

Freshers Fraudsters: How to spot a 'fake' event

[Andrew Young](#) talks you through the ways to distinguish between 'fake' Freshers Week events and legitimate ones before it's too late

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Image: Cabaret Voltaire

Every year thousands of freshers descend upon universities across the country ready to begin the next chapter of their lives. This chapter will usually begin with the (in)famous string of talks, mingling and partying known as Freshers Week. For some it will be the best week of their life, a blissful high before the reality of university work kicks in; for others it might be a quieter seven days of getting to know your flatmates. It is a sad reality, however, that for many students up and down the UK, Freshers can instead be an alarmingly expensive week of scams. With freshers joining large Facebook groups and eager not to miss out, it is becoming all-too-easy for unofficial companies to make money off of unsuspecting first years. York is one of the cities affected by the problem.

Often these events will be created on Facebook before the official YUSU-sanctioned events are, helping to give freshers the impression that these are in fact the more legitimate events. YUSU say that every year, new students lose money on these 'fake' events that are either poorly organised, hardly attended, or in some cases do not exist at all.

University of York student Gabrielle Whittle, now going into her third year, said, "About 2 weeks before I started university I spent money on an event my flat mates and I found online called 'Freshers Initiation'. When it came closer to the event we found out it was fake and had to buy tickets to a different one which was hosted by the University."



Thankfully, if freshers are wise to these illegitimate nights out, then they can actually be fairly easy to spot. This is particularly so as YUSU have issued a list of tell-tale signs to help incoming freshers spot 'fake' events and save themselves some money. The first thing to remember is that all official events will have **the University, YUSU or your college's logo** on the branding. Generally, the majority of your Freshers Week events will be in your college, with some university-wide YUSU events thrown in too. The events may say, "We're from UCAS/Student Guide etc." but without an official logo, it's not an official event.

Next, **watch out for generic branding**. Many unofficial events will have pictures and videos of young people partying in clubs, but they are stock images, showing nothing of what the actual event looks like. It is also worth keeping an eye on the **location**; an event that is held simply in "York" should ring some alarm bells. Look for the location of a nightclub or student bar instead.

"F*ck me, it's freshers." Many a student may have said these words, but an official event certainly will not. These events are one of the most common 'fakes' that you'll find online, but YUSU have made it clear that they will **never use inappropriate language in branding**. This is not the only way in which an event's name can give it away as unofficial. Sometimes 'fake' events will **change their name one or more times**, so watch out for this when giving your money away.

Lastly, it is important not to panic. **"Nearly sold out!"** posts from events are a common way of pressuring freshers into buying a ticket. College freshers tickets rarely sell out, so don't believe an event that does not look official, just because it tells you that you need to hurry.

Watching out for these signs should help protect freshers from losing their time and money on 'fake' events. It is important to make sure the event is legitimate *before* buying the ticket, as once money has been spent there is nothing YUSU can do to help. If freshers are in doubt about the legitimacy of an event, they can ask their STYCs, or email event@yusu.org to check. If anyone has been affected themselves then spreading the word will help new freshers avoid making the same mistake.



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