

REPORT ON ATTENDANCE: ICC PIDA 1 TRAINING

To: The Bar Council

From: Chris Fong and Benjamin Tsang, Barristers-at-Law

Date of the Training: 23 to 25 October 2025

1. We are grateful of being selected to participate in the International Chambers of Commerce (the “ICC”)’s International Commercial Arbitration Training (the “**PIDA 1 Training**”), held from 23 to 25 October 2025. Organised by the ICC Institute of World Business Law and ICC-Hong Kong, in collaboration with the HKSAR Department of Justice, this programme provided premier instruction in dispute resolution. We express our sincere gratitude to the Bar Association for the generous subsidy. It demonstrates a strong commitment to the professional development of the junior bar, and we deeply appreciate the chance to enhance our skills in this specialised field.
2. The primary value of this training lies in bridging the gap between academic theory and the practical realities of international dispute resolution. While arbitration is increasingly popular, young barristers rarely manage complex ICC cases from inception to conclusion. This programme addressed that deficit through an in-depth, “start-to-finish” simulation. Rather than attending disconnected lectures, we were immersed in the full lifecycle of a case, from the initial request for arbitration to the enforcement of the award. This comprehensive approach provided practical insights difficult to obtain through regular seminars. Insightful experiences were also shared by very seasoned practitioners and experts in the field.
3. The course structure was excellent, utilising a single, continuous mock case to anchor the learning experience. This ensured coherence, as we had to navigate the consequences of our strategic choices throughout the three days. The programme began with foundational steps: preparing the Request for Arbitration and the Answer. Working in groups under strict time constraints, we drafted documents to mimic real-world pressure. Plenary sessions

followed, where we analysed our work against ICC standards, receiving immediate feedback on our drafts and refining our drafting techniques.

4. As the training progressed, we examined the procedural complexities of ICC arbitration, specifically the constitution of the tribunal and the Terms of Reference. We received detailed instruction on arbitrator selection and the unique role of the Secretariat of the ICC International Court of Arbitration, followed by the session on drafting the Terms of Reference. Exploring case management techniques gave us a clearer understanding of the powers and duties inherent in the tribunal's role.
5. The most engaging aspect was the simulation of the arbitral hearing, spanning through each stage from preliminary hearings, testimony with cross-examination, and to submissions. This required us to think on our feet and practise oral advocacy in a realistic setting. Receiving direct advice from experienced practitioners regarding the arbitration (and importantly, how they would have handled the mock trial as if a real case) was invaluable. The faculty emphasised the differences between local litigation tactics and the nuanced approach required in international arbitration. Learning how to adjust the cross-examination technique to suit an international tribunal was a highlight, and the professional atmosphere made the experience highly applicable to actual practice.
6. The quality of instruction was exceptional, led by renowned leaders such as Co-Chairs Kim Rooney and Sylvia Tee, alongside Senior Counsel including John Scott SC, Rimsky Yuen SC, Horace Wong SC, Winnie Tam SC and Queenie Lau SC. The faculty also featured experienced practitioners, including Simon Chapman KC, Yvonne Shek, Antony Crockett, Dr. Anran Zhang, Tom Walsh, David Fong, Xin Zhang, Peter Chow, Dr. Christopher To, Sun Wei, Sherlin Tung, and Dr. Noam Zamir. Their contributions went beyond reciting rules; they shared practical and strategic insights. Hearing directly from them about handling procedural issues and managing client expectations provided a depth of learning that was both inspiring and practically useful.

7. Beyond the academic content, the networking opportunities were significant. The cohort included not only lawyers from Hong Kong but also legal professionals from the Mainland in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. Many are partners of their firms and experienced in handling complex transactions. Working alongside them facilitated a genuine exchange of ideas and helped build cross-border professional relationships. Given the increasing integration of the Greater Bay Area, establishing connections with such experienced Mainland counterparts is a distinct advantage for our future practices.
8. We must also commend the high quality of the course materials, which included samples for every stage of the arbitration process. From initial pleadings to the final award, these documents offer a clear standard for high-level international dispute resolution and will serve as a practical toolkit we can adapt for our own instructions. The focused and rigorous atmosphere maximised the utility of the samples and simulation exercises, ensuring the resources provided will have a lasting impact on our work.
9. In conclusion, the ICC PIDA 1 Training was a rigorous experience that significantly enhanced our understanding of international commercial arbitration. The combination of expert instruction, practical simulation, and high-level networking has better equipped us to handle arbitration matters with confidence. We highly recommend that the Bar Association continues the subsidy in future, as it offers a unique platform for young barristers to develop necessary specialised skills. We look forward to applying these lessons in our practice and remain grateful for the Bar's support.

Chris Fong

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