

Prof. Dr. Zehra SAYERS

Dr. Sayers is a molecular biophysicist with a BSc in Physics, from Bogazici University, Istanbul Turkey and a PhD in Biophysics, from the University of London, UK.

As a postdoc she worked at The Open University, UK and Wallenberg Laboratory, Sweden and she was the first female staff scientist at the EMBL (European Molecular Biology Laboratory) Hamburg Outstation in Germany (1986-1998) carrying out pioneering experiments in synchrotron radiation applications for biological molecules. She has been working as a founding faculty member at Sabanci University (SU) for the last two decades, where she held the position of the Director of the Foundations Development Program during 2010-2019. She also served as the Acting-President during 2018.

She pioneered Structural Biology research in Turkey and she supervised several Ph.D. and M.Sc. students in the field. Her research focuses on use of synchrotron x-ray structure analyses for a better understanding of structure-function relationships in proteins. On the education front she is interested in modern pedagogical approaches in learning and she has been instrumental in the design and development of the interdisciplinary core (liberal arts) curriculum at SU.

She was the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the international synchrotron radiation facility project SESAME (Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East) between 2002 and 2018. She has been the Chair of the SAC for the Turkish Accelerator Center Project, and currently she serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Turkish Accelerator and Radiation Laboratory (TARLA), which is the first realized component of this project.

Dr. Sayers is a recipient of the Rammal Award 2017 for her scientific research as well as for her contributions, as Chair of SAC, of the SESAME project evolution to. She shared the AAAS Science Diplomacy Award in 2019 and in the same year she was in BBC list of 100 Most Inspiring and Influential Women. Dr Sayers is a member of the Strategic Advisory Board in field of matter of the Helmholtz Association (Germany) and she is an honorary member of the Turkish Science Academy.