

Manchester International Arbitration Training Programme (MIATP)

1–7 September 2026



hosted by
Manchester China Institute at the University of Manchester

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Overview

Hosted by the **Manchester China Institute at The University of Manchester**, this seven-day training programme is acclaimed as an “intellectual accelerator” leading to the highest echelons of international arbitration. This programme leverages the top-tier academic resources of The University of Manchester and assembles a “master-class faculty” consisting of **former judges of the UK Court of Appeal; the London Commercial Court; the Court of Justice of the European Union**; and the High Court of South Africa; International judges of the Singapore International Commercial Court, **King’s Counsel (KC)**, barristers and international arbitration partners of leading law firms.

The course is tailor-made for **law school students, law firm partners, arbitration institution staff, general counsel of multinational corporations, and arbitrators**. We adopt a unique perspective to deeply deconstruct the core differences and application logic of common law in cross-border transactions. From arbitration process management to the execution of state immunity, we provide comprehensive coverage of dual-track practices in both **International Commercial Arbitration (ICA)** and **Investment Treaty Arbitration (ITA)**.

Global International Arbitration and Cross-Border Dispute Resolution

Learn from a “dream team” in the global arbitration sector and master the legal wisdom that defines foreign-related rule of law. The course covers the core content of international arbitration, including:

- **International Commercial Arbitration (ICA):** Participants will not only gain an in-depth understanding of the theoretical knowledge and the latest frontier cases of international commercial arbitration but will also focus practically on the arbitration process, the role and selection of arbitrators, arbitration agreements, procedural rules, and the making and enforcement of arbitral awards. **Top-band arbitrators** who have heard cases of international impact will personally review these processes. You will learn how to conduct hearing room management in complex multi-party arbitrations, how to influence the direction of a case through strategic arbitrator selection, and how to utilize emergency arbitrator procedures to freeze opposing assets.
- **Investment Treaty Arbitration (ITA):** Key contents include the jurisdictional features of ITA, substantive protections for investors, and the enforcement of awards against states. By dissecting the latest cases, you will gain insight into the political economy behind the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism and understand why global powers are reshaping this system. We will analyse the delicate balance between the “Right to Regulate” and investor protection, and project the future evolutionary trajectory of ITA through cases involving the latest generation of FTAs (such as CPTPP and USMCA).
- **Legal Foundations:** In cross-border disputes, the application of substantive law often determines success or failure. We will take you **inside the adjudicative mindset of UK courts**, allowing you to intuitively experience the cognitive differences between civil law and common law systems. We will go beyond traditional “connecting factor” instruction, with battle-tested **international law firm partners** guiding you on how to conduct “jurisdictional planning”.

Programme Structure

Lectures, interactive workshops, and practical exercises are scheduled every morning and afternoon. Topics include arbitration agreements and processes; jurisdiction and substantive treatment in investment arbitration; post-award procedures, including challenges and enforcement; practical arbitration skills, including mock hearings and group exercises. Participants will receive curated reading materials and case studies, fostering a hands-on learning environment.

Certification and Networking

Upon completion of the training, participants will receive a certificate of attendance. The programme will also offer valuable networking opportunities, including social events, a gala dinner, and a football club tour, allowing participants to build connections with global peers and experts.

Upon conclusion of the Programme, all participants shall receive a Certificate of Attendance.

Presenters Biography

Professor Orkun Akseli

Professor of Commercial Law at the University of Manchester School of Law

Professor Orkun Akseli is a Professor of Commercial Law at the University of Manchester School of Law, where his research primarily focuses on the harmonization and modernization of secured transactions laws, development finance, and the facilitation of credit. He possesses a highly international academic background, having earned his LLB and MA in Turkey, an LLM in the United States, and a PhD from the University of Manchester. Prior to embarking on his academic career, he practiced commercial litigation and insurance defense in Izmir, and he currently remains a member of the Turkish Bar. He is extensively involved in prominent national and international law reform initiatives, frequently contributing to the work of global formulating organizations such as UNCITRAL. In addition to his research and law reform activities, he holds significant leadership roles within the academic community, including serving as the current Secretary General of the International Academy of Commercial and Consumer Law.

Dr Georgia Antonopoulou

Lecturer in Commercial Dispute Resolution at the University of Birmingham

Dr Georgia Antonopoulou is a Lecturer in Commercial Dispute Resolution at the University of Birmingham. Her research focuses on international commercial courts in Europe and Asia, the role of foreign judges in domestic courts and international commercial arbitration. It has been published in both specialist and generalist journals, such as the Journal of International Dispute Settlement and the Oxford Journal of Legal Studies. She is currently working on her first monograph on international commercial courts to be published with Cambridge University Press. Georgia's research has been funded by the British Academy, the Socio-Legal Scholars Association and the University of Birmingham-University of Leiden Strategic Collaboration Fund. She has previously held visiting fellow positions at the Max Planck Institute on Procedural Law in Luxembourg, the Singapore Management University, the China University of Political Science and Law, and the University of Macau.

Dr Nicolette Butler

Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Manchester

Dr Nicolette Butler is a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Manchester, specializing in international economic law with a particular focus on global trade and investment policy. Her extensive research footprint covers international dispute settlement, digital trade, and the complex trade-environment nexus, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical policy applications. Beyond her academic teaching, she has actively engaged in policy-facing work, having previously held a position within the UK Department for Business and Trade. She has consistently served as Principal Investigator on numerous funded projects and has widely disseminated her findings in leading academic publications, including the Journal of International Economic Law and the Journal of World Investment and Trade. Furthermore, her international academic presence is highlighted by prestigious visiting positions she has held at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law in London and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.

Professor Lei Chen

Chair of Comparative Law, Lee Kai Hung Chair of Chinese Politics, and Director of the Manchester China Institute

Professor Lei Chen is the Chair of Comparative Law, Lee Kai Hung Chair of Chinese Politics, and Director of the Manchester China Institute. His academic research sits at the intersection of comparative private law and transnational dispute resolution, notably leading a landmark multi-volume project to produce the first article-by-article English-language commentary on the Chinese Civil Code. In addition to his scholarly work, Professor Chen is a seasoned international arbitrator and specialist mediator who serves on the panels of leading global dispute resolution institutions, including HKIAC, SIAC, LCIA, and the ICC. His exceptional practical expertise recently led to his appointment to the International Commercial Expert Committee of the Supreme People's Court of China in 2024. Furthermore, his distinguished contributions to legal scholarship are recognized globally through his election to prestigious bodies such as the Academia Europaea and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Sir Bernard Eder International Arbitrator and Mediator (Former High Court Judge)	Sir Bernard Eder is a highly esteemed independent international arbitrator and mediator who previously practiced for 35 years as a barrister specializing in commercial litigation. In 2011, he was appointed as a Judge of the High Court of England and Wales, where he sat primarily in the Commercial Court until his resignation in 2015. Following his departure from the English bench, he has continued his distinguished judicial work by serving as an International Judge at the Singapore International Commercial Court. Over the course of his extensive career, he has been appointed as an arbitrator in over 400 international arbitrations across a wide range of commercial sectors. He is universally recognized for his exceptional expertise, consistently achieving top Band 1 rankings for International Arbitrators in both the Chambers and Legal 500 directories.
Ben Giaretta Independent Chartered Arbitrator and Mediator	Ben Giaretta is an independent chartered arbitrator and mediator, experienced in both international commercial arbitration and investment treaty arbitration. He has worked exclusively in international arbitration throughout his career. He has very broad sector experience, including technology, energy, renewables, construction, mining, M&A, commodities, shipping, finance and professional services. He has worked in disputes all over the world: in Africa, Europe, the Gulf region, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region. His experience includes arbitrations under the ICC, LCIA, SIAC, HKIAC, UNCITRAL and ICSID Rules. Ben worked for 27 years in major international law firms, including 20 years in London and 7 years in Singapore, and 17 years as a partner. During that time, he held various senior positions as Head of Dispute Resolution, Head of International Arbitration, and Head of Dispute Resolution in Asia. He has also held senior positions in ADR organisations, including as the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb), Chair of the London Branch of the CIArb, and a member of the Board of Directors of London International Disputes Week.
Joe-han Ho Barrister, 39 Essex Chambers	Joe-han Ho is a highly experienced 'senior junior' barrister who specializes in complex commercial disputes and international arbitration. His practice has a strong international focus, particularly within Asian jurisdictions, where he serves a diverse client base ranging from leading corporations to ultra-high-net-worth individuals. In addition to his primary counsel work, Joe-han is a highly qualified arbitrator, mediator, and adjudicator holding panel appointments at several leading global and Chinese institutions. Prior to coming to the Bar, he practiced as a solicitor at Cleary Gottlieb, held academic positions teaching law, and he continued to publish regularly on various commercial law matters.
Drew Holiner Barrister and International Arbitrator, Monckton Chambers	Drew Holiner is a commercial barrister and international arbitrator with a diverse global practice spanning the UK, US, Middle East, and Asia-Pacific. He specializes in complex cross-border commercial disputes that involve energy, infrastructure, finance, technology, sanctions, and geopolitical risks. Operating across major dispute centres worldwide, he regularly acts as an arbitrator, lead counsel, advisory expert, and expert witness. His unique cross-system qualifications allow him to skilfully navigate the complexities of Western sanctions and Russian countermeasures, bridging the gap between common law and civil law traditions. Furthermore, he is widely recognized by leading directories as one of the foremost experts on Russian and CIS law in international arbitration and cross-border litigation.

Jonathan Lim Partner, King & Spalding	Jonathan Lim is a Partner at King & Spalding who specializes in high-stakes commercial and public international law arbitrations across major global jurisdictions. Fluent in Mandarin, a hallmark of his practice involves advising multinational corporations and ultra-high-net-worth individuals on complex China-related matters, including post-M&A, joint venture, and outbound investment disputes. Beyond his extensive commercial dispute resolution work, he regularly counsels international organizations and sovereign governments on public international law issues and legislative drafting. His exceptional legal acumen and strategic advocacy have earned him top-tier recognition from leading directories, including Global Arbitration Review's prestigious "45 under 45" list and Chambers Global. Consistently praised by clients and peers for his strong work ethic and masterful advice, he is widely regarded as an exceptionally gifted lawyer and a future global leader in international arbitration.
Jue Jun Lu Partner, Charles Russell Speechlys LLP	Jue Jun Lu is a Solicitor-Advocate in England and Wales and Partner at Charles Russell Speechlys in London, with substantial experience in resolving complex, cross-border commercial and investment disputes. Widely known for her expertise in handling Asia and China-related disputes, Jue Jun is consistently ranked by leading directories in International Arbitration. She currently sits on the Users Committee of the AIFC Court and IAC in Kazakhstan and has served on the ICC's Belt and Road Commission. A highly experienced arbitration practitioner, Jue Jun has acted in a large number of international arbitrations seated in London, Paris, Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong and Beijing and under the rules of the major international arbitral institutions including LCIA, ICC, HKIAC, SIAC, LMAA, and ICSID, as well as ad hoc proceedings. She also has a strong track record in managing court litigation of all sizes, particularly those relating to arbitration or involving issues of dishonesty and fraud. Jue Jun is well versed in English and Mandarin and speaks some Spanish. In addition to acting as counsel, she has considerable in-house experience, having spent time at one of the world's largest oil and gas companies. She recently completed a secondment to a major UK bank, with oversight over a wide range of financial services litigation and regulatory investigations.
Sir Bernard Rix Arbitrator (Former Lord Justice of Appeal), Twenty Essex	Sir Bernard Rix KC is a highly esteemed international arbitrator and a member of Twenty Essex, having formerly served as a Lord Justice of Appeal in the Court of Appeal of England and Wales. Following a distinguished judicial career with two decades of experience in the Commercial Court and the appellate bench, he retired in 2013 to pursue a global dispute resolution practice. He frequently accepts appointments as an arbitrator and mediator across a broad spectrum of commercial sectors, including energy, shipping, banking, and insurance. Beyond his institutional and ad hoc arbitration work, Sir Bernard regularly acts as an expert witness, mock arbitrator, and special master in US federal courts. In addition to his active practice, he contributes extensively to legal scholarships by holding a professorship in international commercial law at Queen Mary University of London.
Tim Smyth Partner, Boies Schiller Flexner LLP	Tim Smyth is a Partner who specializes in complex international arbitration and public international law disputes. He represents a diverse array of clients, including sovereign states, multinational corporations, and investors, in arbitrations conducted under major institutional rules such as ICSID, UNCITRAL, and the ICC. Smyth is particularly highly regarded for his work in high-profile investment treaty cases, having successfully handled billion-dollar claims across the mining, energy, telecommunications, and pharmaceutical sectors. His precise legal analysis and strategic acumen have earned him widespread recognition as a rising star and "Up and Coming" practitioner by leading directories including Chambers UK and Legal 500.

**Sir Christopher
Vajda KC**

Member of the Bar of
England and Wales and
Luxembourg, Monckton
Chambers

Sir Christopher Vajda KC is a highly distinguished barrister and arbitrator who notably served as the UK judge at the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) between 2012 and 2020. Knighted in 2026 for his exceptional service, he previously maintained a wide-ranging public and private law practice at the English Bar, where he frequently represented the UK Government and various regulatory bodies. He has since returned to practice as a highly sought-after arbitrator, sitting on panels for leading global institutions including the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and the UK Sports Resolutions panel. Alongside his arbitration and counsel work, he is a dedicated legal academic who serves as a visiting professor at the College of Europe, King's College London, and the University of Luxembourg.

Audience

Law school students

Law firm partners

Arbitration institution staff

General counsel of multinational corporations

Arbitrators

Schedule

Tuesday, 1 September

9:30 – 9:40: Welcome Remarks

Professor Duncan Ivison
President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manchester

9:40 – 9:50: Introduction of the Manchester International Arbitration Training Programme

Professor Lei Chen
Director of the Manchester China Institute

9:50 – 10:00: Group Photo

10:00 – 12:00: Five Views of the Cathedral – Fraud in International Commercial Arbitration

Speaker: Joe-han Ho
Barrister, 39 Essex Chambers

12:00 – 14:00: Lunch

14:00 – 15:30: Careers in Arbitration / Writing an International Arbitration Award

Speaker: Ben Giaretta
Independent Chartered Arbitrator and Mediator

Wednesday, 2 September

9:30 – 11:00: Arbitration and Insolvency (1)

Speaker: Orkun Akseli
Professor of Commercial Law, The University of Manchester

11:00 - 11:15: Tea/Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:30: Arbitration and Insolvency (2)

Speaker: Orkun Akseli
Professor of Commercial Law, The University of Manchester

12:30 – 14:00: Lunch

14:00 – 15:30: Expropriation Under International Investment Law

Speaker: Tim Smyth
Partner, Boies Schiller Flexner LLP

Thursday, 3 September

9:30 – 11:00: Conversational discussion on confidentiality in arbitration and on Principle and Pragmatism in the law

Speakers: Sir Bernard Rix and Professor Lei Chen
Former Lord Justice of Appeal, Arbitrator of Twenty Essex (Sir Bernard Rix)
Director of the Manchester China Institute (Professor Lei Chen)

11:00 – 11:15: Tea/Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:30: Beyond Performance: Explaining the Slow Growth of International Commercial Courts Compared to Arbitration

Speaker: Dr Georgia Antonopoulou
Lecturer in Commercial Dispute Resolution at the University of Birmingham

12:30 – 14:00: Lunch

14:00 – 15:30: Investment Arbitration and Commercial Arbitration

Speaker: Sir Christopher Vajda KC
Member of the Bar of England and Wales and Luxembourg

17:30 – 20:00: Gala Dinner

Friday, 4 September

9:30 – 10:45: Accessing Investment Treaty Protection: Jurisdiction, Admissibility and Treaty Scope for Chinese Outbound Investors

Speaker: Drew Holiner
Barrister, Monckton Chambers and International Arbitrator

10:45 – 11:00: Tea/Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30: Challenges to Awards

Speaker: Sir Bernard Eder
Former High Court Judge, International Arbitrator and Mediator

12:30 – 14:00: Lunch

14:00 – 15:30: Investment Treaty Arbitration Involving Chinese Parties

Speaker: Jonathan Lim
Partner, King & Spalding

Saturday, 5 September

Free day exploring Manchester

Sunday, 6 September

Tour to the Manchester City Stadium (10:00 – 12:00)

Monday, 7 September

9:30 – 10:45: The Arbitration of Intellectual Property Disputes

Speaker: Dr Nicolette Butler
Co-Director of Manchester Centre for Law and Business, The University of Manchester

10:45 – 11:00: Tea/Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30: Setting Aside Arbitral Awards on Public Policy

Grounds: Interpretive Controversies

Speaker: Professor Lei Chen
Director of the Manchester China Institute

12:30 – 14:00: Lunch

14:00 – 15:15: Arbitrator Challenges in International Arbitration

Speaker: Jue Jun Lu
Partner, Charles Russell Speechlys LLP

15:15 – 15:30: Award of Attendance Certificates

Price

Please see the below pricing for MIATP 2026:

- £800 GBP – The University of Manchester students and alumni
- £950 GBP – Non-University of Manchester students
- £1,100 GBP – Professionals

Fees include

- Lectures and interactive workshops
- Gala dinner, coffee/tea breaks, and lunches during the training period
- A tour of the world-famous Manchester City Football Club stadium
- Visits to international arbitration institutions and law firms

Payment Link:

About Manchester China Institute

The Manchester China Institute (MCI) promotes mutual understanding between the British and Chinese peoples through research, students, social responsibility, and inclusion. Established following a £5 million donation by Dr Lee Kai Hung in December 2017, the Institute was formally opened in May 2018 in the newly dedicated Lee Building on Oxford Road, at the heart of The University of Manchester's campus.

MCI advances research excellence in China studies across the Humanities, with impact and equality central to its research mission: it champions knowledge production and exchange to foster socially responsible research with impact beyond academia, and incubates research on racial, gender, economic, and other inequalities both within China and between China and the world. The Institute supports teaching and learning about China across The University of Manchester and promotes student wellbeing through programmes that seek to reduce prejudice and improve the Chinese and British student experiences on campus. Through civic engagement, knowledge exchange, and bespoke programmes such as this one, MCI fosters understanding and empathy between the British and Chinese publics.

Travelling to Manchester

Manchester is easily accessible by rail (regular direct train services from London Euston, Edinburgh, and other major cities), by road, and by air via Manchester Airport, the UK's largest airport outside London. Manchester boasts excellent transportation links, making it easy to travel to other major cities in the UK.

Accommodation

The University of Manchester provides modern facilities and convenient accommodation options for this programme. Below are hotels near The University of Manchester (prices are for reference, based on booking.com for check-in on 31 August 2026 and check-out on 1 September 2026):

- **Maldron Hotel Manchester City Centre** (£66/night/2 people)
- **Holiday Inn Express Manchester City Centre by IHG** (£63/night/2 people)
- **ibis Manchester Centre Princess Street** (£47/night/2 people)
- **Hyatt Regency Manchester** (£120/night/2 people)
- **Kimpton Clocktower by IHG** (£114/night/2 people)

Explore Manchester

Participants can fully enjoy Manchester's cultural and historical landscapes. Things to see and do include visiting:

- Manchester City Football Club's Etihad Stadium (included tour)
- The John Rylands Research Institute and Library
- Manchester Museum and the Whitworth Art Gallery
- The Science and Industry Museum
- The National Football Museum
- Manchester Cathedral and the historic Northern Quarter

Manchester is also a train ride away from major cities such as Liverpool, Leeds, Edinburgh, and London.

Contact us

For all enquiries, please contact The Manchester China Institute:

E: mci@manchester.ac.uk

Address: 178 Waterloo Place, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK

To know more about MCI: <https://www.mci.manchester.ac.uk/>



The Lee Kai Hung Building, home of the Manchester China Institute, The University of Manchester