



Sara Lau
Partner

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Sara is a partner in the firm’s Employment and Immigration practice, with extensive experience in both contentious and non-contentious employment and labour matters.

She advises on a broad range of human resource and compliance issues, drawing on her knowledge across all aspects of employment law, corporate immigration law, tax, and employment-related aspects of corporate law. Her diverse client portfolio spans multiple industries, reflecting her adaptability and depth of expertise.

Sara routinely handles employment disputes, including unjust dismissal claims, and provides strategic legal advice on workforce restructuring, redundancies, business closures, and voluntary or mutual separation schemes. Her practice also covers disciplinary issues, misconduct, sexual harassment, performance management, internal investigations, trade union recognition, and collective bargaining. Additionally, she supports clients with employment matters arising from mergers and acquisitions—particularly employee transitions and the integration of workplace policies, culture, and employment terms.

More recently, Sara has expanded her focus to include ESG compliance, advising businesses on ethical recruitment and the management of foreign labour. She counsels on fair labour practices, working and living conditions, and alignment with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, including indicators of forced labour and human trafficking under Protocol 29.

She has been commended as being “*an excellent lawyer, very responsive, and to the point*” (**Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2025 Edition**), “*practical in her advice*” (**Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2025 Edition**) and praised for being a “*proactive communicator*” and “*demonstrating understanding*” of her clients’ business (**Benchmark Litigation Asia Pacific 2025 Edition**). Aside from being the sole Malaysian recipient of the Client Choice Award 2022 in the Labour and Employment category by Lexology, Sara has also been recognised for her abilities as an award recipient in the Labour, Employment & Benefits category under Lexology Index (previously Who’s Who Legal) Southeast Asia 2024 and 2025 and in the Employment & Labour category under Lexology Index Malaysia 2025.

Sara’s other key practice areas also include general and civil litigation and acting for medical practitioners in negligence and malpractice matters.

Key Practice Areas

Employment Disputes
Employment Advisory and Compliance
Employee Fraud Management & Investigations
Environment, Social and Governance (ESG)

Bribery & Corruption
Medical Negligence
Immigration
General & Civil Litigation
Professional Liability

Key Selected Experience Employment Disputes

- ❖ Advised and acted for a national development financial institution in an unjust dismissal claim filed by its former CEO for breaching internal policies and procedures.
- ❖ Advised and acted for one of the fastest-growing, public listed healthcare groups in Malaysia in a domestic inquiry against its CEO for misconduct.
- ❖ Advised and acted for a statutory body in a dispute involving an ex-employee claiming for simultaneous provident funds and pension funds
- ❖ Advised and acted for a Singapore public-listed company in an unjust dismissal claim filed by the employee following termination from employment for breaching various suspension orders including by way of trespass, theft and intimidation.
- ❖ Advised and acted for a large multi-national data storage company in a judicial review of an award of the Industrial Court in relation to the retrenchment of its employee following a global reorganisation exercise.
- ❖ Successfully and independently advised and acted for a Port in Malaysia in a judicial review of an award of the Industrial Court in relation to the dismissal of an employee for misconduct.
- ❖ Successfully acted for an MNC in the IT Industry in unjust dismissal claims filed by its employees following retrenchment from employment.
- ❖ Assisted and acted for an MNC in the insurance industry on the termination of agency agreements wherein the agents alleged themselves to be employees of the MNC.
- ❖ Assisted and acted for companies in trade union and Collective Agreement disputes.
- ❖ Successfully and independently advised, assisted and acted for a statutory body in a judicial review pertaining to the dismissal of an employee for fraudulent conduct.
- ❖ Successfully assisted and acted for a statutory body in a judicial review pertaining to the implementation and execution of public salary schemes.

- ❖ Successfully assisted and acted for a statutory body in a judicial review pertaining to the dismissal of an employee for divulging secret data to third parties for personal gain.
- ❖ Successfully assisted and acted for a statutory body in a judicial review pertaining to double jeopardy punishment.

Employment Advisory and Compliance

- ❖ Drafting, reviewing and localising Contracts of Employment (for various categories of employees including non-executive, executive, management and directors, permanent and fixed term, foreign and local), Employment Handbooks, Collective Agreements and all other types of employment policies governing the employment relationship.
- ❖ Advising on and drafting all employment documentation pertaining to misconduct and termination of employment including Show Cause Letters, Warning Letters, Dismissal from Employment Letters, Redundancy Letters, and Deeds of Release.
- ❖ Drafting, coordinating and advising on Voluntary Separation Schemes, Mutual Separation Schemes and Separation Agreements.
- ❖ Drafting Data & Privacy Policies, Confidentiality Policies, Restrictive Covenants, intellectual property and confidential information clauses and Non-Disclosure Agreements in accordance with applicable law.
- ❖ Providing immediate practical written and verbal advice and management strategies to corporations and companies involving summary termination, medical boarding out, poor performance, retrenchment, separation, compliance with labour law and practice and the legal employment status of independent contractors.
- ❖ Performed reviews of Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery policies, whistleblowing policies, anti-retaliation policies, codes of conduct, open door policies and providing advice on internal fraud management in high profile and highly sensitive matters.
- ❖ Advised, assisted and provided support to corporations and companies in relation to employees and employment law concerns in transfer of business and share acquisition.
- ❖ Providing advice and assistance on international work authorisations, obtaining of immigration work visas and employment of expatriate and foreign individuals.
- ❖ Providing advice and assistance on Covid19 work restrictions, applicable Standard Operating Procedures, vaccinations and mass testing.

Employee Fraud Management & Investigations

- ❖ Performing on-site investigation and advising on suspected misconduct, non-compliance with internal process and procedure and claims of toxic work environment by a high ranking member of senior management in a national development financial institution.
- ❖ Leading and advising on suspected theft and redistribution of raw materials and conflict of interest by a senior manager of an international ceiling systems production company.
- ❖ Performing remote investigations and advising on employee misconduct, misbehaviour, unhealthy work practices, harassment and claims of a toxic work environment by a key manager.

Environment, Social and Governance (ESG)

- ❖ Advising a multi-national fabric manufacturing company on recruitment practices related to the employment of foreign labour from Nepal, including to review current practices and documents to ensure compliance with International Labour Organisation indicators of forced labour and with local laws.
- ❖ Performing a full investigation and audit into recruitment and employment practices in a multi-national toy manufacturing company to ascertain inconsistencies with the ILO Indicators of Forced Labour.

Bribery and Corruption

- ❖ Assists and advises clients in risk management, drafting and revising relevant whistleblowing policies, anti-corruption and anti-bribery policies, no-gift policies and procedures to be undertaken to avoid corporate liability for bribery and corruption.

Medical Negligence

- ❖ Acted for and represented a doctor in a Malaysian Medical Council Inquiry on a comment made in his medical report on the conduct of another doctor.
- ❖ Acted for and represented a doctor in a medical negligence claim relating to spinal surgery.
- ❖ Acted for and represented a doctor in a medical negligence suit in the High Court relating to kidney failure.
- ❖ Acted for and represented a doctor in a Malaysian Medical Council Inquiry in relation to medical malpractice.

Immigration

- ❖ Advised and assisted a wide range of clients including multinational corporations that employ foreign employees in Malaysia or that second/assign such employees to Malaysia, in obtaining the relevant work permits for the employees, as well as dependant passes for such employees' family members.
- ❖ Advised and assisted in other immigration advisory work including on the employment of expatriates and foreign workers and on the issuance of various types of valid passes for long term stay in Malaysia.
- ❖ Provide pro bono legal advice on applicability of Immigration law to foreign volunteers.
- ❖ Assisted in representing stateless individuals to obtain citizenship.
- ❖ Acted as counsel for criminal breaches of immigration laws.

General & Civil Litigation

- ❖ Assisted and acted as junior counsel for a Member of Parliament in a defamation matter involving a defamatory article published in a renowned local newspaper.
- ❖ Assisted and acted as junior counsel for a GLC in relation to breach of contract in delivery of rice.
- ❖ Independently managed and handled a trial matter pertaining to the existence of a contract for services.
- ❖ Assisted and acted as junior counsel for a corporation seeking to set aside an Arbitration Award.
- ❖ Assisted and advised clients in relation to debt recovery.
- ❖ Assisted and acted as junior counsel for a company in relation to a pre-action discovery application.

Qualifications

Advocate and Solicitor, High Court of Malaya (2013)
Barrister-at-Law (Lincoln's Inn) (2012)
LLB (Hons), University of Reading (2011)

Publications & Talks

Select Publications:

- Co-author, "Chartered Tax Institute of Malaysia's publication Tax Guardian, Borderless Working in Malaysia - Tax and Employment Law Considerations", Tax Guardian Volume 15 No.2/2022/Q2
- Co-author, Malaysian Civil Procedure, Sweet & Maxwell, 2024
- Co-author, Malaysian Civil Procedure, Sweet & Maxwell, 2021

- Co-author, Malaysian Civil Procedure, Sweet & Maxwell, 2017.
- Co-author, Malaysian Chapter, International Comparative Guide to Corporate Immigration, 2017.
- Co-author, Malaysian Civil Procedure, Sweet & Maxwell, 2015.
- Co-author, Malaysian Civil Procedure, Sweet & Maxwell, 2013.
- Author, “A Remedy for Transgression – A Global Discussion”, Skrine’s Legal Insights.
- Author, “The Doctrine of Non-Delegable Duty of Care”, Skrine’s Legal Insights.
- Author, “Old Wine in New Wineskin”, Skrine’s Legal Insights.
- Author, “Hello? Is this Thing On?”, Skrine’s Legal Insights
- Contributor, Practical Law Global Guides – Doing Business in Malaysia 2020 (Employment & Immigration)
- Contributor, Practical Law Global Guides – Doing Business in Malaysia 2021 (Employment & Immigration)

Select Talks:

- Speaker for Skrine Penang Employment & Occupational Safety Conference 2022, “Employment Compliance: Changes required in line with the Amendments to Employment Laws in Malaysia”
- Speaker for IR Law Conference, “Impact of The Endemic Stage on Foreign Workers.”
- Speaker for IR Law webinar, “Proportionality of Punishment Imposed by Employers – Imposing reasonable types of punishment depending on the circumstances.”
- Panellist and Speaker for Skrine Webinar, “Managing Occupational & Health Risks: Operating Your Business Safely During the COVID19 Pandemic”;
- Panellist and Speaker for Skrine Webinar, “Housekeeping: Disciplinary Action Against Employees [Parts 1 & 2]”;
- Panellist and Speaker for Skrine Webinar, “Covid19 Pandemic: Government’s Attempts to Reduce the Impact – How Effective Would That Be?”;
- Panellist and Speaker for Skrine Webinar, “Taking a Jab at It – Back to Work Safely”;
- Panellist and Speaker for Lexis Nexis & Earthworm Foundation Seminar on Child Rights in Palm Oil Industry, “Legal Considerations relating to Children on Oil Palm Plantations: What are the Risks/ Liabilities?”;
- Panellist and Speaker for Skrine Webinar, “Employment in the time of Covid-19: Part 2”;
- Panellist and Speaker for Skrine Webinar, “Covid-19 & The Future of Work”;
- Panellist and Speaker for EUMCCI Biz Talks, “Employment in the Time of Covid-19”;
- Emcee and Moderator for MSLSSL Employment Virtual Conference 2020, “Covid-19: Coping with New Realm of Realities”;
- Speaker for Damansara Utama Methodist Church BizConsult Webinar, “Surviving Lockdown: Measures for Employers”;
- Speaker for MySeminars Medico-Legal Webinar Series 2020, “In Times of a Pandemic: The Infectious Diseases Act & Covid-19”;

- Speaker for MySeminars Medico & Pharmaco Conference 2019, “How to be A Better Medical Expert: 5 Top Tips”; and
- Speaker for MySeminars Medico-Legal Conference 2017, “Common Issues that can Turn into Clinical Negligence”

Podcasts:

- Speaker for Skrine Cast podcast, “Performance Management 101: Steps, Strategies and Tips for Success”;
- Speaker for Skrine Cast podcast, “Impact of the Employment Act 1955’s Amendments on Employers and Employees”; and
- Speaker for Skrine Cast podcast, “Employment Issues Arising in M&A”.
- Speaker for Skrine Cast podcast, “Don’t Call me Sayang (Part 1)”

Media:

- SHRM Newsletter: Malaysia’s New Maternity and Paternity Leave Provisions Will Soon Take Effect (read [here](#))
- NST Leader: Forced Labour, published in the News Straits Times on 5 April 2022 (read [here](#))

Accolades

- 2022 Client Choice Award Winner in the Labour and Employment category
- 2024 Who’s Who Legal Southeast Asia Award Winner in the Labour, Employment and Benefits category
- *“Sara Lau is really great – an excellent lawyer, very responsive, and to the point.”* – Legal 500 Asia-Pacific 2025
- *“Sara Lau is experienced, responsive and practical in her advice.”* – Legal 500 Asia-Pacific 2025
- *“Sara demonstrates understanding of our business and is able to co-solution with us while taking into consideration the pros and cons. She proactively communicates with us on any updates and matters that we need to be aware of.”* – Benchmark Litigation Asia-Pacific 2025