

Panel Feedback – 6 Kyu to 1 Kyu Iaido Grading

Kenshikan – 26th July 2025

Overall Impression

Most candidates were well prepared and demonstrated competence for their grade. However, consistent technical weaknesses were observed across all levels, particularly in the basics and correct execution of kata. Standards appear to vary between clubs, with some prioritising strong-sounding cuts over fundamental precision.

Key Concerns & Recommendations

- **Footwork & Stepping:** Avoid hinging on the heel when stepping; maintain correct ayumi-ashi.
 - **Chiburi & Hand Positioning:** Hand heights should be level; distinguish clearly between furi-kaburi and jodan-no-kamae.
 - **Metsuke** – Eye focus (*metsuke*) must remain on the *teki* (opponent), not the sword. Several candidates were observed watching their sword during movements, suggesting a lack of engagement with the imagined opponent and breaking focus.
 - **Specific Kata Issues:** Greater understanding of **Uke Nagashi (Seitei 3)** is required, with attention to both the **purpose of the technique** and the **correct application**. Particular focus should be placed on the **left-hand position during the parry and the finishing cut position**.
 - **Technical Accuracy:** Some candidates performed incorrect movements, misaligned footwork, and poor finishing points for cuts and chiburi. *Footwork in Nanahonme and Hachihonme often missed the correct line, with back foot alignment incomplete before stepping through. Cuts in these kata were also not ending in the correct finishing positions.*
 - **Fundamentals:** Sayabiki, metsuke, footwork, and consistent cut/chiburi heights must be reinforced as the basis of correct execution.
 - **Preparation:** Instructors should ensure candidates have internalised the basics before grading and remain up to date with current standards via seminars.
 - **Consistency Across Clubs:** Variations in expectations remain a concern; collaborative training sessions across the state are recommended to raise the overall standard.
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Takeaway

While performances were generally strong, a **renewed focus on basics, consistency, and instructor alignment** is required to ensure all candidates progress with the necessary foundation for higher-level gradings.