

MELISSA MCLAREN

Email: melissa.mclaren@pinsentmasons.com

Profile

Melissa is a Solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales with over fifteen years' post-qualification experience in dispute resolution. Melissa has been working in the United Arab Emirates since April 2008, specialising in international and domestic arbitration and commercial litigation. Having spent over a decade practising in the disputes teams of two magic circle firms, Melissa currently works as a Senior Practice Development Lawyer at Pinsent Masons LLP.

Melissa's practice has covered many areas, including construction, finance, property, shareholder and employment disputes. She has worked on numerous arbitral proceedings, including those under the LCIA, ICC, UNCITRAL and DIAC Rules, seated both in the Middle East region and overseas. She has also gained broad experience in litigation proceedings before the onshore UAE and offshore DIFC Courts.

Melissa's current role involves working with the Construction Advisory & Disputes team and Litigation & Regulatory team in the Middle East region and she is responsible for practice development of these teams, focusing on client strategy and business development, knowledge management and training and enhanced delivery of legal services.

Melissa is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb) and sits as Vice-Chair of the CI Arb YMG (UAE Branch), assisting with the planning of ADR training and networking events in the UAE and heading up the CI Arb YMG (UAE Branch) mentorship programme. She is also a member of Arbitral Women and is registered with the DIFC Courts' register of practitioners.

Personal

Nationality: British

Employment History

April 2019 - Present	Senior Practice Development Lawyer, Pinsent Masons LLP, Dubai
July 2015 – April 2019	Senior Associate, Allen & Overy LLP, Dubai
January 2013 – June 2015	Senior Associate, Clifford Chance LLP, Dubai
November 2010 – December 2012	Associate, Clifford Chance LLP, Dubai
April 2008 – October 2010	Associate, Allen & Overy LLP, Dubai
March 2006 – March 2008	Training contract, Allen & Overy LLP, London

Selected Experience

Melissa has broad experience in dispute resolution, focusing on international and domestic arbitration under a range of institutional rules, as well as commercial litigation. Selected matter experience acting as counsel includes:

DIAC

- acting for a Dubai-based property developer in the defence of several DIAC arbitration proceedings, with a total claim value of approximately US\$ 10 million, arising out of the construction, sale and purchase of properties in Dubai;
- representing a global information and communications technology infrastructure provider in relation to the defence and pursuit of counterclaims in DIAC proceedings seated in Dubai arising out of the delay to, and termination of, a major software infrastructure project;
- defending a Dubai government entity in DIAC arbitration proceedings seated in Dubai relating to a major port concession and redevelopment with a claim value of just over US\$ 580 million;
- defending a Dubai government entity in DIAC arbitration proceedings seated in Dubai relating to the termination of an advertising concession;

DIFC-LCIA

- advising a global industrial automation and information solutions company in relation to commencing DIFC-LCIA proceedings for breach of warranty claims following the sale of a company;

ICC

- representing a Saudi Arabian company in the defence of ICC proceedings seated in Geneva in respect of the construction of a nylon conversion plant, with claims totalling over US\$ 24 million;
- advising a Bahrain-based contractor in relation to two ICC proceedings against an employer, pursuing claims worth US\$ 40 million arising out of the construction of a large residential development in Bahrain;
- defending an Iraqi company in ICC proceedings seated in Geneva relating to the alleged mismanagement of an airline company;

LCIA

- representing an Abu Dhabi-based investment company in LCIA arbitration proceedings seated in Abu Dhabi pursuing claims worth over US\$ 37 million for alleged mismanagement;
- acting for a DIFC-based investment company in relation to LCIA arbitration proceedings seated in Singapore relating to tax liability claims arising out of the sale and purchase of a resort in Thailand;
- defending a global online marketing company in LCIA proceedings seated in London relating to the exit of the founding shareholders from the company;

Ad hoc / UNCITRAL

- representing a Dubai-based property developer in ad hoc arbitration proceedings seated in Dubai, defending claims for over US\$ 10 million arising out of multiple construction projects in Dubai;

DIFC Courts

- acting for a global investment bank in the defence of proceedings before the DIFC Courts relating to allegations of fraud, misrepresentation and misuse of name;
- representing a global financial institution before the DIFC Courts in the defence of claims for over US\$ 24 million for alleged deceit and unlawful conspiracy;
- acting for a multi-national professional services firm before the DIFC Courts in the defence of a professional negligence claim of approximately US\$ 6.5 million;
- representing a DIFC body in the first judicial review proceedings before the DIFC Courts;
- acting for a DIFC body in the defence of a number of wrongful termination employment claims in the DIFC Courts; and
- Acting for an international consultancy pursuing non-payment of invoices for completion of works relating to alleged variation in scope, before the Technology and Construction Division of the DIFC Courts.

Other litigation, ADR and advisory

- representing a Dubai-based real estate developer in a circa US\$ 170 million claim brought by a real estate development company and related US\$ 55 million counterclaim before the Special Tribunal relating to Dubai World;
- acting for a Dubai-based real estate developer in the defence of a US\$ 50 million claim brought by a real estate investment company and a circa US\$ 27 million counterclaim before the Special Tribunal relating to Dubai World;
- advising an Afghanistan-based employer in respect of Dispute Adjudication Board proceedings in relation to the termination of an infrastructure project;
- representing a Dubai-based property developer in relation to defective design work of waste and storm water systems with an anticipated claim value of over US\$ 20 million;
- advising a multi-national advertising and public relations company in relation to a claim for arbitrary dismissal of an employee brought before the Dubai Courts; and
- advising on the enforcement or challenge of multiple arbitral awards in various fora, including the Dubai, Abu Dhabi and DIFC Courts.

Practice Development

- Developing comprehensive systems of knowledge profiling, storage and collation for contentious teams;

- Assisting the partnership with the practice development strategy of contentious teams, including identifying clients, drafting and coordinating publications, organising and executing client events, planning and taking speaking engagements and coordinating with the global firm strategy;
- Assisting with the development of advanced delivery projects for efficient delivery of legal services, including the development of AI products for the analysis of contentious matters; and
- Producing and delivering training on current and complex legal and technical issues across numerous legal systems and jurisdictions.

Education and Qualifications

Post-graduate	Higher Courts (Civil Advocacy) Qualification LPC, BPP Law School London
Degree	LLB Law with French Law, University College London Certificat Supérieur de Droit Français, Paris II Panthéon-Assas

Professional Membership

Solicitor, Law Society of England & Wales since March 2008
CI Arb, Member and Vice-Chair of CI Arb YMG (UAE Branch)
Arbitral Women, Member

Foreign Languages

Competent French.