



Grace Cheng

Year of call: 2016 (Hong Kong (2013); England and Wales (2016); AIFC (2020); DIFC (2022); SICC (2022))

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“Grace Cheng is a highly sought-after multilingual arbitrator, often sitting as sole arbitrator, with wide-ranging sectorial and jurisdictional experience” – Legal 500, 2024

Based in London, Grace Cheng is an English barrister and qualified solicitor in Hong Kong with a valid practicing certificate. She has rights of audience before the AIFC Court (Kazakhstan) and DIFC Courts (Dubai) and has also been granted full registration as a registered foreign lawyer at the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC). In addition to speaking fluent English, Cantonese and Mandarin, Grace has a working knowledge of French and Spanish.

Grace is a versatile advocate with experience in many different areas of the law (ranging from commercial and construction to family, employment, IP and sports law) with a particular focus on complex commercial matters involving an international element. She has worked for a wide range of clients including governments, local authorities, FTSE 100 companies and other corporate entities, high net worth individuals, as well as legal aid work. Grace is included on the Legal Services Panel for the Government of the Virgin Islands.

In addition to her practice as counsel, Grace is a sought after arbitrator and adjudicator and has received over 20 appointments as neutral dealing with disputes in a diverse range of areas and involving a range of languages and governing laws, including English law, Hong Kong law and Singapore law. She is a member of the Bar Council's ADR Panel and has been appointed to the British Horseracing Authority's Judicial Panel and The Football Association's Anti-Discrimination Panel. Grace has been a member of the Standing Panels for the Billie Jean King Cup Finals (formerly, the Fed Cup) also known as the World Cup of women's tennis and the Davis Cup Finals since 2022 and 2023 respectively. She was appointed as a member of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association Disciplinary Commission in the biggest snooker match fixing hearing to-date to determine disciplinary proceedings against 10 professional snooker players.

Grace is included on a large number of panels, registries and databases of arbitrators including AIAC (Malaysia); BAIAC (Singapore); BIAMC (Indonesia); CACM (Mozambique); CAA (Taipei); Delos (Paris); DIAC (Dubai); FINRA (US/Puerto Rico); HIAC (Hainan); HKIAC (Hong Kong); ICC (UK); LCIA (London); LMAA (London); MARC (Mauritius); MIAC (Maldives); PIAC (Vietnam); SCC (Stockholm); SHAC (Shanghai); SHIAC (Shanghai); SIAC (Singapore); THAC (Thailand); WTC Macau Arbitration Center (Macau); Sport Resolutions (International); and the World Intellectual Property Organization. She is also on various panels of adjudicators, including HKA (Hong Kong); HKIAC (Hong Kong); LMAA (London); TECBAR (UK); and UKA (UK).

Grace has taught law at the University of Oxford, King's College London, the University of Warwick, the National Chengchi University, and the National Taiwan University. She is a member of the AIAC Academy Tutors Panel and the AIFC Academy of Law Academic Pool.

Grace obtained a First Class Honours degree in law from the LSE and the BCL from the University of Oxford. She previously worked at Slaughter and May and was judicial assistant to the Honourable Mr Justice Blair when he was the Judge in Charge of the Commercial Court. She has also assisted Professor Ewan McKendrick with the latest two editions of Goode and McKendrick on Commercial Law.

Areas of expertise

Administrative and Public
Alternative Dispute Resolution
Commercial
Construction
Employment
Sport

Employment

Grace has acted in many employment cases, including representing English Heritage in a claim brought by a zero-hours contract employee at Stonehenge for alleged unpaid furlough pay under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. She also represented a former employee of Virgin Atlantic in a claim against the airline for unfair dismissal and disability discrimination.

In particular, Grace specialises in cases involving the intersection of commercial and employment law. She acted for one of the defendants in a claim brought by a Covid-19 testing laboratory for breach of employment contract, breach of fiduciary duties and conspiracy.

Cases of note:

- Representing English Heritage in a claim brought by a zero-hours contract employee at Stonehenge for alleged unpaid furlough pay under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Representing a former employee of Virgin Atlantic in a claim against the airline for unfair dismissal and disability discrimination
- Representing a former employee of a care home in a claim for race and age discrimination

Memberships

- Bar Council – member of the Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) Panel
- Chancery Bar Association (ChBA)
- Commercial Bar Association (COMBAR)
- Technology and Construction Bar Association (TECBAR)
- International Law Association (ILA)
- International Chamber of Commerce Young Arbitrators Forum (ICC YAF)
- Young International Council for Commercial Arbitration (YICCA)
- The London Court of International Arbitration Young International Arbitration Group (LCIA YIAG)
- Young Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HK45)

Qualifications

- Admitted as a solicitor in Hong Kong – 2013
- Called to the Bar of England and Wales (Lincoln's Inn; Member of Denning Society) – 2016
- Granted rights of audience before the Astana International Finance Centre (AIFC) Court in Kazakhstan – 2020
- Registered with the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Courts' Register of Legal Practitioners – Part II (registered individual with rights of audience before the DIFC Courts) – 2022
- Granted full registration as a registered foreign lawyer at the Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC) – 2022

Qualifications

Education

- The London School of Economics and Political Science, LLB Bachelor of Laws
- The University of Oxford, Bachelor of Civil Law
- The University of Hong Kong, The Postgraduate Certificate in Laws

Scholarships and prizes

- Blackstone Chambers Prize for Best Performance in Public Law
- Hogan Lovells Prize for Best Performance in the Law of Business Associations
- Hou De Charitable Foundation Scholarship for the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws Programme
- Joint Hong Kong Law Society / Bloomsbury Books Prize
- Pegasus Scholarship (Inns of Court)
- The Eastham Scholarship (Lincoln's Inn Pupillage Award)
- Hong Kong Law Society International Bar Association Annual Conference Sponsorship Award
- Hong Kong Law Society Inter-Pacific Bar Association Annual Conference Sponsorship Award
- International Association of Young Lawyers Scholarship Award
- Worshipful Company of Arbitrators Travelling Scholarship
- The Law Society Pro Bono and Community Work Recognition Programme, Silver Award
- The Hong Kong Council of Volunteering Professional Volunteer Service, Gold Award
- Harvard Book Prize
- South China Morning Post Student Linguist of the Year, Special Recognition Award

Additional Information

Publications

- The Continuing Triumph of 'Bright Line' Rules: Rothwell revisited (2017) 25 Tort Law Review 3
- "You're fired": The Blacklisting of Workers in the Construction Industry (2017) 33 Construction Law Journal 403
- E-Money: Evolution or revolution? (2018) 33(2) Journal of International Banking Law and Regulation 56
- What's in a name? (2018) 1 International Family Law Journal 50

- The role of judicial review in the EU's financial architecture and the development of alternative remedies: The experience of the Board of Appeal of the European Supervisory Authorities (2018) 84 Quaderni di Ricerca Giuridica published by Banca d'Italia 17 (co-authored with Sir William Blair)
- In Code we trust? Trustlessness and smart contracts (co-authored with Mimi Zou and Marta Soria Heredia) originally published by the Society for Computers and Law (April 2019) and in abridged form by the Oxford Business Law Blog (University of Oxford)
- Member of Commercial Bar Association / Chancery Bar Association joint working group responding to the Law Commission's call for evidence on smart contracts (March 2021) and the Law Commission's consultation on digital assets (November 2022).
- Overriding mandatory rules and compliance in international arbitration: national monetary restrictions, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Dossier XIX (co-authored with Sir William Blair)
- Arbitrating financial disputes—are they different and what lies ahead? (2022) Arbitration International 1 (co-authored with Sir William Blair, Gökçe Uyar and Yang Zhao)
- The Lasting Legacy of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Construction Industry in the UK (2022) 38(4) Construction Law Journal 1

Lectures

- 'Principles of Civil Proceedings in the UK Courts', Lecture delivered as part of the Astana International Finance Centre Foundations Program for Lawyers (AIFC Academy, March 2021)
- 'Overview of English Law', Lecture delivered to the National Welfare Fund "Samruk-Kazyna", a sovereign wealth fund and joint stock company in Kazakhstan which owns, either in whole or in part, a number of major companies in the country (AIFC Academy, August 2021)
- 'Commercial Law', a series of lectures delivered as part of the Astana International Finance Centre Certificate in Common Law course (AIFC Academy, September to October 2021)

Grace has assisted Professor Ewan McKendrick with the latest two editions (i.e. 5th and 6th editions) of Goode and McKendrick on Commercial Law, a widely-used text by practitioners and academics, including assuming primary responsibility for updating chapters 38 (commercial litigation) and 39 (commercial arbitration) of the book. She was previously an associate editor of the Oxford University Commonwealth Law Journal.

Her 'A day in the life of' column was featured in Family Law LexisNexis. Grace was also featured in the Chancery Bar Association's 'Meet the Chancery barristers' career's guide.

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