BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

College ODBL Full Inspection

NAME OF INSTITUTION: The Gemmological Association of Great Britain

ADDRESS: 21 Ely Place
           London
           EC1N 6TD

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Alan Hart

DATE OF INSPECTION: 16–18 May 2022

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Accredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:
☒ Re-accreditation awarded for the full four-year period
☐ Probation accreditation
☐ Decision on accreditation deferred
☐ Award of accreditation to be withdrawn

DATE: 21 July 2023
PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Gemmological Association of Great Britain (Gem-A/the Institution) is a private limited company and a registered charity. The Institution offers accredited courses tailored towards gemmology enthusiasts from the general public and those working in the jewellery industry. It was established in 1908 and is the longest established institution of gemmology education in the world.

The Institution’s head office is located in a six-storey building close to Hatton Garden, which is the jewellery quarter in central London. The building houses Gem-A’s education department, laboratory facilities, a library and Gem-A Instruments.

The Institution’s objectives are to advance the art and science of gemmology education and training. The Institution aims to establish and maintain appropriate standards of education and experience for those engaged in the profession of gemmology or studying gemmology and allied subjects. It also aims to undertake, supervise or encourage the education and training in all matters relevant to the advancement of gemmology.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is supported by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Financial Controller. Governance is provided by a Board of Trustees. A Board of Examiners provides academic oversight.

Since the previous inspection, the Institution has introduced a new Level 2 online qualification entitled GemIntro. This course was launched in April 2022. Since the previous inspection, Gem-A no longer offers the Level 2 Gem Basics Award.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Gem-A offers a range of courses from Level 2 to Level 6. These are the Level 2 Award in GemIntro, the Level 4 Certificate in Gemmology, the Level 5 Diploma in Gem Diamond and the Level 6 Diploma in Gemmology. The courses focus on the properties of coloured gems and diamonds and each course includes both theory and practical elements. The Institution also offers three- to five-day laboratory classes, along with one-day workshops.

The Level 2 GemIntro course is self-paced and delivered entirely online. The Level 4 Certificate, Level 5 Gem Diamond Diploma and Level 6 Gemmology Diploma courses are offered through on-site, in-person delivery at the London head office or through a blended learning approach. The British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation does not extend to the blended learning delivery model for these courses.

Students completing the on-site Level 4 certificate attend one day a week or two evenings a week over four months. Diploma students attend two days a week, with one day of independent study over a four-month period or two evenings a week over a nine-month period.

There were 67 students enrolled on courses at the time of the inspection. Of these, 29 students were in the process of completing the GemIntro online course. The Institution has capacity for 44 students studying on-site at any one time.

All students are aged 18 or over. The majority of students are female and are from the United Kingdom (UK). The remaining students come from countries in the European Union, Asia, Africa as well as the United States of America.

Students enrolling for on-site certificate and diploma courses in London are recruited for September and February intakes each year. Enrolment for the GemIntro programme is on demand at any time. Students can enrol on short laboratory courses and workshops on a range of published dates throughout the year. To enrol on the Level 4 and Level 5 programmes, students must meet a minimum standard of English language competency. Students enrolling on the Level 6 Diploma in Gemmology must have successfully completed the Level 4 certificate. There are no entry
requirements for the GemIntro course.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken over three days by one inspector. The inspection was carried out using a hybrid methodology, with inspection activities carried out both on site and online. The inspector held meetings with the CEO, COO and other senior managers. Meetings were held with groups of students and with academic and administrative staff. The inspector observed lessons and undertook a tour of the premises. A wide range of documentation was provided electronically for scrutiny. The Institution co-operated fully before and during the inspection.

4. Inspection history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection type</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full Accreditation</td>
<td>1-2 October 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim</td>
<td>14 December 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-accreditation</td>
<td>11-12 November 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim</td>
<td>9 December 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-accreditation</td>
<td>26-27 September 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim</td>
<td>18 December 2019</td>
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PART B – JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

INSPECTION AREA – MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1.  **The institution is effectively managed**

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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>Senior managers have an understanding of the special requirements of online, distance, and blended learning.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff, especially those working remotely.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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**This standard is judged to be:**  ☒ Met  ☐ Partially Met  ☐ Not Met

**Comments**

GEM-A’s management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood. The CEO is very experienced and suitably qualified. He is well supported by the experienced COO, who at the time of inspection was also acting as the Head of Education.

The CEO and COO provide effective strategic and operational leadership, with oversight and governance provided by the Board of Trustees. Trustees have considerable and relevant expertise across the education, business and gemmology sectors. They provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that the quality of education is maintained.

Senior leaders are experienced in designing, implementing and managing education programmes, both in person and online. In April 2022, leaders and managers used their understanding of the requirements of Online, Distance and Blended Learning (ODBL) to develop and create a new online course, introducing students to the different aspects and basic principles of gemmology. The course has been well designed to be engaging and fully self-paced, meeting the needs of students who are studying in their own time and at their own pace.

Managers and staff communicate regularly through a variety of effective channels, including electronic communications and frequent meetings. This ensures that all staff are kept up to date on the latest developments.

2.  **The administration of the institution is effective**

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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>Data collection and collation systems are well documented and effectively disseminated.</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>No</td>
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2.6 Student and teaching staff records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up to date. ☒ Yes ☐ No

2.7 The institution has a robust security system and policies in place for protecting the data of its students and teaching staff. ☒ Yes ☐ No

2.8 The institution has processes through which the institution verifies the student who registers on the programme is the same student who participates on and completes and receives the credit. ☐ Yes ☒ No

2.9 The institution has access to the services of an experienced Information Technology (IT) technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide support to students, teaching staff and staff working remotely. ☒ Yes ☐ No

2.10 Staff are available to assist students to resolve issues of a general and/or technological nature. All enquiries from students are handled promptly and sympathetically. ☒ Yes ☐ No

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<tr>
<th>This standard is judged to be:</th>
<th>☐ Met</th>
<th>☒ Partially Met</th>
<th>☐ Not Met</th>
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**Comments**

Administrative arrangements are effective. Administrators are suitably qualified and experienced. They understand their roles and responsibilities fully. There are sufficient administrators to meet the demands of the current number of on-site and online students. The administrative support is clearly defined, documented and understood.

The Institution has a broad range of policies and procedures in place for staff and students. Policies are shared effectively with all students via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Staff policies are disseminated through a structure of shared online folders made available through popular office software platforms. This ensures that key documents are accessible and effectively communicated.

The Institution makes use of an appropriate information management system to collect and collate student data. This is effective, secure, and allows the necessary staff to access the information they need. Student and staff records are up to date and accurately maintained. The Institution takes the necessary measures to protect the data of students and staff, for example by using different levels of access and password protections. Suitable data protection and privacy policies are in place.

Students enrolling for courses delivered on site at the Institution’s London premises are required to provide suitable evidence of their identity.

2.8 However, there are insufficient processes in place to verify the identity of students enrolling on the online GemIntro course to ensure that they are the same student who completes the course and receives the credit.

GEM-A works with external IT providers to ensure that online systems are accessible, well managed and maintained. External providers are available to offer support and guidance to staff working remotely. Students can access technical support and guidance from GEM-A administrators and a dedicated E-learning Officer. This ensures that any students’ technical questions are well supported and promptly resolved.

3. **The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff.</th>
<th>☒ Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment.</td>
<td>☒ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
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<td>3.3 The institution has a robust teaching staff recruitment system which is designed to ensure the safety of the students. The recruitment process for teaching staff working remotely includes a face-to-face interview using a suitable online communication platform.</td>
<td>☒ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff.</td>
<td>☒ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
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Leaders and managers implement effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of staff. A member of the Board of Trustees participates in the recruitment of senior positions to support the CEO. Leaders make use of the services of an external Human Resources (HR) professional to advise them on personnel and recruitment best practice. Recruitment consultants are used to identify and shortlist suitably qualified and experienced staff for more specialised gemmology roles.

The experience and qualifications of new staff are checked and verified before employment to ensure staff are suitable for the role. Initial checks are completed by external recruitment agencies. Managers complete further checks, with copies of references taken to validate professional experience. All teaching staff are required to have relevant GEM-A qualifications, which are verified using the Institution’s own qualifications database. New tutors are very well supported by an experienced mentor whom they are able to shadow and observe in order to develop their own professional practice and competence.

Therefore, although the staff recruitment procedures are very thorough and meet requirements, there is no written staff recruitment policy in place that brings all the policies and procedures together in one document.

There are no teaching staff required on the GemIntro programme as learning is self-paced through an automated online learning platform.

The Institution has a suitable system in place for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Senior tutors complete observations of teaching staff, and appraisals are completed following a self-assessment process. This process effectively supports the sharing of best practice and is successful in identifying areas for improvement. Managers have identified the desirability of completing appraisals a little more often in accordance with their appraisal policy.

4. **Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up to date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution’s location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. ☒ Yes ☐ No

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. ☒ Yes ☐ No

**This standard is judged to be:** ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

**Comments**

Publicity material is accurate, clear and up to date. The website contains accurate information on GEM-A’s location, premises, staff, facilities and the range and nature of resources provided.

Course guides provide accurate information on each of the courses, including entry requirements, course content and assessment arrangements. This helps prospective students make informed decisions about their studies.

5. **The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses**

5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students. ☒ Yes ☐ No

5.2 A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. ☒ Yes ☐ No

5.3 Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately. ☒ Yes ☐ No

5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA

5.5 Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
5.6 Students are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the stated programmes.

| ☒ | Yes | ☐ | No |

5.7 The institution makes it clear to applicants that they are responsible for checking that they have the skills and knowledge required to study on the chosen course.

| ☒ | Yes | ☐ | No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

| ☒ | Met | ☐ | Partially Met | ☐ | Not Met |

**Comments**

In line with the Institution’s aims to advance the art and science of gemmology education and training, most courses do not require formal entry requirements, except for a minimum level of English language proficiency. Students enrolling on the Level 6 Gemmology Diploma must have successfully completed the Level 4 certificate, which acts as a foundation programme. Entry requirements for each course are clearly communicated to prospective students on the website and in course guides.

Students complete a formal application process where their English language proficiency is checked by reviewing an internationally accepted test result, for example the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). This ensures that students have the capability to complete the courses they are enrolling on, which are delivered and assessed in English.

Students confirm that their application enquiries are responded to promptly and that they receive accurate information, advice and guidance on the nature and requirements of the courses they wish to apply for. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Students completing the online GemIntro course require a digital device and internet connectivity in order to access the programme’s materials, resources and automated assessments. This is made clear on the course information pages and by administrative staff responding to any course enquiries. Students studying on site have access to a range of online tutorials to help them understand and navigate the VLE. Prospective students receive appropriate guidance to check that they have the skills required to study on their chosen course.

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6. **There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

6.1 There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality.

| ☒ | Yes | ☐ | No |

6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.

| ☒ | Yes | ☐ | No |

6.3 Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.

| ☒ | Yes | ☐ | No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

| ☒ | Met | ☐ | Partially Met | ☐ | Not Met |

**Comments**

GEM-A sets high expectations for student attendance and punctuality, which are clearly communicated and reinforced through appropriate policies and procedures.

Attendance policies are effectively implemented and well understood and, therefore, students have a very secure understanding of the minimum attendance levels they must maintain and the impact of poor attendance.

Tutors record student attendance systematically. Records are reviewed regularly by administrators and the Student Support Officer. Records are well maintained and securely stored. Managers monitor attendance closely and take swift and robust action where necessary to address any unauthorised absences.

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7. **The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**
7.1 The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution’s provision, including formal student representation where appropriate. ☒ Yes ☐ No

7.2 Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis. ☒ Yes ☐ No

7.3 The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. ☒ Yes ☐ No

7.4 There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution’s response to the feedback to the student body. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students in order to continually improve the quality of the education. Students complete online surveys, both during and at the end of their course, to provide feedback on different aspects of their experience.

Feedback outcomes are systematically reviewed and analysed by managers to identify areas for improvement and take appropriate action where necessary. For example, students requested more detailed examiner reports to help them better understand the requirements of their final, formal assessments. As a result, reports are now more comprehensive and provide greater levels of clarity.

Students are updated on the actions taken as a result of their feedback via email communications and announcements on the VLE.

Managers invite staff to provide feedback through regular meetings. Members of the GEM-A’s network of approved training centres also complete an annual survey in order to provide feedback to managers on areas of strength and potential areas for development, such as changes to the curriculum or course materials.

8. The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement

8.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution’s performance. ☒ Yes ☐ No

8.2 Reports are compiled at least annually that present the results of the institution’s reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. ☒ Yes ☐ No

8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Leaders have implemented a range of appropriate systems for monitoring and reviewing the Institution’s performance.

The Board of Trustees meets regularly throughout the year and receives performance updates from senior leaders, including key data such as examination results, and student satisfaction, retention and achievement rates.

Senior leaders analyse key course and programme data and use this information to inform the education strategy, which is reviewed and updated annually. As a result, improvement actions are identified and appropriate action planning takes place.

Leaders recognise that a more consolidated, formal course reporting and monitoring process would be useful to evaluate better the effectiveness of actions taken and to inform ongoing quality improvement planning.

INSPECTION AREA – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
9. **Academic management is effective**

9.1 There is a suitably qualified manager with experience in online, distance and blended learning who has responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment and management of the teaching staff. ☒ Yes ☐ No

9.2 Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. ☒ Yes ☐ No

9.3 The allocation of teachers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience. ☒ Yes ☐ No

9.4 There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

**Comments**

The acting Head of Education is supported by the Tutor Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Senior Gemmology Tutor and an E-learning Officer. Together, they provide effective academic management of all programmes.

Students attend classes that are appropriately timetabled in suitable rooms. Practical classes are scheduled in teaching rooms with the required resources and equipment.

Tutors are allocated to specific classes to provide a consistent learning experience. Less experienced tutors are partnered with more experienced colleagues, so students benefit from the guidance and support of two tutors in each class.

There is an effective process in place for acquiring academic resources. Where additional resources are required, these are requested directly to the COO for consideration by senior leaders.

10. **The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable students to succeed**

10.1 Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow students to develop the knowledge and skills that will be required for final examinations or assessments. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.2 Programme designers make effective use of appropriate teaching aids and learning resources. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.3 Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.4 Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.5 Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.6 Any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.7 The academic backgrounds and particular needs of students are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course. ☒ Yes ☐ No

10.8 The institution uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise interaction between the institution and the student and enhance instructional and educational services. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

**Comments**

Courses at all levels are well designed and sequenced to allow all students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need. Students are well supported by detailed course notes and practical workbooks that help them to confidently identify the properties and uses of a range of gem materials. A wide range of teaching aids and learning resources are used effectively to support students’ practical skills, including stone sets and instrument kits.
Students undertake a range of online assessments, formal examinations and laboratory classes to ensure they have met the required learning outcomes and assessment objectives. Regular practical tests and mock assessments prepare students well for their final examinations.

Courses are planned well to develop students’ confidence and independence over time. For example, the depth and complexity of classes and assessments increase over time to prepare students to use specialist gemmological instruments logically and efficiently to determine the identity of gem materials.

The programme of learning is well planned and communicated effectively to students. Students benefit from small group sizes and high tutor–student ratios, which ensures that their specific needs and abilities are well met.

Students benefit from the VLE, which provides an accessible central platform to access course materials and to communicate with tutors and other students.

11. Teachers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them

11.1 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.2 Teachers have a level of subject knowledge, and pedagogic and communicative skill, which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.3 The allocation of teaching staff to courses provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.4 Delivery methods are sufficient to attain the stated programme objectives and intended learning outcomes; suitable supplementary study aids have been considered where appropriate, whether via investment in technology, additional teaching staff support, issuing extra study materials or offering face-to-face learning sessions. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.5 Teachers have an understanding of the special challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.6 The appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular monitoring of teacher feedback. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.7 Teachers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of students. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.8 Teaching staff are properly and continuously trained with respect to institution policies, student needs, instructional approaches and techniques, and the use of appropriate instructional technology. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.9 Teachers respond to different learning needs of students where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. ☒ Yes ☐ No

11.10 Teachers employ effective strategies to involve all students in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Students benefit from qualified and experienced tutors who have extensive knowledge of the gemmology sector. Tutors use their specialist skills and experience to plan and deliver classes that effectively develop students’ knowledge, skills and understanding of gemmology and the techniques and treatments used in the gem trade.

Tutors use a range of effective delivery methods to help students develop the required knowledge. For example, tutors use images, real examples and scientific equipment to help students understand the differences between different types of gemstones. Students completing the online GemIntro programme benefit from an engaging blend of detailed course notes, videos and quizzes to help them develop an understanding of the properties, characteristics and uses of gemstones most commonly offered on the market.

The E-learning Officer understands the challenges and demands of ODBL, and provides effective advice, support and guidance to students studying online.
The Institution has clear staff appraisal processes in place. Tutors complete a self-assessment to provide feedback on their performance and identify areas for further enhancement and support. Tutors have access to a range of professional development activities to ensure their specialist knowledge is up to date. For example, tutors are supported to attend relevant gemmological conferences.

New tutors shadow more experienced colleagues to develop their pedagogical techniques, ensuring they are confident and effective in their role. The E-learning Officer provides guidance and training for tutors on how to use the VLE and online resources.

Students benefit from small class sizes and supportive tutors who respond well to their individual learning needs and preferences. As most classes include two tutors, students’ needs and learning priorities can be quickly addressed, taking a personalised approach.

Tutors use a range of learning strategies and ongoing assessments to engage students and check on learning. For example, students complete online quizzes and tests to check their knowledge and understanding and to help prepare them to undertake formal examinations.

12. **The institution provides students and teachers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study**

| 12.1 | Appropriate resources and materials for study are available to the students and teachers. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 12.2 | Commissioning of course materials is managed effectively, and materials are checked to ensure standardisation and consistency across the provision. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 12.3 | Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study and include appropriate support when necessary. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 12.4 | Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable students to achieve the programme objectives. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 12.5 | Course materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice and are regularly reviewed and revised. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 12.6 | The institution makes effective provisions for students to access conventional and online resources. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |

This standard is judged to be:  ☒ Met  ☐ Partially Met  ☐ Not Met

Comments

Gem-A provides students and teachers with access to appropriate learning resources and materials. Detailed and informative course notes and workbooks are available to support each qualification at each of the different levels of study. Materials are comprehensive and fully standardised to ensure quality and consistency.

At the time of inspection, the GemIntro online course had very recently been designed and launched. This introductory course is accurate and up to date and reflects current knowledge and practice.

Academic managers are in the process of reviewing and updating course materials for the certificate and diploma programmes at Levels 4 to 6. Managers acknowledge that the course review process, including the curriculum and resources, should be completed to ensure all courses reflect current practice, for example in addressing contemporary issues such as responsible sourcing and sustainability.

A broad range of practical resources supports the development of students’ applied gemmology skills. For example, students are supported to use a range of technical gem-testing equipment that enables them to test and identify gem materials. Students also benefit from access to clear and well-organised online learning materials through the VLE.
### 13. Students receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored

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<td><strong>13.1</strong></td>
<td>Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to students and teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13.2</strong></td>
<td>Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate.</td>
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<td><strong>13.3</strong></td>
<td>Students are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.4</strong></td>
<td>The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.5</strong></td>
<td>Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.6</strong></td>
<td>Oral and written feedback is given to individual students on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.7</strong></td>
<td>Students have appropriate access outside class time to teachers or personal tutors for academic support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**This standard is judged to be:** ☒ Met □ Partially Met □ Not Met

**Comments**

Courses are well planned to incorporate formal assessments and examinations. Examination dates are published well in advance. Students have access to the learning outcomes and criteria that they must work towards and demonstrate.

Tutors and managers monitor assessment outcomes systematically in order to provide the support and guidance required to help students improve and develop the knowledge and skills required.

Tutors use a range of planned ongoing assessments to prepare students well for their formal assessments. Marking of practice tests and mock assessments is very timely, with students receiving prompt and personalised feedback to help them understand how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement.

The Institution has a suitable academic malpractice policy in place, which sets out the penalties that can be imposed if needed. On-site formal assessments are carried out in strict examination conditions, supervised by invigilators, to discourage and prevent cheating. Many assessments are practical in nature, which helps to prevent collusion and plagiarism.

Students received high levels of personalised guidance from tutors to support those not making the expected levels of progress. Where students are not at the required standard to undertake a foundation course, the GemIntro programme provides a useful introduction to the gemmology sector.

Where students do not have the required level of English language proficiency, staff signpost students to relevant language courses with other providers. Students can access tutors outside class time for additional support if required.
### 14. The institution offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate

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<tr>
<td><strong>14.1</strong></td>
<td>For courses leading to the award of a UK degree, the institution has a formal agreement with a recognised UK degree-awarding body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14.2</strong></td>
<td>For courses leading to other UK awards, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14.3</strong></td>
<td>For courses leading to the award of an overseas degree, the institution has a formal partnership agreement with the overseas degree-awarding body, which is itself accredited by a recognised national agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### This standard is judged to be:  ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

#### Comments

GEM-A is a recognised awarding body. All courses are listed on the register of regulated qualifications and recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), which regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

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### 15. There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards

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<tr>
<td><strong>15.1</strong></td>
<td>There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the RQF and evidence that students who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15.2</strong></td>
<td>There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15.3</strong></td>
<td>External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### This standard is judged to be:  ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☒ NA

#### Comments

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### 16. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment

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<tr>
<td><strong>16.1</strong></td>
<td>The institution complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16.2</strong></td>
<td>For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for students to appeal against their marks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### This standard is judged to be:  ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

#### Comments

There are appropriate procedures in place for the administration of examinations, as well as practical and project-based assessments. Examination guidance documents provide students with clear and detailed guidance on the process and conduct of assessments, grade boundaries and marking schemes.

The Examination Board meets regularly to ensure that assessment processes are valid and reliable. A clear and detailed appeals policy is in place.

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### 17. There is appropriate provision of advice for students intending to proceed to employment or higher/further education

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<tr>
<td><strong>17.1</strong></td>
<td>Students have access to advice from an appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☒ Yes ☐ No</td>
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Page 13 of 21
17.2 If the institution offers courses preparing students for higher education, they have access to prospectuses and to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Students can request career and progression advice and guidance from staff as required. Tutors are very experienced in the gemmology sector and provide students with good information on possible career options and progression routes in the sector, where needed.

However, there is no formal planned careers programme that is provided to all students to enhance the advice and guidance that is currently provided on request.

INSPECTION AREA – STUDENT WELFARE

18. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

18.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.2 Students receive appropriate advice before arrival. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.3 Students receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.4 Instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the tutorial materials are made available to assist students to learn effectively and efficiently. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.5 Students are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.6 The institution has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.7 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all students safe. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA

18.8 Effective arrangements are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.9 The institution ensures that students understand any system requirements and have access to appropriate technical advice to assist with technological problems that are the institution’s responsibility. ☒ Yes ☐ No

18.10 The institution supports and encourages peer interaction through a variety of communication channels including social media. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Students benefit from appropriate pastoral support and guidance. A dedicated Student Support Officer, who has completed relevant training, for example in mental health and first aid, is accessible to all students to provide advice and guidance.

Students receive appropriate advice and guidance before they arrive for their studies. Students are able to disclose any specific needs during the application and enrolment process. Relevant access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are put in place quickly, for example extra time in examinations or the support of a reader or scribe where required.

Students receive an appropriate induction at the start of their course that introduces them to the building, facilities, staff and key policies and processes. Students have access to tours of the VLE system to ensure they understand how to access their online resources and use the forums and discussion areas. This helps students to settle in quickly to their studies.
All students are adults who have made their own arrangements for living and studying in London. Students are able to contact staff for support and guidance, but only during standard office hours.

18.5 Students are not currently issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.

Relevant policies are in place to promote inclusion and equality of opportunity, and to avoid discrimination and deal with any bullying or abusive behaviour.

Managers have implemented appropriate arrangements to protect students and staff from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. An appropriate safeguarding policy is in place, which includes relevant guidance on preventing radicalisation. A risk assessment and action plan are in place to minimise and manage potential risks related to radicalisation and extremism. Staff complete relevant awareness training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard students from being radicalised.

The E-learning Officer provides advice, guidance and training to students on how to use the VLE and online resources and how to deal with any technical issues or problems. Students have access to useful online tutorial videos that help them to maximise their use of learning resources.

Peer interaction is encouraged through the use of forums and discussion boards on the VLE. This helps students to communicate with each other when working remotely, sharing ideas and asking questions.

19. **International students are provided with specific advice and assistance**

| 19.1 | International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 19.2 | International students receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 19.3 | Information and advice specific to international students continues to be available throughout the course of study. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 19.4 | Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

**This standard is judged to be:** ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

**Comments**

International students receive appropriate information before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. For example, students are sent email guidance on which airports and stations to use when attending the London premises.

Administrators and the Student Support Officer are available to answer any specific questions that international students may have before their arrival and throughout the course.

International students receive an appropriate induction, which includes a copy of relevant handbooks and key policies. International students highlighted how more formalised guidance on living and studying in London would have been useful to help them settle more quickly into life in London and their studies. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The Institution is sensitive to any specific cultural and religious considerations that students may have. For example, examinations are rescheduled where this clashes with religious observances and requirements.

20. **The fair treatment of students is ensured**

| 20.1 | Students apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 20.2 | Students have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 20.3 | Students are advised of BAC’s own complaints procedure. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
### Comments

Students have access to fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions which are clearly communicated and disseminated.

Students have access to a formal written complaints procedure which is shared with them at the start of their course. The procedure includes clear guidance on how complaints are to be handled, including the right to appeal and BAC’s own complaints procedure.

### 21. Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of students.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where students under 18 are accommodated.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.3 Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of students and their property.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.4 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of students.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21.5 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for students under 18.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>☐ NA</td>
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### 22. Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of students is ensured and the institution’s relationship with hosts is properly managed

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for students and is appropriately located for travel to the institution and back.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before students are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the institution.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22.3 The institution has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and students before and during the placement.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for student feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems.</td>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
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### Comments

This standard is judged to be: ☐ Met  ☐ Partially Met  ☐ Not Met  ☒ NA
23. The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on leisure activities in the area

23.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest. ☒ Yes ☐ No

23.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

23.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of students. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

23.4 Any activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

Students have access to GEM-A’s membership programme of events and webinars. For example, students are invited to attend the annual conference held in London which includes a programme of expert guest speakers and specialist workshops.

A number of other activities are also available, for example, evening membership talks, occasional visits to gem suppliers, and a private viewing of the crown jewels in the Tower of London.

Visits to external venues are supervised by relevant and appropriate staff.

INSPECTION AREA – PREMISES AND FACILITIES

24. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

24.1 The institution has secure tenure on its premises. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

24.2 Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Gem-A has secure tenure of its premises. Suitable external venues are occasionally used to hold formal examinations when required.

25. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

25.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured. ☒ Yes ☐ No

25.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. ☒ Yes ☐ No

25.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to students, staff and visitors. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

25.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors. ☒ Yes ☐ No

25.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information. ☒ Yes ☐ No

25.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors. ☒ Yes ☐ No

25.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness. ☒ Yes ☐ No
25.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments
The GEM-A premises provide a safe and secure environment for study and work. Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and the premises are well maintained and clean.

Appropriate health and safety guidance is effectively communicated and disseminated. Where specialist chemicals are used in gem testing sessions and laboratory classes, specific safety rules are followed and appropriate precautions are taken to ensure students and staff are safe.

Heating and ventilation are appropriate. Washroom facilities are clean and are sufficient in number for the students and staff on the premises.

26. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

26.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. ☒ Yes ☐ No

26.2 Classrooms and/or any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course. ☒ Yes ☐ No

26.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments
Classrooms and other learning areas are sufficient in size and number to meet the needs of students and staff who attend the premises.

Classrooms and laboratories are well equipped and maintained. Specialised teaching areas provide students with access to the practical testing equipment and the resources they need to develop their applied gemmology skills.

Students benefit from access to specialist gemmological instruments, such as the spectroscope and polariscope, to help determine the identity of gem materials.

The premises provide suitable spaces for conducting examinations and practical assessments.

27. There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff

27.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. ☒ Yes ☐ No

27.2 Teaching staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. ☒ Yes ☐ No

27.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

27.4 Students and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

27.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. ☒ Yes ☐ No

27.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the institution. ☒ Yes ☐ No
Students have controlled access to the on-site library which provides an impressive collection of gemmology texts to support students’ research skills and project work. Students also have access to specialist journals and the online Gem Hub resource, providing them with detailed guidance on different aspects of gemmology. Students studying online are able to access a stone library loan scheme to borrow gemstones for developing their testing and gem identification skills.

Although space is limited, tutors have access to appropriate spaces for preparing work and marking assessments, as well as a small kitchen area for the preparation of drinks and snacks.

The premises are centrally located with a good selection of cafeterias and shops close by for students to access to relax and consume food and drink. The provision of facilities would benefit from freeing up suitable space within the premises for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink.

27.4 Students do not have access to storage for personal possessions.

The premises provide suitable rooms in which managers and academic staff can hold staff meetings. A range of administrative offices meet the needs of staff. Offices are well equipped and maintained.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated

☐ Yes  ☒ No
PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

Institution’s Strengths

The Board of Trustees has a range of relevant expertise and experience to provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders.

Senior leaders systematically review performance to inform the education strategy.

Leaders have responded well to the changing needs of students with the creation of an innovative and flexible online course.

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<tr>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Priority H/M/L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.8 The Institution must implement effective processes to verify the identity of students enrolling on the online GemIntro course, to ensure they are the same student who completes the course and receive the credit.</td>
<td>☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Institution’s Strengths

Students benefit from the expertise of specialist tutors who provide high levels of academic support and guidance.

Tutors use a range of ongoing assessments well to prepare students for their final examinations.

Students receive prompt and constructive feedback to help them improve and make sustained progress.

Students benefit from high quality learning resources that help them to develop specialist knowledge, understanding and skills.

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<tr>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Priority H/M/L</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low</td>
</tr>
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</table>

STUDENT WELFARE

Institution’s Strengths

Students benefit from high levels of pastoral support which meets their individual needs well.

Effective arrangements are in place to provide reasonable adjustments in examinations and final assessments.

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<tr>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Priority H/M/L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.5 Managers must consider the need for students to be issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support</td>
<td>☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Institution’s Strengths

Students have access to highly specialised gemmology resources and equipment which support their practical skills.
The specialist gemmology library provides students with access to a wealth of information to support their research and project work.

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<tr>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Priority H/M/L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.4 Managers must consider the feasibility of providing students with access to storage for personal possessions.</td>
<td>☒ Low</td>
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**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

To be reviewed at the next inspection

- Leaders and managers should implement a written policy relating to staff recruitment processes and procedures.
- The appraisal process should be completed more frequently for all staff.
- Arrangements for annual course monitoring and review should be further enhanced and consolidated.
- The course review process should be completed to ensure that course content and learning materials are up to date and fit for purpose.
- It is recommended that a formalised careers and progression guidance programme is developed and made available to all students.
- It is recommended that more formalised guidance on living and studying in London is provided to international students before their arrival.
- The Institution is recommended to investigate how it could find suitable space within the premises for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**