# **Supporting Information for:**

# Synthesis of fluorescent enone derived **a**-amino acids

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# **Table Of Contents**

1. Experimental Procedures and Spectroscopic Data For All Known Compounds	S2-S3
2. References	S4
3. <sup>1</sup> H NMR and <sup>13</sup> C NMR Spectra of All Novel Compounds	S5-S52

# 1. Experimental Procedures and Spectroscopic Data For All Known Compounds

**Dimethyl (2***S***)-2-aminobutandioate hydrochloride 5**.<sup>1</sup> To a suspension of L-aspartic acid 4 (5.0 g, 37.56 mmol) in methanol (30 mL) at 0 °C under argon was added dropwise thionyl chloride (4 mL, 52.58 mmol). The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and heated under reflux for 3 h. The solution was concentrated *in vacuo* to give a colourless oil and triturated with diethyl ether to give **5** as an colourless solid (7.55 g, 100%). mp 115–116 °C (lit.,<sup>1</sup> mp 114–115 °C);  $[\alpha]_D^{24}$  +22.0 (*c* 1.0, MeOH);  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) 2.99 (1H, dd, *J* 18.0, 5.5 Hz, 3-*H*H), 3.05 (1H, dd, *J* 18.0, 5.5 Hz, 3-*H*H), 3.66 (3H, s, OMe), 3.74 (3H, s, OMe), 4.35 (1H, t, *J* 5.5 Hz, 2-H), 8.72 (3H, s, CHN*H*<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) 34.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 48.4 (CH), 52.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 53.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 168.7 (C), 169.6 (C); *m/z* (CI) 162 (MH<sup>+</sup>, 100%), 148 (5), 102 (20).

**Dimethyl (2***S***)-2-(tritylamino)butandioate 6.<sup>2</sup>** To a solution of dimethyl (2*S*)-2-aminobutandioate hydrochloride **5** (7.46 g, 37.72 mmol) in dichloromethane (150 mL) at 0 °C under argon was added dropwise triethylamine (11 mL, 75.44 mmol) and triphenylmethyl chloride (10.50 g, 37.72 mmol). The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 24 h. The reaction mixture was washed with citric acid (2 M, 100 mL), water (100 mL), brine (100 mL) then dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>) and concentrated *in vacuo* to give a colourless oil. The crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica eluting with 50% diethyl ether in petroleum ether to give **6** a colourless solid (15.16 g, 100%). mp 71–72 °C (lit.,<sup>2</sup> mp 70–71 °C);  $[\alpha]_D^{24}$  +36.6 (*c* 1.0, CHCl<sub>3</sub>);  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 2.51 (1H, dd, *J* 14.7, 7.0 Hz, 3-*H*H), 2.66 (1H, dd, *J* 14.7, 5.4 Hz, 3-H*H*), 2.93 (1H, d, *J* 10.1 Hz, NH), 3.25 (3H, s, OMe), 3.67 (3H, s, OMe), 3.68–3.73 (1H, m, 2-H), 7.15–7.20 (3H, m, ArH), 7.23–7.28 (6H, m, ArH), 7.46–7.51 (6H, m, ArH);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 39.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 50.5 (CH), 50.7 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 52.4 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 69.9 (C), 125.2 (CH), 126.6 (CH), 127.5 (CH), 144.4 (C), 169.7 (C), 172.6 (C); *m/z* (EI) 403 (M<sup>+</sup>, 1%), 326 (35), 243 (100), 165 (30), 83 (70).

**Methyl (2S)-5-(dimethoxyphosphoryl)-4-oxo-2-(tritylamino)pentanoate** 7.<sup>2</sup> A solution of dimethyl methylphosphonate (3.0 mL, 27.26 mmol) in THF (50 mL) was cooled to -78 °C under argon. *n*-Butyl lithium (2.5 M in hexane, 11 mL, 28.62 mmol) was added dropwise and the reaction mixture stirred for 1 h. In a separate reaction vessel, a solution of dimethyl (2S)-2-(tritylamino)butandioate **6** (5.0 g, 12.39 mmol) in THF (100 mL) was cooled to -78 °C under argon and then the dimethyl methylphosphonate/*n*-butyl lithium solution was cannulated into the flask and the reaction mixture stirred at -78 °C for 2 h to give a yellow solution. The reaction was quenched with a saturated solution of ammonium chloride (3 mL) and allowed to warm to room temperature. The

mixture was concentrated *in vacuo*. The resulting residue was diluted with ethyl acetate (100 mL), washed with water (2 × 100 mL), brine (100 mL) then dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>) and concentrated *in vacuo*. The crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica eluting with 75% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether to give 7 as a colourless solid (4.93 g, 80%). mp 117–118 °C (lit.,<sup>2</sup> mp 117–118.5 °C);  $[\alpha]_D^{24}$  +31.1 (*c* 1.0, CHCl<sub>3</sub>);  $\delta_H$  (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 2.78 (1H, dd, *J* 16.7, 6.9 Hz, 3-*H*H), 2.85–2.95 (2H, m, 3-H*H* and NH), 3.06 (2H, d, *J*<sub>H–C–P</sub> 22.7 Hz, 5-H<sub>2</sub>), 3.29 (3H, s, OMe), 3.65–3.73 (1H, m, 2-H), 3.76 (3H, s, OMe), 3.79 (3H, s, OMe), 7.15–7.21 (3H, m, ArH), 7.26 (6H, t, *J* 7.7 Hz, ArH), 7.47 (6H, d, *J* 7.7 Hz, ArH);  $\delta_C$  (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 41.8 (d, *J*<sub>C–P</sub> 128 Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>), 48.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 52.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 52.9 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 53.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 53.1 (CH), 71.2 (C), 126.5 (CH), 127.9 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 145.6 (C), 174.0 (C), 199.2 (C); *m/z* (CI) 496 (MH<sup>+</sup>, 1%), 301 (5), 254 (90), 243 (100), 237 (55), 167 (45).

4-(4'-benzyloxycarbonylaminophenyl)benzaldehyde (Table 1, entry 13). To a solution of 4bromobenzaldehyde (0.30 g, 1.62 mmol) in N,N-dimethylformamide/water (10 mL, 95:5) was added 4-2.43 (benzyloxycarbonylamino)phenylboronic acid (0.66)g, mmol). tetrakis(triphenylphosphine)palladium (0.04 g, 0.03 mmol) and potassium carbonate (0.56 g, 4.05 mmol). The reaction mixture was heated to 110 °C and stirred for 4 h. The solution was allowed to cool to room temperature then concentrated in vacuo. The residue was dissolved in chloroform, filtered through celite<sup>®</sup>, and then the filtrate was concentrated *in vacuo*. The resultant solid was dissolved in diethyl ether (100 mL), then washed with water ( $6 \times 100$  mL), brine ( $2 \times 100$  mL), dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>), and concentrated in vacuo. The crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica eluting with 15% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether to give a colourless solid (0.19 g, 36%). mp 132–133 °C;  $v_{max}/cm^{-1}$  (neat) 3331(NH), 1730 (CO), 1697 (CO), 1593, 1568, 1533, 1514, 1425, 1219;  $\delta_{H}$  (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 5.23 (2H, s, PhCH<sub>2</sub>), 6.81 (1H, s, NH), 7.31–7.45 (5H, m, ArH), 7.51 (2H, d, J 8.2 Hz, ArH), 7.60 (2H, d, J 8.2 Hz, ArH), 7.72 (2H, d, J 8.0 Hz, ArH), 7.93 (2H, d, J 8.0 Hz, ArH), 10.04 (1H, s, CHO); δ<sub>C</sub> (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 67.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 119.1 (CH), 127.2 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 130.4 (CH), 134.5 (C), 134.9 (C), 136.0 (C), 138.5 (C), 146.5 (C), 153.4 (C), 192.1 (CH); m/z (EI) 331.1207 (M<sup>+</sup>. C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> requires 331.1208), 287 (31%), 223 (92), 166 (22), 139 (21), 91 (100).

**4-(3'-Nitrophenyl)benzaldehyde (Table 1, entry 12)**. Prepared using the procedure described above. Spectroscopic data as previously reported.<sup>3</sup>

**5-(4'-Fluorophenyl)-2-furaldehyde (Table 1, entry 14)**. Prepared using the procedure described above. Spectroscopic data as previously reported.<sup>4</sup>

# 3. References

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