

Lena Barra



Lena Barra is a Tenure-Track Professor of Chemical Biology at the University of Konstanz, Germany.

Her research focuses on the discovery and exploitation of non-classical natural products and the enzymatic mechanisms that generate their unique molecular architectures. A central theme of her work is the unconventional use of metabolic cofactors such as S-adenosylmethionine (SAM) and nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD) as biosynthetic building blocks in specialized metabolism. Her group aims to uncover new enzymatic chemistries that give rise to previously unknown natural products and truly novel bioactive molecular scaffolds, thereby opening new avenues and perspectives for biomedical and biotechnological applications.

Lena Barra studied Organic and Biological Chemistry at the University of Braunschweig and received her PhD 2018 from the University of Bonn under the supervision of Jeroen S. Dickschat. Following her doctorate, she carried out postdoctoral research at the University of Tokyo in the group of Ikuro Abe, supported by fellowships from the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Since 2022 she has held a Tenure-Track professorship at the University of Konstanz. Her work has been recognized with several competitive funding schemes and awards, including an ERC Starting Grant 2025, the DFG Emmy Noether Programme 2023, the Messmer Research Award 2025, and the Academy Prize 2026 of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences.