

# A Research Environment in Time

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A good research environment will benefit not only the researcher who is part of the environment, but also the research results that come out of the environment. The Stockholm Centre for Commercial Law, SCCL, is a research environment for legal research in the area of commercial law in a broad sense. It is sometimes claimed that it does not matter so much where the individual work is carried out – at an office, at home or at a café. Digitalisation opens up for your own work in different places and creates freedom. This may be so, but there are many examples from the research community that a good research environment is crucial for good research results. As in many other professional areas, it matters what the researcher's work situation looks like and how it is organised. A good local environment promotes good results, which is what SCCL is intended to promote and create.

Today (autumn of 2025), SCCL consists of just over 30 employees, all of whom have their workplace in the Centre's premises and who conduct research and teach in various areas of commercial law. Who they are can be found on SCCL's website, <https://sccl.se/en/our-people/>

In addition, there are a large number of people who are involved in the Centre's activities in various ways but who also work elsewhere, such as lawyers, in-house lawyers, judges and civil servants. SCCL can also recruit Fellows, both younger and more established researchers in commercial law in a broad sense, from doctoral students to emeritus professors. Depending on experience and seniority, a division is made into the categories Fellow, Senior Fellow and Junior Fellow, sometimes “Visiting” depending on where the person is based.

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Within SCCL there are affiliations with the Swedish Corporate Governance Institute, SCGI, Axel Ax:son Johnson's Institute for Maritime and Other Transport Law and the Tenancy Law Discussion Club.

SCCL can be described in several different ways – as an environment, a platform, a hub, a meeting place, “a nursery” and as a source of inspiration. All the epithets are correct and it would certainly be possible to find more. The Centre fulfils different functions depending on what individuals demand and achieve themselves. Physically, the Centre consists of a part of the sixth floor of Stockholm University Library at Frescati, with 35 offices, two seminar rooms, library facilities and a lunch and coffee room with kitchen. These are nice and convenient premises that were specially prepared for the Centre's needs and were financed by a donation from the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation. SCCL is a research centre within Stockholm University with the Faculty of Law as its immediate principal.

After a revision of the statutes in 2019, SCCL's organization consists of a board, a director, a scientific council, an administrative council and two student research assistants (amanuenses). In addition to the chairman, the board may have four to nine members, the Scientific Council has six members and the Administrative Council has four members, including the director. To this organisation should also be added two very important parties, namely the Foundation for Support for the Activities of the SCCL, established in early 2020, and the Foundation for Support to Tax Law Research at the SCCL, established in 2017, for the specific purpose of contributing financially to the activities of the SCCL. The Foundations' capital consists of contributions from lawyers and accountants – individuals and firms – and companies, which donate to the Foundations, which in turn pays for various causes within the SCCL.

However, the core of the Centre consists of the research panels, which represent various areas of commercial law and which are responsible for the important seminar activities. Currently, there are 16 panels with a large number of members. Each panel has one or two leaders, in most cases an internal academic and an external practitioner. Anyone who is interested in who these are and what subject areas are represented is recommended to take a look at SCCL's website <https://sccl.se/en/the-research-panels/>

Today the activities at the Centre consist of different parts in the form of recurring scientific seminars organised by the research panels, of major events in the form of conferences and symposia, publications of research results, of international activities and, of course, of continuous work to sup-

port the research conducted within the Centre, both individually and in groups. The latter includes all research, from doctoral students' dissertation projects, via individual research efforts by established academics, including professors emeriti, to larger, more long-term research projects. Legal research has traditionally primarily been conducted as individual work by a single researcher, but there is now an effort in many places to build research on collaboration across subject and disciplinary boundaries. SCCL is keen on contributing to this development and supports the launch of new projects.

Internally, research is supported by contact and interaction between colleagues, which takes place spontaneously on an everyday basis and also in the form of weekly Tuesday coffee breaks and monthly Thursday lunches. Big and small issues are discussed at these meetings and sometimes new insights and a deeper understanding is achieved among the participants.

*The seminars* within SCCL were established early, as an important part of the activities, in fact already in the 1990s, before separate premises were available. There are now more than 40 different seminars a year, which are arranged by the various research panels, alone or jointly with others. This means at least one seminar a week over the course of the financial year and they attract interested participants, ranging from a dozen to 50–60 people. In terms of subject matter, they cover all areas of law represented by SCCL. Seminars are also arranged in collaboration with external parties, such as the Commercial Law Centre in Lund, ACLU, through combined events, at a distance and on site.

*Conferences and symposia* are recurring features of the Centre's activities. The collaboration between SCCL and the University of Oxford is particularly noteworthy. Since 2012, the Stockholm Oxford Law Symposium has been held at Christ Church College in Oxford, thanks to the work done by André Andersson and his excellent connections at Christ Church.

Under the auspices of the Research Panel for Arbitration and Other forms of Dispute Resolution, together with the Oxford Institute of European and Comparative Law, an international conference is arranged in Stockholm every two years within the theme of arbitration law.

The Research Panel for Corporate and Securities Law arranges regular full- and half-day conferences, as does the Panel for Public Law and Criminal Law for Commercial Actors.

*Publishing* consists of traditional book publishing in the form of a publication series that includes both individual works and a yearbook with articles from the past year, and electronic publishing of both the "physical" material

and separate works. This electronic version is freely available on the SCCL website, <https://publications.sccl.se/sccl/index>.

*International work.* In addition to international conferences, SCCL conducts work to create international collaboration between universities and various institutes. An example of this is that since the academic year 2012–13, SCCL organizes a one-year post-doctoral position in Oxford for a junior researcher, and since 2024 the Centre participates in a doctoral exchange program with the University of Bonn, Germany.

SCCL's scientific activities and ambitions are also supported by its *Scientific Council*, consisting of *Johnny Herre*, Chairman, Independent Arbitrator, Adjunct Professor at the Nordic Institute of Maritime Law and former Justice, *Laura Carlson*, Professor at Stockholm University, *Birgitte Hagland*, Professor at the Nordic Institute of Maritime Law and Director of the Oslo Centre for Commercial Law, *Jesper Lau Hansen*, Professor at the University of Copenhagen, *Ulf Maunsbach*, Associate Professor at Lund University and *Björn Sandvik*, Professor at Åbo Akademi University.

Among other things, the Council has carried out an inventory and analysis of ongoing research at SCCL and thereby provided advice and ideas for the future regarding SCCL's role as research support.

Looking back, it is clear that the Centre found its form early on and that it was successful both within the university and in the eyes of the outside world. From the beginning, focus was not only to create a research environment, but also to create opportunities for contacts between academic law and practice in a broad sense. From the outset, there was a strong response from lawyers and gradually also from the banking, finance and corporate worlds, as well as from the courts and government spheres.

On the initiative of lawyer Göran Ramberg, The Lawyer Friends, “*Advokatvänerna*”, was formed in 2002, as a support association for SCCL, with the task of collecting contributions from participating law firms and with these funds supporting the activities of SCCL. Already in the spring of 2003, 18 law firms were members and the number has grown steadily since then. Today, around 80 firms are lawyer friends of SCCL and make annual contributions to the Foundation for support of the activities of SCCL.

In 2017, the Foundation for Support of Tax Law Research was established at SCCL, which is the hub for the Friends of Tax Law and which supports tax law research and seminar activities at SCCL and the Faculty of Law.

With these support activities as a model, on the initiative of SCCL's current chairman, lawyer André Andersson, The Company Friends, “*Bolags-*

*vännerna*”, was formed in 2015, which today amounts to more than 30 contributors. In addition, invitations have also been sent out to judges in the Stockholm region and government lawyers with an offer to sign up on SCCL’s mailing lists for invitations to seminars. The response has been remarkably good.

All in all, this shows that there is a clear interest from practicing lawyers to cover, support and keep in touch with academia. The SCCL is an excellent bridge for this.

The future is open for the Centre. A gloomy scenario can be painted, with dwindling financial resources and a university that does not perceive the value of a research centre of this kind, but on the contrary, it is just as possible to paint a bright picture based on new initiatives, top-class research and the addition of external funding. It depends on those who are active at the Centre and their commitment, which picture turns out to be real.

From a personal perspective I can only say that the last six years as director of SCCL has been interesting and rewarding in terms of personal development and a both broader and deeper connection with the legal world. It has been a privilege to be able to take part in the development of an organisation such as SCCL, and I am convinced that the new director, Sara Göthlin, will carry this work forward in an excellent manner.

