

Beware of SCAM conferences!

An alert from your CCFA PD committee

Before you decide to register for a conference - whether online or in-person - ensure the authenticity and reputation of the event. Predatory and fake conferences can be extremely deceptive, but they are set up to scam people out of registration fees and their numbers are on the rise!

The companies organizing predatory conferences are experts at what they do. Often the events do exist, but when a participant arrives at the venue, they find it does not live up to what was advertised. Or sometimes the conference is not happening at all. You may click on the Zoom link for an online conference and nobody is there. These conferences are set up to look legitimate, and their websites, keynote speakers, and venues make them seem like the real thing. But with some digital digging, you can save yourself from being taken in.

Some red flags to watch for:

1. Unclear who the organizers are or it is difficult to verify the organization's credentials
2. Overly ambitious title (e.g., 'international' or 'global') Scientific programme that is very broad, making it difficult to discern a clear focus
3. Unreasonably high and/or non-refundable fees
4. Standalone or poorly developed website with spelling and grammatical errors
5. Mismatch between the profile of the conference and the sponsors involved
6. Unresponsive to your questions
7. Your credit card gets declined

Tips to identify a fake or predatory conference (from [Four Waves](#))

1. Research the organizer

Are you familiar with the event organizer? Some fakes set up websites with very similar names as reputable organizations. Have you worked with them or read their work in the past? If not, learn as much as you can about them before you attach yourself to their event. Google search the organizer's name plus "review", or look them up on social media.

2. Look at the event focus

Consider what you've learned about conferences from the ones you've been to in the past. Is the way this event organized inline with others? Is the program focused on a specific area, or is it applicable to a wide range of subjects? A broad program is a warning because an event with a loose focus can be applicable to many fields, attracting more submissions and registration fees.

3. Consider the registration fee

Is the amount being charged to attend or present at this conference in line with the fees you'd normally expect to pay to attend a conference? If it is significantly higher than what you'd expect to pay it's a major red flag. Search out other conferences, talk to colleagues in your field, and compare the fees associated with those.

4. Evaluate the event website

Does the URL look suspicious? Is the website well built and well organized? Often the organizers of fake conferences attempt to add legitimacy to their websites by adding a subdomain that specifically mentions the conference focus in the URL rather than a URL that fits with the rest of their website. Legitimate conference websites link back to recognized academic institutions and research organizations. Predatory conference sites usually have very few linkages and partnerships with legitimate organizations. Is the content error-free? Many companies that organize predatory conferences do not employ native English speakers to write their website making it likely you'll find grammatical errors throughout.

5. Verify who the sponsors are

Do the event sponsors make sense considering the conference focus? For example, is IBM listed as a sponsor for a literature conference? If so, that's a red flag. Many fake conferences simply list big-name sponsors that are unconnected to the topics being discussed.

6. Ask them questions

Reach out to the organizer to ask a few questions. Are they responsive, or are they hard to reach? Organizers of legitimate academic conferences should be collaborative, easy to reach, and eager to answer your questions. Contact them and ask about the event timeline, expectations placed on presenters, and their peer-review and application evaluation process.

Examples of fake conferences. Can you spot anything wrong with them or might you be fooled too? PLEASE spread the word among your colleagues. Whenever you come across a fake conference please tell others and forward the information to the [CCFA office](#) so we can try to keep a list.

- [BIT Congress Inc](#)
- [Conference Series LTD](#)
- [4th International Congress on Addictive Behavior and Dual Diagnosis](#)
- [OMICS International](#)
- [W.A.S.E.T.](#) (World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology)
- [6th World Congress of Education](#)
- [9th International Nurse Education Conference](#)
- [6th World Nursing Conference](#)
- Precision Conference Solutions (PCS)
- [Eurasia Conferences](#)