

Gemmology Foundation

Our Gemmology Foundation course is ideal for those keen to get the best start in their gemstone education. If you are passionate about gemstones or simply want to gain an understanding of gemmology to enhance your career in the gem trade, this course is for you. Studying the Foundation is essential for those who want to go on to study our Gemmology Diploma and gain FGA Membership status — a symbol of knowledge, excellence and integrity in the trade.

Career options

Our Gemmology Foundation is the perfect starting point for a career in gemstones. If you want to work in the trade then sign up today.

After completing the Gemmology Foundation, students can go directly into careers in the trade, such as buying, selling or auctioning, but will find it advantageous to their knowledge and professional standing to complete the Gemmology Diploma and apply for Membership of Gem-A, allowing them to use the letters FGA after their names — a symbol of knowledge, excellence and integrity in the trade.

Further study

- **Gemmology Diploma**, leading to eligibility for FGA Membership status
- **Diamond Diploma**, leading to eligibility for DGA Membership status
- **BSc in Gemmology & Jewellery Studies** (requires successful completion of Gemmology Foundation, Gemmology Diploma and Diamond Diploma)

Once completed you will be able to identify, test and handle a wide variety of gemstones — useful skills if you are handling gems on a daily basis.

At a glance

Course level

Ofqual level 4

Study options

On-site • ODL • ATC

Qualification

Gem-A Level 4 Certificate in Gemmology

(Graduates can use Cert. GA status)

Entry requirements

English qualification, e.g. IELTS Academic (Level 7) or TOEFL (score of 95-120)*

** Applies to on-site and ODL study. Only required if English is not your first language.*

Assessment

- **Assessed coursework**
Four online assessments.
- **Examinations**
Two examination papers combining theory and practical.
- **Practical endorsement**
For on-site/ATC students this will be covered as part of your course tuition. For ODL students this can be completed by attending a Foundation lab class — completion essential.

Course content

The Foundation course covers:

- What defines a gemstone, how to identify common gem materials confidently, and the properties and uses of a range of gem materials.
- Applying this knowledge of gemstone properties to their proper care and commercial use, including gemstone fashioning and uses in jewellery.
- An understanding of value and price factors as they relate to gemstones.
- How to handle rough, cut and set gem materials, such as diamond, sapphire, ruby and emerald, in a professional and confident manner.
- An understanding of a range of organic gem materials and the common treated, synthetic, and imitation gem material seen in the trade.
- How to use basic gemmological equipment and report accurately on the various observations and results of tests conducted on gemmological specimens.
- The origin and formation of gemstones and the various stages of the gemstone pipeline from mining to retail.
- How to compare and contrast features and properties of gem materials, treatments and synthetics and to distinguish between, and correctly identify, gemstones.

Course materials

Students receive:

- Fully illustrated Foundation course notes*
- Foundation practical workbook
- Portable instrument kit, including:
10× loupe, tweezers, stone cloth, spectroscope, dichroscope, Maglite, flat light, folding polariscope, conoscope, Chelsea Colour Filter and zip case
- Foundation stone set containing 20 rough and cut study specimens.
- Refractometer with RI liquid and monochromatic light source (on-site and ODL students).

* *Chinese Traditional/Simplified, French and Japanese course notes are also available to purchase. Contact the Education department (education@gem-a.com) for prices.*



Gemmology Foundation lab class (ODL students only)

All ODL Gemmology Foundation students are required to attend a Gemmology Foundation endorsement/lab class to ensure that they are using equipment safely and correctly, and to handle a range of stones beyond those supplied with the course. Students can attend a lab class in the UK, or may arrange a class with a GAPP centre (see page 20).

All on-site and ODL Foundation students are provided with a refractometer and light source, in addition to the standard study stones and portable instrument kit at the start of their course. This enables students to familiarise themselves with the instruments at home prior to the lab class, and complete some of the practical elements.

Students should bring all course equipment and their workbook to the lab class.

The lab class will cover:

- Observation using the 10× loupe and microscope and the various lighting techniques for looking at gem materials.
- Correct use of the refractometer for faceted materials and the interpretation of results.
- Use of the handheld spectroscope and how to record and interpret results.
- Utilisation of supporting tools such as the polariscope, dichroscope, Chelsea Colour Filter and UV light.
- The theory and practice of hydrostatic specific gravity tools.
- Weight estimation of mounted/set gemstones.

The course will also cover a review of the requirements for the practical aspects of the Foundation practical examination.

“The Foundation lab class is superb; it cements together the practical elements of the Foundation in preparation for the exam.”

Jason Kercher, Gemmology Foundation
(ODL) student