



**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

**CAREERS
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How to Spot Scam Job Adverts: A Guide for University of London Students

If you are interested in using your analytical skills to help organisations gain insights that will enable them to become more successful, then data science may be for you. Whether you're a Career Starter, Career Developer or Career Changer, this global career guide gives you an overview to this relatively new area of the computer science industry.

1. Unrealistic Salary and Benefits

What to Watch For?

Job adverts that promise unusually high salaries for the role and sector, rapid promotions, or extraordinary benefits that seem too good to be true.

Why?

Scammers use overly attractive offers to lure people into sharing personal information or paying upfront fees. Always research the standard salary range for the role you are applying to. You can do this by looking at reputable job websites, or our sector guides on the UoLCS Virtual Learning Environment which have links to different vacancy sources:

<https://learn.london.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=2§ion=26>

2. Poorly Written Job Descriptions

What to Watch For?

Adverts with lots of spelling or grammatical errors, vague or limited job descriptions and person specifications, or inconsistent information.

Why?

Legitimate companies usually ensure that job postings are professionally written. A lack of attention to detail may indicate a scammer who quickly put together a fake job listing.

3. Unclear Company Information

What to Watch For?

Limited or no information about the company, missing contact details, a slightly different email domain to their website, or use of a personal email address (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail) rather than a corporate email.

Why?

Most genuine employers provide a clear description of the company and use professional email addresses. A lack of verifiable company details could mean the job advert is fraudulent.

4. Requests for Personal or Financial Information

What to Watch For?

Adverts that ask for sensitive information such as your national ID number, bank details, or to pay for background checks, training, or other services upfront.

Why?

Legitimate employers will never ask for personal or financial details during the application process, nor will they require payment for any aspect of recruitment – including for purchasing or shipping equipment on your behalf to enable you to do the job.

5. Unsolicited Job Offers

What to Watch For?

Offers for jobs you did not apply for or recruiters who contact you unexpectedly, especially through informal channels like social media or messaging apps.

Why?

Scammers often send unsolicited job offers in bulk. Be cautious of any job offer that appears in your inbox without prior engagement. Also, if a recruiter contacts you directly on LinkedIn make sure you check their profile carefully and their website to make sure they are legitimate.

6. Pressure to Act Quickly

What to Watch For?

Adverts that urge you to apply immediately, or offers that require a quick decision, often within 24-48 hours.

Why?

Scammers use urgency to prevent you from thinking critically or doing research into the role. Legitimate employers understand that good candidates may need time to consider an offer.

7. Suspicious Interviews or Communication Methods

What to Watch For?

Requests to conduct interviews via unconventional methods like messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram) instead of professional platforms, or to join interviews via video calls without notice.

Why?

Legitimate companies typically conduct interviews in person, over the phone, or via a recognised video conferencing tool. Informal or unusual interview methods may suggest a scam.

8. No Job Location or Remote-Only Opportunities

What to Watch For?

Not all remote roles are a fraud and there has been an increase in remote opportunities since the Covid pandemic. However, job adverts that do not specify a job location or state that the role is entirely remote with little to no contact with the hiring manager or team need to be treated with caution.

Why?

While remote work is common, jobs that do not mention any location or office details can be suspicious. Verify whether the company has a legitimate physical presence.

9. Check for Company Legitimacy

What to Watch For?

Research the company's website, LinkedIn profile, and employee reviews on platforms like Glassdoor.

Why?

If you cannot find any credible online presence or the website appears unprofessional, the job may be a

scam. Look for inconsistencies in the company's digital footprint.

10. Requests for Trial Work or Unpaid Tasks

What to Watch For?

Being asked to complete extensive "trial" work or assignments that require considerable time and effort before an official offer is made.

Why?

While some companies do ask for small tasks to assess skills, extensive unpaid work is not standard practice.

Additional Tips for Staying Safe

- **Use Reputable Job Platforms:** Stick to established job portals and career services. University of London's Career Service, LinkedIn, and recognised job boards are safer choices. We have a list of job portals on our

sector and regional guides on the UoLCS Virtual Learning Environment.

- **Trust Your Instincts:** If something feels off, trust your instincts. It is better to miss a potential opportunity than fall victim to fraud.
- **Report Suspicious Activity:** If you encounter a suspicious job advert, report it to the platform where you found it and inform the University of London Career Service so we can make sure others are not affected.

Disclaimer

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