

# Titles

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## Introduction

For detailed information on the correct use of titles that may be recorded on the personal details page of the passport, and the appropriate observation to be entered, see Observations in Passports.

## Titles of nobility

Titles of nobility are part of a person's name and identity, and for holders who use their title as part of their name for all purposes, the title should be entered in the surname field of the personal details page of their passport with an observation recorded on page 32 of the document.

Titles are recorded for:

- All members of the House of Lords (including Archbishops and Bishops), their wives and families
- Holders of knighthoods and baronetcies and their wives
- Dames of the Realm

Where the title of a peer is different from the family name, he should be able to choose whether to show the title or the family name, on the personal details

page. This will avoid any problems at frontiers, hotels and banks where a peer signs with a title rather than a family name.

A title of nobility should always be checked against the entry either in Debrett's Peerage, the latest edition of Who's Who, or where title has been recently bestowed, the appropriate edition of the London Gazette. Cases of doubt should be referred to a line manager or Headquarters Policy Section.

Applications received from members of the College of Arms or Court of the Lord Lyon, or holders of foreign titles (the use of foreign titles of nobility was discontinued in 1932) should be referred to Headquarters Policy section for guidance on the correct usage of the title and observation to be entered on the passport.

## Foreign Titles

By Royal Warrant of 27 April 1932, the use in England and Wales of foreign titles of nobility was discontinued, and existing warrants licensing the use of such titles were revoked – with certain named exceptions. In Scotland, a foreign title may continue to be recognised and registered by the Lord Lyon. However, IPS maintains the right to provide a policy that is consistent throughout the UK. In consequence, at present a foreign title will not be shown on a British passport unless they hold a valid Royal warrant.

This will affect all those who may quite legitimately hold a foreign title, but which is not recognised in the UK. The personal details page of the passport will only show their forenames, family names and place and date of birth.

However, an observation indicating that 'THE HOLDER IS ALSO KNOWN AS (foreign title)' will be included in the passport.

## Manorial titles

A Manorial title (i.e. Lord of the Manor) is not a title of nobility and may be bought and sold by the owner of the property to which the title refers. The Lord Lyon King of Arms has also confirmed that for Scottish Lairds it is not necessary for the words "Laird of" to appear on any part of a passport. Requests from applicants and passport holders for Manorial titles and Scottish Lairds to be included in their passports may be accepted providing documentary evidence is submitted, and recorded in the passport with the observation e.g.:

- **THE HOLDER IS THE LORD OF THE MANOR OF.....**

## Scottish Feudal Baronies

On 28 November 2004, The Abolition of Feudal Tenure etc (Scotland) Act 2000 came into force. It abolished the feudal system of land tenure on feudal

baronies. The retained dignity of baron is no longer attached to land, it is a floating dignity which may be bought and sold as incorporeal heritable property and may be bequeathed by will. Baronies are not registerable in the Land Register and deeds relating to them are no longer recorded in the Register of Sasines automatically. As a result the transfer of dignity is no longer bound to be registered anywhere. However, for the first time, 'Burke's Peerage and Gentry' includes a complete list of Scottish Feudal Barons. This can be viewed on line at [www.burkes-peerage](http://www.burkes-peerage). Where the applicant provides evidence that the Lord Lyon has recognised their feudal barony, or the title is included in Burke's Peerage this may be accepted.

The correct form will be for their surname to change to include the territorial designation as part of their surname thus:

### Passports

Surname: Doe of .....(territorial designation).....  
Forename: John  
Observation: The holder is John Doe, Baron of .....

### Presumed titles

There are companies that change an individual's name to include a title. Legal advice has been sought on this issue and the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) policy is based on the advice received.

It is clear an individual can call themselves any name they wish providing is not for a fraudulent purpose. However, it is believed there is no legal basis for a person to change their title: e.g. from Mr to Lord. It follows, therefore, that applicants have the right to change their name, for example, from Mr John Smith to Mr Sir John Smith and adopt "Sir" as an additional forename. But they cannot change their title from Mr John Smith to Sir John Smith.

As there is a right for an applicant to change their name by deed poll, the presumed title can appear on the personal details page of the passport as a forename with an observation being entered relating to the name change. An observation is required in any case where there is the potential for any name change to mislead; this includes reference to a title and to maintain the integrity of the passport.

In cases where an applicant has adopted a description of a title of nobility as a forename the observation to be entered is:

- THE REFERENCE TO ..... IS TO THE HOLDER'S NAME AND NOT TO THE HOLDER'S TITLE.(e.g. LORD; SIR; BARON; ETC.)

This observation should automatically be placed in the passport of any such applicant and there is no need to contact them unless the application form is completed in a way that indicates the customer believes they are applying for

a change of title rather than of name. In these circumstances the applicant should be advised of how the data will be displayed in the passport and of the observation that will be entered in the document.

The above observation should also be used in all renewal applications where the children's and adult's birth names are similarly misleading, for example where names on birth certificates are registered as Princess, Prince, Earl, Duke, etc.

When dealing with applicants, it is imperative staff make no comments that could be construed as defamatory regarding the companies concerned. It should be noted that in the past, holders of bought, or styled, titles have been advised that they should write to the Manorial Society of Great Britain for confirmation of the right to use and be known by the title. This society is a private company in direct competition with many other organisations that deal in the buying and selling of titles. Under **no** circumstances should an applicant be advised to contact the Manorial Society of Great Britain for confirmation, unless the title has been bought from the Society.

## **Professional titles**

Professional titles and forms of address such as Doctor, Judge, Ministers of Religion, Professor, MP, MEP, and QC may on request be entered as an observation in the passport.

## **Justice of the Peace**

Requests by holders appointed Justices of the Peace to enter JP as an observation on their passport should be accepted.

## **Honours and decorations**

Honours and military decorations may be accepted as an observation where the applicant has recorded them on the application form or requests their inclusion in a letter accompanying the application.

**NOTE 1: Some honours are prefixed with a title (e.g. Sir John Smith KBE)**

Any 'honours' added by a change of name deed should not be included. Please see Titles – Presumed Titles and Names – Unacceptable or unusual names on passports – Presumed Titles for further information.

## **Academic and professional qualifications**

Other than members of the legal profession appointed Queen's Counsel and engineers who hold the qualification "Eur Ing" (European Engineer), requests for professional and academic qualifications to be recorded in a passport should be refused.