/her instructor once the level of proficiency in technique, the correct attitude and the minimum attendance periods have all been achieved. Minimum training times between

each Kyu grading examination are 6 months up to 1st Kyu and then the minimum period to Shodan (Black Belt) is normally 12 months.

Grading time periods for Dan grades are normally equal in years to the grade being attempted, so from Shodan to Nidan is a minimum of 2 years, Nidan to Sandan a minimum of 3 years and so on.

As each grade is passed another aspect of training will be highlighted. The grading examination marks the end of one stage of practice and the beginning of another. This does not mean that the student forgets what has been done previously; rather the student should incorporate that into what is being taught.

The beginner starts with a white belt and may take up to two years of studying in order to progress through the coloured belts before achieving the black belt. The black belt is a benchmark in the students training, as the constant practice of basic techniques will have set a strong foundation for the senior Kyu grades. Speed of mobility is added at this stage to the strong focused attacks and defences of the coloured belt grades.

Kari (仮) - temporary grades may be awarded for student that do not fully meet the requirements of their next grade, but have improved enough to advance.

At their next grading examination, the Kari grade can be fully ratified, the student advanced to the next level or the returned to the previous grade depending upon their performance.

All students, not just junior grades should be guided by the advice of their Sensei. Remember that your Sensei has already gone through all the gradings ahead of you, so has a wealth of experience in this area!

If you are determined to attend a grading, regardless of what your Sensei recommends, no-one will prevent you. But bear in mind that ignoring Sensei's advice can mean the difference between a good grading and poor one and a pass and a fail.

It is important to remember the following:

The time between gradings is a minimum - many students take longer to prepare for a grading.

No student is expected to grade every time - students will not be expected to progress faster than they feel is comfortable.

No student should expect to grade every time - follow the advice of your Sensei.

The decision is final - respect the decision of your Sensei at the grading, learn from what has happened and use it to get better.

The belt grading system is the same for juniors and seniors alike and is as follows:

Novice	White belt
3 rd Kyu	White belt with red stripe
2 nd Kyu	White belt with green stripe
1 st Kyu	White belt with brown stripe
Sho Dan	Black belt – Plain, no tags or bars

Grading Syllabus - Bo

Novice to 3rd Kyu

Pre-amble

This grading demonstrates a basic knowledge of elementary Bo Kobudo covering, basics guards and grips, basic blocking, basic thrusting and striking. Examiners will be looking for a single basic movement of the Bo and the only movement will be slides and pivots from the stationary position. Most of the grading will be performed in Zenkutsu dachi.

Kihon

Nigiri and Gamae (grips and guards)

Jun nigiri, Gyaku nigiri, Yose nigiri, Hassami nigiri, front gamae, Rear gamae, kneeling gamae

Uchi (strikes) and Zuki (thrusts)

Uchi otoshi (over head strike), Uchi age (upward strike), Yose nigiri uchi (double handed overhead strike), Tate uchi (rising strike), Yoko uchi (side strike), Morote Uchi (double handed thrust), Gyaku yoko uchi (reverse side strike), Gedan uchi (lower strike)

Zuki komi (two handed thrust), Gyaku zuki (reverse thrust), Nagashi zuki (sliding thrust), Zuki otoshi (downward thrust)

Uke (blocks)

Yoko morote uke (double hand side block), Ura morote uke (double hand rear block), Tate morote uke (upper double hand block), Otoshi morote uke (downward double hand block), Uchi uke (inside block), Soto uke (outside block), Age uke (rising block), Gyaku age uke (reverse rising block), Harai uke (sweeping block), Gyaku harai uke (reverse sweeping block)

Kata

Taikyoku No Bo Sho

Kumite - There is no Kumite necessary for this level

3rd Kyu to 2nd Kyu

This grading demonstrates a more advanced knowledge of Bo Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations. Examiners will be looking for a single flowing and smooth movement of the Bo combined with slides and pivots and steps forward and backwards. Examiners will also be looking for improved hand/eye co-ordination and effective, solidly executed techniques with kime.

Kihon

Uke (blocks)

Mawashi harai uke (round sweep block), Tate uke (vertical block), Osae uke (pinning/pressing block)

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Yoko uchi/gyaku yoko uchi (side strike/reverse side strike), Otoshi uchi/gyaku tate uchi (overhead strike/reverse rising strike), Gyaku tate uchi/Uchi otoshi (reverse rising strike/overhead strike), Ichimonji mawashi (overhead spin into side strike), Mae mawashi (overhead spin into downward strike), Hachiji mawashi (figure of eight strike), Kata sukashi (under arm spin/grip)
Ushiro dori (back grab spin), Daisha mawashi (large circular spin)

Kata

Taikyoku No Bo Sho, Taikyoku No Bo Dai, Yondan No Bo

Kumibo

Kumibo - Defence (student choice) against two stepping downward strikes (otoshi uchi), then two diagonal strikes (naname uchi), two stepping thrusts (zuki komi) and two lower strikes (gedan harai).

2nd Kyu to 1st Kyu

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Bo Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing.

Kihon

All techniques are performed moving forwards and in some case backwards

Hidari no kamae (left guard), Zuki komi (stepping thrust, with rear thrust)

Sukui (sweeping) and Uchi (strikes)

Sukuiage sunakake (lower sweep), Uchi otoshi (down strike), Yoko uchi (side strike, kiba dachi), Naname uchi (diagonal strike)

Uke (blocks)

Mae uke (vertical block in back stance), Mae uke (vertical block in cat stance)
Mawashi harai uke (front stance), Uchi uke (inside block), Soto uke (outside block),
Osae uke (pinning block, reverse front stance)

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Mawashi harai uke/zuki komi (overhead spin/thrust), Mawashi harai uke/hachiji mawashi (overhead spin/figure eight spin), Otoshi uchi/uchi uke (downward strike/inside block), Mae uke/otoshi uchi (vertical block/overhead strike), Morote uke/naname uchi (double handed block/diagonal strike)

Kata

Taikyoku No Bo Sho, Taikyoku No Bo Dai, Yondan No Bo, Jite No Bo

Kumibo

Bo jitsu defence (set) to: stepping punch; front kick; namame uchi (diagonal strike); uke imasu - morote uchi (blocked overhead strike); zuki komi (thrust)

1st Kyu to Shodan

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Bo Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Bo should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin). Excellent control with regard targeting is necessary at this level.

Kihon

Any blocks, strikes, thrusts, spins, stances, guards or combinations from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Kata

Any previous Kata in addition to; Bassai sho No Bo, Sunakake No Kon

Kumibo

Bo jitsu defence (set) to: stepping punch; front kick; namame uchi (diagonal strike); uke imasu - morote uchi (blocked overhead strike); zuki komi (thrust)

Bo jitsu defence (free) to: namame uchi (diagonal strike); zuki komi (thrust); gedan harai (lower strike)

Self-defence (un-armed) against: otoshi uchi (down strike); yoko uchi (side strike); morote uke (double handed strike)

Bo Ju-kumi – 1 minute partner 'sparring' with weapon – fast/full speed

Shodan to Nidan

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Bo Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Bo should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin). Excellent control with regard targeting is necessary at this level.

Kihon

Any blocks, strikes, thrusts, spins, stances, guards or combinations from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Kata

Any previous grading Kata then examinee choice of; Suji No Kon, Choun No Kon Dai, Ryubi No Kon

Demonstration of own Bo kata (including name and application tests)

Kumite

Any Kumite as requested by the examiners plus, Ju-kumibo – 2 minute partner 'sparring' with weapon – fast/full speed

Nidan and above

Gradings past Nidan are at the discretion of the Chief Instructor and will consist of anything he/she wishes to test on. Gradings at these levels demonstrate a highly-advanced knowledge and mastery of Bo Kobudo covering, twirling, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Bo should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Grading Syllabus - Nunchaku

Novice to 3rd Kyu

This grading demonstrates a basic knowledge of elementary Nunchaku Kobudo covering, basics guards and grips, basic spinning and striking. Examiners will be looking for a single basic movement of the Nunchaku and the only movement will be slides and pivots from the stationary position. Most of the grading will be performed in Zenkutsu dachi.

Kihon

Nigiri and Gamae (grips and guards)

Draw and strike position, Parry grip position, Ready position, Double grip position, Rear hanging position, Under arm ready position, Upward block position, Circular ready position, Rear ready position, Muso gamae to Muso gamae (round shoulder position – changing sides), Waki gamae (hip guard)

Uchi (strikes) and Zuki (thrusts)

Katate otoshi uchi (one handed downward strike), Morote otoshi uchi (double downward strike), Kaiten kontei uchi (swinging bottom strike), Nihon uchi (dual strike), Kontei zuki komi (bottom thrust), Nihon otoshi zuki komi (double downward thrust), Nukite zuki komi (spear thrust – Himon end)

Uke (blocks)

Age uke (upper block), Gedan barai (downward block), Nihon Gedan barai (double downward block), Juji uke (cross block, lower and upper), Yoko uke (side block - rod and himon), Awase Nihon uke (dual block - upper and side)

Furi (strikes)

Heiko Kaiten (overhead circular strike), Yoko Kaiten (side circular strike)
Hachiji Gaeshi (figure of 8 strike), Kote gaeshi furi (hip strike)

There is no Kata or Kumite for this level.

3rd Kyu to 2nd Kyu

This grading demonstrates a more advanced knowledge of Nunchaku Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations. Examiners will be looking for a single flowing and smooth movement of the Nuncahku combined with slides and pivots and steps forward and backwards. Examiners will also be looking for improved hand/eye co-ordination and effective, solidly executed techniques with kime.

Kihon

Uke (blocks)

San uke (three block combination with zuki komi finish)

Furi (strikes)

Nihon hachiji furi (double figure of 8 strike), Kote gaeshi furi (changing hand strike), Suihei gaeshi (cross swing and grip change strike), Shomen gaeshi furi (front strike), Tate ichimumji furi (one handed strike from under arm), Obi gaeshi furi (Belt swing)

Kata

Taikyoku No Nunchaku Sho, Taikyoku No Nunchaku Dai

Kuminunchaku

Defence and counter attack against a Jodan and Chudan Zuki and then Mae Geri.

NOTE: If using furi as counter attacks, rubber weapons can be used to demonstrate this.

2nd Kyu to 1st Kyu

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Nunchaku Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing.

Kihon

Katate kote gaeshi (on hand grip change),

Furi (stikes)

Gyakute gaeshi (underhand grip spin), Fudo gaeshi (cross back spin), Muso gaeshi (shoulder spin), Gyaku muso gaeshi (reverse shoulder spin), Maki gaeshi (neck spin), Gisei (sacrifice spin)

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Hiji kakoi gamae to shomen gaeshi furi to haiman gaeshi to muso gamae (round elbow guard to front strike, to back strike and spin to shoulder guard),

Kata

Taikyoku No Nunchaku Sho, Taikyoku No Nunchaku Dai, Yondan No Nunchaku

Kuminunchaku

Defence and counter attack against a Jodan and Chudan Zuki and then Mae Geri.

NOTE: If using furi as counter attacks, rubber weapons can be used to demonstrate this. Must demonstrate understanding of Shime (choking and trapping)

1st Kyu to Shodan

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Nunchaku Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Nunchaku should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Kihon

Any blocks, strikes, thrusts, spins, stances, guards from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Any combinations from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Kata

Any previous Kata from the syllabus.

Kuminunchaku

Defence and counter attack against a Jodan and Chudan Zuki and Gedan staff/weapon attacks.

NOTE: If using furi as counter attacks, rubber weapons can be used to demonstrate this.

Shodan to Nidan

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Nuncahku Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Nunchaku should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Kihon

Any blocks, strikes, thrusts, spins, stances, guards from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Any combinations from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Kata

Any Kata from the syllabus plus Kata of student own design (to include name and applications)

Kuminunchaku

Defence and counter attack against a Jodan and Chudan Zuki and then Mae Geri. The Jodan, Chudan and Gedan staff/weapon attacks.

NOTE: If using furi as counter attacks, rubber weapons can be used to demonstrate this.

Nidan and above

Gradings past Nidan are at the discretion of the Chief Instructor and will consist of anything he/she wishes to test on. Gradings at these levels demonstrate a highly-advanced knowledge and mastery of Nuncahku Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork.

Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Nunchaku should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Grading Syllabus – Sai

Novice to 3rd Kyu

This grading demonstrates a basic knowledge of elementary Sai Kobudo covering, basics guards and grips, basic spinning and striking. Examiners will be looking for a single basic movement of the Sai and the only movement will be slides and pivots from the stationary position. Most of the grading will be performed in Zenkutsu dachi.

Kihon

Nigiri and Gamae (Grips and guards)

Blade outward grip, blade inward grip, blade downward grip, grasping blade grip

Kaiten (rotations)

Inside retraction, Horizontal strike with vertical retraction, Vertical strike with horizontal retraction

Uke (blocks) and Zuki (thrusts)

Morote yoko uke (augmented side block), Age uke (upper block), Soto uke (outside block), Uchi uke (inside block), Gedan barai (lower block) – all with blade upwards, Zuki komi (straight thrust – blade inwards)

Kata

Taikyoku No Sai Sho

Kumisai

There is no kumite needed for this level

3rd Kyu to 2nd Kyu

This grading demonstrates a more advanced knowledge of Sai Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations. Examiners will be looking for a single flowing and smooth movement of the Sai combined with slides and pivots and steps forward and backwards. Examiners will also be looking for improved hand/eye co-ordination and effective, solidly executed techniques with kime.

Kihon

Nigiri and Kamae (Grips and guards)

Thumb and finger grip, Kokutsu dachi gamae, Neko ashi dachi gamae, Kiba dachi gamae, Kosa dachi gamae, Sagiashi dachi gamae

Uke (blocks), Zuki (thrusts) and Uchi (strikes)

Jodan juji uke (upper cross block), Gedan juji uke (lower cross block), Age uke (upper block), Soto uke (outside block), Uchi uke (inside block), Gedan barai (lower block) – all with blade downwards, Zuki komi (straight thrust – blade outwards), Morote yoko uke (augmented side block), Tate enpi (vertical elbow strike), Mawashi enpi (roundhouse elbow strike), Yoko enpi (side elbow strike), Mawashi kin uchi (circular groin strike)

Kata

Taikyoku No Sai Sho, Taikyoku No Sai Dai, Nidan No Sai

Kumisai

Defence against Jodan, Chudan and Gedan staff/weapon attacks.

2nd Kyu to 1st Kyu

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Sai Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Sai should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Kihon

Renrakuwaza (cominations and exercises)

1. Uchi uke, zuki komi (inside block blade out, stepping thrust), 2. Uchi uke, gedan barai, zuki komi (inside block blade out, gedan barai, stepping thrust), 3. Zuki komi, tetsui uchi, gedan barai (stepping thrust with horizontal strike, hammer strike, gedan barai blade up), 4. Shuto uchi, gyaku shuto uchi (knife hand strike, reverse knife hand stike), 5. Soto uke, yoko enpi, uraken (outside block blade in, side elbow, horizontal strike), 6. Nihon kage uke, nihon chudan uchi (double hook block, double chest thrust), 7. Nihon kakiwake uke, mae geri, nihon chudan uchi (double wedge block, front kick, double chest thrust)

Kata

1. Taikyoku No Sai Sho, 2. Taikyoku No Sai Dai, 3. Nidan No Sai

Kumisai

Defence against Jordan, Chudan and Gedan staff/weapon attacks.

Defence against Jordan, Chudan and Gedan knife attacks.

1st Kyu to Shodan

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Sai Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Sai should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Kihon

Any blocks, strikes, thrusts, spins, stances, guards from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Any combinations from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Kata

Any previous Kata from the syllabus plus Kanku Dai No Sai

Kumisai

Defence against Jodan, Chudan and Gedan staff/weapon attacks.

Defence against Jodan, Chudan and Gedan knife attacks.

Shodan to Nidan

This grading demonstrates a highly-advanced knowledge of Sai Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Sai should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).

Kihon

Any blocks, strikes, thrusts, spins, stances, guards from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Renraku waza (combinations and exercises)

Any combinations from the previous syllabus can be asked by the examiners.

Kata

Any Kata from the syllabus plus Kata of student own design (to include name and applications)

Kumisai

Defence against Jodan, Chudan and Gedan knife attacks.

Demonstrate disarming a threatening opponent.

Demonstrate single sai defence

Demonstrate defence against Nunchaku

Nidan and above

Gradings past Nidan are at the discretion of the Chief Instructor and will consist of anything he/she wishes to test on. Gradings at these levels demonstrate a highly-advanced knowledge and mastery of Sai Kobudo covering, twirling, flipping, blocking and striking combinations that need to be executed with footwork. Examiners will be looking for three specific elements in this grading – Balance and low maintained centre of gravity; power, speed and kime and an excellent appreciation of rhythm and timing. Use of the Sai should be flowing and natural with no jerky movements. Kumi should be reactive and continuous, executed with little thought (mushin).