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Labour nominee for Lords lied about having a PhD

Dame Ann Limb, chair of the King's Foundation, called herself a doctor

David Shipley |

[Gabriel Pogrund](#)

, Whitehall Editor

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Dame Ann Limb has given £50,000 to the Labour Party

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The chair of the King's flagship charity, nominated for a peerage by Sir Keir Starmer this month, has admitted making false claims about her academic qualifications.

Dame Ann Limb is an education specialist who runs the King's Foundation, Charles's non-profit organisation that manages several of his country houses and promotes his philosophy of "harmony" between humanity and nature.

A Labour donor who has given £50,000 to the party, she was the first female chairman of the Scouts and still chairs the charitable arm of Lloyds Bank — roles cited when Starmer included her on his list of political peerages a fortnight ago. She was previously appointed OBE for "services to education" and made a dame in 2022.



Limb with Sir Keir Starmer

However, the 72-year-old has now admitted to inaccurately claiming that she had a doctorate from the University of Liverpool and a master's degree from a separate institution that said it had never offered such a qualification.

On a CV on her website, Limb describes herself as “Dr”. It states that her qualifications include “PhD University of Liverpool”, awarded in 1978, and an MA (with distinction) from the Institute of Linguists two years earlier.

She has regularly described herself as having an academic doctorate. In a talk at the Open University in 2018 she said: “I went from part-time teacher to, having just got my PhD, principal of Milton Keynes College within a decade … 1976 to 1986.”

On her website she says she began her career in teaching “whilst undertaking a PhD at the University of Liverpool”, with other biographies saying she did so while “completing a PhD”.



Limb listed her academic credentials during a talk at the Open University

At the [Athenaeum](#), the London private members’ club of which she was chairman, she has the letters “MA” and “PhD” after her name, according to the internal members’ roll. She holds neither qualification.

Limb, who was raised in Manchester and will be known as Baroness Limb of Moss Side, did study at Liverpool University, but as a French undergraduate.

She received a BA in 1975, three years before she repeatedly claimed to have received the PhD. She now says that she started, but did not complete, a doctorate.

She did not receive a degree from the Institute of Linguists, now known as the Chartered Institute of Linguists. Its spokesman said: “We have never awarded MAs.”



Limb was announced this month as a new Labour peer

In response to queries, Limb said: “Just to be completely upfront and honest about it, I never completed my PhD at Liverpool University.”

She said she “undertook” a French academic qualification called a “*maîtrise de lettre* — which is the equivalent of an MA”, at a university in France, but did not say if she completed it. She added: “But that wasn’t related to the Institute of Linguists … I own that, it’s the truth, and I have no issue.”

She continued: “I did, I do use the word, well, I have used the word ‘Doctor’ ... because I have got several honorary PhDs and that’s been clear to me that they’re honorary.

“Perhaps my own website is not very helpful. I don’t pay a lot of attention to it, but if there’s anything misleading ... on that I’m very happy to correct [it]”.

Limb’s biography states she has received honorary degrees from the Open University, the University of West London, and Anglia Ruskin, Bedfordshire and Manchester Metropolitan universities. These are conferred by higher education institutes to honour someone’s contribution to an academic field or society in general. Holders do not customarily call themselves “Dr”.

Limb, who lives in Milton Keynes, has previously topped lists of [influential LGBT figures](#) in the public sector.



Charles recognised Limb’s services with a damehood in 2023

VICTORIA JONES/PA

Lying on a CV to secure a job can amount to a criminal offence under the Fraud Act. It is not known whether Limb used documents referencing the MA and PhD in applications for any of her existing roles. She did not respond when asked.

It is understood that she has been challenged on her description of her academic credentials in the past. When one person privately wrote to her asking questions about the PhD in July 2024, she did not respond in detail, but quietly uploaded another, newer CV. This removed references to the doctorate but still included the MA. The original CV is still available, but less prominently displayed.

The disclosures are awkward for the King's Foundation, which appointed Limb as a trustee in 2021 as part of an attempt to restore good governance and standards at the body. It had been embroiled in a "cash for honours" scandal over fundraising that prompted a police investigation and the [departure of its chairman and chief executive](#).

She has served as chair of the board of trustees since January 1, meaning she is responsible for the foundation's compliance with charity law. Its president is [Charles](#), who sets the overall vision, and its vice-president is Earl Snowdon, the King's cousin.

A source at the King's Foundation pointed to a recent announcement saying that, as a result of her peerage, Limb would step down as chairman of the charity next year.