

MISCELLANEOUS | Forest Research Institute University
 Course: MSc in (a) forestry (b) wood sciences and technology (c) environment management
 Eligibility: Visit the website for details
 How to apply: Visit www.fri.icFRE.gov.in or call 0135-2751826

LAST DATE
 Apr 2

DESIGN | Sriшти School of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore
 Course: a) foundation studies (art and design); b) diploma in visual communication and other disciplines
 Eligibility: 10+2
 How to apply: Visit www.srishti.ac.in

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 Mar 6

ENGINEERING | Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad
 Course: MTech/MPhil/PhD in different disciplines, such as electronics & instrumentation, environmental science, mechanical, mining and others
 Eligibility: Check the school's website
 How to apply: Visit ismdhanbad.ac.in

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MANAGEMENT | National Power Training Institute, Faridabad
 Course: PGDM (power mgmt.)
 Eligibility: Engineering graduates. On the basis of CAT score followed by GD, PI
 How to apply: Call 0129-2270949, 2275448

LAST DATE
 Feb 22

The more I want to get something done, the less I call it work

RICHARD BACH, WRITER



HINDUSTAN TIMES, NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2010

Make a sparkling choice

Owing to greater consciousness among buyers, the need for trained gemmologists has spiralled in the past few years

Shubhodeep Chakravarty
 shubhodeep@hindustantimes.com

For 22-year-old Aarti Shekhar, gemstones were never just shiny little things that people wore to enhance beauty. The incredible detail that each stone fascinated her from childhood. It is little wonder then that gemmology as a career was a natural path for her after graduation.

A graduate gemmologist (GG), Shekhar's acquisition of a small space in a premier mall in south Delhi is a reflection of her ambitions. The young gemmologist has a natural flair for observing

and identifying stones, an activity which has become critical in the high value business of gemstone trade. "Gemmology is often linked with astrology and that is where a gemmologist steps in. A gemmologist's job is to ascertain the quality and property of precious stones," says Shekhar. S/he examines the true nature of stones and educates buyers.

The need for trained gemmologists has spiralled in the past few years, owing to a greater consciousness amongst buyers. The jewellery trade, becoming scientifically oriented, requires a class of professionals who fit in between retailers and



Rocking career: Gemmologist Aarti Shekhar examines a stone at her lab-cum-retail outlet

buyers. Greater costs involve greater risk and, therefore, a greater need for quality control. "It is a highly technical and scientific profession," says Shekhar.

Another gemmologist in the city, Swati Singhal agrees.

"The work of a gemmologist also includes providing elementary knowledge to people about

what they buy," she says. Shekhar warns, however, that the profession is not meant for all. "Much of the success in this profession comes to those who have a genuine liking for precious stones — what goes into their making, what natural processes change their characteristics and all other processes right from their raw to finished stage," she says.

There are a number of institutes in India and abroad providing hands-on training in the 'art' of gemmology (see box). At the elementary level, students begin with a basic gemmology course that involves identification and grading of cut stones as well as theoretical lectures. This may be followed by an advanced course that introduces learners to the

advanced equipment increasingly being used in the field. These include the refractometer, spectrometer and polaroscope that help in accurately identifying minute features to determine the right price of a stone. Although very elementary knowledge of stones is required to take the course, most institutes have stringent examining processes.

A HIGH-VALUE, HIGH-RISK BUSINESS

A gemmologist talks about the trends in the field

What does an ideal course in gemmology comprise?

An ideal course will take you six months, while a professional course can be for as long as a year. The course is divided into different modules. The first module generally deals with introduction to gemmology — the different precious and semi-precious stones and how to treat these stones. The subsequent modules introduce a student to the different equipment used to identify and grade these stones. In addition, some complex stones require extreme precision while being analysed. Therefore,

they are introduced in the later part of the professional course.

What are the latest trends in teaching as well as in learning gemmology?

With each passing year, a range of high-grade equipment is being brought into the profession. A modern gemmological institute seeks to train students to use this equipment and enable them to be at complete ease with a wide variety of precious and semi-precious stones.

Youngsters are not taking up gemmology in a big way. What are the possible reasons?

It is a misconception that the youth is not developing a liking for this profession. The average age of people in my professional group is 26. Earlier, gemmology was more of a family-oriented enterprise. Today, however, big business enterprises are increasingly hiring enthusiastic young professionals.

What are the human skills that one can cultivate through training in gemmology? Gemmology is not just about being constricted in a four-walled laboratory. Professionals are increasingly interacting with prospec-

Earlier, gemmology was more of a family-oriented enterprise. Today, however, big business enterprises are increasingly hiring enthusiastic young professionals

— Swati Shekhar, practising gemmologist and a trainer with a private institute



Interviewed by Shubhodeep Chakravarty

3 career GEMMOLOGIST

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Gemmology has been the art of identifying and evaluating gemstones. In today's world, it has become a science and profession dealing with precious and semi-precious stones. A branch of mineralogy, it is considered a geoscience

CLOCK WORK

10.30 am: Meet with retailers to look at quality of the latest shipment of gems
 11.30 am: Prepare and finalise stock itinerary
 Noon: Clean high grade and sensitive equipment
 12.30 pm: Examine stones purchased recently and previous stock in private laboratories
 1.30 pm: Lunch

2.30 pm: Examine global trends in gemmology online and through hard manuscripts
 4 pm: Deal with customers (Queries are aplenty in this profession while feedback plays a part in future planning)
 6 pm: Itemise stocks available
 6.30 pm: Go through financial records (if independent outlet)
 7 pm: Pack up for the day

THE PAYOFF

The pay scale varies with not just the level of training but also the nature of the employer. While gemmologists with basic training can fetch between Rs 10,000 to 20,000 a month, those with advanced level of training and

experience can look at a pay package upwards of Rs 30,000 a month. A self-employed gemmologist involved in retail starts slow but once established, s/he may even look at a seven-figure income, per annum

SKILLS

- A genuine interest in the non-ceremonial attraction of precious and semi-precious stones
- An eye for detail, capable of seeing the minutest of details that determine the grade, quality and worth of a stone

- A deep knowledge of not just stones but also of equipment
- Good communication skills to deal with customers
- The high cost retail dealings require integrity and honesty in customer dealings to win buyers' trust

HOW DO I GET THERE?

Most institutes offer a graduate gemmologist (GG) degree to graduates. Students need to clear a practical-cum-theoretical test to earn the GG credential. An undergraduate may also apply for a degree in gemmology but there are few reputable institutions offering

degrees to school graduates. The tuition fee for a typical six-month course abroad is between Rs 4 lakh to Rs 8 lakh. A six-month course in a private college costs about Rs 1 lakh and less than half of that amount from a government institute

INSTITUTES & URLS

Abroad:
 ■ Gemological Institute of America, Carlsbad, USA
 www.gia.edu
 ■ Asian Institute of Gemological Sciences, Bangkok
 www.aigsthai.com
 ■ Gemmological Association of Australia, www.gem.org.au

India:
 ■ GIA, Mumbai
 www.giaindia.in
 ■ Gemological Institute of India, Mumbai
 www.giionline.com
 ■ St. Xavier's, Mumbai
 ■ International Gemmological Institute, New Delhi

PROS & CONS

- A highly lucrative field. Financial possibilities are limitless if you are able to establish an independent set-up
- 'Lab-monotony' can be easily combated with business tours

- to major gemstone producing areas
- Interactions with retailers and customers bring in the human angle
- Initial investment is high

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Punjabi Bagh West	17, First Floor, Punjabi Bagh West Club Road, (Opp. Mysore Bank), 9310023666, 9311123388
Malviya Nagar	D-82, 1st Floor, Main Mkt., Next to Axis Bank, 9971091034, 9811102329, 41831439
Mayur Vihar-I	P-18, II Floor, Pandav Nagar, Acharya Niketan Market, 9810505801, 43055468, 47373301
Shahdara	Aakashline Building 1449/21, Main Road, Durgapur, 22311603, 9999002520, 9268213323
Dwarka	D-977, 3rd Floor, Palam Extn.-1, Sec-7, Near Siksha Bharti School, 25084772, 9312234579
Noida	A-20, Sector-16, 9350852037, 95120-4310206, 2510206/7
East Delhi	E-56 Laxmi Nagar, Vikas Marg, Nr. Hira Sweets, 9313784822, 22440935, 43860145 (10 Lines)
North Campus	38-E Main Circle, Kamla Nagar, 23849500, 45210022 (10 Lines)
West Delhi	AL-7, Main Jail Road, Hari Nagar, 9958989921, 25138337/38/39/40
Ghaziabad	TAHE Building Near MMH College, Model Town, 95120-2860386/486, 9717227755

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ADMISSION INTERVIEWS - 13TH FEBRUARY, 2010

► Mr Owain Llwyd - International Officer, will be conducting interviews for all courses.

► Popular Courses Include : MBA Banking and Finance, MBA Management, Business Studies, Computing, Economics, Journalism, Law, Accounting & Finance, MSc Psychological Research, MSc Applied Sports Science, MBA Marketing, MSc Nanotechnology, MBA Law and Management, Healthcare Leadership, MSc Molecular Biology with Biotechnology & Masters in Education.

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Education Promotion Initiative
Manipal College of Pharmaceutical Sciences

If published papers and books, patents, research projects and fellowships are the quality indicators of an institution, then Manipal College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, better known as MCOPS on the Manipal University campus, is without doubt amongst the best in the country. In keeping with the institute's mission "Excellence in pharmaceutical education and research — marching with the times", MCOPS has grown steadily since inception as a part of Kasturba Medical College in 1963. MCOPS is among the top five colleges in the country in pharmaceutical education and research. The Pharmacy Council of India and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) have approved all the courses offered here. It is ISO 9001-2000 certified as well. The college provides facilities for practical learning and research. Facilities range from a Bioavailability centre, patient counseling services to medicinal plants garden (hosting 300 species of plants) and Pharmacognosy museum. With research facilities in all eight departments of MCOPS, the institute boasts of more than 1350 papers published in international and national journals, contributions to more than 850 international and national conferences, 8 books, 8 patents, 65 funded and completed research projects. More than 50 fellowships and awards have also been received. In step with the times, MCOPS, today, promotes research in some specialized divisions of pharmacy like 'pharmacoeconomics' and 'nanopharmaceuticals' by housing the state divisions of the international societies for research in these fields. These research activities are showcased in the quarterly research journal "PHARMAG" and "The Journal of Hospital Pharmacy". The college has hosted two Indian Pharmaceutical Congress sessions and will be playing host a third time in December 2010. The students are also actively organizing and participating in events like Pharmafest and publishing a student magazine, Aurora. The students get their training at the Kasturba Hospital pharmacy. Along with the Placement cell, the Industry-Institute Partnership Cell (sponsored by AICTE) conducts interaction sessions where several companies visit the campus and interact with students. While 20 per cent of BPharm students opt for jobs, the rest prefer going for masters to strengthen their research roots. Companies like Pfizer, RPG Life sciences, Sandoz, Dr Reddys and others recruit from campus. To provide the students with more variety of choices, MCOPS has brought some fresh opportunities to their plate. One of them is, 'Community Pharmacy', where a pharmacist serves as a vital link between patients and healthcare products and professionals. A US-based consultancy firm in collaboration with MCOPS is recruiting and training aspiring community pharmacists. Another career being encouraged through a special 'Regulatory Affairs' course is, working with the Foods and Drugs Control Administration (FDA) of India. It is the main regulatory body governing and implementing the rules and regulations for the Drugs & Pharma industry. To encourage entrepreneurship, the Department of Science and Technology has sponsored a Technopreneur Promotion Programme (TePP). With such a wide vista of opportunities at disposal at MCOPS and the excellent research and development environment, the students here are actually stepping up the ladder of excellence.

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