



The ROA Gold Standard Award has been highlighting those racecourses that offer owners the very pinnacle of the raceday experience since 2006. The ROA Racecourse Accreditation scheme was introduced in 2019 to supplement the Gold Standard Award by recognising those racecourses that have achieved a minimum standard of performance, and allowing the industry to benchmark each racecourse's performance year on year.

The ROA Racecourse Accreditation Scheme is assessed by AA Hotel & Hospitality Services, who provide an independent and objective assessment of the raceday experience across all racecourses. The AA's carefully selected and trained group of assessors visit each racecourse across the year (Newmarket Rowley Mile and July courses are assessed separately) and complete a detailed report that is fed back to both the racecourse and the ROA. All assessment areas are graded 1-5 and converted to a percentage score, with accreditation awarded on the achievement of a qualifying minimum percentage. One of the key aims of the scheme is to encourage racecourses to seek to improve areas in all of the categories that they are assessed against and to provide a detailed report which can serve as a "toolkit".

Additionally, the ROA collates owner feedback throughout the year. This is via a feedback form on the ROA website; emails sent directly to racecourses which are then sent onto the ROA; and feedback postcards which are completed by owners on the raceday, collected by racecourse staff and emailed/posted to the ROA. All assessment areas are graded 1-5 and an average score generated.

The 2026 criteria and scoring metrics are shown below. The framework and structure of the scheme have been updated to reflect the changes we have seen over the last few years, as well as following consultation and feedback within the industry.

The Racecourse Assessments will take place from March – end of November 2026 ideally at major (but not Festival) meetings, and the team will be in touch shortly to coordinate the visit. If the date suggested by the assessor is not suitable (e.g. new facility due to be opened later in the year) do get in touch as soon as possible and the request will be looked at. Visits will not occur on the first day of a new season.

We look forward to the 2026 Assessments; promoting the range and variety of ongoing innovation and supporting ongoing development by racecourses in the provision of the Owners' Raceday Experience.

## **2026 ROA RACECOURSE ACCREDITATION SCHEME – CRITERIA**

- All assessment areas to be graded 1-5 to allow for distinction across scoring
- Questions 4, 10, 14, 15, 28, 32, 33 and 37 will be double weighted
- Quality Mark to be awarded on achievement of 75%
- Racecourses achieving 85% or more to be assessed for ROA Gold Standard
- Owner feedback will also inform the assessment scheme for the ROA Gold Standard, with racecourses required to obtain a minimum of 40 pieces across the year (via all methods available), with an average score of 4.3 in order to be considered for the Award.

		<b>Score</b>				
		<b>1 NEEDS SUPPORT</b> <i>In need of improvement and support with provision</i>	<b>2 AVERAGE</b> <i>Basic provision for the owner: enhancements encouraged</i>	<b>3 GOOD</b> <i>Good provision of services that satisfy owners' needs</i>	<b>4 VERY GOOD</b> <i>Smooth provision of services for a quality owner experience</i>	<b>5 EXCELLENT</b> <i>Gold Standard provision, "surprise &amp; delight"</i>
	<b><u>PRE-RACEDAY COMMUNICATION</u></b>					
1	Each racecourse website should have a dedicated Owners page (accessible from the home page) – including Going report – on their website explaining the experience that an Owner should expect to receive on racedays	No owners page	Basic owner's page. Lacking much information and difficult to locate.	Basic owners' section, easy to use.	Good owners page, updated regularly. Raceday specific information provided. Specific information provided for shared-ownership runners	A professional owners' page which goes beyond what you would expect to receive. Highly informative content with external links, going, weather, travel

2	Owners with entries receive pre-raceday information within 24hrs of entry including contact details for an owner-liaison who can assist owners and co-ordinate arrangements including catering.	No communication	<i>Basic entry information. Owner liaison is contactable through only one means – and is not dedicated to the role on the raceday.</i>	<i>Basic entry information and some racecourse information. A dedicated Owner liaison is contactable on racedays but only provides the essential information</i>	<i>Good entry information &amp; important racecourse details (direction, parking, food). Specific information provided for shared ownership runners. Dedicated owner liaison – contactable in advance and on the day</i>	<i>Personalised &amp; warm welcome email/letter with all important raceday information. Mapping out your day with when your horse runs. Syndicate Managers contacted and offered alternative facilities when available. Details provided for highly visible and accessible dedicated individual. Knowledgeable – both about the racecourse and racing and can make autonomous decisions</i>
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>ARRIVAL</b>					
3	Clear signposting to the racecourse to be evident from the main roads and into the car park, with no queues/delays	No signage	<i>Basic, poorly located signage. Not owner specific and not that visible.</i>	<i>Basic signage, but well positioned and visible.</i>	<i>Good signage, with clear distinction between car parks. No delay on entry.</i>	<i>Informative signage with clear instructions for owners, from a fair distance from the racecourse. No delay on entry, staff proactive in directing owners away from any queues.</i>
4 (Double score)	There should be a car park for Owners, which is easily accessible, well-signed and has sufficient capacity. (If grass and well maintained do not penalise)	No specific provision for Owners' parking	<i>Not in a good location and/or inadequately sized. Any overflow carpark is inconveniently located for the owner's entrance.</i>	<i>Adjacent to O&amp;T Entrance with overflow (if needed) almost equally convenient.</i>	<i>Well located car park, which is accessible for everyone including wheelchair access. Well-lit, clean with efficient and friendly marshalling.</i>	<i>Well located car park, with space for all owners even on feature days. Clean with good walkways, and adjacent to the owner's entrance. Lighting and planting/landscaping. Charging points provided for Electric Vehicles</i>

5	Owners to have a badge collection area, which should be adequately staffed and sized for the likely number of people wishing to gain admittance.	No dedicated badge collection area.	Small and basic collection area, with limited (and not very knowledgeable) members of staff. Queues at peak times	Adequately sized and decorated collection area which is dedicated to owners. Less than a 5 minute wait at peak times	Dedicated area. Pictures/décor pleasant. Pleasant and knowledgeable staff. No queue at any time.	Owners have a badge collection area, and the areas is decorated with care and attention, with flowers/sweets etc. Pleasant and knowledgeable staff. No queue at any time.
6	Owners' badge allocation – sole/partnership owners	Less than 6 badges provided		6 complimentary badges provided	More than 6 complimentary badges provided	More than 6 complimentary badges provided, plus option to provide additional O&T or General Admission badges
7	Discount rate for additional badges (additional badges to be O&T when space allows).	No discounts.	Limited discounts – for general admission.	Limited discounts in O&T facility on non-feature days.	Flexible and generous discount/complimentary – for general admission.	Flexible and generous O&T discounted/complimentary tickets provided (even on feature days).
<b>Total</b>						
<b>OWNERS AND TRAINERS FACILITY</b>						
8	Location of the main facility	Inconvenient. Far from horses, parade ring and course,		Parade and/or pre-parade ring view and proximity	Course-facing but not offering same quality view as provided in the grandstand.	Course-facing, located within grandstand, opposite winning line.
9	The Owners' facility should be policed to ensure only those with a runner on the day are admitted	Not policed		Policed effectively.		Very well policed in a friendly manner and with a positive attitude
10	Ability to provide seating and comfort for Owners in attendance across the day	Obvious over-crowding and many standing.	Obviously busy facility with inadequate number of seats.		Everyone who wants a seat has one but tables that are vacated are immediately taken.	Seat at a table for the day if wanted OR heavily discounted restaurant

(Double score)						seats offered to prevent over-crowding.
11	Provision of a betting facility/courier	No betting facility or courier	Poorly manned betting facilities, shared with public	Adequate facilities provided	Adequate betting terminals and/or couriers manned by friendly staff	Adequate betting terminals and/or couriers manned by friendly staff, ensuring no/minimal queues.
12	Complimentary Wi-Fi to be provided and accessible from Owners & Trainers facility (where speed will be measured min. 3 times) during racing	No Wi-Fi	Slow (10-11Mbps)	Slow (12-60Mbps)	Good (60-100 Mbps)	Excellent (100Mbps or more)
13	Toilets – provision, location, quality, décor and maintenance.	No dedicated Owners toilet facility or nearby facility	No dedicated Owners' toilets, but a nearby facility is available; basic, clean, and generally accessible with minimal queuing.	Dedicated Owners' toilets with male and female provision and minimal queuing. Good overall presentation and maintenance; sanitary and waste bins provided, though some units or fittings may be out of order.	Dedicated Owners' toilets with male and female provision and minimal queuing. Very good standard throughout; fresh finishes, effective lighting and ventilation, and all fixtures and fittings present and fully operational.	Excellent provision of male and female toilets within the Owners' facility, sufficient for peak demand. Spacious, immaculately maintained, and exceptionally presented, with high-quality fixtures, premium consumables, and thoughtful decorative touches.
14 (Double score)	Main facility – quality, decor and maintenance	Poor overall presentation. Scruffy or dirty in places. Feels 'unloved'	Basic décor and furnishings. Clean and functional, but limited attention to detail or visual appeal.	Good standard of presentation and maintenance overall. Clean and welcoming, though some areas may require improvement or refreshing.	High standard of décor and presentation throughout. Well maintained, very clean, with thoughtful personal touches that enhance the environment.	Outstanding standard of décor and finish. High-quality materials, immaculate cleanliness, and outstanding maintenance throughout, creating a consistently impressive environment.

15 (Double score)	Ambience – the character and atmosphere of the facility.	<i>The ambience is unpleasant or uncomfortable. The environment is uninviting, with significant issues such as noise, poor lighting or uncleanliness.</i>	<i>The ambience is below average. Some aspects might be acceptable, but there are noticeable shortcomings that affect the overall experience.</i>	<i>The ambience is satisfactory. The environment is adequate but not particularly impressive or memorable.</i>	<i>The ambience is enjoyable. The venue is appealing, with thoughtful design and a comfortable atmosphere.</i>	<i>The ambience is outstanding. The environment is beautifully designed, inviting, and enhances the overall experience.</i>
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>ACCESSIBILITY PROVISION</b>					
16	Accessibility (to include wheelchair access and consider other access requirements). Consideration and assistance given to owners with non-visible impairment e.g. impaired vision, hearing loss, dementia, autism	No access/provision	Limited access/provision	Limited access and provision but proactive management attitude	Good access and provision	Excellent access and provision
17	Accessible viewing of races	No provision made	Provision shared with public	Separate (but small) Owner viewing available	Large provision	Large provision, within O&T viewing area
18	Accessible toilets (to include wheelchair access and consider other access requirements). Consideration given to owners with a stoma.	No access/provision		Provision shared with public	Good access and provision in both male and female toilets, within O&T facility	Excellent access and provision within O&T facility, including a unisex accessible toilet (to enable carers to accompany if required). Signage to highlight that not all disabilities are visible.

	<u>Total</u>					
	<b><u>SHARED OWNERSHIP PROVISION</u></b>					
19	Entry tickets to racecourse – baseline of 8 badges available as standard.	<i>Provision below baseline</i>	<i>Ticket quota as stated, with additional entry tickets available to purchase easy to organise/collect</i>	<i>Limited number of extra owner tickets provided, easy to organise/collect</i>	<i>All syndicate/club members (within reason) given course entry, outside of Festival/feature days and music nights.</i>	<i>All syndicate/club members given course entry (within reason). A dedicated shared ownership liaison is clearly identified for communication.</i>
20	Group ownership facilities provided either in O&T facility or separately	<i>No or limited provision – facility changes by fixture.</i>	<i>Dedicated syndicate facility provided for midweek/smaller fixtures.</i>	<i>Dedicated facility provided on the majority of fixtures.</i>	<i>Where inadequate space in owners' room, separate and dedicated facility provided for all fixtures.</i>	<i>Where inadequate space in owners' room, separate and dedicated facility provided for all fixtures.</i> <i>Flowers/premium furniture and presentation of room with ownership focus</i>
21	Catering and bar facility	<i>Tea/coffee for sale, basic bar.</i>	<i>Complimentary DIY tea/coffee, basic bar. Light snacks for sale.</i>	<i>Staffed facility. Complimentary tea/coffee. Discounted hot meal for sale.</i>	<i>Staffed facility. Complimentary tea/coffee. Complimentary hot meal available.</i>	<i>Staffed facility. Complimentary tea/coffee and soft drinks. Full bar. Complimentary hot food offering for all.</i>
22	Parade ring/winners enclosure/unsaddling area access	<i>Rigid policy of no additional access to parade ring</i>	<i>Limited number of extra parade ring passes provided, if safety limit allows</i>		<i>Parade ring passes provided on request with flexibility on the day up to maximum paddock safety level.</i>	<i>Parade ring passes provided on request with flexibility up to maximum paddock safety level. Numbers notified in advance. Safety limit published for transparency.</i>

23	Winner's experience for shared ownership entities	<i>Connections of winner with O&amp;T badge permitted, no refreshment, limited engagement from racecourse staff</i>	<i>Limited number of connections with/without O&amp;T badge permitted</i>	<i>Entire ownership group permitted</i>	<i>Entire ownership group permitted, refreshment provided</i>	<i>Entire ownership group permitted, refreshment provided, prize offer more suitable for shared ownership – e.g. multiple photos and replays (USB) rather than a single item</i>
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b><u>FOOD AND BEVERAGES</u></b>					
24	Complimentary drinks to be available within the Owners' facility. Non-disposable cups to be offered (with the choice of takeaway cups with lids provided)	<i>Limited tea/instant coffee available in disposable cups only. No alternative drinks available.</i>	<i>Unlimited basic tea/coffee available in suitable cups. At least water also available without needing to visit bar.</i>	<i>Good tea and coffee in suitable cups. All machines working. At least water also available without needing to visit bar.</i>	<i>Unlimited free, good quality tea and coffee, with biscuits and choice of cups. Range of teas and coffees and choice of fresh milks available. Alternative soft drink available for those who wish it.</i>	<i>Unlimited free, good quality tea and coffee, with choice of cups. Range of teas and coffees and choice of fresh milks available. Small cakes/scones/similar snacks available. Alternative soft drink available for those who wish it. Complimentary glass of fizz/alternative provided.</i>
25	A vegetarian/gluten free option should be provided, and the racecourse should be prepared to facilitate those with a food intolerance.	<i>No options for food intolerances</i>	<i>Basic vegetarian/gluten-free substitutes – if notified in advance</i>	<i>Basic vegetarian option</i>	<i>Good vegetarian/free-from options.</i>	<i>A wide range of foods that accommodate common food intolerances</i>

26	For Owners wanting a more substantial meal, or table for the day, a discount should be provided in a restaurant on the racecourse, with a number of tables being held back until after declarations for owners to book.	No discount/Table s not held until after declarations.	No discounts but tables are held back	Reservations are available, with discount taking account of admission price	Reservation with minor discounts (above admission price)	A large discount is provided, with availability in multiple restaurants within the racecourse (if applicable)
27	Food and drink: range and menus (Hot food not required in heatwave conditions)	Very limited selection of food and drink or poor availability of stated items. Availability is for a limited time	A wider choice of food and drink but no consideration given to children, vegetarians and other groups. There is limited choice from mid-fixture	A good range of food and drink options. Hot food may not be available but a good range of cold food is available. Clear menus with vegetarian options. Full bar.	A wider choice of hot and cold food options. For example, a vegetarian option, range of breads for sandwiches. A wide range of drinks. Full bar	A comprehensive selection of items and dishes on the menu. An ability to deal with dietary requirements. Vegetarian options, local produce, healthy options and a children's menu if appropriate. There is good availability of food until 30 minutes after the last race.
28 (Double score)	Food and drink: quality and presentation	Little thought given to presentation of hot and cold food, either in display cabinets or on the plate. Poor quality ingredients. Food may be overcooked, dry or reheated	More than one element of the offer is disappointing. A lack of fresh ingredients, poor presentation, food served at an incorrect temperature. Some elements of food and drink may be good, but others make for a disappointing dining experience.	Well-presented food and drink, but let down in one or more areas. Presentation skills may not be as good as they could be for hot and cold food. Food may be overcooked or not at the ideal temperature	High quality presentation of food and drink, served at the correct temperature and using good quality ingredients. Fresh ingredients in at least some of the dishes. All dishes freshly cooked.	The food and drink offering is a highlight of the day. The emphasis will be on fresh ingredients, ideally locally sourced and freshly cooked. An obvious level of skill and care in the presentation of food. All food will look fresh and appetising and served as stated on the menu
	<b>Total</b>					

<b>WATCHING THE RACE</b>						
29	Racecourses to have a big screen at all meetings.	No big screen	"Small" big screen with regard to proximity to stand etc	Basic big screen but not that easy to view at every part of the grandstand	Big screen	Adequate number of big screens that are easily visible from anywhere within the grandstand, of a suitable size
30	Provision and quality of internal screens within the Owners' facility	No screens provided within the Owners' facility	Insufficient screens provided to enable comfortable viewing from all areas of the facility	Sufficient screens provided to allow easy viewing from all areas of the facility but not all are working.	Sufficient screens provided to allow easy viewing from all areas of the facility. Some content additional to the day's racing	Sufficient screens provided to allow easy viewing from all areas of the facility. A high level of content which may included racing from other venues, other sports coverage or a news channel
31	A dedicated Owners' viewing area should be provided in the grandstand of an adequate size, easily located and properly policed.	No owners viewing area.	Small basic Owners' section. Inadequate policing.	Good size Owners' section, but not in the best position. Adequate policing	Owners' viewing area in a good location and policed well.	A range of options including a large area that is provided that gives the owner the best view of the action on the racecourse, including disabled facility. Sufficient space for syndicates to view. Friendly staff
<b>Total</b>						
<b>POST-RACE EXPERIENCE</b>						
32 (Double score)	Winner's experience for sole/partnership-owned horses  The winning Owner should be greeted by a senior member of staff or director	No greetings. No memento or photo provided	Met by a member of staff with basic drinks provision made (not champagne) in small/bland room. Basic memento – with no variation – and poor	Met and taken for champagne by member of staff. Offer of alternative to take a bottle of champagne home. Simple memento but good	Taken for champagne with a senior member of staff or director. Facility is welcoming and "special". An adequate range of mementoes. Good quality photo and	Taken for a complimentary celebratory drink with food offer with a senior member of staff or a director. "VIP" treatment. Wide choice of mementoes,

	and taken for a celebratory drink in aspirational surroundings, in a space of adequate size.		<i>quality photo with no frame.</i>	<i>quality, photo in a proper frame.</i>	<i>frame, personalised to date/horse etc.</i>	<i>thoughtfully sourced. Engraved where appropriate. Locally sourced “extra” provided. Good quality photo and frame, personalised to date/horse etc.</i>
33 (Double score)	Treatment of Placed Owners (regardless of ownership type)	<i>No contact made with them</i>		<i>Placed connections invited for a drink if winning connections not present</i>	<i>Placed connections provided with voucher for champagne</i>	<i>Champagne and race viewing. Dedicated facility or shared with winning connections.</i>
34	Consideration and assistance given to owners where a welfare issue has arisen on course incl. injury or fatality to the horse	<i>No provision or policy</i>	<i>Limited provision and policy</i>	<i>Limited provision and policy but proactive management attitude to support owners in such instances and enable rapid access by owner to horse.</i>	<i>Good provision and policy incl. staff awareness of the process should an issue arise including separate owners facility</i>	<i>Excellent provision and full policy including proactive support for owners, transport to horse, on site facility away from other owners and follow up post race</i>
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>EXIT FROM THE RACECOURSE</b>					
35	Staff available to provide assistance for departing Owners	<i>Queues, no traffic control</i>		<i>Minimal queues, traffic directed</i>		<i>No queues, easy departure.</i>
36	Taxi booking service	<i>No taxi numbers available</i>	<i>Taxi number available on request</i>	<i>Visible taxi numbers</i>	<i>Taxi booked if requested</i>	<i>Proactive booking of taxis. Clear signage of Uber/Taxi collection point.</i>
	<b>Total</b>					

	<b>INVESTMENT/IMPROVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR</b>					
37 (Double score)	Has the racecourse made investment into/improvement of the owner's experience since the previous year?	No changes	<i>Small investment/improvement in the owner's experience e.g. updated decor</i>	<i>Some investment/improvement into the owner's experience e.g. refurbished owner's facility</i>	<i>Noticeable investment/improvement into the owner's experience e.g. tarmacked car park</i>	<i>Significant investment/improvement into the owner's experience e.g. new facility</i>
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>OWNER FEEDBACK LEVELS</b>					
38	To be completed at the end of the annual assessment period by the ROA – How many pieces of feedback has the racecourse received (via forwarded emails, completed postcards and ROA website feedback forms)	<i>Less than 20 pieces (Note – less than 40 pieces removes a racecourse from Gold Standard consideration, regardless of any other scores)</i>	<i>21-39 pieces (Note – less than 40 pieces removes a racecourse from Gold Standard consideration, regardless of any other scores)</i>	<i>40-70 pieces</i>	<i>71-99 pieces</i>	<i>100 pieces +</i>
	<b>Total</b>					
	<b>ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (These will not contribute to your Gold Standard qualifying score but are areas of increasing focus from owners)</b>					
39	Alcohol-free drink provision in the owner's bar(s)	<i>Only soft drinks provided</i>		<i>Soft drinks plus a couple of alcohol-free alternatives</i>	<i>Good range of alcohol-free beverages</i>	<i>Wide range of branded alcohol-free beverages</i>

						<i>including wine, spirits and beers</i>
40	Card/contactless and cash payments should be accepted	<i>Only cash or only card</i>	<i>Card machine but inadequate signal. Cash accepted</i>		<i>Sufficient card machines and cash accepted.</i>	<i>Contactless card payments are accepted with a good signal. Cash accepted.</i>
41	Policy for compensating owners when a race/race meeting is abandoned	<i>No compensatory payments ever offered</i>	<i>Compensatory payments only offered in very strict circumstances</i>	<i>Compensatory payments offered sometimes, more likely when a race meeting is abandoned partway through</i>	<i>Owners offered a compensatory payment in the majority of cases when their race is abandoned</i>	<i>All owners offered a compensatory payment when their race is abandoned after the gates have opened, regardless of the reason for the abandonment.</i>
	<b>Total</b>					

Additional comments – including racecourse-specific USPs, addition of local flavour etc