

SABANCI UNIVERSITY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS 2025

In 2025, Sabancı University further strengthened its position as a leading research-intensive institution, marked by sustained growth in high-impact publications, competitive international funding, and a steady rise in global research partnerships. The University has significantly expanded its collaborative network in recent years, forging new alliances with top universities, research institutes, and industry leaders worldwide. Its researchers continue to perform well above global citation impact averages, while alumni excel across international academic and industrial ecosystems. Together, these achievements reflect a research culture defined by excellence, openness to collaboration, and measurable global influence.

Research at a Glance

Founded on a research-driven ethos, Sabancı University has established itself as a powerhouse of knowledge creation. In just 25 years, the University has published over 9,950 scientific papers, which have collectively attracted more than 250,000 citations worldwide—a clear indicator of their influence and relevance in global academia. Building on this momentum, Sabancı University has also secured over 390 patents, translating research into real-world innovation.

In 2025 alone, faculty members published more than 700 scientific papers, 73% of which appeared in Q1 journals and obtained 37 new patents, reinforcing the University's leadership in cutting-edge research.

As of end-November 2025, Sabancı University is managing 233 active externally funded projects with a total budget of \$52 million, 69% sourced from international funds, underscoring its strong global research partnerships.

Global Presence

Sabancı University to Participate in Developing Quantum Sensor Technologies for CERN



Following the ECFA roadmap, the initiative sets a framework to develop quantum sensors aligned with future high-energy physics needs. Sabancı University faculty and researchers will **contribute** via work packages leveraging expertise in quantum materials, superconducting devices, sensing techniques, and capacity building. This participation advances global quantum sensing efforts and positions the university to develop precise sensor technologies for CERN applications.

Our University Became a Member of the Venice International University Consortium

Sabancı University has **become** a member of the prestigious Venice International University (VIU), an exclusive global network that brings together 23 leading institutions such as Duke University, LMU Munich, Tsinghua University, and Ca' Foscari University of Venice. This membership opens new pathways for Sabancı University for high-impact global collaboration. Through VIU's multidisciplinary academic environment, our students and faculty gain unique access to world-class programs, research opportunities, and cross-cultural learning platforms. This milestone marks a major step in expanding Sabancı University's global engagement.



Sabancı University and Imperial College London Ignite New Research with Strategic Seed Funding

Sabancı University and Imperial College London have **launched** a strategic collaboration that includes a seed-funding program to ignite new research partnerships between the two institutions. Built on a shared commitment to interdisciplinary excellence and internationalization, the partnership empowers researchers to develop innovative projects and expand their global impact. This bottom-up, researcher-driven model will strengthen academic networks, open new pathways for collaboration, and accelerate high-impact scientific breakthroughs.



Global Recognition for Sabancı Business School: EMBA Ranks 48th, AMBA Accreditation Achieved



Sabancı Business School's Executive MBA program has made a remarkable **leap** in the Financial Times 2025 global ranking, rising from 81st in 2023 to 48th worldwide. This achievement makes it the only business school from

Türkiye in the global top 50, underscoring its growing international reputation. In addition, the school has **earned** AMBA accreditation for its MBA, Professional MBA, and Executive MBA programs, placing it among the top 2% of business schools globally and joining an elite network. Already accredited by AACSB and progressing toward EQUIS, these milestones highlight Sabancı Business School's strong research, program flexibility, and industry connections.

Anticipatory Leadership Summit Explores Future-Ready Leadership in Istanbul

Sabancı University and Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) **hosted** the Anticipatory Leadership Summit in Istanbul on October 20–23, gathering global leaders from science, technology, politics, and business to discuss leadership shaped by scientific foresight. Key sessions addressed multi-crisis challenges, AI, quantum technologies, and energy security, while Güler Sabancı emphasized interdisciplinary collaboration and openness to change as essential leadership traits. The summit reinforced Sabancı University's role as a Global Curriculum for Anticipatory Leadership (GCAL) pilot center, preparing decision-makers for a future driven by science and diplomacy.



Strengthening Civic Engagement: Sabancı University Joins Two Leading International Networks

Sabancı University's Civic Involvement Projects (CIP) has **joined** the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities, a global coalition of 445 universities from 92 countries dedicated to advancing civic engagement and social responsibility in higher education. In November 2025, CIP **co-hosted** the For Youth, By Youth International Conference in Istanbul with the Talloires Network, convening young leaders from over 25 countries and resulting in the first youth-written Talloires Network Declaration. Sabancı University has also **become** a member of the University Social Responsibility Network (USRN), a global alliance of 21 institutions founded in Hong Kong to promote collaboration



toward a more just and sustainable world. Through these memberships, the University seeks to strengthen its social responsibility initiatives, expand their international reach, and contribute more effectively to global civic engagement efforts.

IHP of Germany and Sabancı University expand collaboration with joint lab

IHP – Leibniz Institute for High-Performance Microelectronics (Frankfurt/Oder) and Sabancı University are **expanding** their Joint Laboratory, the cornerstone of a successful collaboration since 2007. Recently, the lab broadened its scope from microelectronic technologies to the design and development of integrated high-frequency (RF and mm-wave IC) circuits. The expansion strengthens research excellence in novel HF ICs, radar sensors, micro-/nano-systems, and RF packaging.



Leibniz Institute
for High
Performance
Microelectronics

Sabancı
Üniversitesi

FACULTY OF
ENGINEERING AND
NATURAL SCIENCES

New MoUs Advance the University's Global Research Collaboration



Over the past two years, Sabancı University has strengthened its global research network by signing Memoranda of Understanding with the University of Connecticut (USA), Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA), the European University Institute (Italy), Baku Higher Oil School of SOCAR (Azerbaijan), The University of Seoul (South Korea), City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Daegu Gyeongbuk Institute of Science & Technology (South Korea), Universiti Teknologi Petronas (Malaysia), and Xi'an Jiaotong–Liverpool University (China). These partnerships are already yielding concrete outcomes, such as jointly developed projects and co-authored publications.

Sabancı University Welcomes Three Distinguished Researchers as Adjunct Faculty to Advance AI, Machine Learning, and Quantum Computing

Sabancı University has strengthened its research and education ecosystem by welcoming three distinguished scientists as Adjunct Faculty members. **Dr. Ece Kamar**, Vice President and Lab Director of AI Frontiers at Microsoft Research, and **Dr. Kubilay Atasü**, Associate Professor at TU Delft, will contribute to cutting-edge research in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and scalable graph ML solutions. Dr. Kamar, who is also an alumna of Sabancı University, has been recently awarded with the title of “Distinguished Researcher” by her institution.



Additionally, **Dr. Kadir Akın**, an expert in FPGA-based systems for quantum computing at ETH Zurich/PSI, joins as an adjunct researcher, bringing expertise in real-time measurement and feedback for superconducting qubits. These appointments further reinforce Sabancı University's leadership in Computer Science, Engineering, and Quantum Technologies.

Thematic Research Showcase

World famous agronomist Prof. İsmail Çakmak Ranked 6th Globally in Agronomy; Tops Türkiye's Influence List Five Years Running

Prof. İsmail Çakmak, **ranked** 6th worldwide in Agriculture–Agronomy, has led Türkiye for five consecutive years on the World's Most Influential Scientists list, and is among Clarivate (Thomson Reuters) Highly Cited Researchers. His work centers on plant mineral nutrition and how minerals improve crop performance under stress. By biofortifying grain-based foods and milk with zinc, selenium, and iodine, he targets “hidden hunger,” a global threat to healthy physiological development, especially in young children.

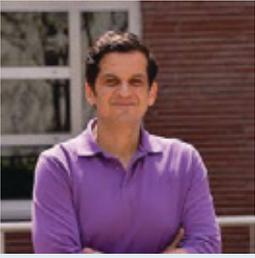


EMBO Elects Prof. Canan Atilgan as Member



Prof. Canan Atilgan, has been **elected** a member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO). EMBO is one of Europe's most prestigious scientific institutions promoting excellence in the life sciences. EMBO's statement underlines the fact that the extraordinary scientists elected for membership were appreciated for their contributions covering a wide range of life science research, including unraveling the molecular secrets of life and deepening our understanding of the concepts of health and disease.

Prof. Ali Koşar elected as ASME Fellow



The Fellow grade is a distinction among American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) members which **recognizes** exceptional engineering achievements and contributions to the profession and to

ASME. As a leading global researcher in next-generation microfluidic systems and micro heat sinks, Dr. Koşar's research interests span a wide spectrum, encompassing micro/nanoscale heat and fluid flow, condensation, boiling, heat transfer, microfluidic systems, and cavitation.



Sabancı University Wins Two €1.5M ERC Grants for Breakthrough Research in Cancer Metastasis and Democracy-Migration Dynamics



Two faculty members from Sabancı University have secured prestigious European Research Council (ERC) starting grants totaling €3 million. Dr. Nur Mustafaoğlu received €1.5 million for her project-“**META-BRAIN**, Deciphering METAstasis of lung cancer to BRAIN and developing new therapeutic approaches via a human metastatic cascade platform”-investigates the mechanisms of lung-to-brain metastasis. It addresses key questions about the metastatic process and the role of the blood-brain barrier (BBB). Additionally, Assoc. Prof. Tahir Kılavuz was awarded €1.5 million for his project-The Democracy-Migration Paradox (**DEMIG**)-tackles the critical global challenge of why strong public support for democracy coexists with rising anti-immigrant attitudes across Europe and the Middle East. By combining AI-assisted surveys with experimental methods, the project aims to generate actionable insights that can guide more inclusive democratic governance and migration policy.

Emre Selçuk Appointed as Co-Editor of Flagship Social Psychology Journal

Prof. Emre Selçuk has been **appointed** Co-Editor of Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (PSPB), the premier outlet of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology. He joins Yuen Huo (UCLA), Michael Kraus (Northwestern University), and Greg Webster (University of Florida) on the senior editorial team leading



PSPB from 2025 to 2028. In their inaugural editorial, the team commits to fostering rigorous, cumulative, inclusive science and expanding the field's global reach.

Gül Günaydın Appointed as Interim Director of The Love Consortium

Prof. Gül Günaydın has been **appointed** Interim Director of The Love Consortium (TLC), a leading international network advancing the science of social connection. Through initiatives like TLC Skillverse, the Statistics Decision Tree, and the TLC Dataverse, TLC equips researchers with tools for collaboration, methodological rigor, and data sharing. Under Günaydın's leadership, TLC will deepen global partnerships, expand training opportunities, and drive cutting-edge collaborative research on love and human connection.



NSF-TÜBİTAK Recognize Çağla Aydın's Collaborative Research on Memory

Assoc. Prof. Çağla Aydın [won](#) an NSF-TÜBİTAK bilateral grant for VIVID: Exploring the Foundations of Memory Vividness, in collaboration with Maureen Ritchey (Boston College). The project investigates the mental processes shaping the subjective experience of remembering and aims to advancing our understanding of how memory supports decision-making, identity, and well-being.



Türkiye's National Coordinator for EU Pancreatic Cancer Project: Prof. Öznur Taştan

Prof. Öznur Taştan, will [serve](#) as national coordinator for Türkiye in ACCELERATE—Functional precision medicine platform for the treatment of pancreatic cancer—supported under the EU's TRANSCAN-3 ERA-NET Cofund program. The functional precision medicine platform to be established through the project has the potential to significantly contribute to the development of new treatment strategies with high clinical applicability for pancreatic cancer. The project partners include the Istituto Romagnolo per lo Studio dei Tumori "Dino Amadori" (IRCCS) in Italy, Instituto Ramón y Cajal de Investigación Sanitaria (IRYCIS) in Spain and Bilkent University in Türkiye.

Project to Investigate Cyber Threat Intelligence, Data Protection and Identity Management Secures EU Funding with a Perfect Score

Privacy-Preserving Identity Management for Digital Wallets and Secure Data Sharing and Processing for Cyber-Threat Intelligence Data (PRIVIDEMA) received Horizon Europe [support](#) with a perfect 15.0/15.0 evaluation, featuring Prof. Erkan Savaş, Prof. Özcan Öztürk, and Prof. Ferruh Özbudak from Sabancı University. Sabancı will contribute to securing sensitive data through homomorphic encryption in this industry-driven initiative spanning cyber-threat intelligence, data protection, and identity management.

The project targets robust, user-friendly, scalable privacy and security technologies for the European ecosystem across multiple research and innovation maturity levels.



Rethinking EU-Türkiye Relations: A New Model Beyond Full Membership

Prof. Meltem Müftüler-Baç argues that EU-Türkiye relations may be shifting toward a new cooperation model beyond full membership. Drawing on legal documents, trade data, and policy reports, she shows that Türkiye has deeply integrated into many EU rules and sectors via "external differentiated integration." Her [article](#) assesses the potential and limits of this layered model as political norms and democratic standards evolve.

Prof. Erhan Budak and Assoc. Prof. Taner Tunç Lead EU-Funded Research on Circular Additive Manufacturing Across Multiple Sectors

Among 72 EU Horizon proposals, DIAMETER project with Sabancı University as Project Coordinator, [won](#) European Commission support. Outcomes will be validated in four industrial scenarios: catalytic converters, valves, aircraft structural parts, and repair/remanufacturing of pressing dies. DIAMETER targets lower carbon footprints, higher recycling, a greener Industry 4.0, and stronger local production.



Sabancı University and Khalifa University to Collaborate on Developing Sustainable, Lightweight Composite Materials

Light-G-Comp is an international R&D project with a budget of 1.4 million USD, led by Prof. Burcu Saner Okan and Prof. Mehmet Yıldız. Sabancı University [hosted](#) the project's kickoff meeting on May 5-7, 2025, at the Sabancı University Composite Technologies Center of Excellence. Supported by Khalifa University, this collaboration aims to develop sustainable, lightweight composite materials, focusing on recycled graphene-reinforced hybrid thermoplastic solutions for automotive, aviation, and energy sectors. By reducing plastic waste and carbon footprint, the project will significantly contribute to promoting circularity, enhancing education, and accelerating international technology transfer.



We May Be Wrong About How Much Others Dislike Us and New Research Shows a Way to Fix It

A [study](#) by Prof. Çiğdem Bağcı, graduate student İpek Güvensoy, and international collaborators finds that people often overestimate how negatively outgroup members view them—known as meta-attitude bias. Across multiple studies, positive, friendly intergroup contact reliably corrected these misperceptions, as meaningful interactions revealed more positive attitudes than expected. The work reveals an important practical lesson: Regular, positive contact can reshape expectations and reduce social divides.



University to Lead Next-Gen Battery Integration under 2ZERO Partnership

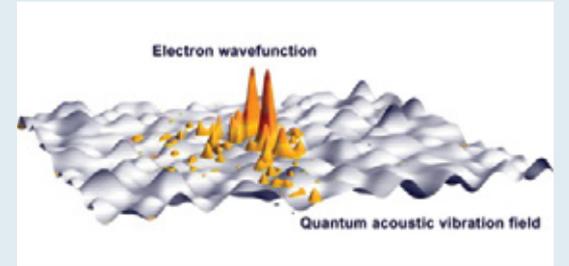
Out of 388 projects across 18 calls involving 2,474 institutions, only 9 were [selected](#) to share €4.5 million in grants. The Advanced Battery System Integration for Next Generation Vehicles (ARISE) project received funding under Horizon Europe: Cluster 5 - Climate, Energy and Mobility within the 2ZERO Partnership. Sabancı University will coordinate the project, led by Prof. Ali Koşar, to drive cutting-edge battery integration for more efficient, sustainable vehicles, aligned with broader environmental and automotive innovation goals.

How Smart Planning Can Save Lives and Forests Before Wildfires Strike

Prof. Raha Akhavan-Tabatabaei shows that data-driven planning before a wildfire dramatically improves response once flames break out. By simulating thousands of fire seasons, her study finds that even small cuts to preparedness budgets can trigger huge increases in damage, while targeted investments avert catastrophic losses. The framework quantifies the true cost of being unprepared and guides faster, safer, more effective wildfire management—[published](#) in Information Systems Research (FT50).



Prestigious Physics Journal Selects Dr. Alhun Aydın's Quantum Acoustics Paper as an Editor's Suggestion



Physics faculty Dr. Alhun Aydın's work was [selected](#) as an Editor's Suggestion in Physical Review Letters, one of the most prestigious journals in physics. The study explains the origin of the displaced Drude peak in optical conductivity—a phenomenon grounded in the Drude model, which treats conduction electrons as a classical gas of free particles. Understanding this peak advances insight into free-carrier dynamics under electromagnetic radiation, enhancing the characterization of metals, semiconductors, and nanostructures.

How Media Shifts the Spotlight: New Research Reveals Subtle Propaganda Tactics in Economic Crises

A [study](#) by Assoc. Prof. Serkant Adıgüzel shows that during domestic economic strain, pro-government media sharply increase negative coverage of foreign economies. Analyzing 700,000 news articles and 13 million sentences, the research finds up to 48% more frequent negative coverage of foreign economies with 83% greater negativity. According to Dr. Adıgüzel, this "reference point adjustment" shapes public perceptions without overt censorship by making local conditions look comparatively better.

What's Really Driving Prices? New Research Unpacks Türkiye's Inflation Surge

Dr. Emrehan Aktuğ, with Okan Akarsu (Central Bank of Türkiye), [disentangles](#) the relative roles of demand-side pressures versus supply-side shocks in Türkiye's recent inflation surge. Using detailed sector-level data and advanced analytics, they show that while loose monetary policy lifted demand, oil shocks and sharp exchange-rate movements have dominated Türkiye's inflation since the pandemic. Revealing insights into how and when inflation can be brought under control, the authors' approach offers a real-time tool for policymakers. Dr. Aktuğ also serves as Director of the Competitiveness Forum formed in collaboration between Sabancı University and the Turkish Industry and Business Association.

How Fairness Laws Can Close the Gender Pay Gap at the Top

A paper co-authored by Dr. Bünyamin Önal shows women executives are paid significantly less than men, especially where traditional gender norms are strong. Pro-equality laws—equal pay, property rights, and access to entrepreneurship—meaningfully reduce this gap. Crucially, legal protections work best where cultural support is weak, acting as an ethical corrective—[published](#) in the Journal of Business Ethics (FT50).



Alumni Success

Our Graduate Named Among Norway's Top 50 Women in Tech



Ceyda Atay Haga, a 2010 graduate of Sabancı University's Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, has been [recognized](#) as one of Norway's Top 50 Women in Tech by ODA Nettverk and Abelia. Her leadership in a major telecom transformation project and mentorship in Northern Europe played a key role in this achievement. The annual list, selected from over 700 nominees, aims to inspire more women to pursue careers in technology and leadership.

Sabancı Alumnus Among Top 40 Under 40 in U.S. Healthcare



Özgün Demir, a Sabancı University graduate, has been [named](#) one of the "Top 40 Under 40" leaders shaping the U.S. healthcare industry. With senior roles at Pfizer, Bayer, Novartis, and Genentech/Roche, he also teaches at Centenary University and advises major firms like Google and Doximity. Demir continues to influence healthcare's future through AI and digital strategy talks at leading conferences.