



What is it really like to study a Gem-A course? Gem-A Graduate **Angel Yuen** FGA DGA, gives us a glimpse into life as a gemmology student...

**Q: What areas do you consider to be the strengths of the Gem-A course?**

The Gem-A foundation course introduces you to essential gemmological knowledge, and market dynamics, in an approachable way that encourages those new to the industry to take the course. The Gem-A diploma covers useful and in-depth knowledge of popular gemstones and covers a wide variety of lesser known gems too. The Gem-A course has the right balance of content and assignment, such as the online exercises that help to refresh the students' memory and prepare you for examinations. The free topic project gives students the opportunity to undertake further research, and to produce a specialist critique on gems. The course is also flexible to students' interests as the exercise and project scores all count towards the final qualification result. In addition, as a native of Hong Kong, my first language

is Cantonese. The Gem-A translations in Chinese textbooks are very clear and accurate, which helps me to understand the course and learn quickly. The Accredited Teaching Centre (ATC) can accommodate different schedules for Gem-A courses in Hong Kong and this was a good way to study.

**Q: Where do you see yourself in the future and how has this course helped shaped those plans?**

Once I completed the foundation course, I decided to continue onto the gemmology diploma and then the diamond diploma. I set a personal goal to become a gemmologist and use the post-nominal letters FGA and DGA, which are highly valued by employers in the gem and jewellery industry in Hong Kong. Given the high standards needed to pass the practical exam, those who are qualified to use FGA and DGA post-nominals are highly sought after by recruiters. The examination also involves writing detailed answers and so the course process has helped to develop my memory and ability to apply gemmological knowledge. After taking the Gem-A courses, I gained confidence in my identification and testing skills, and I can confidently and efficiently communicate with people in the jewellery industry. A year after becoming a Gem-A Member, I joined a gem laboratory and started my dream job.

**Q: What key piece of advice would you give to other students who are considering taking this course?**

I have now been working in the gems and jewellery industry for seven years. I frequently make good use of my knowledge from the course as a retail

salesperson, as a stone sorter and gemmologist. Some students may take the course out of personal interest or for other purposes. The course helps you to explore your own particular interests, and also develop knowledge of the industry such as the latest developments in the gemstone markets, the concepts behind the pricing of different gems, and how to appraise gems and jewellery.

Talk to your tutors too: instructors are experienced specialists in the industry and are happy to share their practical and up-to-date knowledge.

**Q: What skills and expertise do you think you have benefited from by studying this course?**

I'm now working in a gem lab as a gemmologist. In my company the Gem-A textbooks, lab manuals and publications (*Gems&Jewellery* and *The Journal of Gemmology*) are often referenced by our gemmologists. As a graduate, my company is satisfied with my work efficiency and accuracy, which I cultivated on the course.

**Q: What was it that encouraged or motivated you to first enrol onto the Gem-A course?**

Initially, I was a jewellery salesperson and I wanted to know why gems were worth so much. I also wanted to get more involved with the gems market. After taking the course I discovered that I have a passion for gems, particularly the variety of cuts and different angles within gems, and this developed my interest in gemmological knowledge. Gemmology is a wide and amazing topic; it's a life-long learning journey.

**Find out more by contacting:**  
[education@gem-a.com](mailto:education@gem-a.com)

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# Become a member of Gem-A today!

Gem-A Members can read articles about historical gemstones such as those housed in the Jewel House at the Tower of London in our publication, *Gems&Jewellery* magazine. Become a member of Gem-A today and start receiving your copy of *Gems&Jewellery* alongside Gem-A's scientific publication, *The Journal of Gemmology*.

## ARTICLE EXTRACT

**B**uckingham Palace, with its golden gates and beautiful private gardens, is a grand reflection of centuries of British history. But aside from the royal palaces and magnificent castles, there is a collection of treasures that truly evoke the grandeur of British royalty: The Crown Jewels.

At the heart of The Crown Jewels is the Coronation Regalia, used by Queen Elizabeth II and her predecessors since 1661. This exceptional suite of regalia, worn by the monarch during his or her coronation, includes the Imperial State Crown set with 2,868 diamonds and coloured gemstones, including 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds and 269 pearls. Although only dating back to 1937, it contains some of the most historic jewels in the entire collection.

Highlights include the Black Prince's Ruby, which is in fact, famously, a large gem-quality red spinel, and St Edward's Sapphire, which is thought to have journeyed with two Englishmen on their return from the Holy Land. The Crown Jewels also contain some of the best-known and largest diamonds in the world, the most famous of which are the Koh-i-Noor and the Cullinan. The latter was discovered in South Africa in 1905 weighing 3,106 carats. It was presented to King Edward VII on his 66th birthday and was later cleaved into nine major diamonds. Once the cutting process was complete, a total of 1,063 carats remained.

Today, Cullinan I to Cullinan IX reside in the Royal Collection, with the most famous diamond - the 530.2 carat Cullinan I - housed in the Sovereign's Sceptre. The 317 carat Cullinan II, the largest



cushion-cut diamond in the world, resides at the front of the Imperial State Crown. The Koh-i-Noor diamond (or 'Mountain of Light') is similarly extraordinary. Discovered in India in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was said to be a bad omen for men and was presented to Queen Victoria in 1849. It is now placed at the centre of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Crown, dating back to 1837.

What makes The Crown Jewels so remarkable is that it is a working collection; pieces are worn at State Openings of Parliament and for ceremonial occasions to this day. The incredible stories behind each piece mean they can be appreciated from both a gemmological and historical perspective. No wonder more than 30 million people have visited them at the Tower of London.

For more information: [membership@gem-a.com](mailto:membership@gem-a.com)

*Creating gemmologists since 1908*

