General Comments
The unique combination of size, substance and refinement are the main distinguishing and
universal characteristic of Warmbloods. They are relatively tall and substantial, yet they retain
the shape and refinement of riding type horses. The overall impression is one of nobility,
harmony, balance and athleticism. The frame should impress with its substance rather than its
lightness or fineness. In profile, the animal will appear “uphill” in build with muscular
hindquarters supporting a rectangular frame that features a relatively erect, poll-high neck.

Distinguishing characteristics
1. Shape [1]: Rectangular frame, front to middle to back ratio 1-1-1. Within the basic shape the
important aspects of the silhouette are:
   a. Neck: Longer over the top than under the bottom, set relatively higher on shoulder,
      with the poll as the highest point.
   b. Top Line: Smooth from poll to tail, especially at the connection of neck and wither.
   c. Croup: Long and moderately sloped; point of hip to buttock, preferably no less than 1/3 of the
      body length.
   d. Saddle Position: well defined wither (visible above shoulder blades), deep heart
      girth, with ribs well sprung.
2. Substance: A large but not massive frame. Strong, substantial bone featuring large flat joints,
   especially at the hocks.
   a. Bone: Flat bone. A circumference measured just below the knee on the fore leg, using a
      flexible tape, should be 7.5 to 9.5 inches (19 to 24.1 cm)
   b. Hooves: Large, even and conical; more round than oval and proportionate to the size
      of the horse.
   c. Contour measurement: The distance from the withers to the ground following the
      contour of the shoulder, with flexible tape, will be on average 10 cm greater than the height of
      the horse measured at the withers, using a measuring stick with a level, designed for this
      purpose.
3. Size:
   a. Height: Range 15.2h - 18h, ideal 16h to 17h (162cm to 174cm).

The above characteristics refer to young mature horses, with a Texas A&M body condition score
of 6-7 out of 10, normally ages three to seven. Younger and older horses will express many of
the fundamental characteristics, but due to immaturity or aging, will be less measurable.

Expert Review
The preceding document has been reviewed by several European experts, with extensive
knowledge and experience in evaluating Warmblood horses. These individuals, without
exception, found the document to be clear and accurate in its depiction of the distinguishing characteristics of Warmblood horses.

Professor Ingvar Fredricson, manager of the National Stud in Flyinge, Sweden from 1985 to 2000, whose pioneer research work in bio mechanics revolutionized the design of horse race tracks throughout the world and launched a prestigious career at the University of Upsalla.

Fritz Von Blotniz, Successful international Three Day Event competitor and life long breeder, now a senior judge with the German FN, with responsibilities for educating, training and evaluating judges in Germany.

Hakan Wahlmann, President of the Finnish Warmblood Horse Breeders Association, a breeder and upper level dressage trainer and clinician as well as a judge.

Jan-Ove Olsson, Dressage trainer and international judge, member of the Swedish Warmblood Board of Directors with specific responsibility over conformation and gait evaluation.

Manfred Lopp, Senior supervising trainer (Haupsattlermeister) at the Celle State Stud Stallion Performance Test in Germany, for thirty years, now a respected judge and advisor.

Note on selection characteristics Certain performance characteristics including gaits and jumping ability are highly heritable. Research indicates [2] that they may be reliably evaluated in naive horses. The elasticity of the warmblood gait, particularly in relation to push off the ground behind, is deemed an important selection characteristic. When included in a breeding fitness inspection, gaits may be evaluated in-hand or loose. Jumping ability is likewise evaluated at an early age, by free jumping young horses. Recent research, done in the Netherlands, indicates that foals may be reliably evaluated in their first year of life.

References