



Duncan A. W. Abate

Senior Consultant

duncan.abate@jsm.com

Hong Kong +852 2843 2203



“The best employment guru in Hong Kong,” and “I think his track record is brilliant; he is extremely decisive and gives clear advice.” “[Duncan is] good at identifying the main legal issues and providing practical solutions to the client, even when the problem is very sophisticated.”

Chambers Asia Pacific

Employers turn to Duncan Abate for counsel on all aspects of employment and employee benefits law and regulation. He provides guidance on discrimination, labour relations, termination of employment, data privacy and the structure of employment relationships. Duncan also advises on the establishment, maintenance and restructuring of occupational retirement schemes and mandatory provident fund schemes as well as related documentation and services. Duncan has served clients such as Cathay Pacific Airways Limited and Bank of Communications.

Experience

Advised:

- Cathay Pacific Airways Limited on industrial relations issues
- Bank of Communications on its restructuring of MPF and ORSO products

Recognition

- Preeminent – Leading Employment & Labour Lawyers, Hong Kong – *Doyle's Guide*
- Leading – Leading Employment & Labour Lawyers, Hong Kong – *Doyle's Guide*
- Senior Statespeople – Employment: Hong Kong-based (International Firms), China – *Chambers Greater China Region*
- Band 1 – Employment: Hong Kong-based (International Firms), China – *Chambers Greater China Region* and *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- Hall of Fame – Labour and Employment, Hong Kong – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- A Leading Individual – Employment, Hong Kong – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- "Duncan Abate is a legend in employment laws." – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- "Duncan Abate is a veteran and most adept at all issues in employment." – *Chambers Greater China Region*
- "Duncan Abate is super experienced and is able to provide strategic advice quickly." – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- "The best employment guru in Hong Kong," and "I think his track record is brilliant; he is extremely decisive and gives clear advice." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- "Good at identifying the main legal issues and providing practical solutions to the client, even when the problem is very sophisticated" – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- "Market leader" – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- "Supremely experienced, with high expertise, especially with intense projects such as internal investigations within financial institutions." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- "Market leader in terms of his knowledge and responsiveness," and "absolutely top-notch." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- "Very knowledgeable" – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- "What sets him apart is his skill to analyse facts and then come up with very sensible business solutions to legal problems." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- The Best of the Best (Labour and Employment) – *Expert Guides*
- "He's not afraid to give a view and stand behind it, which is rare." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- "First-class practitioner" – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- "He is expert in employment law in Hong Kong. We have every confidence that he will best represent our interests," and "responsiveness is very important in our business, which is why we value him so much." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- Leading Practitioner – Management labour and Employment (Hong Kong) – *The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers*
- Leading Asialaw Labour & Employment Lawyer – *Asialaw Leading Lawyers*
- Featured Labour and Employment Lawyer – *Expert Guides*
- "Much-admired leader in this area," and "his advice is first-class in this field, and comes with strong commerciality. We never thought of instructing anyone else." – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- "Pragmatic, commercial and understands his client's business culture." – *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
- World's top 30 lawyers in Employment – *Guide to the World's Leading Lawyers-Best of the Best*

- Leading Lawyer – Labour and Employee Benefits – *PLC Which Lawyer?*
- “Deep understanding of the technical aspects of labour law,” “practical advice with speed and efficiency” and “sound and excellent lawyer.” – *Chambers Asia Pacific*
- Leading Employment Lawyer – *The International Who’s Who of Business Lawyers*
- “As ‘a responsive, can-do practitioner with considerable built-in knowledge on employment law,’ Abate impresses clients by being ‘very proactive at providing insightful, practical and real-world applicable advice.’” – *Chambers Asia*
- “Described by one source as a ‘top-drawer practitioner’” – *The International Who’s Who of Business Lawyers*
- Leading AsiaLaw Labour and Employment Benefits Lawyer in Hong Kong – *Asia Law & Practice Survey*
- Named one of the “pre-eminent practitioners in the world” – *Guide to the World’s Leading Labour & Employment Lawyers*
- Highly Recommended Labour and Employee Benefits Lawyer – *PLC Which Lawyer? Yearbook*
- Top Lawyer in Hong Kong – *The Expert Guide to the World’s Leading Labour and Employment Lawyers*
- Hong Kong Labour Lawyer of the Year – *China Staff*
- Leading Employment Lawyer – *Legal Who’s Who Hong Kong*

Qualifications

Admissions

- Hong Kong
- England and Wales

Languages

- English

Professional & community involvement

- Hong Kong Election Committee
- Employment Law Sub-Committee, Law Society of Hong Kong
- Executive Council Member and Honorary Secretary, Employers’ Federation of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Institute of Human Resources Management
- International Pensions and Employee Benefits Lawyers Association
- Hong Kong Retirement Scheme Association
- Management committee member, Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children

Related content

- Chambers Greater China Region Guide 2025 ranks JSM in 11 practice areas and recognises 23 lawyers, 17 January 2025
- JSM highly ranked in The Legal 500 Asia Pacific: Greater China 2025, 29 November 2024
- Hong Kong government to relax “418” continuous contract requirement under the Employment Ordinance, 1 February 2024
- Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2024 ranks JSM in 24 practice categories and recognizes 21 lawyers, 19 January 2024
- Chambers Asia Pacific and Greater China 2024 rank JSM in 18 practice areas and recognise 23 lawyers, 18 January 2024
- Hong Kong employer found liable for workplace pregnancy discrimination, 20 September 2023
- #MeToo: Hong Kong court upholds zero tolerance of sexual harassment in workplace, 10 August 2023
- Hong Kong court rules in favour of employer on indemnity provision, 13 July 2023
- Hong Kong expands pilot scheme to facilitate short-term visitors without needing an employment visa, 2 February 2023
- Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2023 ranks JSM in 20 practice categories and recognises 20 lawyers, 16 January 2023
- Hong Kong's new minimum wage effective from 1 May 2023, 13 January 2023
- Hong Kong court refuses to grant springboard injunction to protect employer's confidential information, 13 January 2023
- Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2022 ranks JSM in 20 practice categories and recognises 18 lawyers, 18 January 2022
- Chambers Asia Pacific and Greater China 2022 rank 15 JSM practice categories and 18 lawyers, 18 January 2022