

# Álex Escolà-Gascón

Álex Escolà-Gascón is a professor of applied mathematics at [Comillas Pontifical University](#) in Madrid, whose research has included remote viewing and aspects of paranormal belief.

## Career

Álex Escolà-Gascón is a professor in the Department of Quantitative Methods and Statistics at the [Pontifical University of Comillas](#), an autonomous institution belonging to the Vatican City State and owned by the Holy See. His basic university education includes degrees in ecclesiastical studies, psychology and statistics.

He obtained his PhD in science, specializing in statistics and methodology from [Ramon Llull University](#), Barcelona. His research lines focus on the application of statistical models in consciousness and anomalistic research, environmental and landscape psychology, and educational psychology.

## Remote Viewing

A large remote viewing study carried out by Escolà-Gascón, together with [James Houran](#), [Kenneth Drinkwater](#) and [Andrew Denovan](#), was published in 2023.<sup>[1]</sup> A total of 287 paranormal believers and 347 non-believers completed an experiment using targets based on images or location coordinates, respectively. Extensive parapsychological research has demonstrated a clear advantage for individuals who believe in the paranormal to perform better than non-believers in tests of psi ability – dubbed the [sheep-goat Effect](#). These differences were again found, with non-believers scoring within chance limits and the group of believers performing very significantly ( $p < 0.0001$ ). The influence of emotional intelligence was found to correlate significantly with remote viewing ability.

Statistical and methodological criticisms were answered in a follow-up paper. These covered statistical decisions made to control the biases of underestimated standard deviations; the concern that emotional intelligence is not a type of intelligence, but rather a cultural learning ability that involves using emotions functionally; and the correct interpretation of statistical anomalies in the results.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Paranormal Belief

In a 2022 publication, Escolà-Gascón and coauthors describe a large study that explored the idea that paranormal beliefs may be linked to adverse psychological functioning. Over three thousand participants (1,382 males, 1,693 females, nine non-binary) completed self-report assessments gauging paranormal belief, [transliminality](#) (a measure of the ease with which information enters consciousness from the unconscious or the external world), and attributes associated with psychopathology (schizotypy and manic-depressive experience). The authors found a positive relationship between paranormal belief, transliminality, and

psychopathology-related traits, giving some support to the pathology-belief hypothesis.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Haunted Places

In a paper published in 2021, Escolà-Gascón and James Houran explored the relationship between paranormal belief and individuals' encounters within natural settings, particularly those reputed to be haunted. The paper introduces the concept of “sense of place”, challenging the conventional [stress reduction theory \(SRT\)](#), which posits that natural features of the environment reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, by scrutinizing the impact of paranormal convictions on this relationship.

The study involved participants venturing into an abandoned village renowned for its alleged hauntings, with assessments conducted both before and after their visit. Contrary to the predictions of SRT, individuals who held paranormal beliefs exhibited heightened stress levels following the visit. Remarkably, they found an intensified connection to the haunted environment. Escolà-Gascón and Houran concluded that paranormal beliefs can profoundly shape a person's experiences in natural locales, reducing or even reversing the positive influences of natural features on stress reduction.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Emotional Intelligence and Intuition

In a paper published in 2022, Escolà-Gascón and James Houran explored the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), and anomalous anticipatory intuition using a design based on [Daryl Bem's precognition research](#). An initial study found EI to be a significant predictor of premonition scores, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to report premonitions.

In a second study, individuals diagnosed with psychosis were compared to those without psychiatric antecedents. Patients with psychosis tended to have lower levels of emotional intelligence compared to healthy participants. However, patients scoring high in psychosis tended to show very significant psi scoring ( $p = 0.001$ ).<sup>[5]</sup>

Michael Duggan

## Literature

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## Endnotes

### Footnotes

1. ^ Escolà-Gascón et al (2023a).
2. ^ Escolà-Gascón et al (2023b).
3. ^ Escolà-Gascón et al (2022).
4. ^ Escolà-Gascón & Houran (2021).
5. ^ Escolà-Gascón & Houran (2022).