



Gem-A

THE GEMMOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
OF GREAT BRITAIN

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction and welcome

Welcome to The Gemmological Association of Great Britain (Gem-A) we hope you will find your time studying with us rewarding and interesting.

Our student handbook is designed to ensure that all students are familiar with and understand the policies and procedures. It will aid you, not only in your studies, but also for your comfort and safety. Please take time to read the handbook carefully and if you have any queries please speak to the Director of Education, Lorne Stather or a member of her team.

Overview of Gem-A

Gem-A can trace its origins back to 1908. The world's first gemmology course originated in London and the first gemmology diploma was awarded in 1913. The Gem-A headquarters is situated close to Hatton Garden in central London and contains the Education office, Gem Tutorial Centre, Membership office and Gem-A Instruments.

Gem-A is a charity and its principal objectives are:

- the promotion of the study of gemmology
- the scientific study of all materials and articles used or dealt in by persons interested in gemmology
- the establishment of educational systems including holding examinations, awarding diplomas and medals, and
- the maintaining of libraries and collections of gem materials.

Today Gem-A provides information about gems through publications, education, instruments and books.

Welcome to Gem-A.

Dr Jack Ogden
Chief Executive

Finding us

Gem-A's headquarters is located in the heart of Hatton Garden, one of London's major jewellery districts. We are close to both Farringdon and Chancery Lane underground stations.

The Gemmological Association of Great Britain
27 Greville Street (Saffron Hill entrance)
London
EC1N 8TN
UK
T: +44 (0) 20 7404 3334
F: +44 (0) 20 7404 8843
E: information@gem-a.com



Our offices are open Monday-Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm (although courses may be held outside the office opening hours).

Our qualifications

The Gemmological Association of Great Britain provides four internationally recognized gem qualifications awarded after an examination:

- The Foundation course leading to the Certificate in Gemmology
- Gemmology Practical Certificate
- The Diploma in Gemmology leading to FGA membership of Gem-A
- Diamond Practical Certificate
- Gem Diamond Diploma leading to DGA membership of Gem-A

Short courses and workshops

Gem-A also runs additional one-day workshops covering subjects such as bead stringing, valuations and specialist subjects. Full details are given on our website www.gem-a.com or see student notice boards for the latest information.

Students are advised to refer to our website (www.gem-a.com) for up-to-date details of all courses together with fees or to contact a member of the Education office listed below in person or via email (education@gem-a.com):

Lorne Stather Director of Education **Paveet Amrit** Enrolment Administrator
Lucy Dean Administration manager **Seema Bahadur** Client Services

Course Tutor

You will be assigned a course tutor whose role is to help with any difficulties you might encounter during the course and advise and help with any problems with the course.

Absence

Students must attend all classes/tutorials and examinations to the satisfaction of the Director of Education of Gem-A. Absence is permissible under certain circumstances (such as illness) but students are generally expected to attend as regularly as possible.

For visa students there is a legal requirement for them to enrol and attend courses and if this is not complied with they have to be removed from the course and the British Immigration Authority (BIA) has to be notified in writing by Gem-A.

Gem-A realizes that a student's non-attendance can be an indicator of academic or personal problems. Where attendance problems are identified; tutors will notify the Director of Education.

In many cases, such problems can be resolved on identification of a pattern of non-attendance. However, there may be cases where attendance levels and academic performance are so poor as to warrant removal from the course.

Regulations, policies and procedures

Gem-A has a number of regulations, policies and procedures which you must be aware of when attending one of the Gem-A courses. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with them and that you know where to access them. In particular it is important that you read and understand those in the following list at or prior to your course of study.

- Equality of opportunity and fair assessment for examination candidates
- Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy and procedures
- Appeals policy and procedure
- Malpractice procedure

Equal Opportunity and Fair Assessment policy

Gem-A is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and fair treatment of all its candidates. Gem-A assesses all students in a standardized manner using identical assessment method and content and same administration, together with identical and anonymous scoring and interpretation procedures, regardless of the age, gender and ethnic origin of each individual student.

All enquiries should be directed to the Gem-A Education Office at 27 Greville Street, London EC1N 8TN, tel: 020-7404 3334 fax: 020-7404 8843, email: education@gem-a.com

1. Policy

Gem-A is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of its business relationships. To this end, Gem-A acknowledges the following basic rights of all those with whom it interacts, its staff, suppliers, students and members:

- to be treated with respect and dignity;
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices; and
- to receive encouragement to reach their full potential.

Gem-A further acknowledges that these rights carry with them responsibilities; it consequently expects all staff, students and members to recognize these rights and act accordingly.

The underlying principle of Gem-A's Equal Opportunities Policy is to ensure that no group or individual receives more or less favourable treatment.

Gem-A will therefore seek to ensure that all are treated solely on the basis of merit, ability and potential, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances or other irrelevant distinction.

Through its Equal Opportunities Policy, Gem-A will, as far as possible, seek to:

- identify and eliminate unfair and discriminatory practices wherever they occur in the services and products which it offers;
- remove inappropriate barriers to entry and achievement, thus enabling a wider variety of people to benefit from the opportunities which it offers.

All qualifications, products and services offered by Gem-A, legal or contractual requirements permitting, will be:

- available to all those who are able to achieve the required standard, and free from barriers which restrict access and progression;
- free from overt or covert discriminatory practices, and due regard will be paid to any special learning/assessment needs of individuals;
- free from inappropriate content, language and images;
- free from age (for candidates over 18 years) or other restrictions; and
- consistent with Gem-A's values.

While, there are no barriers to entry for any group and the processes are in place to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners and candidates as appropriate there is one exception. This exception is partially sighted or blind people who would be unable to use the equipment required for full qualification as many of these skills require visual abilities.

2. Responsibility

To ensure the effective implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy, Gem-A will allocate the responsibility for the monitoring of the implementation of the Equal Opportunity Policy to the Director of Education.

However, each manager in Gem-A is responsible for the effective implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and its associated procedures, and for monitoring equal opportunities in his/her area of responsibility.

Notwithstanding the above responsibilities, each individual staff member is accountable for his/her behaviour and for following the procedures associated with Equal Opportunities.

All Accredited Teaching Centres are required to implement the Equal Opportunities Policy in their local centre and to monitor its implementation.

3. Communication

To support staff in fulfilling their obligations Gem-A will ensure that its Equal Opportunities Policy is known to all employees and is available in the public domain.

Gem-A will expect external bodies/agencies with whom it does business to embody the same Equal Opportunities values in their treatment of Gem-A staff, suppliers, students and members; and will communicate this expectation.

Monitoring and Review

Gem-A will regularly monitor and review the application of its Equal Opportunities Policy and the implementation of associated procedures, and from the information gained will analyse potential barriers or areas where positive action may be required.

This statement has been developed to comply with legislation.

Disability Statement

Gem-A recognises its responsibility to offer disabled students, and anyone with a specific learning difficulty or medical condition, access to its qualifications and aims to ensure that no student is subjected to unfair discrimination.

Gem-A endeavours to ensure that no disabled student or member of staff is treated less favourably, or is perceived to be treated as such and in so doing, aims to create a learning environment which:

- enables all students to fully participate in their qualification regardless of disability; and
- offers qualifications that allow for flexibility to ensure that the individual needs of disabled students are met, and that disabled students are able to gain the maximum education advantage.

Defining disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Admissions

Students must ensure that their disability is made known at the time of registration to enable appropriate provisions to be made in learning and assessment. All applications will be considered on an individual basis. Gem-A will ensure that the admissions process is fully accessible to disabled student and support and guidance is available to all enquirers.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Where possible and reasonable, Gem-A will ensure that all teaching and learning material is delivered in an appropriate format so as to be accessible to disabled students. Where tuition is provided via an external centre, the validation process for acceptance of that centre includes appropriate arrangements for disabled students to ensure they are provided with full access to the facilities available.

Any assessment arrangements will not disadvantage or give unfair advantage to the student but will be adjusted accordingly to meet the needs of a disabled student.

All special arrangements will be made known to the tutor and accredited teaching centre and records will be kept for verification if required.

Gem-A will ensure all staff, including tutors and those involved with examination delivery, are able to deal effectively with the needs of disabled students.

Languages and Translations

All of Gem-A's qualification specifications and assessment materials are available in English. There is no current provision in Welsh or Irish.

Gem-A qualifications will consider any request from centres to provide assessment material for our qualifications in Welsh or Irish, provided that sufficient notice (a minimum of six months) is given. However, provision of such an assessment would be dependant on the availability of appropriately qualified examiners.

Communications with all centres will be in English.

All languages other than English may incur a translation charge.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Gem-A is committed to ensuring that consideration is given to the needs of all potential candidates when developing qualifications, associated tasks and assessments in order to try to minimise any subsequent need to make reasonable adjustments for candidates who have particular requirements. Access to fair assessment can be maintained through:

- reasonable adjustment; and
- special consideration.

Gem-A normally requires sight of documented information such as doctors reports or assessment reports in order to make any specific arrangements that may be within the means available to or within the limits of Gem-A and the limitations of the Gem-A authorised centres.

Reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is defined as any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that might place a candidate at a substantial disadvantage when being assessed.

- Gem-A will strive to accommodate each prospective candidate with special requirements or needs for their examination, by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Gem-A will not make adjustments that would in any way directly affect performance in the attributes that are the focus of assessment or that might otherwise affect or impact on the integrity of the award.
- Such prospective candidates must indicate if known, the fact that they have special examination requirements or needs, such as a physical or sensory disability or a language difficulty, on their course or examination enrolment form.
- Each circumstance will be considered on an individual basis according to the means, limits and experience of Gem-A and the specific request under consideration, at the time of course enrolment. Applicants will be contacted by Gem-A Education Office to discuss the circumstances of their requirements
- Wherever and whenever Gem-A finds that special requirements and needs can not be accommodated within its own centre it will strive to find alternative means or accommodation. If no means or accommodation can be found, or afforded, this will be determined, as far as is possible, at the time of course or examination enrolment.
- In the event of the onset of special requirements or needs or any other change of circumstances after course enrolment, Gem-A should be informed at the earliest opportunity and will do its best to handle the requirement on an individual basis, subject to its means and limits and the limitations of the Gem-A centre.
- Following acceptance by Gem-A of a student, special accommodation or arrangements for the examinations will be confirmed upon registration of examination entry.
- Any special requirements that may be needed by students overseas must be discussed by the student early in their course direct with the appropriate person at the ATC (or, for home study students, with Gem-A Education Office) for investigation into local conditions and facilities. Where possible, Gem-A will seek to ensure favourable conditions but can not guarantee that conditions can be made suitable for any particular special requirement and can not provide financial or material provision or adjustments.
- Awarding bodies and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of providing access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration. However, wherever and whenever it is possible to do so, Gem-A will make the necessary examination arrangements.

Special considerations

Special consideration is given following an examination to candidates who are present for the examination but may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances which arose at, or near, the time of examination.

- Special consideration will be given, in line with the circumstances and processes described in this policy, to candidates who have a diagnosed condition or suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition, or who experience any specific adverse circumstances that might have disadvantaged their performance at, or near the time of, the assessment/examination.

- Gem-A will ensure that any considerations given will not otherwise affect or impact on the integrity of the award and that the candidate's result reflects their achievement in the examinations and not necessarily their potential ability.
- Special consideration should not provide the candidate with an unfair advantage, and it should not cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements.
- Special consideration may result in a small post-examination adjustment to the mark of the candidate. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the examination and will reflect the difficulty faced by the candidate, but will always be a minor adjustment as to do more may jeopardize the standard.
- Candidates who are absent from part of the examination due to illness will be given the option to re-sit the examination in full at a later date. Alternatively, at the candidate's request, the part of the examination already completed will be marked and the result will be held over until they sit the remaining sections (at a later date) and this will be added to their final mark.

Language proficiency

- Question papers are available in other languages for certain exams for fuller details candidates should enquire at the Education Office.
- Examination candidates can indicate that English is not their first language in advance but they will be required to provide evidence when enrolling for the exam such as a referral from a professional. Once verified this information will be recorded and given to examiners. All invigilators are asked to read out instructions at the start of each examination which include the statement that candidates may write onto their answer book covers that 'English is not my first language' and examiners are made aware of this instruction.

Identifying conditions and supporting evidence

In order to ensure that any adjustment to the examination will only provide a candidate with the necessary assistance without giving them an unfair advantage over others, Gem-A must be clear about the extent to which the candidate is affected by the disability, or difficulty.

- Where the implications of a disabilities are not obvious it may be necessary to obtain specialist advice to determine what level and kind of assistance the candidate will need.
- Where the centre can verify evidence of the disability and where the implications are clear, such as for candidates with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, no further evidence would be required.
- Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, the centre will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the candidate's performance in the examination. Any of the following types of evidence will be accepted. The centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the candidate's situation:
 - Evidence of assessment of the candidate's needs in relation to the particular examination, made within the centre by relevant qualified centre staff such as learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff. This evidence should include an indication of how the centre plans to

meet the candidate's needs and should show that the candidate can cope with the level and content of the examination. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous centres attended by the candidate may also be included.

- History of provision within the centre. This should include information about the support received by the candidate during the learning, or training programme and during informal assessments.

Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, external specialists. This could take the form of medical/specialist reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessments and wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the candidate is affected by the difficulty; including the effects of any medication that the candidate may be taking.

Any special requirements that may be needed by overseas students must be discussed by the student early in their course direct with the appropriate person at the ATC (or, for open distance learning (ODL) students, with the Gem-A Education Office) for investigation into local conditions and facilities. Where possible, Gem-A will seek to ensure favourable conditions but can not guarantee that conditions can be made suitable for any particular special requirement and can not provide financial or material provision or adjustments.

Candidates may be asked to cover any additional costs relating to the provision of any special services provided.

If you have any queries or would like further information please contact: **Lucy Dean, (exam@gem-a.com)**

Fees

All fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Course fees can be found in the current prospectus which is available in hard copy or downloadable as a pdf from the Gem-A website (www.gem-a.com).

Appeals fees

The appeals come under four different categories and the costs are as follows:

- consideration due to extenuating circumstances
- a clerical re-check of results - £18.00
- a special examination report - £30.00 for each exam component of the examination required
- an appeal against grades issued by Gem-A - £50.00 for each grade being appealed.

All fees are payable at the time the appeal is made but will be returned in full to the appellant if the appeal is upheld.

Duplicate certificate fees

If a certificate needs to be reissued due to an error made by Gem-A no fee is charged but the original certificate will have to be returned to the Education Office. However, if a

duplicate replacement fee is requested then a fee will be payable at the time the duplicate is requested and all duplicate certificates will be identified as duplicates.

- Replacement certificates for the Certificate in Gemmology (Foundation) and the practical's, £10 + postage
- Replacement certificates for the Diplomas £25 + postage

Translation fees

There is a fee charged for any translation work that has to be undertaken the exact amount will be estimated and quoted at the time the request is made and will be payable before the translation work is undertaken.

If you have any queries or would like further information please contact: the Gem-A Education Office (education@gem-a.com).

Appeals Policy and Procedures

Course Complaints Procedure for Gem-A London

Gem-A is committed to high quality of educational and other provision for students, and encourages students to say where there is cause for concern in individual or general matters. It undertakes to take such representation seriously. In raising possible issues of complaint students will themselves be aware of and have observed their obligations as students of Gem-A.

Gem-A aims to handle complaints in a way which is sympathetic, fair, and efficient, which encourages informal conciliation, facilitates early resolution, maintains individual privacy and confidentiality, and permits useful feedback.

This procedure is for all people enrolled as students at Gem-A London.

A complaint will normally be about a problem encountered by a student in connection with educational or other activities or services provided by Gem-A. Complaints principally arising about matters covered by other specific procedures (such as examination results) should be raised under those procedures.

Because the purpose of the complaints procedure is, if possible, to resolve problems, a complaint should be made promptly, in an attempt to resolve it quickly and informally. The procedure, therefore, has three stages, and the Trustees hope that most problems will be solved in the first two stages of advice, and informal process. The three stages are:

- Discussion and Advice
- Informal Process
- Formal Process

Some general points about the procedure:

The student is entitled to fair and independent consideration of a complaint. The rights of the student and the rights of any person complained against are both important and must be kept in balance. The student should not suffer retaliation for making a complaint in good faith and a student who believes that he or she has suffered a reprisal should

raise the matter. If a complaint which is not upheld is found to have been made maliciously, the student may be subject to disciplinary procedure.

The student may withdraw a complaint or stop the process at any time. Personal privacy will be respected. Confidential information will not be communicated without the consent of the student, other than in exceptional circumstances (for example in reporting an alleged criminal offence to the Police). The student has a free choice of adviser and of representative, who need not be the same person. Normally this would be a Tutor, but students are free to go to someone else if they prefer.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly to ensure that delay does not hinder fair resolution. Minor complaints will normally be resolved at an early stage.

A complaint can only be brought by a student affected, although several affected students may act together. If a complaint is upheld there should be a satisfactory remedy or outcome, which may include:

- a full explanation;
- an apology (which is not an admission of liability);
- the matter put right if possible;
- if appropriate, some kind of financial recompense (for example if the student had paid for something which he or she did not receive);
- if appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken.

Written records will be kept of complaints. The student will have access to the documents submitted about his or her case, and those taking part in the complaint will be informed that this is so. Otherwise the records will be confidential. An annual report will be made to the Trustees, in which references to individual cases will be made anonymously.

Stage 1: Discussion and Advice

- 1.1. It is very important to get early advice about problems. Often, this can resolve the matter quickly and informally.
- 1.2. Normally, a student would seek the advice from a Gem-A member of staff or tutor.
 - 1.2.1. The student can expect to be given advice on how to proceed and on an appropriate course of action, advice about what would constitute an appropriate remedy, and an opportunity to consider whether there is indeed a complaint to be addressed. The student will then be in a position to decide whether to proceed further, and how.

Stage 2: Informal Process

- 2.1. It is in the interest of the student that a complaint is dealt with informally as soon as possible. If there has been a delay the student should explain the reason. The student should if possible record the complaint in writing.
- 2.2. The student should if possible raise the complaint directly with the person responsible for the matter. It may not always be easy to do this if the complaint is about the conduct of this person. If for some reason the student cannot go direct to the person alone he or she should ask for someone else to be present, or should raise the matter with another person in the organization concerned (the Director of Education or the Chief Executive).

- 2.3. If possible a suitable solution will be agreed and implemented, to solve the problem.
- 2.4. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of such an informal process, he or she may consider whether to raise the matter formally through Stage 3.

Stage 3: Formal Process

- 3.1. Students must exhaust informal routes before making a formal complaint, or give a good reason for not doing so. A good reason might be that the problem is particularly serious, or that when it was raised informally there was refusal to deal with it. Informal processes are suitable for dealing with many problems, but if a complaint includes serious allegations, and especially where a person complained against must have an opportunity to give his or her side of the matter, it may be necessary to refer straight to Stage 3. If informal routes seem not to have been exhausted a formal complaint may be referred to informal resolution.
- 3.2. A student wishing to make a formal complaint must do so in writing. The written statement initiates the formal process and must include a description of what has happened to give rise to the complaint including dates, times, and other details. It is necessary to show that something has gone wrong in the discharge of a Gem-A duty towards the student, and that the student had suffered as a result. The statement should include:
 - 3.2.1. the name of the person(s) or details of the Gem-A facility or practice about whom/which the complaint is made;
 - 3.2.2. the name of any witnesses who will corroborate the complaint, including a written statement from each to say that they have given their consent;
 - 3.2.3. documentary evidence where possible;
 - 3.2.4. an outline of what action a student would like to be taken or what remedy he or she is seeking;
 - 3.2.5. if desired, the name of the person who has agreed to accompany, support, or represent the student at any meeting or hearing;
 - 3.2.6. it would be almost always sensible for the student to discuss the written statement of the complaint with an appropriate adviser.
- 3.3. The complaint should be addressed to The Director of Education, Gem-A, 27 Greville St, London, EC1N 8TN.
- 3.4. A complaint will be referred to the Gem-A Board of Trustees.
- 3.5. The written statement of complaint will also be referred to any person or Gem-A department concerned, so that they can, if they wish, make a written response, to be considered by the Trustees.
- 3.6. The Trustees will normally appoint a sub-committee to hear the representations about the complaint in person, but may also determine that the complaint should be dealt with on the basis of written submissions without a hearing. If a hearing takes place the student may be accompanied by an adviser or friend.
- 3.7. The Trustees will issue a report. The report will contain findings about the complaint, and may make recommendations as to remedies, if any, to be adopted or other action recommended to be taken.
- 3.8. The Trustees may terminate the proceedings, determine that a complaint is rejected as vexatious or frivolous, or refer the complaint for informal resolution as in Stage 2.
- 3.9. Legal representation and legal advice are not necessary in Stage 3.

The Trustees will not (without agreement by those concerned) take into consideration documents or information which are not available to the student, the Trustee, and to any person or Gem-A dept concerned. The Trustees may request

Examinations Appeals

As part of Gem-A's post examination services candidates can apply for one of the following:

- consideration due to extenuating circumstances
- a clerical re-check of results
- a special examination report
- an appeal against grades issued by Gem-A

These appeals procedures exist to deal only with exceptional cases where a candidate considers that an enquiry or complaint about an examination requires further action.

This appeals procedure only applies to problems that have occurred in relation to the conduct of the examination or result and not matters relating to any extenuating circumstances known to the candidate prior to the examination. For example if a candidate has any special needs or has suffered any kind of illness or extenuating circumstance which they anticipate will affect their examination performance, the correct procedure is for the candidate to submit information and suitable supporting documents relating to this before their examination.

All appeals regarding an enquiry or complaint about an examination must be submitted in writing to **Lucy Dean** at Gem-A Education Office by **e-mail (exam@gem-a.com), fax or mail**.

Gem-A Education Office will aim to acknowledge an appeal letter within three working days of its receipt and will aim to investigate and reply within four weeks of the enquiry. In the event of an extended investigation the situation will be explained to the enquirer.

Candidates may not view their answer scripts or any copy of the script at any time.

Candidates may not contact any examiner directly, through Gem-A or a third party to enquire about their examination or results.

All appeal fees must be paid at the time of submission of the appeal, payable in GBP (sterling) to 'Gem-A'. This fee will be returned in full to the appellant if the appeal is upheld.

Information or results on appeal will be sent by mail delivery and will not be given by telephone, fax, email, to personal callers or to a third party.

Following an upheld appeal, any consequent effect upon the results of other candidates will be taken into consideration and candidates affected by such consideration will be informed as soon as possible.

A final decision will be made in writing to the appellant, with copies to the Chief Examiner and Gem-A CEO, with copies kept for external auditing by bodies such as QCA.

Consideration due to extenuating circumstances

Candidates, who experience any problems on the day of the exam or with the examination centre, must notify Gem-A in writing, supplying any suitable supporting documentation, within two weeks of the examination date any complaints after this deadline will not be considered.

Any request for special consideration or marking adjustment due to an irregularity at the examination centre or a breach of examination regulations will be individually investigated by Gem-A.

If this appeal is upheld Gem-A will:

- offer candidates a re-sit in the next suitable examination session, and/or
- advise the exam marker to accord special consideration during marking due to extenuating circumstances.

Clerical re-check of results

A full clerical re-check including the provision of a statement of the marks by element for an individual candidate. The candidate will typically be notified of the outcome of the clerical re-check within two weeks from receipt of the enquiry.

Applications for a clerical re-check must be submitted within three weeks of the notification to candidates of their examination results.

A clerical re-check fee will be applied and must be paid in full before the check is made.

Special examination report

A special examination report for an individual student covering problem areas and recommendations for improvement produced in consultation with an examiner.

Applications for a special report must be submitted within three weeks of the notification to candidates of their examination results.

A special report fee will apply for each exam component of the examination required.

Appeal against grades

An appeal should be received by Gem-A within four weeks of the notification of the examination results or within two weeks of the date of Gem-A's response to a candidate's re-check or special examination report. An appeal received after these deadlines will not be considered.

A fee must be paid at the time of submission of the appeal for each grade being appealed.

The candidate can appeal against the result on the grounds of procedural irregularity with the examination or examination process and the candidate must provide substantive proof of such an irregularity at the time of the request of the appeal.

Appeals for a re-marking of papers will only be considered if supported in writing by the candidates tutor and teaching centre giving clear and sound supporting reasons for this action.

Candidates can not appeal on the grounds that they did not understand or were not aware of Gem-A's regulations or of the procedures for submitting work. It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform themselves about these things.

An appeal will not be considered if the academic judgment of an examiner is being questioned.

Initially an appeal will be checked that it meets the criteria for appeal and that it has been received within the required timescale.

The external Board of Examiners will hear such appeals and the candidate will be notified of the result. Any unresolved appeals will be put to independent review at the earliest opportunity.

If the result of the appeal is that the candidate is granted a free re-sit, this is only valid for the next available examination session.

Until an appeal is considered and a decision made, an original result stands and the candidate should act accordingly, e.g. if it is necessary for the candidate to re-sit an examination then the candidate should make the appropriate arrangements to do so.

Malpractice procedures

Contact: *Lorne Stather (lorne.stather@gem-a.com)*

Gem-A's examination and assessment process is dependent upon all parties acting in good faith and adhering to the highest professional standards of conduct. Therefore, any evidence of deviation from these standards may lead to disqualification of students or tutors, or the termination of a contract with an Accredited Teaching Centre.

How is malpractice defined?

Malpractice is defined as being any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in a qualification for oneself or for any other person or any infringement of examination rules. Examples of malpractice on the part of students include:

- copying another student's work in an examination;
- bringing into an examination room notes that could be used to help answer the examination questions;
- using others' ideas and words in an assignment without clearly acknowledging the source of the information (plagiarism).

Other examples of malpractice include:

- a tutor giving a candidate unfair assistance with an assessment;
- an examiner revealing the questions in an examination to candidates in advance of the examination;
- an invigilator or tutor assisting candidates with answers in an examination room.

Reporting suspected malpractice

All examiners, invigilators, registered centres, registered course providers and awarding body staff are required to report any suspicions of malpractice on the part of students, tutors or anyone else involved in providing the qualification. Failure on the part of any centre to cooperate may lead to certificates not being issued and future entries and/or registrations not being accepted. Such reports should be made directly to Lorne Stather (lorne.stather@gem-a.com) for investigation and resolution.

Investigating malpractice

All suspected cases of malpractice will be fully investigated by Gem-A.

If a case is found to be proven, Gem-A reserve the right to withhold or cancel a student's result, disqualify a tutor, or terminate its contract with an Accredited Teaching Centre.

If a candidate is suspected of malpractice, Gem-A may request that they attend a meeting at which they may be required to present their work and be questioned about their work, and/or to account for their behaviour in an examination.

If Gem-A is satisfied that there has been no malpractice involved, the assignment/examination will be processed and marked in accordance with standard procedures and/or the examination result will be allowed to stand.

Where a candidate is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation of apparent evidence of malpractice, Gem-A reserves the right to invalidate the results, and/or to request further information. Exclusions from further examinations may also be enforced.

Appeals

Anyone found by Gem-A to be guilty of malpractice will have the right to appeal against the outcome, in the same way as a candidate may appeal against the result of a review of an examination result. Such an appeal will be considered by the external board of examiners and processed in the same manner as examination appeals.

Examinations

All practical endorsements, coursework or pre-requisites for any examination must be fulfilled before sitting the examination. It is the responsibility of each individual student to ensure these requirements are completed. Details of the requirements for each course, examination breakdown and pass grades can be found in the course specifications which can be downloaded from www.gem-a.com.

The Association may, without assigning a reason, refuse entry to any part of the Examination.

Students are required to register for all examinations by the following deadlines:

- 31st March for June examinations
- 31st October for January examinations
- Late entries are not accepted.

Please note that examination fees are not refundable. Once an exam entry has been accepted it may be withdrawn by the 13th April or 13th November respectively, a withdrawal form must be submitted. No refunds are given but transfers of exam fees, to

the following session only, may be considered in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of The Association. The Association Education Office should be informed immediately, if candidates are unable to attend the exam. If you are absent from an exam and wish to be considered for a transfer to the following session, Gem-A will need to receive a request in writing with appropriate backup documentation, within ten days of the exam date.

Candidates are advised against sitting both the Foundation and Diploma Gemmology examinations in the same session. In such circumstances candidates should contact their tutor and the Association before any form is submitted. The entry for the two examinations must be made on separate forms. Please note that no Diploma or Practical Certificate is awarded if the candidate does not qualify in the Foundation examination, and the student would need to pay a re-sit fee for any further examinations.

Please note that certain examination centres, particularly overseas, may make their own local examination charges. These charges are separate from The Association examination fee and such charges are payable by the candidate direct to the Centre. Please check with your examination centre for further information.

The Association sets up examination centres in areas where there are usually a sufficient number of candidates wishing to sit the Examinations and availability of gemmological instruments for the practical exams. The allocation of a centre is entirely at the discretion of the The Association and no guarantee is given that a centre will be set up in any particular locality.

Notification of results

All candidates will be notified of their results by letter, and a grading standard will be indicated. Please ensure that The Association has your latest address for posting your results.

All Examination papers are the property of The Association. Answer papers are not returnable.

Please do not telephone The Association for results. To abide by data protection regulations we can only supply results in written form.

Verification of name

Students may be asked to provide photo identification on enrolment and when taking examinations this could be a current passport, driving license or identity card so long as it contains photographic evidence.

Mobile phones

Mobile phone cannot be taken into examinations.

General information

Personal details and contact information

All students need to ensure that their personal information details are up to date at all times. Any changes to these should be notified to the education in writing via email (education@gem-a.com).

Gem-A in-house students are reminded of the importance of keeping the details of the person you nominate as your emergency contact (the person to contact in event of an accident) up to date. Please do this via email to the education office (education@gem-a.com).

Data Protection Act

Gem-A is required to collect, hold and process personal information on students for various academic and related administrative purposes. This information will largely be provided by you on application or on notification to the Education Office from time to time. Gem-A will confirm, update and enhance personal records as you progress with your course. All personal information will be processed in accordance with Gem-A's data protection policy which, in turn, enshrines the data protection principles as set out under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Gem-A shop

Gemmological and diamond books, instruments and student stone sets are available for purchase in our shop on the first floor. Mail order and web purchases are also available.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm.

Notices of upcoming events

Please check the student notice boards and visit our website www.gem-a.com for all upcoming events / talks.

Smoking

Please note that by requirement of the law, it is illegal to smoke anywhere within the building; this includes all stairwells and toilets.

Mobile phone policy

Gem-A would politely request, for the convenience of other students that all mobile phones are either turned off or set to silent / vibrate whilst in class. Please no answering the phone in the class.

Our service to our customers and quality assurance

We look continually for ways to improve the services we provide and learn from the feedback we receive from our members and students. We have a service statement which is reviewed annually.

Customer service statement

Gem-A aims to provide a quality service by building strong, mutually supportive relationships with our members, students, suppliers and others with whom we come in contact. We will achieve this by providing direct and easy access to dedicated team of staff who can be reached by direct dial telephone or email.

Gem-A is committed to providing a high quality support service for all our users. This statement will help us monitor our service to you and continually improve that service.

If you wish to comment on this statement or any service offered by Gem-A, please contact us direct on **clientservices@gem-a.com** or by post to **Customer Service Desk**, 27 Greville Street, London EC1N 8TN. Our offices are open 9.30am-5.00pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays, to answer any queries. Outside of these hours an answering service is available where all calls will be picked up the next working day. Phone number: 020 7404 3334, fax: 020 7404 8843.

Our service aims

Gem-A:

- ensures that the interests of students, members and other clients are our priority;
- offers qualifications with the appropriate national accreditation and international recognition;
- provides prompt, helpful and friendly responses to all enquiries, and endeavours to respond within three working days;
- responds to written correspondence within seven working days wherever possible, excepting requests for examination dates which we will prioritise according to the urgency of the appointment;
- maintains full, easily accessible, current information on fees (available on our website www.gem-a.com), and publishes any changes;
- supports its members, tutors, students and centres through forward-looking syllabuses, publications, events and training;
- provides clear and simple guidance notes to all students;
- has confidential and secure procedures for storing questions, written papers and blank certificates;
- deals with financial transactions within two months wherever possible;
- makes an initial response to complaints within seven working days;
- investigates any allegations of malpractice thoroughly and rapidly;
- keeps records of candidates' achievements and respond to legitimate requests for these records;
- complies in all areas of the UK Data Protection Act;
- complies with all current relevant statutory legislation;
- continues to ensure that it is committed to providing equality of opportunity and treatment for all, and that it will not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of gender, age, ethnic origin or disability in its dealings with students, tutors, examiners, members or others; and
- provides its students and members with the opportunity to comment on all aspects of our service by contacting us at any time.

Feedback

At the end of your course we will be issuing you with a questionnaire, please take the time to complete it and hand it to your tutor. Your feedback is valuable and will allow us to further improve our student services / facilities.

Facilities at Gem-A London

Use of equipment

It is important that students do not attempt to use any gemmological laboratory equipment until they have been properly instructed.

Photocopying

No photocopier arrangements are available to students in the building.

IT facilities

It is our aim to make the Gem-A computer network an important part of our educational resource and easy, useful and pleasant for all our users. Please treat it and other users with respect. You are responsible for all activities carried out by you so please read and pay attention to the following code of use:

- Do not do anything that could jeopardize the integrity, performance or reliability of networks, software and or data that belong to Gem-A. This means that you should have effective and up-to-date virus protection on the computer you use to access the Gem-A online resources.
- You may not alter or make unauthorized copies of computer files or data belonging to Gem-A or another user.
- You must not use the Gem-A computing or network resources to use, publish or communicate material that is obscene, libellous or defamatory, or breaks our code of practice concerning harassment. This includes anything that may damage Gem-A's reputation. Gem-A online forums must not be used for private messages, including anything relating to marketing non-Gem-A products or services without express Gem-A agreement.
- In exceptional circumstances, we may need to have access to your messages and other data to carry out our work or meet our legal obligations. This will only be done with the authorization of a senior Gem-A member of staff and you will be told. Gem-A staff who are authorized to reveal data (in storage or transit) must follow strict ethical standards as a condition of their employment.
- Software or information we have provided may only be used for educational purposes unless agreed otherwise. You agree to follow all the licensing agreements for software that we have entered into.
- You must not break any UK legislation relating to copyright or Data Protection or as covered by the Computer Misuse Act (1990) and the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

People who break this code of conduct may be blocked from using this site, be suspended from Gem-A Membership or, in extreme cases, face criminal procedures.

Refreshment facilities

There are kitchens in the 2nd and 4th floor lecture rooms where hot water, tea and coffee making facilities are provided. There is also a fridge in each kitchen and a microwave on the 4th floor.

Students are welcome to bring in their own lunches and snacks.

For the comfort of other students and users of the kitchen, we would ask you to ensure that the kitchen area is kept tidy. Please tidy all litter away when you have finished. (No liquids in bins please.)

Toilets

Ladies toilets are located on the 1st and 4th floors and Gents is on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Emergency procedures for Gem-A London

The welfare and safety of our students is of prime importance to Gem-A. It is essential that they are aware of all emergency procedures for their own safety and that of others.

Fire

In the event of a fire the alarm bell will sound continuously. **Move quickly and calmly. Do not stop to collect personal belongings.**

If you discover a fire, break the nearest fire alarm glass and this will set off the fire alarm. Alarms are situated in the hallways on each floor of the building.

If the fire alarm sounds please proceed down the stairwell (if safe to do so) and exit through the front door and report to the assembly point to the left of the building on the opposite side of the road in the front of car park. Make sure you obey any instructions given by the site fire safety co-ordinator, fire marshals or supervisory staff.

If the stairwell is unsafe there is a fire exit on the 4th floor towards the back of the room. This fire exit provides access to the roof only. Do not take any risks or return to the building for any reason until advised to do so by the site fire safety co-ordinator, fire marshals or supervisory staff.

DO NOT USE THE LIFT IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE.

Accidents and first aid

Any accidents need to be recorded in our accident log so please make sure you report all accidents or incidents to a Gem-A member of staff as soon as possible.

Lift breakdown

In the unlikely event of a breakdown of the lift please note the following:

- **During the day** – There is an alarm bell within the lift in the event of a breakdown press this bell and a member of staff will be attend.
- **During the evening** – Again in the event of a breakdown press the alarm bell to alert an evening tutor. If no evening tutors are available, please call **07976 264812**.

Please be aware that it may be up to one hour for the engineer to arrive.