

## Important terms to know:

**Onajiku** - both Shite and Uke change stance and shuffle in to do the other side

**Hajime** - signal to begin the technique

**Shite Uke Kotae** - Uke and Shite change roles

## Testing Procedure

Testing for Kyu or Dan grades is a time of excitement and anxiety. Consequently, people are often confused about how to conduct themselves. We hope these few guidelines will help, but if you are ever in doubt when in front of Sensei, some early advice is not to worry about mistakes or problems. Just do your absolute best. Good Luck!

Before the test there will be at least two weeks of test review in the dojo. At this time your instructors will let you know if they believe you are ready to test and will advise you of any areas you need to improve in. When you are ready to test you will be given a test form, and you must know who your partner (if required) is for the test. Your test fees and testing forms must be submitted in advance of the test date.

On the day of the test:

- Wear a clean uniform (dogi). A uniform is not required for your first test.
- Have all the weapons needed for the test with you when seiza prior to the beginning of the test,
- When your name is called, bow, answer with “Osu” and run to your appointed spot with your appropriate weapon for the first technique.

The placement during tests is as follows:



Remember that Sensei will call out students in rank order of the tests. Lower ranked tests are called first. The first person called in a test group goes to Sensei's far left and faces forward to the “Shomen” (dojo front wall). The others go to #1's left, ending with everyone in a straight line, including the senior calling the test. Pay attention to the commands of the person calling the test, as he or she is responsible for telling you what to do and when to do it. Do not watch Sensei but focus to your front or your partner, whichever is appropriate.

You will be instructed to:

1. Bow to Sensei (at the beginning of the test).
2. Bow to your partner (prior to beginning techniques with a partner).
3. Commence the test - the first person called of the testing pair will be Shite first.
  - When **Kamae** is called come into right kamae, 4 mat widths apart.

- When the technique is called, if the technique is a #2, or ni technique, Shite will move into left kamae and in all cases both parties will move forward so that they are within striking distance - about 1 mat width apart.
  - When you hear the command "**hajime**" you may begin the technique.
  - When you have completed the technique on one side, return to the same kamae as you started in, four mat widths (2 lengths) apart. When you hear the command "**Onajiku**" both Shite and Uke change stance and shuffle in to do the other side. On the next "**hajime**" command you may execute the technique.
4. When you hear the command "**Shite Uke Kotae**" Shite and Uke change roles and assume the appropriate stance for beginning the technique again. In most cases the technique will be the same for Uke and will not be repeated. But, in some cases, for prior techniques (shite waza in the syllabus) Uke may be given a new technique and may need to change stance when the technique is called.
  5. Always maintain the kamae position between techniques.
  6. When the test is finished reverse the above order of bowing.
  7. Lastly, run back to your place in line, exiting to your left and returning to your spot from behind the seated students. The most senior of the group will say "seiza" and all who just tested will kneel together.

During the test, if you forget a technique, stay calm. Take a deep breath. Try to relax your body and mind, and ask to have the technique name repeated. If you do the wrong the technique, follow the same procedure. If you are having a lot of difficulty on one side, try not to worry but do better on the other side. You will usually be asked to repeat the technique if there is enough of a problem. Be aware that when a group is testing, it may not be you who had the problem! Everyone in the group will be asked to repeat the technique.

O-Sensei often said that Aikido is harmony and loving protection of all living things. You must take care not to cause any undue pain or injure your partner. If one partner injures another so that the injured partner cannot continue the test, both will fail. You are a set and work as a team.

Also during tests, the audience on the tatami must sit in **seiza** at the start and finish of the test. During the test itself they may sit in either **seiza** or **anza**. It is considered extremely bad etiquette to sit sloppily, or with your feet pointing at Sensei or the people testing. sitting is an important and natural part of training in Aikido,

A last point to remember - although testing is an important and natural part of training in Aikido, attaining rank is not the main purpose. The test itself and practising for it are the most important aspects. Regardless of passing or failing a test, there is great potential to grow from it.