

Appraiser Questionnaire Checklist

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- Are you a Graduate Gemologist or a Fellow of the Gemological Association of Great Britain?
- Are you a member of a professional personal property appraisal organization? (ie. International Society of Appraisers.)
 - What is your level of membership within the organization?
 - How did you obtain that level of membership?
 - Did you have to take courses and pass a comprehensive examination?
 - Or did you just have to pay dues?
 - How often do you have to take a requalification course and pass a requalification exam?
 - What does the requalification course and exam consist of?

Remember one may be a member of an organization and yet may not have taken their courses or passed the prescribed exams. Other organizations have almost no educational criteria to obtain designations they just exchange "Dollars for Diplomas".

- How many hours of continuing education courses do you attend per year?
- How many of these hours are appraisal specific and how many are gemological and jewelry specific?
- Do you stay current on industry guidelines and research, along with local and federal laws?

- What are your specialty areas?

Remember no one is an expert on everything. There are many types of jewelry. Here is a list of areas that may pertain to the type of jewelry that you want appraised, and you will want to know if they are qualified to handle it.

- Diamonds- natural v. synthetic, modern cuts, old cuts (old mine, old European, rose, and transitional), fancy colored (natural v. enhanced), Ideal cuts, and enhanced (fracture filled, laser drilled, HTHP color enhanced).
- Colored Gemstones- natural v. synthetic, gemstone enhancements (fracture filling, heat treatment, glass infilling, deep diffusion treatment, coating, irradiation, paraffin coating, dye, and assembled stones. Note there are many more enhancements and the majority of gemstones on the market today are enhanced. You want to address how the enhancements will be reported within the appraisal. Rare colored gemstones, origin (the country of origin can play a major role in the value of the gemstone)
- Pearls- natural v. cultured v. assembled, freshwater or saltwater, (over the past two years, there has been a flooding in the marketplace of Chinese freshwater pearls that mirror saltwater Akoya pearls and they can be worth a fraction of the price). Natural color v. dyed or

irradiated, south sea (white & Tahitian), American freshwater, abalone, seed, keshi, and mabe.

- Jadeite- natural v. simulants. "A" v. "B" v. "C" v. "D". "A" jade is natural with just a wax finishing, "B" jade has been acid "bleached" and polymer impregnated, "C" jade has been dyed, while "D" jade has been acid "bleached", impregnated, and dyed. " (a very fine green one inch "A" jade carving can be worth thousands of dollars while a similar looking "B" jade carving is usually worth less than a couple of hundred dollars)

- Metals- 9kt, 10kt, 14kt, 18kt, 20+kt, yellow v. white, platinum, rhodium, silver, gold filled, gold plated etc. Testing metals and manufacturing process (cast, hand fabrication, die struck, machined)

- General jewelry- mass-produced v. custom, antique and period v. reproductions and "married" pieces (period with modern parts and/ or converted pieces) modern, along with quality assessment. Enamels and inlays.

- Watches- pocket and wrist, modern and period, condition analysis, authentic v. fake or after market parts.

- Hallmarks and Trademarks- manufacture's marks (a piece made by Cartier is more valuable than the same piece as an unknown)

- Accessories- compacts, chatelaines, cigarette cases and lighters.

- What equipment do you own and what will be used to evaluate the jewelry?
 - What type of lighting conditions will be used to analyze the jewelry? (5000-5500 Kelvin is the best lighting under which to grade colored gemstones)
 - Binocular 10x – 60x microscope with darkfield illuminator
 - Fully corrected 10x triplet loupe
 - Diamond light
 - Pen light
 - Long and short wave ultraviolet light
 - GIA certified diamond color master set
 - GIA gem set
 - GemDialogue
 - Cultured pearl master set
 - Fiber optic lighting
 - Dichroscope
 - Spectroscope
 - Polariscope with interference figure sphere
 - Refractometer
 - Specific gravity fluids
 - Methylene iodide
 - Filters and lenses
 - Leveridge gauge

- Electronic leveridge gauge or micrometer
 - Electronic scale measuring carat, gram, and pennyweight
 - Hydrostatic scale
 - Proportion scope or proportion analyzer
 - Sarin
 - Thermal conductivity tester
 - Moissanite detector
 - Metal testing acids
 - Camera
 - Gemological, jewelry and watch reference library
- How will you conduct the appraisal?
- Are you aware of the appropriate markets in which to value the property?
 - If you are not fully qualified to identify or authenticate an item, how will you handle it?
 - Will you not appraise that one item, or will you consult an expert?
 - If you use an outside resource will the item be out of your possession?
 - Who is liable should anything happen to the item while it is in your possession?
- What are your fees?
- What standards do you conform to?
- Do you write to the guidelines of the organization that you are a member of?
 - Can you show me what those standards and guidelines are?
- What will my completed appraisal look like?
- May I see a sample?
 - Will the appraisal have color photographs?
 - Will there be archived negatives in case the photos are needed later?
 - How long do you retain copies of appraisals?
 - What do you charge for updates?
- Are you willing to defend this appraisal in a court of law?
- Do you have any references (past clients or colleagues) who can be contacted?
- May I have a copy of your professional profile?