

How-to Guide for putting on a Promotional in the SEUSKF (For promotionals up to Shodan)

Introduction

Every kendo-ka goes through a shinsa during their training in kendo. The procedure can be nerve-wracking and very exciting at the same time. Most of the time, the kendo-ka is so focused on remembering what needs to be done, he or she hardly notices how they are brought before the judges and the procedures involved in shinsa. A good shinsa is one where the competitors should not have to worry about those issues. What is the key to making the shinsa seamless? The hosts of the promotional.

This guide is here to help teach the things that are involved in hosting the shinsa so examinees will be able to focus solely on their performance in the shinsa and nothing else. There are many steps involved in putting a promotional together and many requirements. This guide is meant to be used in conjunction with the “Rules and Regulations for a promotional in the SEUSKF.”

It may be a bit daunting to host a promotional, but I hope that this guide will help ease the confusion and stresses of hosting one. While you are going through this guide, remember that hundreds of promotionals have been hosted in the past. It is not required to be a certain rank to put one together and you do not need to have a certain number of years of experience either. The biggest key to hosting any promotional is one thing: organization.

Before you begin

If you and your dojo have decided to host a shinsa, you will need to find a weekend that would work out best with most of the kendo-kas in the area. However, before you announce it to the masses or begin any planning, you have to obtain permission from the Vice-President of Promotionals of the SEUSKF.

You will also need to acquire the judges for the shinsa. The SEUSKF requires that there be at least five (5) Yondan and above for a promotional for Shodan and below. Generally, promotionals for ranks of Nidan and higher are held at the annual SEUSKF tournament. It is customary to reimburse the judges for the shinsa for travel and lodging if they are not from the area. Travel expenses for the judges should be reimbursed through the testing fees received.

Once you have obtained permission from the Vice-President of Promotionals and secured the judges, then you may begin the planning process. (See Annex for list of current SEUSKF officers)

Quick check points:

- Obtain permission from the Vice-President of Promotionals
- Acquire five (5) Yondan and above as judges
- Arrange for reimbursement of travel fees for the judges
- Set the date for the shinsa

Announcing the shinsa and preparing the promotional packet

You have set a date and have the approval from the SEUSKF to host a shinsa. The next step is to get the word out about the shinsa. There are many outlets to get information out and feel free to use any of them so long as the promotional has been approved. If you want to have the promotional announced on the SEUSKF website, please contact the SEUSKF Secretary so they may post the information on the web.

Simply announcing the date is not quite enough. You will need to provide a copy of the promotional application form along with information about where to send the application forms and money for the testing fees. Forms can be acquired from the Vice-President of Promotionals. There are a few basic forms that you will need in the promotional packet:

- SEUSKF shinsa application form
- Written exam questions for 1-Kyu and above
- Cost for shinsa and menjo fees

When compiling the information for the promotional packet, have all testing fees and menjo fees payable directly to the dojo. The host dojo must also take care of collecting all shinsa applications. The host dojo may also keep all application fees to pay for expenses to host the promotional (i.e. gym rental fee, travel for the examiners, etc.). Be sure to let the examinees know that they **MUST** write separate checks for the testing fee and the menjo fees. That way, if an examinee does not pass, they can be easily reimbursed for their menjo fees. Note that an examinee must pay their menjo fee before or on the day they receive their rank. Set a deadline for applicants to send in their shinsa application forms, such as two weeks before the date of the shinsa. This will minimize the amount of last minute work that will need to be done on the date of the shinsa.

Once the promotional packet has been assembled and all the information for examinees has been included, the packet is ready to be sent to the public. Be sure to send notice of the shinsa to all surrounding dojos. Once this step is done, all that is left is to wait for the examinees to send in their applications.

Quick check points:

- Prepare promotional packet (application forms, fees, etc.)
- Send out informational packet and announcement to the masses (i.e. surrounding dojos, all SEUSKF dojos, etc.)

Preparation for the Shinsa

As you begin receiving applications for the shinsa, start listing the examinees names, rank requested and other information such as if they have paid for the examination fee, menjo fee or other notes. See Table 1 for a sample spreadsheet. Once you have all of the applications, you will need to make sure that every applicant has paid the appropriate fees, double-check to make sure that all applicants are current SEUSKF/AUSKF members and that the application was filled out correctly. All applications must have the applicant's AUSKF ID number written on it. If you have any questions about an applicants membership with the SEUSKF, please contact the current SEUSKF treasurer. Non-SEUSKF members may test, as long as they are a member of

one of the AUSKF Federations. Those applicants must have a signed permission form from their Federation President allowing them to test outside of their Federation.

You will then need to sort the examinees by rank requested and age. Try to group examinees who are the same age within the same group, if you have a group with a large age gap, then try to pair the examinees to have matches with those close to their age group. For example, if you take the examinees listed in Table 1, Dean who is 52 should not go against Adams who is 11. Instead, Adams should be matched up against Burns and Early who are the two youngest examinees in that group. To best determine how to group them, please see Table 2. Table 2 details how the matches will run in either a 3, 4 or 5 man group. In the case of how to appropriately match Adams in a group of 5, Table 2 shows that Adams will have a match against Burns first and then the last match against Early. Depending on the judges, you may have to rearrange the order or the side of the court that all the examinees are entering. It is best to get in touch with the judges to make sure that you comply with the way they want the examinees to be matched-up.

Once you've completed putting all the examinees into groups and assigning their numbers, you will need to create judging sheets for the judges that only list the examinees' number, age, prior rank, requesting rank and number of years in kendo. Make sure that the judges' scorecards also include the different groups you've assigned in advanced. See Table 3 for an example of what the judges' scorecard should look like. As you see, numbers 1-5 are in a 5 man group. Numbers 6-8 and 9-11 are in 3 man groups. Completing all of these tasks in advanced will help to make the day of the promotional much smoother.

Table 1

Number	Name	Age	Prior Rank	Time in rank or Time in Kendo	Requesting Rank	Test fee	Menjo	Paid	Notes
1	Adams	11	6kyu	2 yrs 9 mo	4kyu	\$15	\$10	\$25	
2	Burns	16	5kyu	4 yrs	4kyu	\$15	\$10	\$25	
3	Collins	23	5kyu	2 yrs 1 mo	4kyu	\$15	\$20	\$35	
4	Dean	52	none	2 yrs 6 mo	4kyu	\$15	\$20	\$35	
5	Early	18	none	2 yrs	4kyu	\$15	\$20	\$0	Not paid

Table 2

Group	Match 1	Match 2	Match 3	Match 4	Match 5
Group of 3	1 vs 2	3 vs 2	3 vs 1	1 vs 4	5 vs 1
Group of 4	1 vs 2	3 vs 2	3 vs 4	1 vs 4	5 vs 1
Group of 5	1 vs 2	3 vs 2	3 vs 4	5 vs 4	5 vs 1

Table 3

Examinee Number	Age	Current Rank	Time in rank or Time in Kendo	Rank Requested	Kendo Results	Kata Results	Written Exam	Rank Awarded	Comments
1	11	6kyu	2 yrs 9 mo	4kyu					
2	16	5kyu	4 yrs	4kyu					
3	23	5kyu	2 yrs 1 mo	4kyu					
4	52	none	2 yrs 6 mo	4kyu					
5	18	none	2 yrs	4kyu					
6	20	4kyu	2 yrs	3kyu					
7	20	4kyu	2 yrs 9 mo	3kyu					
8	24	4kyu	4 yrs	3kyu					
9	19	3kyu	2 yrs 9 mo	2kyu					
10	29	3kyu	3 yrs	2kyu					
11	32	3kyu	3 yrs	2kyu					

Quick check points:

- Double-check to ensure all examinees are current paid AUSKF members
- Organize examinees by their age and requesting rank and assign them a number in sequential order
- Divide the examinees by 3, 4, or 5 person groups for the shinsa
- Prepare copies of exam sheets for the judges

Setting up the Examinees and the Exam

All of the applications should have been turned in by now and the only thing left is to hold the shinsa. On the day of the shinsa, you will need to have a tachi-ai to run the exam. It is best to have someone who is an experienced kendo-ka be the tachi-ai for the examination and be sure to ask well in advance of the exam to ensure that they can participate. You will also need to have the gym set up for the shinsa. Tables and chairs will be needed for the judges and a single 'X' is all you need in the center of the court. Make sure all judges have a testing score sheet with only the numbers of the examinees listed (See Table 3 above). If you are allowed to set-up the gym in advanced, it is advised to do so.

At least half-an-hour before the start of the examination, you should start giving the examinees their assigned numbers. All examinees must be in bogu and have removed their zekken from their tare. Arrange the examinees in number order then put tape onto the two sides of the tare and write their assigned number in black marker so the judges can identify each examinee. Once everyone has been assigned a number, they will need to be seated in their number order. To make the testing run smoothly, have two to three helpers who will direct examinees to the correct court and to also assist in informing them when they should start putting on their men, getting warmed up and when they are allowed to return to their seat.

You should have already assigned everyone into groups of 3, 4 or 5. Once the judges are ready, begin with the first group by having them put on their men and line them up in the correct order (See Table 2). Be sure to have your extra helpers here to guide the examinees to the correct side of the court. While the first group is up, start getting the next group ready so once the first group finishes, the second group will start automatically. This will make the testing run seamlessly. After the first group finishes, have them sit in the same place that they started and they can take off their men and relax until the testing is completed. Examinees do not have to sit in seiza during the entire exam and are encouraged to sit comfortably when they are not getting ready to test. Continue until all of the examinees have completed their matches.

If there is kata in the shinsa, then you will need to make sure that the examinees who are moving on to perform kata have removed their dou and have their bokken ready. In some cases, the judges may tally the results to only watch the kata of those who have passed the jigeiko portion of their exam. In preparing for kata, line examinees up in two parallel lines on either side of the court opposite their kata partners in numerical order. Repeat this step until all of the examinees have been lined up. If there is an odd number of examinees, it will be necessary for an experienced kendo-ka to pair up with one of the examinees. Be sure to ask for a volunteer in advance so they can be ready for when the kata portion of the shinsa begins.

Quick check points:

- Set up table and chairs for the judges along with exam sheets and pens
- Place an 'X' in the center of the court
- Assign a person as tachi-ai for the shinsa and ensure they know their duties
- Assign around two people to help move the examinees
- Assign one experienced kendo-ka as a back-up in case of an odd number for the kata
- Make sure all examinees have removed their zekken
- Line up examinees by their numbers
- Tape and write in black marker the examinee's assigned number to the sides of their tare

Role of the Tachi-Ai

As the Tachi-ai, it will be your responsibility to start and stop the matches. The judges will have the final decision on the format of the exam. The Tachi-ai's role is to make sure that that format is adhered to. The Tachi-ai will also inform the examinees' of what techniques the judges want to see from them.

When starting the match, the Tachi-ai will say "Hajime." When ending the match, the Tachi-ai will say "Yame." To inform the examinees that they are allowed to sonkyou and exit the court, the Tachi-ai will say "Sore-made."

The Tachi-ai will start and stop the match when the head judge has given the Tachi-ai the signal that they are ready or that they have seen enough of the examinees' skills. The Tachi-ai may also stop the match to ensure the safety of the examinees' or if they linger too far from the court where the judges cannot see them.

If there is kata in the examination, then the Tachi-ai will need to assign which side will be the uchidachi and which side will be the shidachi. If there are an odd number of examinees, a volunteer kendo-ka with experience will participate as a partner to one of the examinees. If there

is a volunteer kendo-ka in the kata, the Tachi-ai should call the side that the volunteer is on as the uchidachi side. Otherwise, it will be up to the Tachi-ai and the judges to determine which side will be uchidachi or shidachi.

Posting the results and collecting the menjo fees

After all of the examinees have finished both the jigeiko and kata portion of the examination, the judges will have one last meeting with all of the examinees and then the shinsa will be over. At this time, you will need to collect the judges' scorecards and tally the results from the examination. The results should be polled by someone who did not sit on the judging panel. That person will poll the judges' scorecards and tally the results of the shinsa. If there are any questions about the rank given to any examinee or questions about how to tally the scorecards, be sure to ask the judges. On a separate piece of paper or large poster board, you will write down the results of the exam by examinee number and their listed rank. See example below:

Examinee	Current Rank/Rank Awarded
1	4 Kyu
2	4 Kyu
3	5 Kyu
4	4 Kyu
5	4 Kyu
6	3 Kyu
7	3 Kyu
8	3 Kyu
9	2 Kyu
10	3 Kyu

If there is a case where an examinee has passed the jigeiko portion of their exam, but not the kata portion, then you will need to create a separate column for the ranks that took the kata portion of the exam. This chart will show the examinees' if they have passed or failed the jigeiko and/or kata portions of the exam. Use an "O" to indicate that they have passed and an "X" to indicate that they have failed. If you use this format for the ranks that had to perform kata, then it is not necessary to write down the rank received of the examinee. **Note:** If someone passes the jigeiko portion, but fails the kata portion, they will be allowed to retake the kata portion within 6 months. Only when an examinee has passed both jigeiko and kata will he or she receive the requested rank.

Examinee	Jigeiko	Kata
20	O	O
21	O	X
22	O	O
23	X	X
24	O	O
25	X	X

Once the results are posted, you will need to collect the menjo fees, any outstanding fees and the written exams for examinees, if applicable. A list of the appropriate menjo fees up to 5 Dan are listed below (**NOTE:** The AUSKF no longer makes Japanese menjos):

Age	Rank	Cost of Menjo
17 and under	1 Kyu or below	\$10
18 and over	1 Kyu or below	\$20
All ages	1 Dan	\$30
All ages	2 Dan	\$40
All ages	3 Dan	\$60
All ages	4 Dan	\$80
All ages	5 Dan	\$100

If you have not already reimbursed the out of town judges for their travel fees, please be sure to do so before the conclusion of the shinsa.

Quick check points:

- Poll results from the judges and post results by examinee's number
- Post final results of the shinsa
- Collect menjo fees and written exams for all examinees
- Reimburse judges' travel fees

Submitting the shinsa results and menjo fees to the SEUSKF

At this stage, you should have the final results from the shinsa as well as all the fees to cover the menjos. Fill out the menjo requisition form of all of the applicants' names as well as their rank received. Be sure to print each name clearly or type in ALL CAPS to reduce any confusion over the correct spelling of a person's name. If you do not have a menjo requisition form, one can be requested by the Secretary of the SEUSKF or the Vice-President of Promotions.

After writing down the menjos, tally the total fees for all of the menjos listed in the menjo requisition form. (See table of menjo fees). Write ONE check to the "South Eastern United States Kendo Federation" for the correct fees for all of the menjos requested on the menjo requisition form.

Prepare a package of the menjo requisition forms, check to cover the menjo fees, copies of all of the testing applications and any written examinations. Mail all materials to the Vice-President of Promotions in a timely manner. The AUSKF has given all the federations a time limit of having the promotional results sent to them within one month of the promotional. Please send the materials to the Vice-President of Promotions well in advance so they may process the materials before they forward it on to the AUSKF.

Once the packet has been mailed out to the Vice-President of Promotions, the Vice-President of Promotions will handle getting the menjo requests to the AUSKF. Your job is almost complete. The last thing you will need to do is to distribute the menjos to passing examinees after the menjos have been created by the AUSKF and mailed to you.

Quick check points:

- Prepare menjo requisition form
- Write check to the SEUSKF for correct amount to cover menjo fees
- Send shinsa packet to the Vice-President of Promotionals

Conclusion

In order to improve yourself as a kendo-ka, you prepare and practice. The same goes for conducting a shinsa. Coming in prepared before the shinsa begins will help make the daunting task of hosting a promotional much easier. Not only that, but the more experience you have taking part in, helping out and simply watching a promotional will give you a better grasp of what to expect and how things should be run. This is a job that anyone who is willing can accomplish. It is also a job that is much appreciated by the judges and most importantly, the kendo-ka wishing to advance in rank. After all, no one can pass their next rank examination if there is no one willing to host a promotional.

Appendix

List of 2009-2010 officers:

President	Kenneth Strawn	kenstrawn@earthlink.net
Vice-President Promotions	Shinobu Maeda	Shinobu7358@tampabay.rr.com
Vice-President Education	Philip Hyun	jkhyun22@yahoo.com
Vice-President of Competition	Ryoko Barr	fryobarr@aol.com
Treasurer	Tina Liu Canada	tinalcanada@yahoo.com
Secretary	Mike Watson	kenshi@nc.rr.com

Rules for Promotional Exams in the SEUSKF

- All examinees must be **current** members of the AUSKF/SEUSKF to test. If membership status is unclear, please contact the SEUSKF Treasurer to confirm the student's status.
- SEUSKF members must have paid their dues to the Treasurer at least 30 days prior to testing at a shinsa.
- If a dojo has not paid their annual dues by the deadline set by the SEUSKF Treasurer, then the members of that dojos are not allowed to take a promotional until 90 days **after** the Treasurer has **received** their dues.
- If a non-SEUSKF examinee is testing in the SEUSKF, a signed permission slip from their federation President is required for the testing.
- If an examinee is **not** a current member of the AUSKF and they participate in a shinsa, they will have their awarded rank revoked.
- All examinees must wear bogu.
- It must be at least 90 days from a previous failed shinsa exam before testing again.
- A minimum of 6 months must have passed from when the rank of ikkyu is awarded before testing for shodan.
- It is required for all examinees to have signed permission from their Sensei to participate in a promotional.
- A Sensei must SIGN and PRINT clearly their name on all shinsa applications.
- The examinees' Sensei must write in the requested rank of the examinee.

- No open 'kyu' ranks will be accepted on a shinsa application.
- Shinsa applications must include the AUSKF ID number on the application (if known).
- Examinees should **only** test for the rank that is one rank higher than their current rank. Examinees should **not** skip a rank when taking a shinsa. (i.e. Examinees must be ikkyu before they can test for shodan)
- All examinees must remove their nafuda (zekken) or any nametag on their bogu.
- All examinees will be given a number to identify the examinee.
- All examinees taking the exam for ikkyu or higher must turn in their written exam the day of the testing.
- All testing fees must be paid by the testing day.
- All menjo fees must be paid the same day of the shinsa.