

# Blackbelt Grading Preparation – What happens next!

Below is an outline of what has happened in the past during the build-up to previous students blackbelt grading. This should hopefully give you an idea of what to expect, however, this is only a rough guide based on previous grading and each grading will differ. To keep up to date with what is happening at your grading you need to check the PUMA and NCTKD websites regularly for any late changes.

## **Building-up to your grading**

- Following your successful promotion to blackstripe your instructor will decide when you are a suitable to go for your blackbelt grading. At the earliest your blackbelt grading will be between 6 to 9 months after your blackstripe grading.
- During this period you must train as often as possible. Previous successful students have trained up to four nights per week.
- Blackbelt gradings are held in Spring and Autumn. The date varies every year due to other TKD events in the calendar. Most recently the gradings have been held at the Oasis Leisure Centre, North Star, Swindon.
- Before you can go for your grading you will have to pass your blackbelt pre-grading. This is an examination designed to assess whether you are ready to be placed in front of the national examining panel.
- The pre-grading will be held locally on the same day as the senior grade training. These are usually held in the Summer and Winter before the main grading. You will be notified of the time and venue nearer to the day.
- You will be told the following week if you have passed the pre-grading by telephone.
- Once you have passed your pre-grading you will be emailed a blackbelt application form and a self appraisal form to complete. You will also be emailed the essay title to answer. These will need to be completed and emailed back to myself as soon as possible.
- The grading cost varies depending on your belt grade. It has previously been between £100 and £200. This may change. You will be notified of the exact cost by myself.
- Usually, on the Wednesday and Thursday before the grading, Master Gayle will host training sessions for students who are grading. This is usually held near to the grading venue (often Swindon leisure centre). This often starts at 10am and finishes at 3pm. Payment for this can be in advance or on the day. It is usually about £30 for the 2 days. This is an excellent way to prepare for the grading and should not be missed.
- The grading venue and date will be announced several months before the grading. Students are advised to check [www.puma-uk.co.uk](http://www.puma-uk.co.uk) for any late changes to the grading.

## **The Grading Itself**

- The grading usually takes place over a weekend. Blackstripes on the Saturday and Blackbelts on the Sunday.
- You will be told of your grading start time the week before your grading. This is emailed from PUMA to myself.
- Students are recommended to arrive a minimum of 2 hours before their grading time.
- At the venue there will be a training room available to warm-up prior to your grading.
- Students are advised to wear smart clothing (shirt, tie and shoes) when arriving at the venue.
- White suits are to be used on the grading. **Remember, you are on your grading the moment you leave home.**
- Check you have full safety equipment before you leave home, better still, check 1 week prior to your grading.
- After completing the grading, all students are gathered together to complete a “spirit test.” This is held outside, whatever the weather, so take along sportswear (tracksuit/shorts/T-shirt). Something that you can get dirty.
- Results are emailed to me the week after the grading. I will try to notify you by telephone.
- The presentation evening is the formal event that is held in the month after the grading. This is when you are presented with your blackbelt. This is usually held at the oasis leisure centre in Swindon. The venue time and date will be given out at the grading. It’s a great night, don’t miss it!!