

## **Accredited Gemologists Association**

### **Code of Ethics**

#### **Professional Conduct**

1. The gemologist holds a position of trust with the client by virtue of specialized training, professional knowledge, and the ability to advise; members must recognize and respect their responsibility to the client as well as to potential third parties.
2. Members may give considered opinions only; it is unprofessional and unethical to render "off hand" opinions without full regard for the critical importance of careful inspection, analysis and evaluation.
3. Independent professional gemological opinions should be free of self-interest and bias. Members who have present or future contemplated financial interest in the articles examined, or the conclusions reached, must disclose the nature and extent of that interest. Full disclosure of pertinent facts is mandatory.
4. Members may not accept assignments contingent upon pre-determined results, or requiring 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 and client records are confidential in nature. 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. General membership in AGA is a professional association affiliation, not a professional designation. Members must separately apply for, and 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 and 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 and AGA. Copyright protections will be respected.

#### **Standards of Professional Practice**

1. Members must make every effort to be well versed in gemological science and technology, and to keep current with new professional developments.
2. Gem identification reports must be based on gemological testing sufficient to establish correct results. In identification and evaluation, any limiting conditions which might affect results must be disclosed.
3. Standardized color and 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 and gemologically proficient, a member may give counsel or make written reports only after consultation with a party competent to assess and evaluate the subject gem.
5. Gemstone enhancement disclosure should follow the guidelines published in the most recent edition of the "Gemstone Enhancement Manual." However, it is within the stated purpose of AGA that standards of this type be advanced and refined. When disclosing enhancement to members of the general public, descriptive language - not codes - should be used.
6. Written reports require the date, signature, the printed name and professional credential, and address of the examining gemologist; a copy of the report is to be retained as a permanent record.

7. Members may not serve more than one party with respect to the same written report, unless all parties given them prior consent.
8. Written reports express professional opinions which are free from bias. 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, and the AGA - Certified Gemological Laboratory and AGA - Certified Master Gemologist designations, may not be graphically displayed or affixed to a written report purporting to be an independent grading report or certificate, or an appraisal, unless the gemologist so designated includes a written statement of financial disinterest, and 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 and methodology. It is an unethical practice to disregard federal and state regulations which apply to specific types of appraisal reports.
11. Members subscribe to the standards presented before the Federal Trade Commission by the Jewelers Vigilance Committee, published April 1986 as "Guides for the Jewelry Industry". However, it is within the stated purpose of AGA that standards of this type be advanced and 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. It is a breach of obligation to refrain from advising AGA when aware of non-compliance with our published Code of Ethics, either by members or by candidate members.
2. Any member filing a formal complaint with the Ethics & Grievance Committee must do so in a timely manner. Therefore, all members shall be bound by the established grievance procedures.
3. Results of formal grievance proceedings may range from censure to complete revocation of membership and designations, with loss of all member benefits and rights.