

SARAH E. O'CONNOR

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<https://www.ice.mpg.de/ext/index.php?id=natural-product-biosynthesis>

Education

2001 PhD, Organic Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
1995 BS, Chemistry, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Positions held

2019- Director, Department of Natural Product Biosynthesis, Max Planck Institute of Chemical Ecology, Jena, Germany
2022- Honorary Professor of Chemistry, Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany
2011-2019 Project Leader, The John Innes Centre, Department of Biological Chemistry, Norwich, UK
2011-2019 The University of East Anglia, School of Chemistry, Norwich, UK
(Honorary Professor (2015-2019), Professor (2012-2014), Lecturer (2011-2012))
2007-2011 Associate Professor of Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA
2003-2007 Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA
2000-2003 Post-doctoral Fellow in Biochemistry, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA

Honours and Prizes

2024 Honoris causa, University of Tours
2024 Prelog Medal
2024 Elected Member of the Germany Academy of Sciences Leopoldina
2023 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz-Preis
2023 Elected Fellow of the Royal Society
2023 Elected Fellow of the American Society of Pharmacognosy
2022 ACS Ernest Guenther Award in the Chemistry of Natural Products
2019 RSC Perkin Prize for Organic Chemistry
2017 Elected to EMBO membership
2017 ERC Advanced Grant
2013 Wain Medal
2012 ERC Consolidator Grant
2011 Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit Award
2011 ACS Pfizer Award in Enzyme Chemistry
2007 Sloan Research Fellowship
2007 Arthur Neisch Award of the North American Phytochemical Society
2007 American Cancer Society Research Scholar
2005 Beckman Young Investigator
2004 Latham Family Career Development Professor
2003 Smith Family Medical Foundation New Investigator
2000 ACS Irving S. Sigal Postdoctoral Fellowship, Harvard Medical School
1998 ACS Organic Division Graduate Fellowship, California Institute of Technology
1998 Distinguished Graduate Student Everhart Lecture, California Institute of Technology

Panels and Committees

Chair of the Perspective Committee, BMS Section, Max Planck Society (2024-2027)
Associate Editor, Journal of Biological Chemistry (2022-)

Associate Editor, Science Advances (2018-2023)
Associate Editor ACS Synthetic Biology (2017- 2019)
Editorial Advisory Board ACS Central Science
Editorial Advisory Board ACS Chemical Biology
Editorial Advisory Board ACS Bioorganic and Medicinal Chemistry
Editorial Advisory Board Natural Products Reports
Editorial Advisory Board Metabolic Engineering
Editorial Advisory Board ChemBioChem
Scientific Advisory Board, Ayana (2022-)
Scientific Advisory Board, Entheos (2022-)
Scientific Advisory Board, Terpnet (2015-)
Scientific Advisory Board, Helmholtz Foundation, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (2015-2018)
Member, European Research Council Grant Review Panel (2018-2024)
Member, Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy Strategy Advisory Panel (BBSRC) (2016-2019)
Member, Newton Foundation Fellowship Committee (2015-2021)
Member, BBSRC Panel D (2013-2016)
Chair of the Plant Metabolic Gordon Research Conference (2015)

Selected Invited Lectures (since 2021)

- University of Pennsylvania, Lucy Hirschmann Visiting Professor, Philadelphia, 09/2026
- Biocatalysis Gordon Research Conference, New Hampshire, 07/2026
- Directing Biosynthesis, Keynote Speaker, Manchester, 06/2026
- Department of Chemistry Princeton, Princeton, 05/2026
- Groningen Molecular Chemistry Symposium, Keynote Speaker, Groningen, 05/2026
- Frontiers in Medicinal Chemistry, Keynote Speaker, Münster, 03/2026
- Emerging Applications of Microbes (VIB) Plenary Speaker, Leuven, 11/2025
- Yale University, Chemical Biology Retreat, Keynote Speaker, New Haven, 10/2025
- Cold Spring Harbour Laboratories, 04/2025
- German Mass Spectrometry Conference, Göttingen, Plenary Lecture, 03/2025
- IMPRS-LM Distinguished Guests Seminar Series 2023/2024 at the MPI in Dortmund 01/24
- EMBL Chemical Biology Symposium, Keynote Speaker, Heidelberg, 09/24
- Academic Lecture Program of the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung, Munich, 06/24
- ETH, Department of Plant Biology, Zurich, 05/24
- University of North Texas, BioDiscovery Institute Distinguished Lecture series, Denton, 02/24
- 2023 GRC for Plant Herbivore Interactions, Keynote, Ventura, 03/23
- 2023 GRC for Natural Products, Andover, 7/23
- ACS Medicinal Chemistry Workshop, Keynote, Bonn, 03/23
- University Wisconsin-Madison, Chemistry Department, 04/23
- Helmholtz Institute of Infection Biology, Saarbrücken, 05/23
- Groupe d'Etude en Chimie Organique, Vanne, 08/23
- Cold Spring Harbour Conference, Plant Genomes, Systems Biology & Engineering, Opening Keynote, 12/23
- 2022 International Symposium on Chemical Biology, Geneva, 11/22
- 17th Belgian Organic Synthesis Symposium, Namur, Plenary Speaker, 07/22
- Taito Soine Memorial Lecture in Medicinal Chemistry, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 03/22
- Harvard Medical School, Department of Biological Chemistry, Boston, 04/22
- Scripps Research Institute, Department of Chemistry, La Jolla, 04/22
- Oxford, School of Plant Sciences, Oxford, 03/22
- Enzyme Mechanisms Conference, Tucson, 01/22
- German Conference on Synthetic Biology, online, 09/21
- CeBeTech Plenary Lecture, Bielefeld, 09/21
- University of Bristol, Synthetic Biology Center, online, 07/21
- European Conference of Natural Products, Plenary Lecture, online, 07/21
- Metabolic Engineering 14, Opening Plenary Lecture, online, 07/21