



PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANKS OF ROKUDAN, SHICHIDAN, AND HACHIDAN

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND PHILOSOPHY	3
STUDENT RANKS – SHODAN, NIDAN, AND SANDAN	3
Shodan	3
Nidan	4
Sandan	4
SENSEI RANKS – YONDAN AND GODAN	4
Yondan	4
Godan	4
MASTER RANKS – ROKUDAN, SHICHIDAN, AND HACHIDAN	4
OVERVIEW	4
Rokudan	5
Shichidan	6
Hachidan	6
CONTRIBUTION TYPES	6
Short-Term Contributions	6
Long-Term Contributions	7
PROPOSED PROMOTION GUIDELINES	7
Technical Proficiency	7
Administrative Contributions	8
Teacher/Educator Contributions	9
Societal Contributions	9
For all Applications to the Master Ranks	10
RECOMMENDATIONS	10



For the Promotion Committee.....	10
For applications to the Master Ranks	11
For Yudanshakais	11
CONCLUSION.....	12



PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANKS OF ROKUDAN, SHICHIDAN, AND HACHIDAN

This document describes recommendations of our committee for guidelines concerning contributions to the promotion to Rokudan, Shichidan, and Hachidan. The evaluation of applications for promotions to these ranks falls within the realms of objectifiable, concrete information as well as the abstract. We balance accomplishments, abilities, and the attributes of the individual along with character, skill, leadership abilities, and dedication to the Judo community. The guidelines we offer below seek tangible and measurable evidence while expecting to quantify ideas or concepts that are difficult to assess objectively well. It is expected that candidates exhibit measurable qualitative and quantitative growth as a contributing person to society through their practice of judo from their current rank to the rank applied. This objective and subjective process can be determined through testing, evaluation, success of students, and maturation of skill and delivery, among other aspects of evaluation. Not only are candidates' contributions to Judo considered, but especially are their contributions to greater society, in line with the loftier tenets of Judo. Rank must have merit and *the journey through rank is unique to every individual*. Agreement by the Promotion Committee on these principles assures that progression through these higher ranks has viable potential.

Below, we first describe background philosophy for earlier dan ranks and the associated basic expectations for each grade for promotion consideration. We also provide below definitions related to contributions based on their short- and long-term impact. Lastly, there is a recommendation for the promotion process to increase the amount of information related to the potential candidate(s) by the respective Yudanshakais.

BACKGROUND PHILOSOPHY

Philosophically, our Promotion Committee has agreed that the progression through the Dan ranks should reflect a notable change in the individual over time, as well as a progression from an internal to a more external focus. Due to this progression, the certifications the USJF offers should be earned primarily through the Shodan through Godan development stages.

STUDENT RANKS – SHODAN, NIDAN, AND SANDAN

The three student Dan ranks of Shodan, Nidan, and Sandan show the growth of a Judoka from a fledgling of the Shodan Rank, progressing with focus primarily on self-development. This internal focus is primarily related to the technical aspects of Judo skills, strategies, and areas of interest. As a judoka progresses through these first three Dan ranks, there should be a demonstration of continued development through the guided sharing of those developing skills and interests on to beginning to learn the art of teaching.

Shodan

Shodan candidates are ready to “hatch from the egg.” They are now ready to focus on the development of their own judo, while continuing to expand understanding and technical ability



of a range of tachiwaza, newaza and competitive skills. They may also do guided teaching in the dojo. They begin to explore the opportunities for courses available to expand their knowledge and understanding.

Nidan

Nidan candidates are still primarily internally focused on self-development and depth of knowledge and understanding, are expanding their role as an assistant teacher in general classes in the dojo. They continue to take advantage of certification and education courses to expand their knowledge and understanding and better share with others.

Sandan

Sandan candidates are starting to independently personalize their Judo style, have a greater understanding of technical aspects of Judo, and are learning the art of how to begin to teach independently not only general classes in the dojo, but share knowledge in areas of interest as well.

SENSEI RANKS – YONDAN AND GODAN

Yondan and Godan are considered Sensei ranks within the United States. People of these Dan ranks are willing and able to share knowledge, understanding, and strategy with technical proficiency, accuracy, and skill of delivery.

Yondan

Yondan candidates are teaching with a greater understanding of Judo, are involved at the club and local level, and increase service to the club and to students. They have entered the first stage as an independent teacher. This requires a solid level of understanding of judo. It is expected that they be able to teach all aspects of judo commensurate with their rank and are clearly a leader within the club.

Godan

Godan candidates are involved at a club and Yudanshakai level and are encouraged but not required to be involved at the regional and national level, based on their area of personal expertise. They have entered the second stage as an independent teacher having a greater understanding of technical Judo, of teaching all ages and skill levels, and with increased ability to adapt to the learning needs of all students. A high level of understanding of all judo is required, as they are expected to be able to teach all aspects of Judo commensurate with their rank. They are clearly recognized leaders in the club and region.

MASTER RANKS – ROKUDAN, SHICHIDAN, AND HACHIDAN

OVERVIEW

The ranks of Rokudan through Hachidan signify both quantitative and qualitative growth, development, and maturation that transcends the individual and any previous or current activities and is recognizable within those they meet, teach, and mentor. What is abundantly clear for these



ranks is that they should be associated with *qualitative growth of the candidate as a continuing self-actualizing person who matures and evolves over time; thus, applications should reflect and provide evidence of that maturation and continuing self-actualization* and not merely list activities or accomplishments. What is also abundantly clear for these ranks is that *meeting minimum time in grade requirements and other markers of the passage of time are not sufficient grounds for promotion. Evidence should be proffered for evaluation of the candidate's evolution as a selfless person, which goes beyond quantifiable checklists and into subjective realms of character maturation and contribution evaluation.* Moreover, the stature of the applicant as a leader in the community and society as a whole becomes a critical focus.

Rokudan, Shichidan, and Hachidan are considered Master Ranks. Master Rank candidates are life-long learners and have made a transition to a selfless approach to Judo and life, sharing Judo, developing others, and contributing to society. Time and effort in Judo is significantly greater than in Student or Sensei ranks, as they are also master educators, sharing their passion and depth of knowledge with others selflessly. They will have students that emulate the example taught to contribute to society and the Judo community within the *Time In Grade* period. Remaining a lifelong learner while progressing in skill of delivery, remaining open to new concepts and ideas, and absorbing new or different material is critically important. They embody the values of Judo, specifically humility, and they strive to take in pure information prior to analysis, thus giving new knowledge a chance. The embracing of new concepts before automatically rejecting a differing process, thought, or idea provides a leading example and demonstration of a model for others to follow. Notoriety, stature, and technical proficiency are key attributes to applications for these ranks. The skills and contributions of a person during their *Time In Grade* period should unquestionably speak to the quality and qualifications of the individual. This is partly due to the human perspective attributing the contributions to judo equal to what the candidate has learned from judo. The application should clearly state that the contributions are because of judo and/or articulate the seemingly common knowledge known by others that the contributions were made from lessons learned from or by judo.

At some point, your rank is not yours; it belongs to your students.

There is an expectation the candidate will be well known by the committee, the greater judo community, and perhaps even those outside of the judo world, based on their contributions to Judo and society over an extended period of time. Notoriety and stature along with technical proficiency can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.

Rokudan

Rokudan candidates have made a transition to a selfless approach to Judo, sharing Judo, and developing others. Time and effort in Judo is significantly greater than as a Godan. They should be an inspiration to others. They will have students that emulate the example taught to contribute to society and the Judo community within the *Time In Grade* period. They must have local impact – growth outside the dojo. They are a leader within their club, local area and may expand to the regional and the national level.



Shichidan

Shichidan candidates should have at least regional impact within their Yudanshakai and be regionally and possibly nationally or internationally known for their expertise. This may include recognition in judo administration, the accomplishments of their students should carry significance, and they should at minimum have contributions at the regional level, which must be reflected within the *Time In Grade* period. Regional impact means that there is growth outside the local area to include the Yudanshakai and the state or region at the very least. The Shichidan candidate should invoke meaning and purpose to what we do, providing higher and more personalized motivation and inspiration regardless of the student's level through their direct interactions with students, on the mat and in uniform.

Hachidan

Hachidan candidates should, within the *Time In Grade* period, have well-known national and likely international impact through their expertise or through their direct students. Judoka actively involved in the national activities directed by the USJF should know the impact of their Judo, abilities, knowledge, and areas of expertise. Everyone attending national meetings should know their name, reputation, and areas of expertise. Candidates should also be focusing on succession planning to develop those to carry on their legacy. They should be a solid, unquestioned role model of the true Judoka. Their active service, sharing their knowledge and expertise, can be seen and experienced through a variety of ways in the four criterion areas described below.

CONTRIBUTION TYPES

There are many different types of contributions that judo practitioners can make and that can be used in promotion applications. For the purpose of this document, we divide contributions roughly into **short-** and **long-term** contributions. Rokudan, Shichidan, and Hachidan candidates should have a combination of these and other types of contributions and the amount and/or quality of these contributions should notably develop in depth and maturation with each *Time In Grade* cycle. Selfless contribution and the resultant notoriety and stature of a candidate ought to become increasingly evident as individuals rise through these high master ranks.

Short-Term Contributions

Many short-term contributions correlate closely to the deductions for *Time In Grade* that can be recorded on the current USJF Promotion Application (Form 20) and attachments. Short-term contributions include, but are not limited to:

- As a Sensei, the candidate is able to demonstrate the ability to teach and coach with a notable level of quality.
- Active participation in national meetings with evidence of efficacy.
- Active service on National committees, sub-committees and Ad Hoc committees with evidence of efficacy.
- Chairing a National committee, sub-committee or Ad Hoc committee with evidence of efficacy.
- Being an active voting delegate for National meetings.



- Serving as an executive officer with evidence of efficacy.
- Local, Regional, and National Officer positions with evidence of efficacy.
- Certifications such as:
 - Kata teaching or judging
 - Referee educator or Pan American or International referee
 - Coaching
 - Teaching

Long-Term Contributions

Many long-term contributions are not necessarily addressed directly in the USJF Promotion Application (Form 20), but ought to be reflected in the application package for Master Rank promotions. Long-term contributions include activities and accomplishments that transcend any particular time in grade period and rank promotion. Examples may include but not be limited to the following:

1. Developing and disseminating business models that can help others be successful in judo that have evolved across time beyond any time in grade period.
2. Developing and distributing scholarly materials, such as authoring books, writing articles, conducting and disseminating research, conducting lecture and keynote tours, and the like.
3. Developing programs that have a positive impact for multiple generations in any and all areas of judo.

Of particular relevance for this document is the note that both short- and especially long-term contributions that occurred in one time in grade period and counted for a promotion can be used for subsequent time in grade activities and promotion applications; yet for promotions to the Master Ranks, applications need to demonstrate how the previous activities led to a continuous evolution and maturation of the individual toward a self-actualizing individual with contributions to greater society.

PROPOSED PROMOTION GUIDELINES

Below we provide guidelines for promotion to the ranks of Rokudan, Shichidan, and Hachidan assembled into four broad bucket areas. The buckets are not meant to be mutually exclusive or exhaustive; other areas deemed applicable to provide evidence for the type of ***quantitative and qualitative growth and maturation of the person as a selfless, self-actualizing individual*** should be considered. Such development and maturation should be quantitatively and qualitatively different and improved over the previous rank; that is, Rokudan applicants should demonstrate growth and maturation since the rank of Godan, Shichidan applicants should demonstrate growth and maturation since the rank of Rokudan, etc.

Technical Proficiency

Criterion: Candidates for these ranks should have a past and/or current record of impeccable technical proficiency and continued improvement in such proficiency; thus, resting on one's past laurels is insufficient for continued promotion after the time such laurels were attained. Expertise is a contribution based in results of the individual's competitive career, and the intentional focus on giving back to the judo community based on those results. Examples of evidence for improvement in technical proficiency include but are not limited to:

USJF Promotion Committee Contribution Task Force

Janet Johnson, Anthony Catanese, Joshua Kindelberger, David Matsumoto

October 2023



1. Competitive success since the attainment of the last previous rank.
2. Attainment of international referee licenses or continued and improved involvement in officiating in international level competition.
3. Continued and/or increasing kata proficiency on the international or world stage or the continued learning or mastery of kata.
4. Continued and/or increasingly successful coaching at IJF sanctioned events internationally.
5. Continued and/or increasingly successful participation of one's students in national or international competition.
6. Continued and/or Increased knowledge and mastery of the history of judo, judo philosophy, or other judo related topics.
7. Continued and/or increased invitations to teach or coach internationally, particularly outside of North America.

Administrative Contributions

Criterion: Candidates for these ranks should have a past and/or current record of impeccable service to the administration of judo and continued efficacy in such services; thus, resting on one's past contributions is insufficient for continued promotion after the time such contributions were made. Also, continued efficacy refers to not only serving in positions, but ***demonstrating effectiveness in that service.*** Examples of evidence for continued improvement in administrative contributions include but are not limited to:

1. Organizing, hosting, or instructing at judo camps, clinics, workshops, or other educational or developmental activities, particularly with participants and/or instructors from outside the U.S., with evidence of their success. This may include technical proficiency opportunities for both community and competitive programs with the intent to give back to the judo community.
2. Developing programs that have a positive impact for multiple generations, with evidence for their success. These may include but not be limited to:
 - Developing programs to teach others how to teach, coach, and lead others.
 - Developing education programs within a school district.
 - Developing community based program for at-risk youth.
 - Developing programs to teach others how to create, organize and teach judo clinics or seminars.
 - Developing programs on how to lead others through the teachings of Professor Kano, through judo.
 - Developing programs to teach others how to conduct tournaments and be a Tournament Director.
3. Creation of instructional materials and other media, and the successful dissemination and promulgation of such materials.
4. Evidence of success in administrative positions, not just holding a position (e.g., numbers of individuals who received certifications under one's program, etc.).



5. Developing and sharing business models that can help others be successful in judo, with focus on topics such as marketing, professionalizing, branding, etc., and evidence for the success of such model dissemination.
6. Evidence of succession planning in all areas of judo in which the candidate is involved.

Teacher/Educator Contributions

Criterion: Candidates for these ranks should have a past and current record of impeccable contributions as teachers and educators of judo and continued success in such activities; thus, resting on one's past contributions as a teacher/educator is insufficient for continued promotion after the time such contributions were made. Examples of evidence for continued improvement in teacher/educator contributions include but are not limited to:

1. Successful and continuing or increasing registration of students in one's dojo across the time in grade period.
2. Continued and/or increasing numbers of one's students promoted to dan ranks since the last promotion.
3. Continued and/or increasing success of one's students in teaching, administering, coaching, refereeing judo.
4. Continued and/or increasing success of one's students as competitors.
5. Growth and contributions of one's students outside the region and to the national level or beyond, with evidence that such growth and contributions occurred in part due to the applicant.
6. The conduct of Master Class sessions with higher ranking individuals.
7. Being sought out by others, especially those at higher ranks, for expertise, to study specifically with the candidate. This may include hosting visiting students at one's dojo (local or international), and the length of time the student(s) spent with the candidate. This may also include having students sent to acquire specific skill sets such as kata, specific techniques, competitive skills, coaching skills, refereeing skills, teaching skills, etc.
8. Creating instructional videos and evidence for the successful dissemination of such materials.
9. Being invited to teach clinics throughout the country and internationally.
10. Demonstrating and modeling how one can be an active and effective teacher without necessarily being able to demonstrate the skills as they once could. There is more than one way to be active in Judo. Actively teaching from the side of the mat is still being an active practitioner.
11. Evidence that one's students surpassed the candidate in measurable ways.

Societal Contributions

Criterion: Candidates for these ranks should have a past and/or current record of impeccable contributions to the greater judo community and society as a whole. Evidence should be brought to bear by the candidates of their increased stature of citizens of the world and exemplars of judo. As in the original tenets of Kodokan Judo, societal contributions through professions may not be limited to certain professions. It is not the profession, but how the individual has engaged in that profession in service to and by judo. Examples of evidence for continued improvement in societal contributions include but are not limited to:

USJF Promotion Committee Contribution Task Force

Janet Johnson, Anthony Catanese, Joshua Kindelberger, David Matsumoto

October 2023



1. Scholarly record of judo related publications, especially in multiple languages.
2. Evidence of lecture tours or clinics provided in multiple, different countries.
3. Letters of recommendations or testimonials from people outside of judo and the U.S. testifying to the contributions of the individual because of judo.
4. Creation of work or products with national and/or international distribution.
5. Development and distribution of scholarly materials, such as:
 - Authoring a book
 - Writing articles
 - Conducting research
 - Giving lecture tours
 - Delivering Keynotes or Regional, National or International Clinics/Lectures
6. Receiving awards for lifetime achievements such as an IJF Award
7. Professional contributions to society

For all Applications to the Master Ranks

Applications for these Master Ranks should bring to bear evidence in the four areas above, and any others, that demonstrate the continued evolution and maturation of the candidate as a selfless, self-actualizing individual who contributes to the greater good of society through their continued practice of and involvement in judo. Evidence should be primarily focused on content since the previous promotion; that is, applications for Rokudan should provide evidence in the areas above since the rank of Godan. Likewise, applications for Shichidan should provide evidence in the areas above since the rank of Rokudan, and applications for Hachidan should provide evidence in the areas above since the rank of Shichidan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the guidelines above, this committee makes the following recommendations to the application process for applications to the Master Ranks, in order to ensure that the review of applicants reflects integrity and quality along that guidelines and criteria mentioned above.

FOR THE PROMOTION COMMITTEE

- a. Standardize the process used for the review of every application that is brought to the table.
- b. Come to agreement that a qualified candidate should have measurable growth through their current rank and be worthy of promotion to the next level. The term measurable means an objective process determined through testing, evaluation, success of students, and maturation of skill and delivery.
- c. Conduct annual mandatory Zoom (or other on-line) training sessions for each Yudanshakai Promotion Committee Chair to attend to review all the Rank Requirement Recommendations, application process, completion regulations, and time limitations.
- d. Provide examples for the candidates and Yudanshakai to follow. The collection of relevant information and evidence will fall on the candidate and the respective Yudanshakai Promotion Committee.



- e. This Zoom training is particularly important for the Master rank promotion applications.

FOR APPLICATIONS TO THE MASTER RANKS

- f. Application packages to the Master Ranks should include the following:
 - i. The candidate's curriculum vitae.
 - ii. A self-statement that summarizes the candidate's accomplishments and evolution as a selfless and self-actualized individual contributing to society through the four criteria areas.
 - iii. An indexed set of supplementary materials that represent the candidate's accomplishments in the four criteria areas. The supplementary materials should provide evidence for as many of the four criteria described above and any others as deemed relevant by the submitting Yudanshakai. Examples may include the following:
 - 1. Accomplishments and awards through the *Time In Grade* period as well as Lifetime Achievement awards.
 - 2. Contributions made within the *Time In Grade* period at the **local level** (Club or Yudanshakai), **regional level** (large Yudanshakai or state-wide), **national level**, and if it applies to the candidate, **international level**, as appropriate for the rank being applied for.
 - 3. A balance of short, and long-term contributions should be clearly articulated by the candidate.
 - 4. Special certifications that might not be reflected in the *Time In Grade* reductions.
 - 5. Students who emulate the example(s) taught directly by the candidate to contribute to society and the Judo community within the *Time In Grade* period.
 - 6. Contributions made to Judo by students of the candidate.
 - 7. Success(s) of students achieved by students of the candidate.
 - 8. Evidence of succession planning for whatever aspect of judo these individuals are engaged in.
 - iv. Names and contact information for at least three individuals from whom the promotion committee can solicit letters of recommendation, and who can objectively and professionally evaluate the candidate's application. For applications to Hachidan, at least one of these individuals should be outside the judo community.

FOR YUDANSHAKAIS

- g. The submitting Yudanshakai has primary responsibility for the correct, error-free and sequential organization of the application package.
- h. Application packages must be submitted by the closing date as determined by the USJF Promotion Committee.
- i. Yudanshakai need to inform their higher-ranking membership of the expectation that they attend, participate, and present and/or contribute at regional and national events, to include national meetings, unless their exemplary previous

USJF Promotion Committee Contribution Task Force

Janet Johnson, Anthony Catanese, Joshua Kindelberger, David Matsumoto

October 2023



contributions are well known and recognized. As always, consideration for exemption may be given to those with physical or financial limitations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to leave you with this thought:

TRUE TEACHERS ALWAYS WANT THEIR STUDENTS TO EXCEED WHAT THEY WERE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THEMSELVES.