



# GAA

Gemmological Association of Australia

## DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY



ADELAIDE  
BRISBANE  
HOBART  
MELBOURNE  
PERTH  
SYDNEY



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# 00

# **INTRODUCTION TO GEMMOLOGY & THE GAA**

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Gemmology is the science and study of gemstones. It is part of the earth sciences discipline and has evolved from mineralogy, a branch of geology.

## **WHAT DOES A GEMMOLOGIST DO?**

### **A gemmologist:**

- Applies specialised scientifically based knowledge about the nature and properties of gemstones.
- Identifies gemstones, ornamental and organic gem materials by using gemmological testing instruments.
- Discriminates natural gemstones from man-made synthetics, imitations and composite stones.
- Identifies and discriminates enhanced and artificially treated gemstones, ornamental and biological gem materials.
- Assesses and quantifies damage to gemstones and gem materials.
- Assesses a stone's durability and suitability for a particular purpose.
- Advises on gem options and variations for clients.

## **WHAT IS THE GEMMOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (GAA)?**

The GAA is an Australia-wide, not-for-profit Association that has been passionately educating the industry, gemstone enthusiasts and consumers about gemstones since 1945. Since its inception, the GAA has been Australia's leading gemmological educator.

## **WHAT IS GEM-ED AUSTRALIA?**

Gem-Ed Australia is the educational arm within the GAA organisational structure and is responsible for providing support to the state teaching centres and ensuring quality of education and welfare for our students.

# 01

## DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY

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The GAA Diploma in Gemmology is the scientific study of gemstones and is internationally recognised as the Australian benchmark to become qualified in the identification and handling of gems.

You will investigate the geological and chemical processes that form gemstones, their physical properties and various methods of identification. The training combines a sound understanding of theory and practical techniques to distinguish natural gemstones from treated stones, synthetics and imitants.

## WHO ARE THE TEACHERS?

Our teachers are all past graduates of the Diploma in Gemmology and are Fellows of the GAA. Many are internationally recognised leaders in their field. They possess a wealth of knowledge and experience and keep up to date with continuing developments within the gemmological arena. Many are employed within industries that reward intimate knowledge of gem materials such as jewellery design and sales, gemstone trading, mining and exploration and other industries.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

The course offers a structured, comprehensive and recognised study of gemmology that will give you the grounding to confidently identify and handle gemstones. These skills are especially valued in the gem and jewellery industries.

The GAA's focus is on the testing of gemstones in the laboratory. Class sizes are kept small to ensure that each student receives personalised attention to reach their full potential.

You will be studying with like-minded, dedicated people who are fascinated by gemstones and their origins, and people who work with and handle all types of gem materials in diverse situations. You will gain access to specialist laboratory facilities and form links with others that may lead you to networks within the industry.

### Other benefits include:

- Learning the rich and interesting stories that accompany gemstones from around the world.
- Gaining the knowledge and confidence to accurately identify all types of gemstones by visual means and using specialised equipment.
- Learning how to spot a 'fake' – technological advances are constantly introducing new synthetic and treated gemstones to the market, including imitants.
- Give your career a boost or enhance employment opportunities by gaining knowledge and industry contacts.
- Upon successful completion, apply to become a Fellow of the GAA and use the internationally recognised post-nominal FGAA.

## **WHO IS THIS COURSE AIMED AT?**

The course attracts anyone with an interest in gemstones who wants to study them in depth. This ranges from enthusiasts who undertake the course for their own satisfaction, to people involved in the jewellery and mining industries and allied trades who wish to deepen their knowledge and enhance their career development

### **Some of the people who have studied with us include:**

- Jewellery manufacturers, designers, retailers and wholesalers.
- Dealers in estate or antique jewellery.
- Gem and/or diamond commercial trade or collecting.
- Lapidaries.
- Mining laboratory specialists.
- Auction house and museum staff.
- People from all walks of life who have a passion and enthusiasm for gemstones.

## **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?**

Two years part time, either in-house (face-to-face) or flexi (theory studying at home and practical classes taken in 'blocks' during the year). The face-to-face option of evening classes and some weekend sessions is designed to cater for people who may be working during the day.

The Sydney and Melbourne teaching centres offer a one-year intensive course. This is only suitable for students who are prepared to commit upwards of 25 to 30 hours per week minimum for classes and revision.

Each State's schedules vary slightly and exact times and dates are available from the enrolment officer and on the website.





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## **COURSE FEES & INFORMATION**

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Flexible payment option allows you to enrol now, pay later. Member of the GAA? A member discount applies.

Mandatory course materials are covered in the cost, with further expert recommendations to enhance your learning.

## **WHAT ARE THE COURSE FEES?**

Course fees for the Diploma in Gemmology can be found online. Please visit [www.gem.org.au/education](http://www.gem.org.au/education) for up-to-date fees.

## **CAN I PAY MY FEES BY INSTALMENTS?**

Yes. We can offer you a payment plan of \$1000 minimum to start the course, then you may apply to pay off the balance by 1st May with monthly repayments.

## **DO I GET A DISCOUNT IF I AM A GAA MEMBER?**

Yes, there are Member and Non-member prices for courses and many of the events run by the GAA.

## **CAN I GET VET FEE HELP OR GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE?**

Students applying for the Diploma in Gemmology are not eligible for VET fee help or government assistance.

## **ARE COURSE MATERIALS SUPPLIED?**

Gem-Ed Australia will provide all tuition, electronic course notes and some student online learning tools. Teachers may recommend suitable texts for wider reading that are not examinable but may enhance your study experience.

In addition to the online course notes, you will receive *Practical Gemmology Handbook and GAA's Values of the Refractive Index and Specific Gravity of Commercially Known Gemstones*.

We encourage wider reading, for example *The Australian Gemmologist*, *Gems and Gemology* and other texts as recommended by teachers.

Students are required to purchase certain gemstone handling tools that are available via the GAA shop (the list of required equipment and order form is provided in the enrolment form).

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## ENROLLING & PREREQUISITES

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Your success in the course may hinge on your proficiency in English and your manual dexterity. If you have any doubts, our Enrolment Officer is happy to discuss this with you.

## **COURSE PREREQUISITES**

- Fluent English language skills and the ability to understand technical scientific terminology.
- Legible hand writing in English, especially for examinations.
- Basic computer skills including proficiency in MS Word as well as access to email and internet.
- Sufficient dexterity and eyesight for handling small stones and tools.

## **DO I NEED TO TAKE AN IELTS TEST BEFORE I ENROL?**

Due to the technical and scientific nature of the course and the wide range of reference and general reading material only being available in the English language, it is necessary for you to have a sound knowledge of the English language and good numeracy skills. There is also a high level of discipline-specific scientific jargon that you will need to understand.

It is not just a case of being able to speak and write basic English. We do not have an IELTS entry level, but, as an indication, you would need to have a level of English that would be acceptable for entry to an Australian University (Level 6-7).

Assignments and examinations require comprehensive detailed analysis for their completion in a satisfactory manner.

## **WHEN DOES THE DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY COURSE START?**

The course commences at end of January/early February of each year.

## **WHEN CAN I ENROL?**

Enrolments are open from 1 September to mid-January.

## **ONCE ENROLLED, CAN I DEFER?**

It is possible to defer, but conditions apply. Please discuss this with the Educational Support Officer.



### **WILL GAA HELP ME GET A STUDY VISA?**

No, GAA is not able to assist in obtaining a study visa to Australia and intention to study with GAA is not an eligible criterion for granting of a study visa by the Australian government.

### **I HAVE COMPLETED A DIPLOMA OR DEGREE IN GEMMOLOGY IN MY COUNTRY. IS IT RECOGNISED IN AUSTRALIA?**

The GAA does not automatically or formally accept qualifications from other gemmological training bodies for recognition of prior learning or other purposes.

Contact Gem-Ed in writing with any question regarding recognition of prior learning, including details of where, what and when you studied.

### **IS THERE AN AGE LIMIT FOR STUDENTS?**

Minimum enrolment age is 18 years. There is no maximum age.

### **I'M STILL NOT SURE WHETHER THIS IS RIGHT FOR ME. IS THERE SOME WAY I CAN TRY IT OUT FIRST?**

Yes, indeed. Most State teaching centres offer an introductory gemmology course. Run as a short course, you will be introduced to the main gemstones varieties, and basic information about localities and composition. It's a great way to get an overall grasp of the subject and whether studying gemmology in greater depth is right for you. Contact your local State Division for more information.

### **I LIVE OVERSEAS. CAN I STILL DO THE COURSE?**

Yes, it is possible to do the course by Flexible mode. Note that this will require travel to Australia and a good command of the English language.

# 04

## **COURSE CONTENT & ASSESSMENT**

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So many gems! Dive in and discover the world of crystals, gems, geological processes and more. Learn to use gemmological instruments to enhance your knowledge and your career.



## **I'VE SEEN REFERENCE TO THE BOARD OF STUDIES AND EXAMINATIONS. WHAT IS THAT?**

The Board of Studies and Examinations (BOS&E) is responsible for provision of course content, materials and assessment. This includes the preparation of a syllabus and reading list for each course, setting and marking of examinations, and promulgation of examination results.

## **WHICH TOPICS ARE COVERED?**

### **First year (Gem 1)**

- Physical and optical properties of gemstones.
- Methods of testing gemstones based on physical and optical properties.
- Elementary chemistry, and optics.
- Crystallography.
- Introduction to gem testing techniques using microscope, hand lens, refractometer, polariscope, dichroscope, Chelsea filter, spectroscope, ultraviolet light and x-rays.
- Geology and occurrences of gemstones.

### **Gemstones covered include:**

- Silica gems (varieties of quartz and chalcedony), feldspars (such as moonstone), ornamentals (such as turquoise and lapis lazuli), organic gems (such as pearls, amber, jet, and coral).

### **Second year (Gem 2)**

- More advanced study of physical and optical properties.
- Greater detail in the use of instruments with an emphasis on gem identification.
- Imitations and treatments.
- Synthetics - manufacture, properties and inclusions.

### **Gemstones covered include:**

- All mainstream gems including corundum (ruby and sapphire), diamond, beryl (including emerald, aquamarine and morganite), tourmaline, garnet (including tsavorite), spinel, zircon, tanzanite, jade, opal and numerous others including rare and lesser known gemstones.

## HOW IS THE COURSE ASSESSED? ARE THERE EXAMS?

Yes, strictly controlled examinations are held annually in each teaching centre in October/early November. You are required to attend a minimum of 75% of classes and will be assessed on coursework, with the bulk of assessment based on theory and practical examinations. A minimum standard is required in first year before moving on to second year.

Students are also required to submit theory-based assignments throughout the year and in Gem 2 they must identify a prescribed minimum number of gemstones in the practical sessions.

Flexi students will be required to attend two practical block sessions at mid-year and end of year prior to undertaking exams. Enquire for further information.

## WILL THERE BE ANY FIELD TRIPS?

From time to time, field trips are organised by students. Attendance on field trips is not mandatory and does not count in your final assessment. However, the experience may help deepen understanding of gemstone formation and discovery. And they're a lot of fun! As a member-based organisation, the GAA hosts various activities in each state and all students are warmly welcomed to participate.



*Completing my Diploma in Gemmology has benefited me as a jeweller in more ways than I ever expected. I have always had an interest in gemstones and found the course was not only informative and challenging but immensely rewarding.*

**Emma Meakes FGAA**

Jeweller, John Miller Design - WA

## **I WANT TO LEARN ABOUT DIAMONDS. DOES THE DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY COVER DIAMONDS?**

Diamonds are an important study within gemmology and certainly form a significant component of the Diploma. When you have completed studying gemmology, you may then choose to do further specialist training in the GAA's Diploma in Diamond Technology for which Diploma in Gemmology is recommended as background, though not required.

This part-time course runs from May to October. The Diploma in Diamond Technology qualification is awarded after successful completion of both theory and practical modules (priced individually) including Practical Diamond Grading and Advanced Practical Diamond Grading.

(The Practical Diamond Grading course may also be undertaken as a standalone course – you do not need to be studying in the Diploma in Gemmology or Diploma in Diamond Technology course to enrol.)

## **CAN I STUDY WITH THE GAA TO LEARN JEWELLERY MAKING OR STONE FACETING?**

We currently do not offer any courses which will provide you with the skills to become a qualified jeweller – in Australia these skills are normally developed through the apprenticeship scheme or in association with other teaching organisations. Likewise, stone faceting is not a topic taught by the GAA.

Many GAA students study jewellery making or faceting with other organisations, and the many GAA members that possess these skills are also happy to support or guide in these study areas.

## **ARE THE METAPHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF GEMSTONES COVERED IN THE COURSE?**

Every GAA course is centred on the scientific study of gemstones and is therefore concerned with their physical properties. Metaphysical characteristics are not recognised or addressed.

# 05

## STUDY OPTIONS

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We all lead busy lives and sometimes it's hard to fit in everything we want to do. With that in mind, several study options are available to help you along the way.

## **I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND ONSITE CLASSES OVER THE COURSE OF TWO YEARS. ARE THERE ANY OTHER OPTIONS?**

**Yes, there are three modes of study:**

1. **In-house** – provided at the teaching centres in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide. As well as evening classes, students in Queensland may choose to attend block classes instead, comprising 5 or 6 four-day blocks on selected dates distributed between February to September.
2. **Flexible** – students complete theory components via distance learning (course materials supplied) and complete their practical (prac) in two one-week blocks: one in June, and one in September. In first year these blocks are five days long and in second year they are seven days long.

WA flexi students complete the theory component by distance learning (course materials supplied) and the prac by:

- i. first year 4 x three-day blocks, and
  - ii. in second year 5 x three-day weekends spread throughout the year.
3. **Intensive** – offered in NSW and Victoria as a one-year intensive course. The content and other features of the course are the same as the two-year course and it allows participants to complete the work in one year.

## **WHAT ARE THE START DATES AND ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS?**

Gem 1 starts in February. Assessments (mid-year and end-of-year, 1 x theory and 1 x practical examinations of 2.5 hours each) are held late October / early November. A successful result qualifies you to continue on to the second year. A new enrolment for Gem 2 must be completed and, upon payment of fees, acceptance will be granted.

Gem 2: The second year course progression (face-to-face) starts in January / early February, while Intensive starts in June. All learning modes end in late October. Assessments (2 x sittings theory examinations of 2 hours each and 2 x sittings for practical examinations of 3 hours each) complete the Diploma in Gemmology.

## **I'M INTENDING TO DO DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY INTENSIVE SO THAT I CAN FINISH THE COURSE FASTER – WHAT COMMITMENT IS INVOLVED?**

The Diploma in Gemmology intensive mode runs from mid-February through to mid-October. You need to be available for one full-day (7.5 hours) laboratory study each week (NSW and Victoria).

You would really be studying for the whole year at a fast pace. We do not recommend missing any classes as you will find them difficult to make up. Moreover, as there is a minimum requirement for at least 16 hours per week outside of class time, taking time off would seriously impact your study goals and potential success in the course.

## **CAN I STUDY THE DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY CONCURRENTLY WITH MY OTHER TERTIARY STUDIES?**

If you are studying at university or TAFE, we recommend you complete your studies before enrolling in gemmology, as the time commitments can, and will, be challenging.

## **CAN I STUDY THE DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY ONLINE?**

No, the courses are delivered on campus on a part-time basis at the six divisional (state) teaching centres, or as Flexible or Intensive as detailed above.

## **WHAT SORT OF HELP CAN I EXPECT WHILE STUDYING?**

The GAA provides the following support to its students:

- Comprehensive learning materials.
- Supportive and safe learning environment.
- Small student to teacher ratios and personalised attention.
- Progress reports and feedback.
- Supplementary study materials via the online portal.
- Access to the Education Support Officer in your learning centre.

## **CAN I TAKE A HOLIDAY WHILE I STUDY THE COURSE?**

We do not recommend missing any classes as you will find them difficult to make up. If you are planning on taking an extended time away from the course we strongly recommend discussing this with your State Education Officer or Enrolment Officer prior to enrolment.

## **HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE TO SPEND STUDYING?**

For on-site (face to face) and flexi we recommend eight or more hours per week at a minimum, in addition to class time.



*Behind every gemstone, there is a fascinating story waiting to delight clients around the world. Studying with GAA brings the expertise, networking and confidence to build a solid career in a multimillion-dollar industry. Joining one of the most supportive and passionate professional communities of gemmologists in Australia was one of the best decisions I ever made.*

**Gina Barreto FGAA, Dip Dt**  
Gemmologist and Diamond Technologist

# 06

## VOCATIONAL OUTCOMES & RECOGNITION

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The courses offered by GAA will give you skills to enhance your employment and/or promotion opportunities, your workplace performance and help in your career development.



## **WILL I LEARN HOW TO VALUE GEMS FOR INSURANCE OR MARKETING PURPOSES?**

Techniques of gemstone identification are a necessary skill to have as a valuer. The Diploma in Gemmology does not specifically teach how to value gems or jewellery. For more information on becoming a Registered Valuer, please contact the National Council of Jewellery Valuers.

## **WHAT ARE MY CAREER PROSPECTS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE COURSE?**

Vocational outcomes for graduates may include employment in the jewellery, gem, diamond or an allied trade. This may include sales or consultancy positions in retail jewellery, jewellery design and/or manufacture, wholesale distribution and valuation work. Graduates may also go on to work in related fields such as mining, prospecting, lapidary and faceting, education, and laboratory research and identification.

- Gem/Diamond Merchant
- Jeweller
- Jewellery Retail Sales
- Jewellery Valuer
- Antique Dealer
- Pawnbroker
- Museum Curator
- Lapidary
- Laboratory Gemmologist
- Lecturer
- Geologist
- Wholesale Jeweller
- Auction House Dealer

## **WHAT COURSES DOES GAA OFFER?**

### **Diploma and further education courses**

- Diploma in Gemmology
- Diploma in Diamond Technology
- Practical Diamond Grading
- Advanced Diamond Grading

### **Short courses** (not available in all states)

- Introduction to Gems & Gemmology
- Retail Diamond Consulting
- Introduction to Antique Jewellery
- Pearl & Bead Threading
- Advanced Opal
- Inclusions 101
- Jewellery Sketching & Design

### **WILL THE GAA HELP ME GET A JOB?**

While GAA does not offer a careers placement service, the knowledge and industry contacts you will make during the course may help you in your future career prospects. Organisations occasionally advertise vacancies on the GAA noticeboard and website as they are confident in the knowledge and expertise of GAA graduates; they regularly recruit staff with the assistance of GAA networks and communication forums.

### **IS THE DIPLOMA IN GEMMOLOGY RECOGNISED IN THE INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONALLY?**

Graduates of the GAA Diploma in Gemmology are recognised throughout the jewellery and allied trades. The GAA's reputation for high standards is widely acknowledged both internationally and within the Australian industry.

## **I'VE HEARD OF FGAA. WHAT IS IT?**

On successful completion of the GAA Diploma in Gemmology you will be a qualified gemmologist and may apply for Fellowship of the GAA. You may then use the post-nominal 'FGAA' while you continue to remain a financial member of the GAA.

## **WHAT DO I GET AT THE END OF THE COURSE?**

Upon successful completion of this course graduates are entitled to apply for GAA Fellowship (through their local State Division) enabling the use of the internationally recognised post-nominal FGAA. They also receive:

- the GAA Diploma in Gemmology Certificate; and
- benefits of GAA membership and Fellowship.

# ENROL NOW!

To enrol or for further information,  
please call the Enrolment Officer on  
**1300 436 338** or email **learn@gem.org.au**

## GAA DIVISION LOCATIONS IN EACH STATE

### Queensland

PO Box 1372, Woodford, QLD 4514  
0448 325 314

### South Australia

Suite 421, 4th Floor, "Edments Building",  
38 Gawler Place, Adelaide, 5000  
(08) 8227 1377

### New South Wales

24 Wentworth Ave, Darlinghurst, 2010  
(02) 9264 5078

### Tasmania

Phillip Smith Centre  
2 Edward Street, Glebe, 7000  
0438 677 619

### Victoria

380-382 Spencer Street,  
West Melbourne, 3003  
(03) 9326 6160

### Western Australia

Unit 14/136 Railway Street, Cottesloe, 6011  
(08) 9385 5489

**www.gem.org.au**

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*Passionately educating  
the industry, gem enthusiasts  
and consumers about gemstones*