

Introducing Think. Check. Attend.

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[Think. Check. Attend.](#) is an initiative that guides researchers and scholars when deciding to attend a conference or submit an abstract and present their research. The three-step approach encourages academics to Think about the problem posed by predatory or substandard conferences, Check the conference against a set of criteria designed to highlight attributes of good and bad quality conferences, and Attend only if the conference adheres to the criteria consistent with a legitimate conference.

This initiative is provided by [Knowledge E](#) and has been endorsed by [Think. Check. Submit.](#) as a sister initiative.

A common forum for discussing and exploring research findings is a scholarly conference, and consequently organising and hosting conferences is an important and rapidly growing activity that aims to gather researchers and interested parties for networking, exchanging ideas and presenting research findings. Indeed, conference organising has grown into a profitable business and along with it comes a broad range of organisers; these organisers range from those providing high quality established conferences to those who, knowingly or unknowingly, mislead academics into presenting their papers at events that lack the expected academic rigour or editorial control and fall short of common ethical practice. Therefore, the need for a guide to distinguish the trusted from the misleading event has become imperative. The purpose of the Think. Check. Attend initiative is to help and guide academics to screen and identify appropriate conferences to attend.

The checklist

Researchers are encouraged to run through a simple checklist covering characteristics of a legitimate conference, and if the answers to too many points on this list are negative, then it might not be the conference for you. In the Check section, researchers are guided through a number of parameters with a series of 'Yes/No' questions that will very quickly begin to clarify the value of the conference in their mind.

Organisers & sponsors:

- Are you aware of the society or the association organising this conference?
- Can you easily identify the venue of the conference?
- Is it the first time that this conference is being held?
- Have you or your colleagues attended this conference before?
- Is it clear what fees will be charged (conference fee, registration fees, etc) and would these be waived if you are accepted as a speaker?
- Are any of the sponsors involved in the conference?

- Are you aware of any of them, especially with industry-related fields such as engineering & biomedical research?
- Did you check the conference website? Is all the information (such as the attendance fees, submission date, conference date, editorial committee, program details and venue) presented in a proper way?
- Have you read any papers from this conference's proceedings before?

Agenda & editorial committee

- Is there clear information about the timeline and agenda for the conference?
- Do the scope and objectives of the conference fit your field and core interest or not?
- Have you heard of the keynote speakers?
- Is the editorial committee listed on the website?
- Have you heard of the editorial committee members?
- Is the committee clear about editorial control over presentations and the type of peer-review it uses?

Conference proceedings

- Is the organising committee clear about where the proceedings will be published?
- Does the conference make it clear which indexing services it can guarantee the published proceedings and to which indexers will it submit the proceedings for evaluation?
- Is the publisher of the proceedings a member of a recognised industry initiative such as COPE, OASPA, DOAJ?

Also refer to the [Think. Check. Submit.](#) checklist for more details about publishing in the right journal.

Nowadays, the scholarly community faces an increasing number of invitations to present at or attend conferences. Some of these are respectable academic events, while others are misleading, exaggerated or have even been described as ‘fake’. Think. Check. Attend. provides guidelines that help researchers to differentiate between an authentic conference and the ones they should avoid. In this initiative, we help scholars to recognise the characteristics of a trusted conference to attend and submit their abstracts through a number of steps and a check list. Simply following these steps will reassure potential presenters and attendees that they will only attend the most appropriate conferences.

Get involved

Publishers can add [Think. Check. Attend.](#) to their author guidelines pages and spread this information by publishing blog posts. They can also use the checklist as reference when evaluating publishing proposals and potential opportunities to publish conference proceedings as a journal special issue or standalone publication.

Researchers can use the checklist when evaluating which conference to attend and present their research.

Librarians can share this with staff members and add it to the library resources.

These views are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect the views of UKSG.



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