

EDUCATION

## The RealReal facilitates innovation, research via gemology program

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*The RealReal is collaborating on an educational program on gems. Image credit: The RealReal*

By STAFF REPORTS

Consignment marketplace The RealReal is joining with the University of Arizona to launch a degree program in gemology.

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The endowed chair in gemology at the school's College of Science will focus on growing its research and technology tools, while making coursework available to students at the undergraduate, graduate and PhD levels. This first-of-its-kind program is expected to be mutually beneficial, as The RealReal is poised to gain insights for its gemologists, buyers and sellers.

Gem of an education

For this program, the University of Arizona and The RealReal are partnering with the Gemological Association of Great Britain (Gem-A) to allow students to achieve certification.

Students will take classes in Tucson, AZ, a fitting place due to its proximity to many minerals and colored stones. Along with studying on the university's campus, enrollees will also take classes within labs at the school's Gem and Mineral Museum in the city's downtown.

The intent for this program is to develop new technology and research in the field of gemology.

"As the market leader in the jewelry resale market, we have always invested heavily in gemologists, research and technology," said Julie Wainwright, CEO of The RealReal, in a statement. "Collaborating with University of Arizona on this new degree program will enhance our efforts and the entire industry."

"We have had great success working with University of Arizona gemologists in the past and are extremely impressed with their expertise," she said. "We are excited to share their knowledge with the world."

Based in San Francisco, The RealReal employs more than 60 in-house experts, including gemologists, horologists and authenticators.



*The RealReal employs gemologists. Image credit: The RealReal*

"The RealReal is clearly an innovator in the luxury space," said Joaquin Ruiz, dean, UA College of Science, UA vice president for innovation, executive dean of the Colleges of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

"The University of Arizona is a known innovator in many aspects of retail, forensic sciences and development of novel programs.

"I am thrilled that these two entities who are currently leading in their respective fields are now working together to build this gemology program," he said. "These partnerships are how transformative changes happen."

Educational partnerships are common among luxury brands, as companies look to pass along knowledge while also training future talent.

For instance, Kering-owned fashion house Gucci recently announced a three-year applied research partnership with Milan's Bocconi University.

The fashion house and one of Italy's best universities will collaborate on the Gucci Research Lab project to explore how luxury businesses can effectively evolve in the 21st century's rapidly changing environment. Gucci Research Lab will be managed by a lab director and a supporting research team of four Bocconi University professors ([see story](#)).

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