



PRESS RELEASE
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Jewelers of America Offers Modernized Bench Professional Certification

The Bench Professional Certification program has been revamped to include a streamlined exam process, lower costs and quicker turnaround

New York, NY – Jewelers of America, the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry retail marketplace, has updated its Bench Professional Certification program to reflect the standards of modern bench jewelers. Since 1997, the program has established national standards to rate the talents and proficiency of bench jewelers at four skill levels. The association announced the program’s “re-launch” May 31, 2009, during a press conference at Couture Las Vegas.

“At a time when service differentiation can be crucial to surviving, the re-launched Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification credential gives storeowners an effective means of distinguishing their shop from competitors,” says David Peters, Jewelers of America Director of Member Services.

Expert Review Results in More Benefits for the Bench Jeweler

The Bench Professional Certification program underwent an extensive review, which began in September 2007, by the Bench Jeweler Education Resource Forum. The Forum was a collaboration of Jewelers of America, the American Gem Society (AGS) and bench jewelry industry leaders, who came together to examine the state of bench jeweler education and certification. The results of their review, which covered the program’s content, structure and fulfillment process, can be seen in the updated Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification program.

Bench Professional Certification applicants can enjoy new features of the program:

- **Demonstrate You Are a Cutting-Edge Bench Jeweler:** Modernized exams include content that reflects bench best practices, updated bench tests and the addition of natural gemstones to several projects.
- **Receive Faster Results:** Improved fulfillment process for exam reviews and grading results in faster certification turnaround.

- **More Affordable Fee Structure:** Thanks to fulfillment partner, Stuller, Inc., jewelers can receive the added value that a Bench Professional Certification designation brings to their career, and store, at an affordable price.

As always, Certified Bench Jewelers receive the **marketing benefits** of an official certificate from Jewelers of America, a distinctive lapel pin and a press release (Jewelers of America members only) prepared by Jewelers of America's Communications department.

David Gardner, owner of David Gardner's Jewelry and a Certified Bench Jeweler, has seen the benefits of the program firsthand. "We've used the Jewelers of America Professional Bench Certification – and the professionalism it represents – to differentiate our store within the marketplace," he says. "Our store has averaged a 20% growth in the past decade, and that is largely due to the marketing advantage of having quality, certified bench jewelers on staff."

Leading bench jeweler Alan Revere, founder of Revere Academy of Jewelry Arts, the renowned professional jewelry school, took part in the Bench Jeweler Education Resource Forum. Revere recommends Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification to his students and staff. "This test is key to being a bench jeweler in that it establishes reasonable expectations for four different levels of experience and skill," he explains. "We have integrated the Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification into our program and encourage graduates to take the certification exams as a marker of their skills at this point in their career."

Jewelers Mutual Creates Bench Professional Certification Scholarship

Due to its new, ongoing partnership with Jewelers of America, Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company has generously donated to the Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification program. The donation will be divided evenly between certification scholarships and general program support. Jewelers Mutual Bench Professional Certification Scholarships are only available to Jewelers of America members.

Become a Certified Bench Professional Today!

Jewelers of America Bench Professional Certification is open to all bench jewelers. Visit the "Education" section at www.jewelers.org for more information. Click on the "Certification" page, where you can download the new Program Guide and Certification Application. Jewelers of America members can download the Scholarship Application, by logging into the Members-Only section at the website and visiting "Discounts on Education."

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About Jewelers of America:

Jewelers of America is the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry retail marketplace. Jewelers of America's primary purpose is to improve consumer confidence in the jewelry industry by: serving as a forum for discussion and analysis of issues; playing a leadership role in public, government and industry affairs; advocating professionalism, including high ethical, social and environmental standards; and facilitating members' access to education. For more information about Jewelers of America, visit www.jewelers.org.