

How do I...

AVOID PREDATORY CONFERENCES AND JOURNALS

WHAT IS A PREDATORY CONFERENCE OR JOURNAL?

A predatory conference or journal is a fake or low-quality publishing opportunity. They may be presented as legitimate scholarly venues, but their practices prioritise profit over scholarship.

HOW WOULD I ENCOUNTER ONE?

You will most commonly encounter predatory outlets through unsolicited invitations (usually email). Graduate researchers are often targeted because they are keen to publish/present their research but still learning how to judge quality and legitimacy.

HOW DO I SPOT A FAKE INVITATION?

Common red flags in fake invitations/websites include:

- Flattery such as “Dear Professor/highly esteemed researcher”
- No clear reason you were invited
- Unrealistically broad or generic scope
- Grand claims about prestige without evidence
- Missing or vague contact details, affiliations, or physical address
- No credible local organising committee (e.g. conference run in Australia without Australian academic presence)
- Vague, unrealistic peer review timeframes (real peer review usually takes several months)
- Impossible logistics (e.g., the same event running simultaneously in multiple cities with identical webpages)
- Guaranteed publication add-ons for a fee

WHAT'S AT RISK IF I FALL PREY?

- Losing money and time (registration fees, preparation, travel, and attendance costs), often coupled with feeling scammed or demoralised
- Opportunity costs: money and effort spent on predatory venues means missing genuine conferences where you could present, network, and build collaborations
- Loss of intellectual capital if you share research insights with unscrupulous outlets
- Reputational damage if predatory outlets appear on your CV

HOW DO I AVOID THEM?

- Protect your reputation and intellectual property; don't share unpublished work or sign over publishing rights before checking with your supervisor.
- Pause before responding to invitations; treat unsolicited invitations as unverified until checked. Delete invitations that pressure fast action or try to bypass normal scholarly networks.
- Forward suspicious invitations to your [Faculty Librarian](#) and supervisors to verify authenticity.
- Use external resources for help identifying predatory behaviour, e.g. [TEQSA's Predatory Conferences A-Z](#), and [Beall's List of Predatory Journals and Conferences](#)

WHAT IF I'VE ALREADY AGREED TO PUBLISH OR PRESENT?

- **Contain the risk:** Do not share more materials or personal details until you have checked the outlet. Save all emails, invoices, webpages, and terms as evidence.
- **Clarify your commitment:** confirm what you have agreed to (abstract vs full paper; any publishing-rights transfer) and any refund rules.
- **Withdraw in writing if it's a conference:** email a clear withdrawal and request written confirmation; request your name/details be removed from the program/website.
- **Protect your rights if it's a journal:** if not yet published, send a formal withdrawal stating you do not grant permission to publish and request release of any rights you may have signed over; don't pay any processing/fast-track/withdrawal fees.
- **Seek help from your support network:** involve your supervisors and [Faculty Librarian](#) to advise on next steps.
- **Reduce future exposure:** be cautious with unsolicited invitations that pressure fast action, and verify editorial boards/committees and indexing/metrics claims through trusted sources

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