

Melissa Gohlke

Partner



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White Collar Defense and Investigations
Securities Litigation + Enforcement
State Attorneys General

Melissa represents companies and their senior executives in complex government and internal investigations. She has represented clients before a variety of domestic and international authorities – including the US Department of Justice (DOJ), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), as well as the UK Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). She also has significant experience representing companies in multistate investigations by state attorneys general. Melissa focuses on large-scale investigations that include multiple investigating states, authorities and/or jurisdictions.

Melissa has experience at every level of conducting investigations, from advising on data collection consistent with domestic and foreign data privacy laws to negotiating an ultimate resolution. Her experience covers an array of subject matters – including market manipulation, securities and commodities fraud, insider trading, money laundering and compliance with consumer protection laws. She also regularly leads internal investigations into similar conduct, including matters involving whistleblowers. In addition, Melissa frequently advises companies on remediation steps and compliance enhancements related to investigated conduct.

Before joining Cooley, Melissa was an associate in the DC and London offices of an international law firm. She also was seconded to HSBC Holdings in London in 2017, where she worked on the litigation and regulatory investigations team of HSBC Group Legal.

Melissa's recent matters include representation of:

Government-facing Investigations

- A global social media company in nationwide investigations by more than 40 state attorneys general in relation to potential violations of consumer protection laws
- A top-five technology company in criminal, civil and internal investigations related to potential violations of consumer protection laws in connection with a wearable product
- A multinational financial institution in parallel investigations by authorities in more than a dozen jurisdictions – including the US, UK, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina – concerning the global foreign exchange markets
- A cryptocurrency investment fund in multiple examinations by the SEC related to compliance with the Investment Advisers Act and federal securities laws
- Broker-dealers in connection with SEC and FINRA inquiries into market volatility surrounding “meme stocks” in early 2021
- A major market making firm in multiple examinations and investigations by the SEC into various aspects of compliance with federal securities laws and regulations, including anti-money laundering controls and

Regulation SCI compliance

Internal investigations and compliance advice

- Multiple public companies – including a major insurance provider, a biotechnology company and a pharmaceutical company – in whistleblower investigations related to potential fraud, including collaboration with external auditors and advising on potential self-disclosure to the government
- The PAC-12 Conference board of directors in an internal investigation related to potential material overpayments to a business partner
- Multiple multinational private equity firms in developing compliance protocols for the reopening of their offices across the globe in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Individual representations

- The CEO and Global Head of Commercial Banking for a multinational financial institution in a criminal investigation conducted by the DOJ into potential sanctions violations
- A former congressman in a joint DOJ and SEC investigation into potential insider trading
- The former chief operations officer of a national sports team in connection with a congressional investigation into the team and its executives
- The current finance director of a public company in a special investigation by the company's audit committee into potential misrepresentations on the company's 2023 financial statements
- Former and current senior executives of an electric car company in multiday testimony before the SEC in a company-wide investigation into potential financial misrepresentations by the company
- Former employees of an international investment firm under criminal investigation by the DOJ (Southern District of New York) for potential securities laws violations

Education

Georgetown University Law Center
JD, 2013

Texas Christian University
2007, magna cum laude

Admissions & Credentials

District of Columbia

Maryland

Memberships & Affiliations

Women's White Collar Defense Association, diversity committee member

Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA)

National LGBT Bar Association, membership committee member

Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (HBA-DC)