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CHAMBERS

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JOHN MCMILLAN

Call: 2012

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Areas of practice

- Construction & Engineering
- Energy & Natural Resources
- International Arbitration
- Commercial
- Professional Negligence

Clerks Details

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Practice Overview

John McMillan is a “talented barrister” who is “really analytical” (Chambers and Partners, 2022). Clients say that he “has real star quality,” is able to “process large volumes of information at light speed,” and is “very strong on his feet” (Legal 500, 2022).

He specialises in commercial arbitration and litigation, with a focus on the construction, engineering, energy, and technology sectors. He is recommended by Chambers and Partners, Legal 500 and Who’s Who Legal for international arbitration, and by Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 for construction.

His recent experience includes:

- Acting as sole counsel in a week-long, USD 20 million ICC arbitration relating to the sale of a number of aircraft;
- Acting as junior counsel in a three-week, USD 400 million LCIA arbitration relating to the construction of an LNG facility in the Middle East;
- Acting as junior counsel in a three-week, USD 1 billion ICC arbitration concerning the construction of a near-shore marine works at an LNG facility;

- acting as sole counsel in a Part 8 trial concerning the construction of an automotive manufacturing facility in East Asia;
- acting in adjudication enforcement proceedings in the TCC (including Illuminesia Limited (t/a Alterego Facades) v RFL Facades limited [2023] EWHC 3122 (TCC)).

While he has experience of all major contract forms, he has particular expertise in the FIDIC suite of contracts. He has acted in disputes involving the Yellow, Red and Pink books, and has appeared in 10 Dispute Board hearings in the past few years with values ranging between USD 5 million and USD 150 million.

He has conducted advocacy in a wide variety of settings, including the TCC and Chancery divisions of the High Court, international arbitration, Dispute Boards, the County Court, adjudication, and the First Tier Tribunal (in relation to a claim under the Building Safety Act 2022).

Having studied Chinese at Oxford University, John speaks and reads Chinese. He has acted in disputes for and against Chinese clients, in which he has been required to review Chinese-language documents.

His international work has included disputes in China, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Australia, Germany, Ghana, Angola, South Africa, Uruguay, Brazil, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, India and Pakistan, among other jurisdictions.

In the right case, John is willing to act pro bono. In 2023, he successfully represented an individual in a claim arising from a domestic building contract in a 2-day County Court trial.

Recent Cases

Construction & Engineering

Construction & Engineering disputes have always been central to John's practice. Recent highlights include:

- Acting in High Court, First Tier Tribunal and adjudication proceedings relating to a number of fire-safety related disputes for owners, contractors and tenants
- Acting in adjudication enforcement proceedings in the High Court and County Court
- Representing the claimants in \$180m arbitration relating to the construction of an underground metro station
- Representing the claimant in a series of high-value FIDIC Dispute Board hearings relating to the construction of two power stations in Africa
- Acting as sole counsel in High Court litigation regarding the construction of an automotive manufacturing facility in East Asia
- Representing a State in relation to a \$200 million dispute arising from the construction of a major road, involving several FIDIC Dispute Board proceedings and a SIAC arbitration
- Representing South American clients in an \$85 million ICC arbitration relating to the construction of a biofuels facility in South America
- Representing a European contractor in two ICC arbitrations (one against the employer and one against a subcontractor) relating to the construction of an industrial facility in South America
- Representing a global oilfield services company in an ICC arbitration relating to the drilling of oil wells in the Middle East

John has experience of the FIDIC, NEC, JCT and LOGIC forms.

“He is thorough, diligent and dedicated.”

Chambers UK Bar 2023

Energy & Natural Resources

John has wide experience of energy & natural resources disputes, especially in the oil and gas sector. Recent highlights include:

- Representing the owner of an LNG facility in the Middle East in a \$400 million arbitration
- Representing an Australian contractor in a billion dollar arbitration concerning near-shore marine works at a gas processing facility
- Representing an oil and gas exploration company in a \$60 million ICC arbitration arising from a joint operating agreement for an offshore oil concession in West Africa
- Representing a global oilfield services company in an ICC arbitration relating to the drilling of oil wells in the Middle East
- Advising on enforcement of an arbitral award relating to a multi-billion dollar dispute arising from the development of gas fields in Northern Iraq
- Representing South American clients in an ICC arbitration relating to the construction of a biofuels facility in South America

“He has a real understanding of the pressures solicitors are under and really understands the nature of working on a team, and of client realities.”

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

International Arbitration

John has advised on or acted in arbitrations under the ICC, LCIA, SIAC, UNCITRAL, ICC, NAI and ICSID rules, involving common-law, civil-law and international-law issues. Recent highlights include:

- Representing an airline in a \$20 million LCIA arbitration relating to the purchase of a number of aircraft
- Representing the owner of an LNG facility in the Middle East in a \$400 million arbitration
- Representing an Australian contractor in a billion dollar arbitration concerning near-shore marine works at a gas processing facility
- Representing a Chinese company in a \$1 billion ICC arbitration arising from purchase of a company in another East Asian jurisdiction
- Representing a leading European manufacturing company in a multi-billion dollar ICC arbitration relating to disputes with a major Japanese manufacturer
- Representing a financial institution in a \$200 million LCIA arbitration relating to the alleged negligent valuation of complex assets
- Representing an American healthcare company in a \$150 million ICC arbitration relating to an agreement to develop a pharmaceutical facility in the Middle East
- Acting as secretary to the tribunal in an ICC arbitration relating to disputes between a State and a European engineering company

John has also advised on investor-State arbitrations, including:

- Advising on a jurisdictional dispute arising from an arbitration under the Energy Charter Treaty
- Advising a State entity on its international-law obligations arising from an investor-State arbitral award
- Advising on an ICSID arbitration claim

Further examples of John's arbitration experience can be found under Construction & Engineering and Energy & Natural Resources.

Commercial

John has wide experience of commercial disputes and frequently advises on post-M&A, joint venture and sale of goods disputes. Recent highlights include:

- Advising a Hong Kong property development company on a complex, multi-jurisdictional loan transaction
- Advising an American technology company in relation to a \$1 billion post-M&A dispute with a Chinese technology company
- Advising an American food and beverage company in relation to a \$200 million post- M&A dispute with Chinese investors
- Advising a European aviation company on disputes arising from an engine maintenance contract
- Advising an American pharmaceutical company on a patent licensing dispute with a British company
- Advising a joint venture in West Africa on a sale of goods dispute with a vendor

Further examples of John experience of commercial disputes can be found under Construction & Engineering, Energy & Natural Resources, and International Arbitration.

“John has also provided very strong advocacy support on a range of matters and has demonstrated a very clear and persuasive style that marks him out as a star in the making”

Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024

Professional Negligence

John also has experience of professional negligence disputes. He has acted in:

- Multiple cases relating to fire-safety defects in high-rise buildings
- High Court litigation regarding the hydraulic modelling for river diversion works
- An ICC arbitration relating to the design of a biofuels facility
- An LCIA arbitration relating to the valuation of complex assets
- Linked High Court and adjudication proceedings relating to cladding on a high-rise block in London

Education & Professional Career

Keating Chambers	February 2020
WilmerHale, London	2014-2020
(Associate: 2014-2016; Senior Associate 2017-2019; Counsel: 2020)	
Bar Professional Training Course, City University, London, (Outstanding)	2012
Graduate Diploma in Law, City University, London (Distinction)	2011
BA Chinese, Wadham College, University of Oxford, (First)	2004 - 2008

Publications & Seminars

- Assistant Editor, Journal of International Arbitration (2017-2021)
- Taught cross-examination class at Africa Arbitration Academy (London, June 2019)
- Spoke about working with expert witnesses at seminar organised by Delos and Grant Thornton as part of London International Disputes Week (London, May 2019)
- Co-author of the England & Wales chapter, International Comparative Legal Guide to International Arbitration (Global Legal Group, 2016-2019)
- Taught class on cross-examination as part of the L.L.M. in International Business Law at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Brussels, December 2018)
- Spoke about the ethics of arbitrators marketing themselves at Cambridge Arbitration Day (Cambridge, March 2018)
- Taught class on arbitral awards as part of the LSE Law Society's International Arbitration Academy (London, March 2018)
- 'The Evaluation of Witness Evidence in Time-Limited Arbitral Proceedings: The Chess-Clock and the Rule in Browne v. Dunn' in Young Arbitration Review (No. 24, January 2017)

Awards

- City University: Oxford University Press Prize for Advocacy and Procedure (2012)
- Lincoln's Inn: Megarry Scholarship (2012), Denning Scholarship (2011), Hardwicke Entrance Award (2010), Haldane Scholarship (2010)
- Oxford University: Gibbs Prize for Oriental Studies (2006)
- Wadham College, Oxford: prize for examination results (2008), scholarship (2005, 2006)

Languages

Chinese (Mandarin)