



American Traditional Jujutsu Association Promotion System

ATJA Rank System - The ATJA Rank System for Jujutsu and Judo follows the traditional rank systems used by most traditional martial arts systems. The system has seven student grades and ten advanced or instructor grades. The ATJA retains the authority to promote deserving members up through the Jujutsu or Judo rank of Judan (10th degree black belt). ATJA ranks, with their proper identification, minimum and normal time-in-grade, and promotion requirements, can be found in the official documents list on ATJA website (www.atja.org/Official_Docs.htm).

ATJA National Promotion Standardization – Both the ATJA Jujutsu and Judo Promotion Systems are based on a national system. That is, national requirements have been established for all rank promotions, and the same exams are used throughout the country. Candidates for certain rank in one part of the country can be expected to be equal in skill and knowledge to persons holding the same rank in other parts of the country. All ATJA rank promotions are registered at the ATJA National Office. Each individual is issued a national rank certificate and membership card indicating the rank held. If a member loses his rank card or certificate, it can easily be replaced by contacting the ATJA National Office. The ATJA promotion system achieves national standardization by adherence to the following guidelines.

1. Each student must meet minimum requirements to be eligible for promotion. These individual requirements are found in the official documents list on ATJA website (www.atja.org/Official_Docs.htm). Requirements may be found in the ATJA Jujutsu Manual and the ATJA Judo Manual, but may not be up to date. Each person recommended for promotion must be a current member of ATJA and must pass an exam and be recommended for promotion by the instructor. In general, any ATJA instructor who is Shodan or higher and an ATJA member in good standing may recommend a student for promotion to any grade up to the instructor's own rank. That is, a Shodan may recommend to Ikkyu, and a Nidan may recommend to Shodan, etc.
2. All promotion recommendations must be submitted to the ATJA National Office on the proper recommendation for promotion form, with the appropriate fee. All promotions through Sandan are reviewed by the ATJA National Office to ensure that all minimum promotion requirements have been met.
3. Promotion recommendations for 4th degree black belt and up in Jujutsu or Judo are further reviewed by the respective ATJA Promotion Board (as appropriate). These Boards also ensure that all minimum requirements have been met, and further identify those exceptional individuals eligible for minimum time promotions.
4. Candidates for promotion to Nidan and above must be tested/examined and passed by a Certified Master Examiner who is a member of the ATJA Board of Examiners. The Master Examiner must hold certification for the art being considered for examination (I.E. A Master Jujutsu Examiner can test a candidate only for Jujutsu promotion).
 - a. Candidates for Nidan or Sandan must be examined and passed by one Certified Master Examiner;
 - b. Candidates for Yodan or Godan must be examined and passed by two Certified Master Examiners; and
 - c. Candidates for the rank of Rokudan, Shichidan or Hachidan must be examined and passed by three Certified Master Examiners.
 - d. All promotions to the rank of Shichidan and higher must be also validated by the ATJA Board of Directors.
6. Master Examiners must hold the rank of Rokudan or higher and must go through the ATJA Certified Examiner program for the appropriate Art. After completing the Certified Examiner Program, candidates for Master Examiner must also be reviewed and approved by the ATJA appropriate Jujutsu or Judo Promotion Board.

Non-ATJA rank - The following options are available for people joining the ATJA with no rank, or Jujutsu or Judo rank from another organization:

Documentation (Option #1) – Currently, any ATJA member can get an alternative rank added to their ATJA membership card by submitting a processing fee and a copy of the non-ATJA rank certificate to the ATJA National Office. The ATJA will not issue a Jujutsu or Judo certificate, but will issue a new membership card with the alternative rank(s) with the associated organization or style listed.

Validation (Option #2) – This option is for ATJA members who have no ATJA rank, and either (1) have not been ranked through another organization, or (2) do not wish to use a previous non-ATJA rank as a basis for receiving an ATJA Rank Certificate. This validation process is a one-time event for those holding no ATJA rank in the Art (Jujutsu or Judo) under consideration. The standard appropriate ATJA National Promotion Standardization guidelines (listed above) must be followed, with the exception that time-in-grade, points (for Judo validation) and previous rank may be waived by the Promotion Board. Once an appropriate rank is approved, further promotion within the ATJA must be in accordance with standard ATJA promotion requirements.

Validation (Option #3) – ATJA members who wish an equivalent, unrestricted ATJA Jujutsu or Judo Rank Certificate based on a rank obtained through another organization must be examined as outlined in the National Promotion Standardization guidelines (above) to determination whether the applicant meets or exceeds ATJA promotion level requirements. Once the equivalent rank is validated, an ATJA Rank Certificate will be issued, and the holder of this certificate holds the same privileges as any other ATJA rank holder and may sit on promotion boards and other committees. No probation period is required. Once an equivalent rank is approved, further promotion within the ATJA must be in accordance with standard ATJA promotion requirements.

After being examined, the applicant should submit a copy of the rank certificate from the other organization (if appropriate), a completed application for promotion/validation along with the appropriate fee to the ATJA National Office. The ATJA will issue certificate a new membership card with the new rank added.

ATJA Rank Names and Belt Color

Rank (English)	Rank (Japanese)	Belt Color
Seventh Class Rank	Shichikyu	White Belt
Sixth Class Rank	Rokkyu	Yellow Belt
Fifth Class Rank	Gokyu	Orange Belt
Fourth Class Rank	Yonkyu	Green Belt
Third Class Rank	Sankyu	Brown Belt
Second Class Rank	Nikyu	Brown Belt
First Class Rank	Ikkyu	Brown Belt
First Degree Black Belt	Shodan	Black Belt
Second Degree Black Belt	Nidan	Black Belt
Third Degree Black Belt	Sandan	Black Belt
Fourth Degree Black Belt	Yondan or Yodan	Black Belt or Red & Black Panel Belt
Fifth Degree Black Belt	Godan	Black Belt or Red & Black Panel Belt
Sixth Degree Black Belt	Rokudan	Black Belt or Red & White Panel Belt
Seventh Degree Black Belt	Shichidan	Black Belt or Red & White Panel Belt
Eighth Degree Black Belt	Hachidan	Black Belt or Red & White Panel Belt
Ninth Degree Black Belt	Kudan	Black Belt or Red Belt
Tenth Degree Black Belt	Judan	Black Belt or Red Belt