



Maltese

The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.

Origin and Purpose

The Maltese is of spaniel origin, and has been a household pet for many centuries.

General Appearance

Should suggest a vigorous, well-balanced dog with a mantle of long white straight coat hanging evenly down each side.

Temperament

The Maltese is among the gentlest mannered of all little dogs. They are intelligent, vigorous, very affectionate and seemingly fearless. Over-aggressive or too timid behaviour is to be severely penalized.

Size

Weight under 3.2 kg (7 lb) with 2-2.7 kg (4-6 lb) preferred. Overall quality is to be favoured over size.

Coat and Colour

Should be of good length, but not so as to impede action. The coat is single, that is, with no undercoat. It hangs flat, straight and silky on either side of the centre part, which should run from tip of nose to tip of tail. The texture should be even throughout with no suggestion of woolliness, curliness, or cosmetic alteration. The long head hair may be tied up in a single topknot or divided into two. White colour is preferred, but light beige or lemon markings are permissible.

Head and Skull

Head in proportion to the size of the dog. From stop to centre of the skull (centre being between forepart of the ears) and stop to tip of the nose should be equally balanced. The skull is slightly rounded, rather broad between the ears and moderately well defined at the temples. The stop is moderate. The muzzle is fine and slightly tapered, but not snipey, with a good firm underjaw. The nose is small, black, and in balance with the size of the eyes. Teeth may meet in an even edge to edge bite or in a scissors bite. The lips should be black. Eyes should be dark brown with black eye rims. Halos of pigmentation around the eyes gives a more beautiful expression. The shape is not quite round but not almond shaped, and their size should be in proportion to the size of the face, there should be no suggestion of bulging or prominence and the expression should be gentle but very alert. Ears should be low set, the hair long and well feathered and hanging close to the side of the head, the hair to be mingled with the coat at the neck and shoulders.

Neck

Of sufficient length and proportion to the body to give a high carriage of head.

Forequarters

The shoulder blades are sloping at an approximate 45 degree angle, elbows are well knit and held close to the body. Forelegs are straight, their pastern joints well knit and devoid of appreciable bend. The feet should be round and small. Pads of the feet are black. The hair around the feet may be trimmed to give a neater appearance.

Body

Should be in every way balanced. The dog should be compact, with the height from the withers to the ground to equal the length from the withers to the root of the tail. The topline should be straight and level from the tip of the shoulders to the root of the tail. Ribs should be well sprung, chest fairly deep, at least to the elbows, the loins taut, strong and well tucked up underneath.

**Hindquarters**

Legs are fine boned and nicely feathered. Hind legs are strong and moderately angulated at the stifles and hock. The hock is straight, turning neither in nor out.

Tail

Is set high and should be long haired and carried well arched over the back with the tip resting on the hindquarter on either side.

Gait

The gait should be smooth and flowing without weaving. In stride the forelegs reach forward, straight and free from the shoulders, elbows close. The hind legs move in a straight line with good driving action. The topline is level, head held high and tail carried gracefully over the back resting on the hindquarters.

Faults

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed's purpose.

Scale of Points**Positive Points**

Balance and size	20
Movement and carriage	20
Head, eyes, nose, pigmentation	15
Legs, feet, action	10
Tail and tail carriage	10
Coat, colour and texture	15
Condition, presentation, body substance	10
TOTAL	100

Negative Points

Lack of pigmentation	-10
Cow-hocks, or hind legs toeing-in or out	-10
Weaving in front, toeing in or out	-10
Gay tail, or low-set tail	-5
Roach back, topline not level	-10
Undershot or overshot jaws	-10
Prominent, bulging eyes, or too wide set	-5
Lacking in body substance, poor condition	-10
Kinky coat, curly coat, or undercoat	-10
Timid or snapping	-10
Poorly balanced	-10
TOTAL	-100

Breed Name: Maltese
Year of Recognition: 1902
Effective Date: January 2004