Karate & Dance Fed Ltd - 17150545

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KARATE & Dance FEDERATION

Assessment, Progression, Grading & Examination Policy

Kindness – Diversity - Friendship

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1. Policy Statement

Karate & Dance Federation Ltd (KDF) is committed to operating assessment, progression, grading and examination arrangements that are clear, fair, inclusive and aligned with the curriculum taught across KDF Karate and KDF Dance. Assessment should help students understand their progress, identify next steps and prepare appropriately for advancement without creating unnecessary pressure or reducing learning to a single examination result.

KDF recognises that progression is broader than the acquisition of technical skills alone. Confidence, independence, consistency, understanding, effort, physical control, communication, regulation, safe participation and the ability to apply learning appropriately may all contribute to a student's development.

Grading and examination must therefore sit within a wider assessment framework. A student should not be considered ready to progress solely because a fixed period of time has passed, nor should one difficult lesson automatically prevent progression where the wider evidence demonstrates readiness.

KDF's approach reflects its values of Kindness, Diversity, Friendship and supports the KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish KDF's approach to ongoing assessment, curriculum progression, grading readiness, examinations, feedback, reasonable adjustments, reassessment and quality assurance.

It provides a consistent framework for staff making progression decisions and ensures that students and families understand the difference between attendance, curriculum participation, assessment and formal grading.

The policy also protects the integrity of KDF qualifications and progression pathways while ensuring that access arrangements remain inclusive.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students participating in KDF Karate and KDF Dance where assessment, progression, grading or formal examination forms part of the curriculum pathway.

It applies to Lead Coaches, coaches, assistant coaches, examiners, junior coaches and any other person involved in preparing students for assessment or contributing to progression decisions.

Different departments may use different technical criteria, but the principles of fairness, transparency, inclusion and consistent quality apply across KDF.

4. Assessment as Part of Learning

Assessment should be an ordinary part of teaching rather than something that occurs only at the point of grading.

Coaches should continually observe what students can do, where they require support and whether previously taught content has been retained.

Ongoing assessment allows staff to adjust teaching before difficulties become embedded.

5. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is used during learning to help students improve.

This may include observation, questioning, practical demonstration, correction, feedback, repetition and review of previously taught content.

Its purpose is developmental rather than pass-or-fail.

6. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment considers the level a student has reached at a particular point.

This may include grading, examination, performance assessment or another formal review.

Formal assessment should confirm the wider evidence gathered through routine participation rather than introduce completely unfamiliar expectations.

7. Curriculum Alignment

Students should only be assessed against content they have reasonably had the opportunity to learn.

Assessment criteria should reflect the curriculum and syllabus applicable to the student's pathway.

KDF should avoid testing arbitrary material simply to make examinations appear more difficult.

8. Clear Expectations

Students should understand, at an age-appropriate level, what they are working toward.

Coaches should explain the relevant techniques, behaviours, knowledge or performance expectations during ordinary teaching.

Families should also be able to understand the broad progression pathway without needing access to confidential examiner notes.

9. Progression

Progression means moving forward within the KDF curriculum.

This may involve greater technical complexity, increased independence, stronger consistency, deeper understanding, higher performance expectations or movement to the next grade or pathway stage.

Progression should reflect genuine development rather than simply the passage of time.

10. Individual Rates of Progress

Students progress at different rates.

Age, attendance, prior experience, SEND, confidence, physical development, medical needs and the amount of practice outside lessons may all affect progress.

KDF will not compare students mechanically or promise identical progression times.

11. Attendance and Progress

Regular attendance supports progression because students receive more consistent exposure to the curriculum.

However, attendance alone does not guarantee grading readiness.

A student who has attended regularly may still require additional consolidation, while another student may demonstrate readiness more quickly.

12. One-Session and Multi-Session Attendance

Where KDF operates different membership frequencies, grading expectations may reflect the amount of curriculum contact available to the student.

Students attending more frequently will normally have greater opportunity to practise and consolidate learning.

Any grade structure linked to attendance frequency should remain transparent and curriculum-based rather than arbitrary.

13. Half Grades and Full Grades

Where KDF uses half-grade and full-grade progression within karate, these should reflect the student's curriculum exposure and demonstrated readiness.

Students attending once weekly may work toward half-grade progression where this aligns with the relevant KDF pathway, while students attending more frequently may be eligible for full-grade progression where they have completed the required learning.

The existence of a membership level does not automatically guarantee the corresponding grade outcome.

14. Intermediate and Striped Grades

Intermediate or striped grades may be used to recognise meaningful progression between major belt levels.

These grades should provide a clear developmental purpose and should not exist solely to increase examination frequency.

Students should understand how intermediate progress connects to the wider belt pathway.

15. Junior Black Belt

Where KDF retains a Junior Black Belt pathway for students under sixteen, this should be treated as a meaningful achievement within the junior curriculum.

It should not be represented as identical to an adult black belt where the technical, developmental or assessment requirements differ.

Transition beyond Junior Black Belt should be managed through the relevant senior pathway.

16. Early Years Progression

Early Years assessment should be developmentally appropriate and should not replicate older-student examination pressure.

Progress may include participation, confidence, listening, balance, coordination, basic technical foundations, communication and independence.

Where animal-themed or Jungle Passport grades are used, they should celebrate meaningful developmental milestones within the Early Years curriculum.

17. SEND Progression

Students with SEND should have access to meaningful progression within KDF.

Assessment should recognise achievement against the essential learning expectations while allowing appropriate adjustments to communication, processing, sequencing or method of demonstration.

SEND should not automatically result in lower expectations, but the route through which a student demonstrates competence may differ.

18. Grading Readiness

A student should be entered for grading or examination when staff have sufficient evidence that the student is reasonably ready to demonstrate the required standard.

Readiness should consider consistency rather than isolated success.

A student who can perform a skill only with extensive prompting may require further preparation before formal assessment.

19. No Automatic Grading

Students are not automatically entitled to grade because a certain number of weeks or months have passed.

Time between grades may provide a useful minimum development period, but it does not replace assessment of actual readiness.

KDF will prioritise meaningful progression over automatic advancement.

20. Readiness Conversations

Where a student is not yet ready, coaches should explain this constructively.

Feedback should identify what needs to improve rather than simply stating that the student has failed to qualify.

Parents and guardians should receive sufficient information to understand the next steps.

21. Examination Preparation

Preparation should be integrated into normal curriculum delivery rather than relying solely on intensive last-minute practice.

Students should become familiar with the style, structure and expectations of formal assessment where appropriate.

Preparation should build confidence without creating the impression that the examination is more important than the wider learning journey.

22. Examination Conditions

Formal examinations should be conducted in a safe, respectful and appropriately organised environment.

Students should be given clear instructions and reasonable opportunity to demonstrate the required learning.

Examiners should avoid unnecessary intimidation, humiliation or deliberately confusing questioning.

23. Examiner Conduct

Examiners must remain objective, professional and consistent.

Personal preference, favouritism, family relationships, popularity or prior disagreement must not influence results.

Where a potential conflict of interest exists, KDF should consider whether another assessor should contribute to the decision.

24. Consistency Between Assessors

KDF should seek reasonable consistency where more than one coach or examiner assesses students.

Lead Coaches should provide guidance on standards, interpretation of criteria and expected progression levels.

Where significant differences in judgement emerge, moderation or review should be used.

25. Moderation

Moderation helps ensure that assessment standards remain consistent across classes, coaches and examination groups.

This may involve joint assessment, sample review, staff discussion or Lead Coach oversight.

Moderation should be used constructively to strengthen reliability rather than undermine professional judgement.

26. Reasonable Adjustments

KDF may make reasonable adjustments to assessment and examination arrangements where a student would otherwise be disadvantaged by disability or SEND.

Adjustments may include additional processing time, visual demonstration, simplified wording, reduced verbal demand, short regulation breaks or adapted sequencing.

Adjustments should improve access while preserving the essential standard being assessed.

27. What Reasonable Adjustment Does Not Mean

Reasonable adjustment does not automatically mean removing the skill or standard being assessed.

For example, if the purpose is to assess a technical movement, the student still needs to demonstrate that movement to an appropriate standard, although the way instructions are delivered may be adapted.

The distinction between access and standard should remain clear.

28. Sensory and Regulation Support

Students may use appropriate sensory or regulation strategies before or during assessment where this does not invalidate the assessment.

The Tiger Retreat or Leopard Retreat may be used if a student becomes dysregulated and needs a short period to regain readiness.

Using regulation support should not automatically be treated as failure.

29. Physical and Medical Adjustments

Temporary injury or medical need may require postponement, adaptation or alternative assessment arrangements.

KDF should not encourage students to perform movements that may worsen an injury simply to complete a grading.

Where the essential assessment cannot be completed safely, reassessment at a later date may be more appropriate.

30. Student Wellbeing During Examination

Examinations should challenge students appropriately without causing avoidable distress.

Staff should distinguish between normal nerves and significant dysregulation or panic.

Where a student is unable to continue safely, the assessment may be paused or ended and reviewed.

31. Pass, Defer and Reassessment Decisions

Assessment outcomes may include successful progression, deferred progression or reassessment where appropriate.

A deferred result should be used where the student has not yet demonstrated the required standard but would benefit from additional development.

KDF should avoid language that unnecessarily labels the student as a failure.

32. Reassessment

Where reassessment is offered, expectations should be clear.

The student should understand what requires improvement and the likely next opportunity to demonstrate it.

Reassessment arrangements should remain fair and should not disadvantage the student unnecessarily.

33. Recording Results

Formal grading and examination outcomes should be recorded accurately.

Records should identify the grade achieved, date and relevant assessor information where applicable.

Any significant adjustment or deferred outcome should also be documented proportionately where this assists consistency and future planning.

34. Certificates and Awards

Certificates, belts, badges or other progression awards should correspond accurately with the result achieved.

Awards should not be issued informally where the required criteria have not been met.

The integrity of KDF progression depends on awards having genuine meaning.

35. Feedback Following Assessment

Students should receive feedback appropriate to age and understanding.

Feedback should recognise strengths and identify clear next steps.

Even where a student passes, they should understand that progression continues and that the next grade does not represent complete mastery.

36. Parent and Guardian Communication

Parents and guardians should receive clear information about grading arrangements, costs where applicable, readiness and outcomes.

KDF should avoid promising a pass in advance.

Where a student is not entered or does not progress, communication should remain respectful and focused on development.

37. Appeals and Review

Where a parent, guardian or student believes an assessment decision was made unfairly, they may raise the concern through KDF's normal review or complaints process.

A review should consider whether the published criteria were applied fairly and whether appropriate adjustments were considered.

An appeal is not an automatic opportunity to substitute a preferred outcome for professional judgement.

38. Complaints About Examiners

Concerns about examiner conduct, bias or inappropriate behaviour should be taken seriously.

Where the concern raises safeguarding or professional-conduct issues, the relevant safeguarding or staff procedure should be applied.

Assessment integrity depends on students being able to trust the process.

39. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Assessment decisions must not be influenced by disability, race, religion, sex or another protected characteristic except where a lawful and appropriate adjustment is required.

Students should be assessed on relevant curriculum expectations.

KDF should monitor whether any group appears to experience unexplained disadvantage within progression systems.

40. Reward Station and Assessment

The Reward Station is separate from formal grading and examination.

A student may be recognised for Kindness, Diversity or Friendship regardless of technical grade.

Likewise, not receiving a Reward Station recognition has no bearing on grading readiness.

41. Sensei Spots and Dancing Dodo

Sensei Spots and Dancing Dodo are positive Early Years recognition tools and are not formal assessment awards.

They may recognise effort, participation, confidence, kindness or growth.

Their purpose is motivational and relational rather than examinational.

42. Quality Assurance

KDF will review assessment and grading practice as part of wider curriculum quality assurance.

This should consider whether criteria are clear, outcomes are consistent, adjustments are applied appropriately and students are progressing through meaningful learning.

Patterns of unusually high or low pass rates may warrant review of teaching, preparation or assessment standards.

43. Staff Development

Coaches and examiners should receive appropriate guidance on curriculum standards, assessment, feedback and reasonable adjustments.

Lead Coaches are responsible for supporting consistency within their department.

Staff should understand that fair assessment requires both professional judgement and clear evidence.

44. Kindness, Diversity and Friendship

Kindness means giving feedback in a way that supports confidence and growth rather than humiliating students. Diversity means recognising that students may demonstrate learning in different ways and ensuring reasonable adjustments are considered fairly. Friendship means creating a culture in which students encourage one another's progress rather than viewing grading as a competition against peers.

These values should be visible in both the preparation and conduct of assessment.

45. The KDF Promise

This policy supports the KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.

Every student should understand what they are learning, receive meaningful feedback and have a fair opportunity to demonstrate progress.

The Promise means that KDF will neither advance students without sufficient evidence nor hold them back unnecessarily where they have demonstrated readiness.

46. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside KDF's Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Policy, Curriculum Differentiation, Adaptation & Inclusive Learning Policy, SEND & Inclusive Practice Policy, Early Years Policy, Sensory Regulation & Calm Spaces Policy, Student Attendance & Absence Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, Disability & Reasonable Adjustments Policy and relevant curriculum, syllabus, grading and examination documents.

These policies should be applied together where assessment overlaps with inclusion, attendance, SEND, behaviour, medical need, curriculum progression or reasonable adjustment.

47. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed annually, but earlier review may take place following grading-system redesign, significant changes to curriculum pathways, examination concerns, quality assurance findings or evidence that progression decisions are inconsistent.

KDF will continue to maintain assessment and examination systems that are meaningful, transparent and proportionate.

Progression will remain based on demonstrated learning, appropriate readiness and fair access so that achievement retains genuine value within a culture of Kindness, Diversity, Friendship and the KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.