



Taekwondo Council UK (TCUK)

Dan (Degree) Grade Recognition, Seniority and Promotion Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and procedures used by Taekwondo Council UK (TCUK) for recognising and awarding **Dan (Degree) grades** in Taekwondo.

The policy ensures that recognised grades reflect appropriate martial arts experience, integrity, leadership and contribution to the development of Taekwondo.

TCUK recognises that Taekwondo is practised through multiple recognised systems and therefore aims to provide a fair framework for practitioners from different Taekwondo backgrounds.

2. Terminology

Within this policy the terms **Dan** and **Degree** refer to the same level of black belt rank within Taekwondo.

- **Dan** is the traditional Korean terminology.
- **Degree** is the English equivalent.

After the first reference, the term **Dan** will be used throughout this policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Recognition of Dan grades awarded by external Taekwondo organisations
- Confirmation of Dan grades within Taekwondo Council UK
- Promotion or recognition of **senior Dan grades (6th Dan and above)**
- Practitioners from both **Chang-Hon and Olympic-style Taekwondo systems**

TCUK acknowledges the international systems associated with both:

- International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF / Chang-Hon Taekwondo)

- World Taekwondo (WT)

TCUK recognises practitioners who have trained within these traditions or other legitimate Taekwondo organisations.

4. Recognition of External Dan Grades

TCUK may recognise Dan grades awarded by legitimate Taekwondo organisations where sufficient evidence of the grade is available.

Evidence may include:

- Original Dan certificates
- Confirmation from the issuing organisation
- Historic records or documentation
- Witness statements from senior instructors
- Photographic or archival evidence
- Other credible supporting evidence

Where original certificates have been **lost or destroyed**, TCUK may review available evidence and confirm recognition of the grade through a decision of the TCUK committee or an authorised Senior Dan Panel.

Recognition may include grades issued through organisations affiliated with WT, ITF or other recognised Taekwondo bodies.

A decision issued by TCUK confirming recognition of a grade shall constitute the official recognised rank within Taekwondo Council UK.

5. Cross-System Recognition

Taekwondo Council UK recognises that Taekwondo is practised through multiple established systems, including Olympic-style Taekwondo and Chang-Hon Taekwondo.

Black belt (Dan) grades awarded by legitimate organisations within **World Taekwondo (WT)** or **Chang-Hon / ITF traditions** may be recognised as **Taekwondo Dan grades** by TCUK.

Recognition confirms the practitioner's **black belt seniority within Taekwondo**, regardless of the specific technical system in which the grade was originally awarded.

Recognition of a Dan grade does **not automatically convert the technical syllabus of one system into another**. Practitioners training within a different system may be required to demonstrate knowledge of the relevant technical curriculum before further grading within that system.

6. Black Belt Seniority

For the purpose of determining seniority and experience, TCUK recognises the **date of a practitioner's first Dan (1st Degree black belt)** as the beginning of their black belt career.

This date establishes the practitioner's **overall black belt seniority within Taekwondo**.

Due to the historical development of Taekwondo and the existence of multiple organisations with differing grading systems, the time intervals between subsequent Dan promotions may vary.

Such variations may occur due to:

- Differences between organisational grading structures
- Historical grading practices based on **training hours rather than calendar years**
- Movement between Taekwondo organisations
- Recognition-based or honorary promotions
- Periods of absence from training

Variations in the timing of promotions do **not automatically invalidate a practitioner's seniority or experience**.

7. Consideration of Martial Arts Background

When reviewing senior Dan grades, TCUK may consider a practitioner's **wider martial arts experience**, including training in other disciplines that contributed to their technical development prior to or alongside Taekwondo training.

However, Dan grades recognised by TCUK apply specifically to **Taekwondo**.

8. Historical Context of Dan Progression

TCUK recognises historical guidance for Dan progression as referenced in the *Taekwon-Do Encyclopedia* by **Choi Hong-hi**.

This reference indicates that advancement through Dan grades traditionally reflects increasing years of experience following attainment of black belt.

Similarly, Olympic-style Taekwondo systems associated with **World Taekwondo (WT)** recognise Dan progression based on continued training, development and experience within the art.

While historical guidance provides approximate time progression through early and intermediate Dan grades, fixed promotion requirements for the highest senior degrees were not rigidly defined.

9. Time-in-Grade Guidance

TCUK may consider general time-in-grade guidelines when reviewing promotions. However, these guidelines are considered **advisory rather than absolute requirements**, particularly for senior grades.

Traditional Taekwondo references commonly indicate a progression where increasing Dan levels correspond with increasing years of experience after black belt.

Due to differences in historical practice and organisational structures, TCUK recognises that strict timelines may not always apply across all Taekwondo systems.

10. Senior Dan Grades (6th Dan and Above)

Senior Dan grades represent **leadership levels within the art of Taekwondo**.

Promotion or recognition to **6th Dan and above** may be considered by the TCUK committee or a designated **Senior Dan Panel**.

When reviewing eligibility for senior Dan grades, the following factors may be considered:

- Total years of martial arts experience
- Black belt seniority
- Teaching history and development of instructors
- Contribution to the growth and promotion of Taekwondo
- Leadership within the martial arts community
- Service to Taekwondo organisations and practitioners

Promotion to senior Dan grades is **not determined solely by fixed time requirements**, but by the overall standing and contribution of the practitioner within the art.

11. Recognition of Service and Contribution

Senior Dan grades may recognise a practitioner's **long-term dedication to the teaching, development and promotion of Taekwondo**.

Such recognition may include consideration of:

- Establishment of martial arts organisations or schools
 - Development of instructors and students
 - Contribution to Taekwondo governance or organisational development
 - Promotion of Taekwondo nationally or internationally
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12. Authority of Taekwondo Council UK

Taekwondo Council UK reserves the authority to:

- Recognise Dan grades awarded by other organisations
- Confirm or ratify Dan grades within TCUK

- Review the legitimacy of Dan grades where questions arise
- Establish panels to review senior Dan promotions
- Determine eligibility for recognition or promotion based on a practitioner's overall martial arts history and contribution

Decisions made by the **TCUK committee or authorised Senior Dan Panel** shall constitute the official recognition of rank within Taekwondo Council UK.

13. Policy Review

This policy may be reviewed and updated periodically by the TCUK committee to ensure it continues to reflect best practice and the ongoing development of Taekwondo.

Approved by:

Taekwondo Council UK Committee

Effective Date: _____

Review Date: _____