



少林功夫學院  
Shaolin Kung Fu Academy

**Examiner and Grader**

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**Grading Guides**

**檢查員**

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## Background of Gradings

### History

Often it is said that traditional schools did not have an advancement process, that the students just learned, and when the teacher said so, they were ready. This may be true, but it may also be a myth. It would have been a very frustrating process for students who would not have the same perspective as the instructor and would possibly see favouritism and discrimination.

In the Shaolin Temples it is believed that an adept learned one technique at a time. In the many years of 'kitchen duty', the adept learned Strength & Focus, Stretch & Flexibility, Stature & Posture, Speed & Coordination and Stamina & Endurance. Once the adept had learned the basics (through 'kitchen duties'), they progressed (possibly) to their first technique, which may have been horse stance, again possibly for months and years until their master considered it good and strong enough. This approach is no longer viable or even smart.

### Accelerated Learning

We have learnt about better learning principles, learning through doing, learning through fun, link-learning, mentally assisted physical learning, and more. These all fall under the banner of Accelerated or Advanced Learning. In all these learning styles there is a key, something that makes it all possible, and that key is consolidation through Structured Accreditation!

### Gradings

This is where your progress is periodically reviewed and benchmarked against a set and/or agreed criteria and you are given clear feedback. This is the single most important activity contributing to the Advanced Learning Process. At the Shaolin Academy we call this Gradings!

Gradings in themselves are not a goal or a target. They fulfil some very key functions;

1. Safety - that each student is learning the correct techniques safely
2. Progress - to ensure that students are progressing and not stagnating
3. Consolidating - allowing Students to see the curriculum in small, manageable chunks.

There are many more reasons and that is why most professional learning institutions will give a Structured grading and Accreditation Process.. ☺

## **Appreciating Gradings**

Gradings are important for both the student and the teacher.

Students;

1. Need to know what is being taught
2. Need to know that they are being taught what is agreed
3. Need to know how they are progressing in Learning

Instructors;

1. Need to know what is to be taught (not too much not too little)
2. Need to be held accountable for teaching what is agreed
3. Need to move along and teach without favouritism (for person or subject).

For this we need to get together and do Gradings!

## **The What & How of Gradings**

For Grading to be Justified and Valuable, there needs to be an understanding of what and how!

What is being Marked and How the marking is applied to the Grading.

The What is easy; every student is given a Workbook when they join the Shaolin Academy. In this workbook, amongst many others, is the full curriculum for the current level. The How is a bit less easy to explain as there are many how's and many interpretations of the How.

## **Interpreting Gradings**

Communication is not easy and giving the proper feedback to student on their Gradings is very important. There needs to be first an easy to understand and agreed to form of communication. In the Shaolin Academy this is in three parts;

- a) The Key Mark (mandatory)
- b) The Variation (if required)
- c) The Special Feedback (if required)

## Competency Based Gradings

In principle, Competency Based Gradings are a very good, non-judgmental method of giving feedback to student. It simply states if you can or can't do what you were meant to do. Competency can be set at any level. You may be competent if you know how to execute the technique generally or you may be competent if you can deliver the technique effectively. Shaolin Academy has a competency based system in which you are checked on 5 different competencies;

- I. You know the technique and can perform it safely
- II. Point one plus you can use it.
- III. Point 1 & 2 plus the technique will be effective in self defence
- IV. Point 1, 2 & 3 plus you have achieved a excellent level of execution
- V. Point 1, 2, 3, 4 plus you execute it perfectly.

Assuming that if you do not reach competency, you receive a 0 mark, this would allow for a clear feedback for Gradings. But this does not fully reflect Kung Fu and Traditional Chinese Weaponry progress. There is a very wide range between 0 and 1, and the distances decrease as the numbers increase. Below is a Linear graphic representing 0 to 5, but first the extra mark.

We also need to make a distinction between “Did not know the Technique” and “Knows the Item but did not achieve any Competency. So now we have;

0. Did not know the technique
1. Knew the technique (form, item, etc) but it was not correct and/or not safe
2. You know the technique and can perform it safely
3. Point one plus you can use it.
4. Point 1 & 2 plus the technique will be effective in self defence
5. Point 1, 2 & 3 plus you have achieved a excellent level of execution
6. Point 1, 2, 3, 4 plus you execute it perfectly.

This pure numbers system does not really represent the distribution of skill. The following graph is more likely to be representative of effort, skill and ability;

Competency Not Achieved (Fail)		Competency Achieved (Pass)			
0	1-5	6	7	8	9 10

As you can see, the change-over point is at 6 or 60%. You will also notice that the distribution of marks above 60% is not even. But what does this mean?

## Meaning of Gradings Results;

0. The demonstrated the technique was very unsafe or unknown!
1. through 5. the demonstrated technique was not adequate for competency or still unsafe
5. The demonstrated technique was very close and safe but some key aspect is incorrect.
6. The demonstrated technique was is correct and safe but nothing more.
7. As in 6 and has been practiced, but needs more.
8. This is a good and solid martial art demonstration that will work under most circumstances
9. The student demonstrated this excellently and flawless in almost all aspects
10. This technique was demonstrated with perfection!

## Minimum Requirements for a Pass (6) Result

To achieve a pass you need to demonstrate the ability to execute the technique correctly and safely even if it is slowly. Following are the key points;

- Start Point and Form
- End Point and Form
- Detail of transition from Start to End Point
- Correct Target (each technique has the optimum target)
- Correct Positioning of limbs and sighting

## Minimum Requirement for a Credit (7) Result

Each higher mark can only be achieved if ALL aspects of the previous mark(s) have been achieved. If the previous 5 points have all not been achieved than you can not achieve a result of 6 or higher. Therefore to achieve a result of 7 you need to have achieved 6, plus execute the technique with Strength and Speed.

## Minimum Requirement for a Distinction (8) Result

This is the level that we would expect for Red Sash at the completion of the Temple Levels. We now also look at the body and feet to see how well you are performing the technique and how well you are supporting the technique with your whole body, stance and movement.

## Minimum Requirement for a High Distinction (9) Result

Black Sash, it need to be almost perfect for your physical, mental and spiritual self.

## Grading Markings

In your workbook you will notice that there is a scale from 0 to 10 against each listed item as per below example;

Some Technique, System or aspect of a form ..... 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

When you are grading you will see 2 marks, one around a specific full number or half (-) number and another that is around at least two number or possibly more.

Some Technique, System or aspect of a form ..... 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

The smaller circle is your final result and in this case a Credit 7. The larger circle shows though that some of your techniques were at a less than 7 level and some at an even higher level. Ideally, you should have both circles the same, which means that you perform the technique consistently, without a lot of variation.

The principle of variation shows how well you really perform the technique. If there is, as in above a variation spanning between 5.5 and 8.5, that is a bad sign, saying that some of your techniques are very good but some are . . .er . . . not so good.

In a self defence situation, you will be nervous and will not perform the technique at it's best. This means it is not a reliable technique for you yet, And although you have the makings of a good technique, you need more practice.

Some other Technique, System or aspect of a form ..... 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

The above example is a very good result showing that your training is going in the right direction. Most your techniques are at a 7 level and some are managing to be very good. This is a very promising result.

Some different Technique, System or aspect of a form..... 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

This example shows a generally good technique but suggest that during the performance the student was distracted or there was a supporting technique error (other hand dropped, foot wrong). It means that the technique being shown is good but something else is letting you down.

# A Different View on the Marks

Considering all the afore mentioned, here is the short version of the Shaolin Academy Markings;

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Short Description</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	Technique Unknown or Copied from another student
<b>1 - 5</b>	<b>Unsafe</b>	Unsafe, incorrect, wrong technique, confusion
<b>6</b>	<b>Correct and Safe</b>	This mark verifies that the item is Safe and correct; it can now be safely practiced
<b>7</b>	<b>Focused &amp; Practiced</b>	This mark builds on the previous and confirms that you are practicing correctly and that you have the right focus and targeting
<b>8</b>	<b>Functional &amp; Effective</b>	This mark confirms that this technique will work for you in a stress situations
<b>9</b>	<b>Efficient &amp; Effortless</b>	This level shows that you have made the technique yours; you own it.
<b>10</b>	<b>Perfect &amp; Inspired</b>	On the rare occasion that an item is executed in a way that Inspires and suggest perfection. It is a moment in time.

There is another way of looking at these marks if we only consider the Pass + mark using the competency paradigm.

- 6.00 to 6.99 result verify that the student has shown that they know the technique and can demonstrate it safely. This means that they can now train the technique by themselves only occasionally needing some guiding input!
- 7.00 to 7.99 result verifies that the student is training the technique correctly and safely. They need more practice but there is no further fine tuning required to reach the next level. This technique is now good enough to use for fitness training.
- 8.00 to 8.99 result let the student know that they have achieved an effective and functional proficiency with this technique and this technique will have a high degree of success if needed in a stress situation. This technique is now good enough for self defence
- 9.00 to 10 result suggest that this technique is second nature and yours. It can be used for anything that you may want it for.

# Shaolin View on the Grading Marks

It is good and honourable to pass with;

6+ on your first time grading for Gray to Orange Sash

7+ on any Re-grading below Red Sash

8+ on any Grading where you are between Red Sash and before Black Sash

9+ on your Black Sash Grading

9.5+ if you wish to be an Shaolin Academy Instructor\*

(\* note - If you age, size, genetics, capabilities do not allow to demonstrate a technique you will need to show that you are good enough to teach this technique correctly without needing to demonstrate this and without anyone's help.)

## And now, for the final words;

*May you have;*

*the courage of the Tiger*

*the overview of the Panther*

*the flexibility of the Crane*

*the knowledge of the Snake*

*and foremost the Wisdom and Compassion of the Dragon*