GIA CHANGES LAB-GROWN DIAMOND GRADING SERVICE: WHAT TO KNOW

Brecken Branstrator, GIA GG

GIA's new lab-grown diamond grading services officially begin Oct. 1.

The previous system of grading lab-grown diamonds used the same nomenclature as for natural diamonds on a digital-only report. After Sept. 30, GIA's new Laboratory-Grown Diamond Quality Assessment will use descriptive terms "premium" and "standard" to describe lab-grown diamonds, based on an overall assessment of clarity, color, and cut, on a printed report.

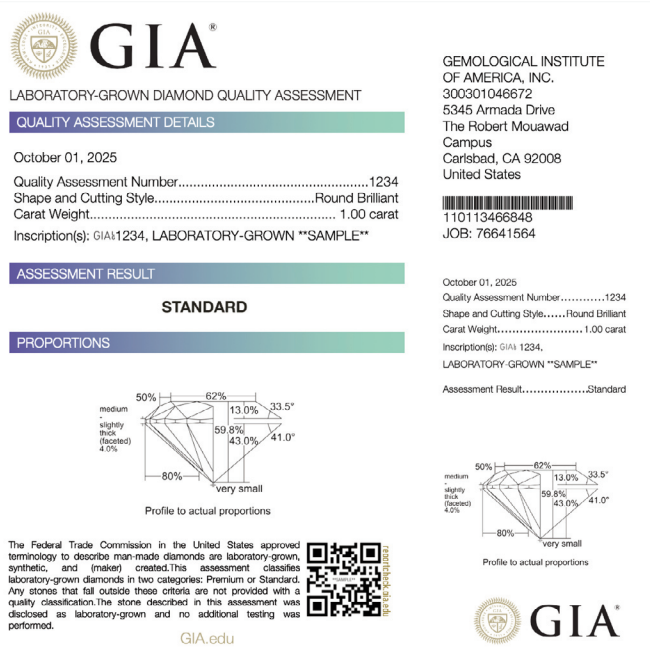
To be classified as "premium," a lab-grown diamond must meet all of the following criteria: VVS clarity or higher; D color; excellent polish and symmetry; and an excellent cut grade for round brilliants.

Lab-grown diamonds that meet any combination of the "premium" criteria and another minimum criterion set will be classified as "standard." Those minimum criteria are: VS clarity; E to J in color; very good polish and very good symmetry (or good for fancy shapes); and a very good cut grade for round brilliants.

Any diamond that doesn't meet all the minimum criteria for "standard" won't receive a designation from GIA.

The minimum size for submission for this GIA service is 0.15 carats. The fee for the GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Quality Assessment is $15 per carat, with a minimum fee of $15. Submissions that don't meet the minimum criteria for assessment will carry a $5 evaluation fee.

GIA said the move is intended to help consumers understand the important differences in the two products' origin, ensuring their confidence and helping them make informed and educated decisions.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LABORATORY-GROWN DIAMOND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

QUALITY ASSESSMENT DETAILS

October 01, 2025

Quality Assessment Number.....1234
Shape and Cutting Style.....Round Brilliant
Carat Weight.....1.00 carat
Inscription(s): GIA 1234, LABORATORY-GROWN **SAMPLE**

ASSESSMENT RESULT

STANDARD

PROPORTIONS

Profile to actual proportions

The Federal Trade Commission in the United States approved terminology to describe man-made diamonds are laboratory-grown, synthetic, and (maker) created.This assessment classifies laboratory-grown diamonds in two categories: Premium or Standard. Any stones that fall outside these criteria are not provided with a quality classification.The stone described in this assessment was disclosed as laboratory-grown and no additional testing was performed.

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October 01, 2025
Quality Assessment Number.....1234
Shape and Cutting Style.....Round Brilliant
Carat Weight.....1.00 carat
Inscription(s): GIA 1234, LABORATORY-GROWN **SAMPLE**
Assessment Result.....Standard

50%
62%
13.0%
33.5°
59.8%
43.0%
41.0°
80%
very small
Profile to actual proportions

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Sample image of the GIA Laboratory-Grown Diamond Assessment document. (Image courtesy of the Gemological Institute of America)

"More than 95% of laboratory-grown diamonds entering the market fall into a very narrow range of color and clarity," Tom Moses, GIA executive vice president and chief laboratory and research officer, said in a June press release first announcing the news. "Because of that, it is no longer relevant for GIA to describe man-made diamonds using the nomenclature created for the continuum of color and clarity of natural diamonds."

GIA is not known for being one of the go-to labs for synthetic diamond grading, so it's not a market-altering move, but it does reflect the current state of the lab-grown market in terms of make-up. Because of

improvements in the manufacturing process, most synthetic diamonds are now of the best quality, meaning, for example, that D color and VVS quality are a lot less rare for synthetics, begging the very question about whether natural and lab-growns should be graded the same when rarity levels are so different between them. (Look for a full analysis on the lab-grown market make-up and prices in GemGuide's November/December 2025 issue.)

HRD Antwerp, meanwhile, announced it will stop grading loose lab-grown diamonds next year. It will continue to research the stones and will still issue reports for jewelry set with lab-grown diamonds, but is instead turning its focus to natural diamonds and the city's role in that space. It's not a huge move for the lab, which told JCK that lab-growns have accounted for only a "mid-single-digit" percentage of its business.

IGI, meanwhile, which is known for being a go-to for lab-grown diamond reports, has indicated it has no plans to change the way it grades the stones, sticking with its standard diamond grading factors for both natural and lab-grown. ◆

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