

ASA's

Master Gemologist Appraiser®

Certification Program Requirements



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Overview of the MGA Certification Program

The Master Gemologist Appraiser ® (MGA) is an advanced, optional certification issued by ASA to members who currently hold the Accredited Senior Appraiser designation in Gems & Jewelry and to candidates applying for their ASA designation and MGA certification simultaneously.

Those holding the MGA must complete the following once during each five-year recertification period. Prospective MGAs must also successfully complete these within five years prior to submission of their initial application.

- Successful Completion of GJ209 Connoisseurship Class, or its GJ Committee-approved alternative
- Successful Completion of GJ210 Gemology Practicum including submission of an ASA-GJ and USPAP compliant appraisal report for GJ Board of Examiner review
- Proof of Color Vision/Hue Acuity Testing by an optometrist, ophthalmologist, or peer organization

Members and applicants must be in possession of or have direct access to the equipment and resources of an accredited gem laboratory as specified in this document.

Certification/Recertification

The MGA certification must be renewed with each member's 5-year reaccreditation period. The renewal process is the same as the application process and has the same requirements.

There are two pathways:

- 1) Any GJ member may apply at any time after having earned their Accredited Senior Appraiser designation.
- 2) Candidate Members may apply simultaneously with their application for the Accredited Senior Appraiser designation

Specific Requirements for MGA Certification/Recertification

GJ209 Connoisseurship Class & Alternate Credit in Lieu of GJ209

GJ209 courses are scheduled intermittently and are **not** offered annually. **Current and prospective MGAs are strongly encouraged to participate when a GJ209 course is offered.** Successful completion of GJ209 is required once during each five-year recertification period. Prospective MGAs must successfully complete GJ209 within the five years prior to submission of their initial application.

These are “connoisseurship” courses offered by industry experts on various topics that may be gemological in nature, valuation in nature, related to specific types of properties, jewelry history or practical techniques and knowledge to expand the competency of a Master Gemologist Appraiser®.

Alternative Credit for the GJ209 course will be allowed with verifiable, in-person full attendance at two or more ASA International Conferences within the most recent 5-year reaccreditation period. Members must submit corroborating documentation for either GJ209 course attendance or ASAIC attendance.

GJ210 Gemology Practicum

GJ210 is a hands-on test of gemological ability and knowledge. Students are strongly encouraged to study, review and practice standard and advanced gemological testing techniques before requesting a test kit and are advised that identifications will require multiple test techniques. Students are allowed to utilize any/all equipment in their accredited gem laboratory. Students are required to personally perform all identifications without outside assistance.

Students will receive a test kit of 20 gem materials, including mounted and loose stones. The exam must be completed and the kit returned within four calendar days of receipt (or by the following Monday if received on a Friday). Any extension must be approved in advance by the Chair of the GJ Education Committee. A minimum score of 90% is required to pass.

Each colored gemstone identification consists of two required components:

1. Nature (e.g., natural, synthetic, manufactured, composite, assembled)
2. Mineral species or material composition

Both the nature and the mineral name must be correct to receive credit for the stone.

D-Z colored Diamond identification will consist of four components (below). Each diamond is worth a total of five points. To receive points, the stone must be correctly identified as a diamond, and its nature (natural or synthetic) must be correct. Errors in color or clarity grading will each result in a ½-point deduction. **For fancy-colored diamonds, only correct identification as a diamond and determination of nature are required; color and clarity are not graded.**

- 1) nature (natural, synthetic)
- 2) identification (as diamond)
- 3) color grade (within 1 grade)
- 4) clarity grade (within 1 grade).

Students may request one preliminary grading prior to submitting test results. Pre-grades will only confirm whether a passing score has been achieved, but will not identify which stones, if any, were incorrectly identified. Final scores below 90% require a re-take of the exam with a different test kit. Failure to score 90% on two successive attempts will result in the entire MGA application requiring resubmission.

Appraisal Report Requirement

Members must submit an Appraisal Report with an intended use of a Federal tax related assignment of their choice (Estate Tax, Gift Tax, or Noncash Charitable Donation). The report must be in conformity with the current minimum requirements of [USPAP](#), the ASA GJ reporting requirements, and the applicable requirements as defined in relevant Treasury Regulations. Members are strongly encouraged to review the USPAP Scope of Work Rule, Standard 8 (specific focus on Standard Rule 8-2) as well as the appropriate current Treasury Regulations, IRS Guidance & Instructions for the intended use chosen as well as Publication 561 for guidance on the requirements of a Qualified Appraisal Report. Current Treasury & IRS requirements are available online. Note: Current, published CFR and eCFR may differ. Currently published CFR are the governing regulations.

ASA GJ minimum report requirements, including GJ Descriptive Elements are included with this document. Members that do not conduct any appraisal work within North America are required to comply with the International Valuation Standards (IVS) or a comparable set of recognized appraisal standards specific to their country of practice. International applicants should discuss with the GJ Vice-Chair of the Board of Examiners an appropriate intended use for the report requirement. In general, it should be an intended use which must comply with a regulatory requirement.

The Appraisal Report for the MGA program may be prepared specifically to meet the MGA requirement and does **not** need to be a redacted copy of a client report. If the member chooses to submit an actual client report, it must be fully redacted of all personally identifiable information. The MGA Appraisal Report must meet the same minimum standards as the Fair Market Value report required of Candidate Members during their designation application, except that it **only needs to cover two items rather than four**. The intended use must be for a Federal Tax assignment (Estate Tax, Gift Tax, Non-cash Charitable Contribution, or Casualty Loss), and the report must consist of two items:

- 1) One plotted diamond
- 2) The appraiser's choice of **either** an item featuring an important colored gemstone **or** a vintage/antique/period item.

MGA reports must be submitted to the ASA's [GJ Credentialing Specialist](#) for distribution to the GJ Board of Examiners for review.

Candidate members applying simultaneously for their Accredited Senior Appraiser (ASA) designation and their MGA Certification do not need to submit a separate report for the MGA.

CONFORMITY: Reports that do not meet current reporting requirements will be returned to the member with comments and must be corrected and resubmitted to [ASA Headquarters](#) within 30 days for a second review by a member of the GJ International Board of Examiners. Failure to resubmit within 30 days, or failure to meet reporting requirements after three attempts, will result in rejection of the MGA application.

Members with non-compliant reports are encouraged to enroll in GJ203 in which valuations for Federal

Tax intended uses is currently taught. Staying up to date on current theory and methodology being taught by ASA Gems & Jewelry discipline is an ongoing obligation implied by holding the MGA certification. The current schedule for the GJ Principles of Valuation series of courses (GJ201-203) can be found in the [GJ Course Library](#).

Additional Requirements

Accredited Gemological Laboratory

The ASA-GJ minimum equipment requirements for the MGA Certification are identical to the current requirements for an Accredited Gemologists Association (AGA) Accredited Gem Laboratory. Membership in the Accredited Gemologists Association is NOT required to hold MGA certification. The exact requirements will change as the AGA requirements are modified. The list of minimum equipment as of July 2025 is attached to this document. Members are encouraged to verify that at the time of their certification/recertification application they are in compliance with current minimum equipment requirements.

Color Vision/Hue Acuity Screening

Members must provide evidence of color vision or hue acuity testing either within their 5-year recertification period or during the 5-years immediately preceding their initial application for the MGA certification.

The Farnsworth-Munsell 100 Hue Acuity test is the most accurate assessment of the ability to distinguish very slight differences in hue and is the preferred test. An authorized member of the GJ Discipline or an ASA HQ Staff member regularly administers the Farnsworth-Munsell 100 Hue Acuity test using a test kit owned by ASA for that purpose. The test is administered primarily at the annual ASA International Conference, the Tucson AGTA gem show, and at various other events when space and volunteer examiners are available.

Other screening tests may be available through an optometrist/ophthalmologist, colleges teaching those professions or other sources. The intent of this requirement is to let the member know of potential weaknesses in hue discrimination / recognition so they can make any needed adjustments in their examination protocols. The FM100 exam is NOT the same as testing for colorblindness using the various Ishihara testing techniques, but can also detect it.

Summary of ASA-GJ Appraisal Report Requirements

	Type of Report
	Date of report
	Effective Date of Value
	Date of Inspection *
	Identify Client and any other Intended Users by name or type
	Intended Use of the appraisal
	Type of Value sought
	Definition of the type of value, cite the source of the definition
	Identify the Property – Literal Description per ASA-GJ Descriptive Guidelines
	Ownership rights, (e.g. whole or fractional)
	Extent to which the property was inspected

	Extent to which the data was researched and analyzed
	Specific limiting conditions which have affected the valuation process and its conclusion and the extent of the effect of those limitations
	Extraordinary assumptions or hypothetical conditions and their effect on the value conclusion if applicable
	Existing use of the property and use of property reflected in appraisal
	State or describe the research process
	Explanation of the application and reconciliation of 1 or more of the three traditional Approaches to Value
	Explain exclusion of any of the 3 traditional Approaches to Value
	Interpretive Description (Narrative) including added relevant market - analysis where applicable
	State the Value Opinion or Conclusion

	Research & Analysis performed and also not performed, when applicable
	A certification including the declarations outlined under Standard Rule 8-3
	State the name of each appraiser who contributed materially to the appraisal
	State that the appraiser is or is not in compliance, with ASA reaccreditation requirements when applicable *
	Statement of equipment used **, metal market prices, and rating scales used – as applicable *
	Sources consulted or references used as applicable ** (RARELY NEEDED UNLESS NECESSARY TO MAKE REPORT MEANINGFUL TO CLIENT; NOT REQUIRED)
	Privacy Statement*
	Glossary of related terms as applicable ** (RARELY NEEDED, NOT REQUIRED)

* Required by ASA but not included in USPAP reporting requirements except as necessary to render the report understandable.

** Glossaries, works consulted, and equipment statements are **not required** and should be included only when necessary to support report credibility or assist intended users with limited knowledge. These

elements are rarely appropriate in insurance appraisal reports. Consistent with USPAP, the appraiser must ensure the report contains sufficient information for proper understanding and determine whether such additions are needed; in most cases, clear explanations within the narrative are preferable.

The specific Treasury requirements for a Qualified Appraisal Report are summarized in IRS Publication 561 which is available for download online. These requirements are updated often and members should rely on the most recent revision. Current advice from many CPAs and Tax Attorney specialists is that every appraisal report for every Treasury required intended use should be prepared to the level of a Qualified Appraisal as defined in federal regulations. A Qualified Appraisal Report, while recommended, is NOT required for the MGA application.

ASA Descriptive Elements for Gems and Jewelry

Descriptive Elements for Jewelry Mountings

The level of detail is proportional to the type of report, the importance of the jewelry and its impact on the overall value.

- A general description of the type of item (ring, bracelet, brooch, etc.)
- Style, motif (e.g., waterfall ring, hearts and scroll motif)
- Period of manufacture (approximate date)
- Metal type, color(s) and fineness
- Weight of the item (including or excluding gemstones, straps, etc.) include scale (e.g. grams, dwt, troy oz.)
- Overall measurements/dimensions, include scale (e.g. mm, inches)
- Method of manufacture (cast, die-struck, handmade, etc.)
- Finish (Florentine, satin, etc.)
- Findings (e.g., earring backs, type of clasp)
- Trademarks or serial numbers, if present
- Name of the manufacturer if known or determinable
- Manufacturer's style number, if present or known
- Condition of the item
- Any endowed characteristics of value that have an effect on value (provenance, rarity, celebrity ownership, etc.)
- Photographs (front, back, side, trademarks, fineness marks and/or damage.)

Descriptive Elements for Diamonds

The level of detail for an item is proportional to the intended use and users, type of report, the importance of the jewelry, and the diamonds' impact on the overall value.

Diamonds must be described and documented in GIA and/or AGS terminology. Any other system used must be explained and correlated accurately with at least one of those systems. Origin (natural vs. synthetic) must be noted. In the absence of certainty, the services of a leading laboratory to identify must be secured when the difference in value opinion is impacted.

All known diamond treatments and enhancements that are detectable by currently available gemological means must be listed, including but not limited to laser drilling, coating, fracture filling, HPHT, etc. In the absence of certainty, if the value opinion would be significantly impacted the services of a leading laboratory must be secured, or the uncertainty recorded in the appraisal or the assignment declined.

All diamond descriptions must include:

- Actual, estimated, or calculated carat weight (number and total weight for melee)
- Color
- Clarity
- Shape
- Proportions (state the average quality of cut for melee)
- Diamonds over 0.25 carat should further include individual measurements
- Diamonds over 0.50 carat should further include individual measurements
- Fluorescence when value is impacted
- Plotting diagram or photomicrograph recommended
- Diamonds over 1.00 carat should further include detailed proportion information; estimated GIA cut grade elements for round diamonds is recommended (see GIA Facetware™).
- Symmetry
- Polish
- Plotting diagram or photomicrograph required
- Photographs of unmounted diamonds are optional.
- Photomicrographs are recommended for documenting significant inclusions and damage.

Descriptive Elements for Colored Gemstones

The level of detail is proportional to the intended use and users, type of report, the importance of the jewelry, and the gemstones' impact on the overall value.

The appraiser must determine not only the type of gemstone but whether the gemstone is natural or synthetic. In the absence of certainty, the services of a 3rd party laboratory must be secured.

- Species and variety must be identified
- Gemstone color must be described using a known, repeatable grading system (Gem-E-Square, World of Color, Munsell, AGL ColorScan, Gem Dialogue™, etc.)
- Treatments and enhancements, when detected, must be described (heat treatment, irradiation, diffusion, dye, coating, fracture filling, etc.)
- Country of origin should be included, if it is documented through a reputable laboratory specializing in Origin Reports and relevant.
- **All melee should include:**
 - Shape
 - Quantity
 - Average measurements (random sampling OK if disclosed and believed credible)
 - Estimated total carat weight
 - Color
 - Clarity
 - Cut quality
 - Matching
- **Primary colored gemstones should include:**
 - Measurements
 - Estimated, calculated, or actual carat weight
 - Shape
 - Color
 - Clarity
 - Cut quality (average cut quality for multiple gemstones)
 - Height and belly of cabochon
- **For significant transparent colored stones, also consider:**
 - Bulge
 - Windowing
 - Extinction
 - Brilliance
 - Plot diagram for inclusions or damage that may have a significant effect on the value.

- Photographs of unmounted gemstones are at the appraiser's discretion. Photomicrographs are recommended for documenting significant inclusions and damage.

Additional Descriptive Elements for Gemstone Carvings (consider the impact on value):

- Carving type (cameo, intaglio, dimensional)
- Material (shell, coral, onyx)
- Quality of carving
- Artist if known
- Subject (portrait, city scene)
- Carving method (hand, laser)

Additional Descriptive Elements for Gemstone Beads (consider the impact on value):

- Number of strands
- Length
- Knotted or unknotted
- Continuous or clasp with type and details

Additional Descriptive Elements for Phenomenal Gemstones

- Asterism description should include:
 - Number of legs
 - Centering
 - Sharpness
 - Definition
- Cat's-eye description should include:
 - Centering
 - Sharpness
 - Strength of eye
- Change-of-color description should include:
 - Colors exhibited
 - Degree of color change
 - Type of lighting used and the reaction to each
- Play-of-color gemstones such as opal should include:
 - Variety (crystal, black, boulder, hydrophane)
 - Treated
 - Assembled (doublet, triplet)

- Body color
- Play-of-color
- Predominant hue
- Secondary hues
- Hue intensity
- Pattern (pinpoint, harlequin, rolling flash, etc.)
- Brightness
- Directionality
- Cracking or crazing

Other gemstones exhibiting optical color phenomena [moonstone, sunstone and ammolite] should include pattern size and colors exhibited

Descriptive Elements for Jade

The level of detail is proportional to the intended use and users, type of report, the importance of the jewelry, and its impact on the overall value.

(The grading, evaluation and valuation of jade is a complex skill which very few Western gemologists / appraisers possess. Understand the limits of your experience and knowledge before appraising jade.)—course developer’s comment, **not part of ASA descriptive elements.**

It is especially important to identify the evidence of treatments. In the absence of certainty, the services of a leading laboratory must be secured, or the uncertainty must be recorded in the appraisal. The following elements should be described:

- Species must be determined (jadeite, nephrite, omphacite)
- Type
 - A Jadeite – natural jade with possible wax used in finishing
 - B Jadeite – acid bleached and polymer impregnated
 - C Jadeite – B-jade with additional dye
- Fashioning
- Cabochon
- Slab
- Bangle
- Carving
- Quality of carving
- Motif
- Color description
- Hue
- Tone
- Saturation

- Uniformity
- Diaphaneity (opaque, translucent, etc.)
- Texture (fine, uneven)
- Polish

Descriptive Elements for Pearls

The level of detail is proportional to the intended use and users, type of report, the importance of the jewelry, and its impact on the overall value.

The appraiser must determine if the pearls are natural or cultured. In the absence of certainty, the services of a leading laboratory must be secured, or the uncertainty must be recorded in the appraisal, or the assignment declined. The following elements should be described:

- Type (South Sea, Tahitian, Akoya, Freshwater – natural or cultured)
- Number (consider the impact on value)
- Size
- Shape (roundness)
- Color and overtone
- Luster
- Blemishes
- Nacre thickness
- Orient (strength if present)
- Drilled, half-drilled, or undrilled
- Matching (when applicable) For Necklaces and Bracelets include:
 - Number of strands
 - Length of each strand
 - Uniform or graduated
 - Knotted or unknotted
 - Continuous strand, or clasp with type and details

Descriptive Elements for Organic Materials

The level of detail is proportional to the type of report, the importance of the jewelry, and its impact on the overall value.

This listing is not intended to be complete and includes:

- Shell
- Coral
- Wood
- Horn
- Amber
- Ivory
- Jet
- Non-nacreous pearls such as conch or abalone

Descriptive Elements for Watches

The level of detail is proportional to the intended use and users, type of report, and its impact on the overall value.

- Brand
- Model name/number
- Serial number
- Existence of original box and warranty
- Approximate date of manufacture
- Case and lugs
- Material (case front and back)
- Dimensions
- Finish
- Gemstones or diamonds
- Dial
- Color
- Chapters (hour markers)
- Hands (type, color, style)
- Gemstones or diamonds
- Dial features (sweep second hand, date window, etc.)
- Crystal material (synthetic sapphire, plastic, diamond, etc.)

- Crown (original or after-market)
- Gemstone or diamond set
- Bezel (original or after-market)
- Material/color (enamel, guilloché)
- Functionality (e.g., rotating)
- Gemstone or diamond set
- Movement
- State whether watch was opened for inspection.
- Manufacturer/caliber/serial number (if case has been opened)
- Type (quartz, mechanical, etc.)
- Number of jewels
- Complications (chronograph, tourbillon, annual calendar)
- Condition/working
- Bracelet/strap (original or after-market)
- Material
- Total length
- Clasp type/material
- Diamonds or gemstones

Additional Descriptive Elements for Pocket Watches

- Case type (hunting case, open face, etc.)
- Winding and settling mechanisms (stem wind, lever set, etc.)

Accredited Gem Laboratory Minimum Requirements

- Gemological binocular stereoscopic microscope (min. 10–45×) with dark field/light field illumination and overhead illuminator.
- The microscope must include the following accessories:
 - Fiber-optic light Both polarizer and analyzer plates to create crossed polar conditions
 - White diffusion filters and others as needed
 - Proper immersion cell and appropriate immersion liquids
 - Camera attachment to capture photomicrographs
 - Either a doubling lens or high-power eyepieces to extend the magnification range
- Carat balance – accurate to 0.001 ct, with proper calibration weight
- Polariscope with condensing sphere
- Dichroscope
- Chelsea filter
- Refractometer with eyepiece polarizer and 589 nm light source
- LW/SW UV light source and box
- Direct-vision spectroscope
- Specific gravity measurement: Either hydrostatic balance attachment and/or heavy liquids
- Thermal conductivity tester
- Hot point thermal reaction tester such as needle point soldering iron or equivalent
- Photography system for photographing items
- Reference library containing major gemological monographs and periodicals
- Table gauge
- Diamond color-grading light box
- Certified diamond master set for color grading, 5-stone minimum (copies of GIA, AGS, or GCAL reports required)
- Diamond Type IIa tester to separate possible synthetic/HPHT diamonds

Recommended Equipment for Laboratories

- Raman spectrometer
- MicroRaman
- UV-Vis-NIR spectrophotometer
- FT-IR spectrophotometer
- Beryllium-detection equipment (LIBS, LA-ICP-MS, SIMS)
- Fluorescence spectrophotometer
- Advanced chemical analysis (ED-XRF, LIBS, LA-ICP-MS, SIMS)
- Portable gem testing lab
- Reflectivity meter
- Set of hardness points
- Radiation monitor

ASA PRINCIPLES OF APPRAISAL PRACTICE AND CODE OF ETHICS

This document may be found at this link: (copy & paste in browser)

https://www.appraisers.org/docs/default-source/3---governing-documents/asa_code_of_ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=7dbe7384_15