

**Vovinam Việt Võ Đạo**

**Hội Đồng Võ Sư Thế Giới**

Le Conseil Mondial des Maîtres Vovinam-VietVoDao  
The World Council of Masters Vovinam-VietVoDao

**Tổng Liên Đoàn Vovinam-Việt Võ Đạo Thế Giới**

La Fédération Mondiale de Vovinam-VietVoDao - The Vovinam-VietVoDao World Federation



## **The International Convention of Ranks**

The International Convention of Ranks was ratified by the Vovinam Viet Vo Dao World Council of Masters on August 19, 2000 in Los Angeles – California – USA

With the first revision – Amended at the 6th World Congress of Masters May 04th, 2008 in Paris - France.

2nd revision – Amended at the 7th World Congress of Masters May 28th, 2012 in Paris - France.

*3rd revision – Amended at the 8th World Congress of Masters July 15th, 2016 in California - USA.*

Paris 01-09-2016.

The General Secretary of the World Council of Masters  
Master HA Kim Khanh



## Chapter I - The Ranks in Vovinam Viet Vo Dao

### Article 1. The national and international ranks

The ranks in Vovinam Viet Vo Dao are as follows:

- 1.1. National ranks:** These ranks will be issued by the Vovinam Viet Vo Dao authorities within the country where the testing and grading are organized and done within the national system. Those national ranks are valid only within the country where they were issued. They cannot be equivalent to the ones existing in any other country and will not be recognized by the system and the international authority of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao.
- 1.2. The international ranks:** These ranks are recognized by the World Council of Masters and the World Federation of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao. They are valid in all countries affiliated with the World Federation of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao.

### Article 2. Validation of the ranks

The international ranks are recognized by the World Council of Masters for the following two processes:

- 2.1. Direct validation of the ranks:** The ranks are issued by the Board of International Jury. It is them who organizes and does the grading. Then, these ranks are immediately validated.
- 2.2. Indirect validation of the ranks:**
  - (a).** The ranks are issued within the country by a national jury who organizes and does the grading. An official report of the ranks must be sent to the World Council of Masters for approval and certification.
  - (b).** The countries organizing the exams and the grading must comply with all the requirements and conditions within the most current copy of the International Convention of Ranks.

### Article 3. Issuance of international ranks

- 3.1.** The World Council of Masters is the only authority who has the power to recognize and issue the international ranks.
- 3.2.** All the diploma and certificates for international rank for the red Belt 5th Dang or higher must require the signatures of the General Secretary of the World Council of Masters and the President of the Vovinam Viet Vo Dao World Federation.
- 3.3.** The World Council of Masters grant the power to the International Technical Board to handle and issue the ranks from 1st Dang to 4th Dang.
- 3.4.** The World Council of Masters grant the power to the International Exams Board to organize the exam sessions and the thesis presentation for the 5th Dang or higher.

- 3.5.** The list of the Masters and Black Belts officially recognized by the World Council of Masters is updated annually and distributed to all of the international authorities every year.
- 3.6.** The international grade types recognized are :
  - (a).** Diploma
  - (b).** Passport
  - (c).** Certificate
  - (d).** Yearly list

#### **Article 4. Issuance of the national ranks**

- 4.1.** The World Council of Masters authorizes every countries to organize and issue the national ranks.
- 4.2.** Each country must clearly distinguish national and international ranks. All processes and administrative formalities provided by the International Technical Board must be followed precisely.

#### **Article 5. Issuance of honorific ranks**

- 5.1.** The honorific ranks are symbolically issued to the individuals who have contributed to the development of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao. Those ranks allow the recipient to have the Vo Phuc with the corresponding belt and to participate to all Vovinam Viet Vo Dao activities as a counselor. Those people are not allowed to vote and cannot be the jury members of a belt exam.
- 5.2.** The honorific ranks are limited to the two possible cases:
  - (a).** Black Belt 1st Dang
  - (b).** Red Belt 4th Dang
- 5.3.** The national honorific ranks attributed by a national authority to the individual are subject to the approval from the World Council of Masters. The World Council of Masters attributes the international honorific ranks. The countries and the members of the World Council of Masters can suggest the candidates for such ranks to the World Council of Masters.

#### **Article 6. Issuance of ranks for expansion needs**

- 6.1.** Ranks for "expansion needs" are obtained without passing an official exam. Those ranks are reserved to Masters and Instructors who are holding important responsibilities in the expansion of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao such as being an instructor or being in charge of a newly established region.
- 6.2.** Those ranks are not permanent. They cannot be used outside of their designated functions. For any other activities, the recipients of those ranks must wear their original belts.
- 6.3.** Every country can attribute those ranks from Black Belt 1st Dang to Red Belt 4th Dang.

- 6.4.** The World Council of Masters is the only authority who can attribute ranks from Red Belt 5th Dang.

**Article 7. Respect of the International Convention of Ranks**

All the countries that signed the International Convention of Ranks must rigorously observe and meet all the clauses mentioned in it. Any misuse of this convention copy will be severely sanctioned by the International Discipline Board I (the International Discipline Board is formed by the World Council of Masters).

**Article 8. Recognition of the Equivalence of the ranks**

It is a procedure reserved only for any individuals who have not yet been recognized by The World Council of Masters and the World Federation of Vovinam-Viet Vo Dao. Heir recognition has to follow the following procedure:

- 8.1.** Submitting the data and profile of each of the candidates.
- 8.2.** For the Red Belt 5th Dang, the candidate must bring either the proofs such as the diploma/certificate or two witnesses.

## Chapter II - Ranking System

### Article 9. Description

- 9.1.** The international ranking system was adopted during the 2nd World Masters Congress of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao in Houston Texas, USA in May 1998. A 1st update was made during the 6th World Congress in Paris - France on May 04th, 2008. 2nd one during the 7th World Congress in Paris - France on May 28th, 2012. And 3rd update at the 8th World Congress in California - USA 15 July 2016
- 9.2.** The two recognized grade systems are the traditional system of 1964 and the international grade system. Each country should apply the system, which fits its best.

Système Traditionnel		Système International	
<b>Initiation</b>			<b>Initiation</b>
<b>Bleu belt 1st Cap</b>			<b>Bleu belt 1st Cap</b>
<b>Bleu belt 2nd Cap</b>			<b>Bleu belt 2nd Cap</b>
<b>Bleu belt 3rd Cap</b>			<b>Bleu belt 3rd Cap</b>
<b>Yellow belt 1st Dang</b>			<b>Black belt 1st Dang</b>
<b>Yellow belt 2nd Dang</b>			<b>Black belt 2nd Dang</b>
<b>Yellow belt 3rd Dang</b>			<b>Black belt 3rd Dang</b>
<b>Red belt</b>			<b>Black belt 4th Dang</b>
<b>Red belt 1st degree</b>			<b>Black belt 5th Dang</b>
<b>Red belt 2nd degree</b>			<b>Black belt 6th Dang</b>
<b>Red belt 3rd degree</b>			<b>Black belt 7th Dang</b>
<b>Red belt 4th degree</b>			<b>Black belt 8th Dang</b>
<b>Red belt 5th degree</b>			<b>Black belt 9th Dang</b>
<b>Red belt 6th degree</b>			<b>Black belt 10th Dang</b>
 <b>Supreme white belt</b>		 <b>White belt of the president of the World council of master</b>	

## Chapter III – Length of time for grade exams

### Article 10. Length of Time required at the Medium level grade exam (Trung dang)

	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cap to 1 <sup>st</sup> Dang	1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dang	2 <sup>nd</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dang	3 <sup>rd</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> Dang
<b>Standard time required</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>Time required for instructors and instructor in charge of clubs/centers</b>		<b>1 year</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>2 years</b>
<b>Time required for special cases</b>		<b>6 months</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>1 years</b>
<b>Minimum age required</b>	<b>16 years</b>			

**10.1. Standard time required:** it is the minimum period required in training to be able to register for the exam.

**10.2. Time required for instructors and instructor in charge of clubs/centers:** this length of time is shortened by one year, especially reserved to instructors who do the trainings and at the same time practices on his own.

**10.3. Time required for special cases:** reserved for instructors who do the trainings and possesses an exceptional skill in the martial art.

**10.4. Minimum age to postulate for the rank of 1<sup>st</sup> DANG:** 16 years at the date of examination.

**10.5.** For promotions, the following cases are valid:

- (a).** Individuals from other martial arts who possess a technique level being equivalent to Vovinam Viet Vo Dao.
- (b).** Individuals who are still active but do not have the chance or do have lack of conditions to take the exam.
- (c).** Individuals who have exceptionally contributed to the expansion of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao.

### Article 11. Length of time required at the Superior level(Cao dang) grade exam

	4 <sup>th</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> Dang	5 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> Dang	6 <sup>th</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup> Dang	7 <sup>th</sup> to 8 <sup>th</sup> Dang	8 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> Dang	9 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> Dang
<b>Minimum period of time required to present a thesis</b>	<b>4 years</b>					
<b>Special cases for period of time required to present a thesis</b>	<b>2 to 3 years</b>					
<b>Minimum period of time required to be promoted</b>	<b>6 years</b>					

- 11.1. Minimum period of time required to present a thesis:** 4 years.
- 11.2. Special cases:** shortened by 2 years or 3 years, reserved for the Masters being in charge of a state or province (technical regional Director), or countries (President of the World Council of Masters, President of the National Federation), or having important responsibilities within the international Vovinam Viet Vo Dao authorities panel. Prior to presenting their thesis, the candidate Masters must request for the authorization from the international jury for exams.
- 11.3. Minimum period of time required to be promoted:** 6 years, reserved to Masters who have exceptionally contributed to the expansion of Vovinam Viet Vo Dao, but do have lack of means to present a thesis. The promotions can be done as follows:
- (a).** Directly proposed by the World Council of Masters.
  - (b).** Proposed by the National Council of Masters who will submit the document to the World Council of Masters.

## Chapter IV - Organization of the belt exams

### Article 12. International Jury for exams

- 12.1.** The International examiners Board is the body having the power to organize sessions of international examination or the sessions of thesis for the ranks of 5th Red belt or higher
- 12.2.** The international technical Board is the body having the power to organize sessions of international examination for the ranks of 1st Dang in 4th Dang.
- 12.3.** All the candidates can register freely for international ranks upon approval of the National Council of Masters.
- 12.4.** The diploma obtained for an international grade is automatically, recognized by all national authorities and will be delivered to the laureate.

### Article 13. National Jury for exams

- 13.1.** The World Council of Masters authorizes the National Council of Masters to organize exams under the following agreements:
- (a).** Observe all the articles mentioned in the current International Convention of Ranks;
  - (b).** Form a jury for belt exam that includes at least 3 members having international diploma.

- (c). In the case where a country cannot meet all the required conditions, then the National Council of masters or/and the national Federation can request the World Council of masters to organize an international session in its country

### 13.2. From Black Belt 1st Dang to Black Belt 3rd Dang:

- (a). Maximum of 2 belt exams per year.  
 (b). The president of the jury for belt exam must have at least a Red Belt 4th Dang, and have least 3 (three) ranks higher than examinee. The remaining members of the jury must have at least 2 (two) ranks higher than the examinee. (see the chart as described hereunder)

Examinee level	Grade to pass	Level of the President of the jury	Level of the other members of the jury
3 <sup>rd</sup> Cap	1 <sup>st</sup> Dang	4 <sup>th</sup> Dang	2 <sup>nd</sup> Dang
1 <sup>st</sup> Dang	2 <sup>nd</sup> Dang	4 <sup>th</sup> Dang	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dang
2 <sup>nd</sup> Dang	3 <sup>rd</sup> Dang	5 <sup>th</sup> Dang	4 <sup>th</sup> Dang

- (c). The official report for the belt exam as well as the files for all candidates must be sent to the World Council of Masters to be recognized.

### 13.3. From Red Belt 4th Dang:

- (a). Maximum of 1 belt exam per year.  
 (b). The President of the jury for belt exam must have at least 2 ranks higher than the examinee, the remaining members of the jury must have at least 1 rank higher than the examinee, as listed:

Examinee level	Grade to pass	Level of the President of the jury for the belt exam	Level of the other members of the jury for the belt exam
3 <sup>rd</sup> Dang	4 <sup>th</sup> Dang	5 <sup>th</sup> Dang	4 <sup>th</sup> Dang
4 <sup>th</sup> Dang	5 <sup>th</sup> Dang	6 <sup>th</sup> Dang	5 <sup>th</sup> Dang
5 <sup>th</sup> Dang	6 <sup>th</sup> Dang	7 <sup>th</sup> Dang	6 <sup>th</sup> Dang
6 <sup>th</sup> Dang	7 <sup>th</sup> Dang	8 <sup>th</sup> Dang	7 <sup>th</sup> Dang
7 <sup>th</sup> Dang	8 <sup>th</sup> Dang	9 <sup>th</sup> Dang	8 <sup>th</sup> Dang
8 <sup>th</sup> Dang	9 <sup>th</sup> Dang	10 <sup>th</sup> Dang	9 <sup>th</sup> Dang
9 <sup>th</sup> Dang	10 <sup>th</sup> Dang	World Council of Masters	World Council of Masters

- 13.4. Three months prior to the belt exam, the National Council of Masters must request the World Council of Masters for an authorization to organize the belt exam. The official report of the results for the belt exam, the thesis (5 copies), and the files for the examinees must be sent to the World Council of Masters.

- 13.5. The World Council of Masters can send one or more international Masters to participate and check on the belt exam.

## Chapter V - Programs for belt exams

### **Article 14. Technique exam – Thesis Presentation**

The program for belt exam consists of 2 parts:

- 14.1.** Technique exam: reserved for Black Belt 1st Dang to Red Belt 4th Dang.
- 14.2.** Master and thesis or technique presentation: reserved for Red Belt 5th Dang or higher.

### **Article 15. Technique program**

- 15.1.** The national program for belt exam must be based on the international program for belt exam published by the World Council of Masters.
- 15.2.** In the case where the country has his own program, then it must be presented to the World Council of Masters for approval.
- 15.3.** In addition, the difference between the national and international programs must be less than 20%.
- 15.4.** In the case where the international program is not yet published (being still updated), the national program must be sent to the World Council of Masters three months prior to the belt exam.

### **Article 16. Master, thesis and technique presentation for higher level (Cao dang)**

The examinees at higher levels, starting from Red Belt 5<sup>th</sup> Dang, who want to do the presentation on the thesis or do a technique presentation, must observe the following procedures:

- 16.1.** The subjects and the body of the thesis must absolutely not have any contents or issues related to politics, religion, racism, and violence or criticizing any individual or organization.
- 16.2.** The examinee can utilize the language of the country that he/she belongs to.
- 16.3.** If necessary, the examinee should have a translator.
- 16.4.** The examinee must send at a minimum five copies of the thesis to the World Council of Masters.

### **Article 17. Short Thesis**

- 17.1.** Any document with less than 50 pages (A4 format, 10 points font) is considered as a short thesis, or any other document designated by the examinee.
- 17.2.** Rules for short thesis:

- (a). The thesis must be sent to a jury for belt exam two months prior to the presentation.
- (b). For some exceptional reasons, which prevent the examinee from being at the jury exam, then he can authorize another master to do the presentation on his behalf.
- (c). The jury of the belt exam must meet all the articles of chapter 4: Organization of the belt exams.

## **Article 18. Thesis**

- 18.1.** Any document equivalent to a PhD thesis with more than 50 pages (A4 format, 10 points font) is considered as a thesis, or any other document designated by the examinee.
- 18.2.** Rules for thesis presentation:
  - (a). The thesis must be sent to the jury of the belt exam 3 months prior to the presentation.
  - (b). The candidate must be present at the jury exam.
  - (c). The candidate must have a thesis advisor who can be a Master or any civilian.
  - (d). The jury for the belt exam must be composed of at least 3 members. Additional members such as experts or specialists can be invited for contents of the thesis being beyond Vovinam Viet Vo Dao.
  - (e). The grades for the thesis can be: acceptable (D), fairly good (C), very good (B), excellent (A) with the exam board's utmost praise.

## **Article 19. Technique presentation**

- 19.1.** The examinees must present their techniques under one of the following:
  - (a). Direct presentation: execution of techniques in front of the jury;
  - (b). Indirect presentation: presentation with the aide of pictures or video film in front of the jury.
- 19.2.** Rules for technique presentation:
  - (a). The scenario for the technique presentation must be submitted to the jury of the belt exam three months prior to the exam;
  - (b). The examinee must be physically present.
  - (c). The examinee cannot be absent on the day of the exam unless he/she has exceptional reasons.

## Chapter VI - Disciplinary measures and Protests

### Article 20. Disciplinary sanctions

- 20.1.** To any individual:
- (a).** Warning.
  - (b).** Not being allowed to register for any belt exam from 1 to 10 years.
  - (c).** Downgrade.
  - (d).** Being expelled from Vovinam Viet Vo Dao.
- 20.2.** To any country or the local comity:
- (a).** Warning.
  - (b).** Suspension from the authorization to organize belt exams for several years.
  - (c).** Not being allowed to organize belt exam until further notice.
  - (d).** Being excluded from the Vovinam Viet Vo Dao World Federation.

### Article 21. International disciplinary Board

- 21.1.** Each Master, country or local comity has the right to sue the international Disciplinary Board.
- 21.2.** the International Disciplinary Board must apply the following procedure:
- (a).** Examine the file of the protest and decide to follow up or not.
  - (b).** Constitute the disciplinary Commission to review the complaints.
  - (c).** Inform the involved parties and organize the judgments.
- 21.3.** Any person or organization condemned by the International Disciplinary Board can appeal to the World Council of Masters.
- 21.4.** The World Council of Masters will announce the outcome of the judgment and all members must respect them rigorously.

### Article 22. National disciplinary measures

- 22.1.** Every country can form its own disciplinary Commission to treat complaints concerning Black Belts 1st Dang and Red Belt 4th Dang. The official reports on the judgments must be sent to the World Council of Masters.
- 22.2.** If the condemned individual does not appeal the decision to the international Commission of control within 3 months, the World Council of Masters will inform all the countries of the disciplinary action.
- 22.3.** If the condemned individual does appeal the decision, the international disciplinary Commission will perform the judgment.
- 22.4.** If the complaints are towards a Master with a Red Belt 5th Dang or higher, the country must inform the international Commission for control which will take over the file.

The national disciplinary Commission cannot be created without the explicit approval of the international Commission of control.

- 22.5.** If the international Commission of control judges the plaint as not being valid, no disciplinary action can be taken against the Vo Sinh in his/her country of origin.

## **Chapter VII** **Administration – maintenance** **of the International Convention of Ranks**

### **Article 23. Administration – Procedure – Release form - File**

The International Technical Board explains all the articles of the mentioned International Convention of Ranks in a detailed manner in release forms.

### **Article 24. Maintenance of the International Convention of Ranks**

- 24.1.** All the Masters, all the international organizations, all the countries and all the local comities can make some suggestions to improve the Convention.
- 24.2.** All the suggestions must be sent to the World Council of Masters at least 2 months prior to the opening date of the annual meeting.
- 24.3.** Rules:
- (a).** The vote is done with secret ballots.
  - (b).** The majority consists of 2/3.
  - (c).** Every Master has a voice.
  - (d).** Vote by proxy is accepted.

### **Article 25. Application**

- 25.1.** The International Convention of Ranks comprises 7 chapters and 25 articles. The International Assembly of Masters on 08/19/2000 in Los Angeles, California, USA, approved it. It is updated :
- 1<sup>st</sup> update at the 6th World Congress in Paris - France on May 04th, 2008.
  - 2nd update at the 7th World Congress in Paris - France on May 28th, 2012.
  - **3rd update at the 8th World Congress in California - USA 15 July 2016**
- 25.2.** All the ranks and agreements existing prior to the Convention are recognized.
- 25.3.** This International Convention of Ranks supersedes and replaces all previous conventions.