

Alexander (Alex) Weiss

Contact Details

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Personal Details

Date of Birth: 20 June 1971
Place of Birth: Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Citizenship: USA

Positions Held

2024–present	Director, Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes, Lincoln Park Zoo
2019–2020	Visiting Professor, Wildlife Research Center, Kyoto University
2024–present	Honorary Professor, Department of Psychology, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, The University of Edinburgh
2010–2023	Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, The University of Edinburgh
2005–2010	Lecturer, Department of Psychology, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, The University of Edinburgh

Education & Training

2002–2005	Post-doctoral Fellow, National Institute on Aging, NIH
1996–2002	University of Arizona, Ph.D. Psychology
1993–1996	California State University, Long Beach, MA Comparative Psychology
1989–1993	California State University, Los Angeles, BA Psychology

Research Interests

Comparative psychology

Personality

Lifecourse epidemiology

Subjective well-being/covitality

Behavior genetics

Multivariate statistics

Recognition of Research

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| 2023 | “Personality traits, rank attainment, and siring success throughout the lives of male chimpanzees of Gombe National Park” recognized as one of the top 5 most viewed articles in anthropology published in 2023 in <i>PeerJ</i> |
| 2019 | “Studying primate personality in zoos: implications for the management, welfare and conservation of great apes” identified as one of the top downloaded articles published in 2017-2018 in <i>International Zoo Yearbook</i> |
| 2014 | Elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology |
| 2013 | Fulker Award for best paper in <i>Behavior Genetics</i> |
| 2012 | “Evidence for a ‘midlife crisis’ in great apes consistent with the U-shape in human well-being” identified as one of the 20 most-read papers online during November in <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America</i> |
| 2012 | “All too human? Chimpanzee and orang-utan personalities are not anthropomorphic projections” identified as the second most downloaded article in <i>Animal Behaviour</i> within a 90 day period |
| 2009 | Paper “A cross-setting study of chimpanzee (<i>Pan troglodytes</i>) personality structure and development: Zoological Parks and Yerkes National Primate Research Center” recognized by the <i>American Journal of Primatology</i> as being one of the five most frequently cited papers of 2007 |
| 1998 | Thompson Award for Outstanding Research by an Associate Member of the Behavior Genetics Association |

Recognition of Teaching

2019	Edinburgh University Students' Association Student-Staff Partnership Award
2011, 2012	Nominated for Edinburgh University Students' Association Teaching Award
2009–2011, 2013	Highest rated Year 2 Psychology module

Affiliations

2022–present	Animal Welfare Research Network
2018–2019	Great Ape Welfare Group
2014–present	International Collaborator, Kyoto University Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science
2012–2018	Research Member, Medical Research Council Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology

Outputs

Articles

Edited Books and Issues of Journals

Contributed Chapters

Activities at Conferences Since 2005

Invited Presentations

Symposia Organized

Presentations

Invited Seminars

2025	Northwestern University, Personality, Development & Health Seminar
2025	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior Seminar
2023	University of Stirling's Universities Federation for Animal Welfare Guest Lecture, Stirling, United Kingdom
2023	Seminar, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University, Japan
2023	Wildlife Research Center Seminar, Kyoto University, Japan
2023	Animal Behavior Graduate Group Winter Seminar Series, University of California, Davis
2022	Evaluation Group for the Analysis of Data, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
2021	Human Behavior and Evolution Society Roundtable Series (Online) ↗
2020	Graduate School of Education, Kyoto University, Japan
2019	Wolf Science Center, Domestication Lab, Konrad Lorenz Institute of Ethology, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria
2017	Department of Animal and Aquacultural Sciences, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway
2017	German Primate Center, Göttingen, Germany
2017	Institute of Biology, University of Leiden, The Netherlands
2016	Department of Psychology, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
2016	The Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago, IL
2015	RIKEN Institute, Kobe, Japan
2015	Wildlife Research Center Seminar, Kyoto University, Japan
2014	National Evolutionary Synthesis Center, Durham, NC
2014	Center for Cognitive Neuroscience, Duke University, Durham, NC
2012	Wildlife Research Center of Kyoto University, Japan
2012	Center for International Collaboration and Advanced Studies in Primatology, Kyoto University Primate Research Institute, Inuyama, Japan
2012	Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University, Japan
2009	Department of Psychology, Cambridge University, United Kingdom
2008	Institute for Evolutionary Biology, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

2008	Department of Psychology, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom
2008	Department of Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom
2007	Faculty of Applied Biological Sciences, Gifu University, Japan
2007	Kyoto University Primate Research Institute, Inuyama, Japan
2007	Department of Psychology, Tokyo University, Japan
2007	Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom
2005	Department of Psychology, University of Stirling, United Kingdom
2005	Department of Psychology, Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom

Public Engagement

2020	Nerd Nite Kansai 15 (Online) ↗
2016	University of the Third Age Science Group, Edinburgh, UK
2005	Support for African/Asian Great Apes 8, Osaka, Japan

Funding

2019	Kyoto University Visiting Professorship (£49,000)
2019	Research Excellence Framework Enhancement Award (£2920)
2014	Kyoto University Primate Research Institute (£1000)
2014	NSF National Evolutionary Synthesis Center Sabbatical Scholarship (\$46,142)
2014	Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation Small Grant (£1000)
2012	Royal Society of Edinburgh International Exchange Programme (£3000)
2012	University of Edinburgh School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences Innovation Initiative Grant (£2822)
2012	Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation Small Grant (£650)
2010	Carnegie Trust of the Universities of Scotland Small Grant (£2500)
2009	NIH Service Contract (\$15,000)
2007	The University of Edinburgh Development Trust Small Project Award (£1300)
2007	Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation Small Grant (£1000)
2007	The British Academy Overseas Conference Grant (£700)

Teaching

Undergraduate

Inferential statistics laboratory
 Primate behavior
 Research methods laboratory
 Invertebrate psychology laboratory
 Year 1 Animal learning
 Year 2 Differential psychology
 Year 2 Abnormal behavior

Year 3 Multiple regression and the general linear model
Year 3 Scale construction and factor analysis
Year 3 Group project
Year 4 Basic tendencies of personality

Postgraduate

Statistics laboratory
Strong inference and the method of multiple working hypotheses
The linear model as a data analytic tool
Intraclass correlations
Multitrait-multimethod analysis
Univariate statistics using R
Multivariate statistics using R
Seminar in personality

Supervision

Postdoctoral fellows

2008–2010 Ulrika Alm Bergvall, Ph.D.

Doctoral students

Primary supervisor

2018–2024	Jolène van der Mescht
2015–2021	Linnea Lyckberg
2015–2020	Conor Smith
2013–2017	Drew M. Altschul
2013–2017	Lucille Bellegarde
2013–2017	Lauren M. Robinson
2012–2016	Vanessa A. D. Wilson
2011–2015	Iva Čukić
2009–2013	Marieke C. Gartner
2008–2012	Mark J. Adams

Secondary supervisor

2017–2023	Qian (Yvonne) Ma
2015–2018	Roxanne Hawkins
2015–2017	Judith Okely
2011–2015	Caimei Liu
2008–2011	Gary Lewis

MSc students

21 in Psychology, The University of Edinburgh
1 in Applied Animal Behaviour and Welfare, Scotland's Rural College
1 in Biology, Leiden University, The Netherlands

Service

Lincoln Park Zoo

2024– Research Committee

University of Edinburgh

2016–2019 Postgraduate Advisor in Psychology
2012–2014 College Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Committee
2008–2016 Director of the MSc in the Psychology of Individual Differences
2008–2013 Edinburgh Compute and Data Facility Oversight by Researchers Group
2008–2019 School and Department Postgraduate Committee
2008–2012 Computing Committee
2008–2012 Colloquium Committee
2008–2009 Research Day Committee
2007–2012 Health and Safety Committee
2006–2008 Staff-Student Liaison Committee

Other organizations

2024–present Chair, American Society of Primatologists Zoo Working Group
2024 Search Committee for *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*
2012–2024 Living Links to Human Evolution and Budungo Research Centre Consortium Board
2007–2008 Judge for Primate Society of Great Britain’s 2008 Napier Medal for Best Primatology PhD competition

Journals

Editorial work

2021–present Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences (Editorial Board)
2013–present Journal of Comparative Psychology (Consulting Editor)
2015–2020 Psychology and Aging (Consulting Editor)
2015–2018 Animal Behaviour (Associate Editor)
2013–2018 Applied Animal Behavioural Sciences (Editorial Advisory Board)
2012–2015 Journal of Behavioral Medicine (Editorial Board)
2010–2014 Frontiers in Personality Science and Individual Differences (Consulting Editor)
2009–2015 Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Consulting Editor)

Ad hoc peer review

American Journal of Primatology	Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences
Animal Behaviour	Journal of Experimental Psychology: General
Annals of Epidemiology	Journal of Health, Nutrition, and Aging
Behavior Genetics	Journal of Health Psychology
Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology	Journal of Personality
Behavioral Medicine	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Behavioural Processes	Journal of Psychosomatic Research
Biological Reviews	Journal of Research in Personality
Biological Psychiatry	Nature Communications
Biology Letters	New England Journal of Medicine
Brain, Behavior, and Immunity	PeerJ
British Journal of Health Psychology	Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society
British Journal of Psychology	B – Biological Sciences
Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Neuroscience	PLOS Computational Biology
Current Biology	PLOS ONE
Developmental Psychology	Primates
Drug and Alcohol Dependence	Proceedings of the Royal Society B – Biological Sciences
Ethology	Psychology and Aging
European Journal of Personality	Psychological Medicine
Genes, Brain, and Behavior	Psychological Science
Health Psychology	Psychosomatic Medicine
iScience	Royal Society Open Science
International Journal of Primatology	Social Science and Medicine
Journal of the American Geriatrics Society	Translational Psychiatry
Journal of Affective Disorders	
Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science	

Funding bodies

Ad hoc grant review

National Institute on Aging (NIH)
National Science Centre (Poland)
The Royal Society
Vienna Science and Technology Fund
The Leakey Foundation
Swiss National Science Foundation
Economic and Social Research Council UK