



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

MONITORING VISIT

GEMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA (GIA) - LONDON

(Company registration number - 04566140)

Full Name **Gemological Institute of America (GIA) - London**

Address 104 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LA

Parent\Company name Gemological Institute of America

Telephone Number 0207 813 4321

Email Address gialondon@gia.edu

Website www.gia.edu

Principal Mr Mehdi Saadian

Proprietor Gemological Institute of America, Inc

Age Range 18+

Total number of students 27

Numbers by age and type of study 18+: 27

FE only: 27

Inspection date **07 June 2023**

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight Monitoring Visits and Extended Monitoring Visits of private further education colleges and English language schools. The focus of the visit is to confirm that the quality standards reported at the last full inspection are being maintained.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges and, by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

A monitoring visit is for those colleges found at the last inspection to have met or exceeded the Standards for Educational Oversight. Inspectors will make judgements on progress against any action points and recommendations made at that time. The inspection will not examine all other Standards in detail but will sample to confirm that previous Standards have been maintained and that there are no contrary indicators to those quality judgements.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT	2
2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY	5
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	7
6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	9

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Gemological Institute of America (GIA) was established in 1931 to provide professional education programmes in gemmology. GIA England is a registered charity, governed by a board of trustees. GIA London opened in central London in 2002 and is one of seven campuses worldwide owned by GIA Inc. Day to day responsibility for the London college is delegated to the campus director (principal), who reports to the senior director for global education in the United States of America (USA). The aim of the group is to ensure public trust in gems and jewellery by upholding the highest standards of integrity, academic study, science and professionalism through education, research, laboratory services, and instrument development.
- 1.2 GIA London delivers a range of specialised courses designed to prepare students for employment in the industry. These include graduate courses of between 8 and 28 weeks in length, in gemmology, diamonds, coloured stones, and jewellery design. The institute offers a 7-week computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) certificate course. A quick design course and short practical laboratory (lab) courses in gem identification, diamond, pearl, and coloured stone grading are also offered.
- 1.3 All courses are scheduled at various set dates throughout the calendar year. Student selection is based on successful completion of compulsory secondary education. Students who do not have English as a first language must also provide evidence of English language proficiency at level B2, or above, of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). At the time of inspection, the practical lab courses, jewellery design and the CAD/CAM certificate course, were not running.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection, 27 students were enrolled, all of whom are over the age of 18 and the majority are female. The large majority do not have English as their first language. Students are from a range of countries including the UK, the USA, India, Belgium and a wide range of other countries. One student has been identified with additional learning difficulties.
- 1.5 The college was previously inspected on 15 – 17 June 2021 when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations.
- 1.6 The recommendation from the previous report is:
 - Ensure students have greater access to the specialist library resources to support their research and independent study.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college exceeds expectations.** At the previous inspection of 15-17 June 2021, the college was found to exceed expectations and the quality of education as judged at that time has been maintained.
- 3.1 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Excellent pre-arrival information and guidance ensures that courses closely meet students' needs. Students are very well educated in accordance with the college's aims and ethos. All courses on offer to prospective students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Well-qualified and experienced teachers develop students' knowledge and practical skills in different aspects of gemmology extremely well. Students benefit from high-quality resources and high levels of individual support from teachers, so that they make excellent progress in lessons. Regular testing and feedback help students to improve their work. Consequently, the very large majority achieve the qualification for which they enrolled. The college promotes a mutually respectful atmosphere that encourages tolerance and respect. However, some of the illustrations used in lesson materials are out of date or stereotypical, and therefore do not provide good examples of inclusivity for students.
- 3.2 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. The premises are well maintained, secure and fit for purpose. Highly effective arrangements exist to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. The college keeps highly accurate admission and attendance registers. Attendance levels are exemplary. Absences are followed up meticulously and reports made to the Home Office as necessary. Pastoral and personal support for students is excellent. Relationships are excellent and students feel safe and comfortable at college. The college has made excellent progress in making its own books and on-line resources more available to students to support their research and independent study.
- 2.2 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The directors of global education have excellent oversight of the college and provide very clear strategic and educational direction in line with the organisation's aims and ethos. They ensure sufficient investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The principal and head of instruction and accreditation (HIA) fully discharge their duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students and to maintain a high standard of education. All legal permissions are met. Quality monitoring systems are highly effective in securing improvements in the provision and outcomes for students. Staff recruitment and suitability checks are excellent. Provision of information is excellent.

3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.3 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 3.4 Assessment of students prior to and on arrival to the college is excellent. Students receive comprehensive information prior to enrolment that enables them to choose a course that meets their needs and career aspirations. Any additional learning needs and disabilities are identified during the enrolment process and appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are put in place to ensure that students succeed.
- 3.5 Course provision is excellent. Courses match those advertised on the website and in promotional materials. Students are very well educated in accordance with the college's aims and ethos. All courses on offer to prospective students on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in Home Office guidance.
- 3.6 The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Teachers have extensive subject knowledge and industry experience, which they use very effectively to help students develop their understanding of different aspects of gemmology. Students are attentive and highly motivated to learn. They are confident to ask for further clarification to develop their understanding. Teachers use high-quality resources extremely well to help students to learn. They provide highly effective support to individuals during lessons and this enables students to make rapid progress in their understanding and practical skills. Consequently, students make excellent progress in lessons. For example, in the speed and accuracy with which they identify and grade gemstones.
- 3.7 Teachers set regular homework and tests, which are marked carefully. Feedback from these tests enables students to improve their work. Students are kept well informed of their progress. Teachers quickly identify students who are falling behind. They set targets for improvement and support them well, so that they can catch up.
- 3.8 Students study within a mutually respectful atmosphere that promotes tolerance and does not discriminate against those with protected characteristics. However, some of the illustrations used in lesson materials are out of date or stereotypical, and therefore do not provide good examples of inclusivity for students.
- 3.9 Students' progress and attainment is excellent. Students make rapid progress against their starting points and the very large majority achieve the qualification for which they enrolled.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 4.2 The recommendation in this area from the previous inspection report is:
- Ensure students have greater access to the specialist library resources to support their research and independent study.
- 4.3 The college has made excellent progress towards this recommendation. The book collection is now available in the main reception as a reference resource for students to use on site. Additionally, the college is actively promoting to students the GIA on-line library. This is a free resource containing an extremely wide range of materials for loan, on all aspects of the industry that supports students' independent study and research.
- 4.4 Health, safety and security of premises are excellent. There are highly effective arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. Sufficient staff are appropriately trained to provide first aid. The college takes all appropriate measures to minimise risks from fire and other hazards. Staff and students are appropriately trained in health and safety, which has a high priority within the college. Students' safe working practices are good and they feel safe in the college environment.
- 4.5 The college building is well maintained and is fit for purpose. Effective measures are taken to ensure the security of the building, in line with the nature of the activities taking place. Free drinking water is provided to support students' well-being. They benefit from well-equipped classrooms and a comfortable area in which to relax, study or socialise.
- 4.6 Student registration and attendance records are excellent. The college keeps highly accurate admission and attendance registers. There is a very clear attendance policy, which sets extremely high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Procedures for contacting students who miss classes are very effective. As a result, attendance levels are excellent. Appropriate reports are made to the Home Office as required.
- 4.7 Pastoral and personal support for students is excellent. Effective on-line guidance prior to the course, followed by an in-person induction, prepares students very well for their studies and living in the London. Students appreciate the range of opportunities for social activities and trips to enrich the curriculum that the college provides.
- 4.8 The college takes its duty to ensure the welfare of students extremely seriously. They ensure that students receive very effective pastoral and personal support from teachers and the Welfare Officer. Several staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid. They provide initial support and can refer students to external agencies for further help as required. There are excellent relationships between students and staff and

between students themselves. Students and staff receive appropriate training and information on preventing risks from radicalisation and extremism.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. All Key Standards continue to be met.
- 5.2 Ownership and oversight of the school is excellent. The directors of the global organisation have highly effective oversight of the college. There is an excellent relationship between them and the principal. Consequently, they have an excellent insight into the working and performance of the college. They provide very clear strategic and educational direction in line with the organisation's aims and ethos. They ensure sufficient investment in staff, accommodation and resources through robust financial planning. All legal permissions are met.
- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. Management structures and responsibilities are very clear. Day to day responsibility for running the college is delegated to the principal, supported by the HIA. Together they fully discharge their duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students and to maintain a high standard of education. Leaders and managers are successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff. New staff are well supported and appropriately trained for their roles. All staff benefit from a well-structured programme of continuous professional development.
- 5.4 Quality assurance is excellent. Self-evaluation is thorough and the college's development plan sets clear objectives and challenging goals for improvement. Teachers, managers and administrative staff work together very effectively to promote a positive and supportive culture that aspires to excellence. Quality monitoring systems are highly effective in securing improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for students. Analysis of student feedback, student achievement data and lesson observations are used effectively to raise expectations and set appropriate targets for further improvements.
- 5.5 The college has an appropriate complaints procedure which is clear and transparent. It includes provision for independent adjudication should a complaint remain unresolved. Complaints are few and are resolved effectively.
- 5.6 Staff recruitment and suitability checks are excellent. The college has very effective procedures in place to ensure that they recruit high quality, well-qualified staff with experience in the industry. All necessary checks are made on staffs' identity and right to work in the UK. Detailed and meticulous records are kept.
- 5.7 Provision of information is excellent. The website contains a wide range of detailed information that is helpful to students and prospective students. All information requested by the inspectors was provided very promptly and efficiently.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The college has maintained the excellent quality found at the last inspection.

Recommendations for further improvement

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the college should:

- Revise lesson materials to ensure that illustrations are up to date, non-stereotypical and fully support teachers to promote inclusivity in lessons.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with a representative of the global board of directors. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Ms Angela Moir	Lead Inspector
Ms Margaret Arokiasamy	Team Inspector