Code of Ethics - Accredited Gemologists Association

Professional Conduct

1. The gemologist holds a position of trust with the client by virtue of specialized training, professional knowledge, & the ability to advise. Members must recognize & respect their responsibility to the client as well as to potential third parties.
2. Members may give considered opinions only. It is unprofessional & unethical to render "off hand" opinions without full regard for the critical importance of careful inspection, analysis & evaluation.
3. Independent professional gemological opinions must be free of self-interest & bias. Members, who have present or future contemplated financial interest in the articles examined, or the conclusions reached, must disclose the nature & extent of that interest. Full disclosure of pertinent facts is mandatory. It is recommended that any disclosure be made in writing.
4. Members may not accept assignments contingent upon predetermined results, or requiring an unreasonable deviation from norms of professional practice which would render distorted or prejudicial conclusions. Members act as professional agents of clients, not as their advocates.
5. It is unethical to charge a percentage of value when rendering any type of gemological report that includes determination of value.
6. Professional consultations & client records are confidential in nature. Intentional disclosures of confidential material may be made only with the approval of parties concerned, or as so directed by a court of law.
7. In acting professionally either as a material or as an expert witness in a court of law, it is unethical to suppress any facts, data or opinions in order to intentionally bias or prejudice any finder of fact.
8. It is unethical to misrepresent professional qualifications or affiliations, or to present them in a form which clearly implies a reasonable but erroneous interpretation. A member must be in good standing with any association or organization from which they claim a credential or professional designation; unless the time period in which the member was in good standing is clearly shown for any credential or professional designation not presently in effect. Listing “past & present” credentials together in a manner that would potentially lead a prospective client to conclude that each violates provision 8 of the Professional conduct section of these codes. General membership in AGA is a professional association affiliation, not a professional designation. Members must separately apply for, & meet the requirements of, designations offered by AGA.
9. Any deceptive advertising, use of misleading or inaccurate claims, or unfounded warranties or other promises which are detrimental to public confidence in gemology are unethical practices.
10. It is unethical to make false & defamatory statements regarding a fellow professional.
11. All work products created for AGA purposes, or using AGA funds, shall carry copyrights shared by the individual creator & AGA. Copyright protections will be respected.

Standards of Professional Practice

For any AGA member who is doing appraisals or rendering gemological opinions or testimony must comply with the following standards.

1. Members must make a reasonable effort to be well versed in gemological science & technology, & to keep current with new professional developments.
2. Gem identification reports must be based on gemological testing sufficient to establish reasonable results. Any limiting conditions which might affect results must be disclosed.
3. Standardized color & clarity grading nomenclature must be used in written reports. Any widely recognized gem grading system may be used, but the report must indicate which system has been used.
4. When encountering a gem with which the gemologist is not familiar & gemologically proficient, a member may give counsel or make written reports only after consultation with a party competent to assess & evaluate the subject gem.
5. Gemstone enhancement disclosure should follow guidelines published in the most recent edition of *AGTA Gemstone Enhancement Manual*. When disclosing enhancement to members of the general public, descriptive language - not codes - should be used.
6. Written reports must include date, signature, the printed name, professional credential, & address of the examining gemologist. Reasonable care should be taken to preserve a printable copy of the report for a period of no less than 5 years or as required by law in the member’s community.
7. Members may not serve more than one party with respect to the same written report, unless all parties give their prior consent.
8. Financial interest in an article or conclusion must be disclosed. Business relationship or affiliation with parties to a transaction must be disclosed. Contemplated future financial interest must be disclosed.
9. AGA logos, the AGA Certified Gemological Laboratory & Accredited Senior Gemologist designations may only be displayed by voting members in good standing. Logos or designations may not be graphically displayed or affixed to any document or media (electronic or otherwise) unless the gemologist so designated clearly discloses whether or not there is any financial interest, & is the examining gemologist of record.
10. Each member, whose gemological report is to be incorporated into a written appraisal for the public, is encouraged to seek adequate education in appraisal principles & methodology. It is an unethical practice to disregard federal & state regulations which apply to specific types of appraisal reports.
11. Members subscribe to the most current version of the standards presented before the Federal Trade Commission by the Jewelers Vigilance Committee, published as "Guides for the Jewelry Industry." However, it is within the stated purpose of AGA that standards of this type be advanced & refined.

Grievances

1. Any member who is aware of the unethical professional conduct of another member has an obligation to report the matter to the Ethics & Grievance Committee in a timely manner. It is a breach of obligation to refrain from advising AGA when aware of noncompliance with our published Code of Ethics, either by members or by candidate members. All members must abide by the grievance procedures outlined in the Constitution & Bylaws.