

# Academic titles and other titles

On first mention, instead of placing the title in front of the person's name (where it becomes an honorific), place the title right after the name and offset with a comma, or pair of commas if surrounded by other text. Don't capitalize titles unless referring to named, endowed positions.

*Denise Green '07, assistant professor in the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design*

*Scott Emr, director of the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Institute for Cell and Molecular Biology*

*Martha E. Pollack, president of Cornell University*

*Kent Kleinman, Gale and Ira Drukier Dean in the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning*

*Alice Fulton, Ann S. Bowers Professor in English*

This recommendation also applies to non-academic titles.

*Zach Iscol '01, former captain in the US Marine Corps*

*Subutai Ahmad '86, P '16, vice president of research at Numenta*

In running text, use articles “a,” “an,” or “the” in front of the title. Only use “the” if the position or title is one of a kind and held by one person at a time.

*Adeolu Ademoyo, a senior lecturer in Yoruba language and culture, is deeply interested in African philosophy.*

*Ross Brann, the Milton R. Konvitz Professor of Judeo-Islamic Studies, was named a Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow.*

## Avoiding titles as honorifics

In general, avoid honorifics in front of names, because you'll have to keep repeating the honorific on subsequent mentions along with the last name. This can get cumbersome and hard to sustain.

Honorifics can also pose other challenges: If an individual is both a professor and a dean or a director, which honorific should you prioritize?

By offsetting the title as recommended above, the title becomes a matter of fact.

## Use of “doctor”

To avoid confusion, don't use “doctor” to refer to people with doctorate degrees. Reserve the term for physicians, dentists, and other specialists in the medical field. Again, avoid using it as an honorific.

## Use of “emeritus” or “emerita”

These terms are official designations and do not simply mean “retired.” They take these forms: “emeritus” (masculine, singular); “emerita” (feminine, singular); “emeriti” (masculine or feminine, plural); “emeritae” (feminine, plural).

*Every summer, in New York City, Franci Blassberg '75, JD '77 and Karen Rupert Keating '76 hold a small gathering for illustrious Cornell alumnae. The trustees emeritae take turns hosting the event in their homes.*