



Informal Guide to the IATL Nomination Process

Thank you for your interest in putting forth candidates for admission into the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. Sponsors are invaluable in that they directly contribute to the growth and long-term success of the Academy. This guide to the nomination process is an informal, non-binding document intended to help Fellows navigate the Admissions nominations process and more easily sponsor a candidate for IATL Fellowship. *

Introduction to IATL

The International Academy of Trial Lawyers was founded in 1954 and is recognized as the most prestigious organization of trial lawyers in the world.

Fellowship in the Academy is by invitation only. Trial lawyers become Fellows after a rigorous vetting process, which includes both peer and judicial review. The Academy seeks out Fellows who have achieved a career of excellence as shown by their skills in trial, and as demonstrated by their integrity and professionalism. Members are often heavily involved in pro bono efforts and generously contribute time and resources to their local communities.

IATL is an international legal association both in spirit and membership. The Academy limits Fellowship to 500 active trial lawyers from the United States under the age of 75 and includes over 150 Fellows from nearly 40 countries across the globe. United States' Fellows who are seventy-five (75) years of age or more shall not be counted for purposes of the 500 fellows cap, but shall have all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the Fellows of the Academy.

Why New Nominations Are Important

New nominations are needed every year to maintain the size and diversity of the Academy.

Qualification Criteria for Potential Candidates

(Article I, Section III of By-Laws adopted effective March 7, 2024)

- Any Fellow of the Academy in good standing may propose for Fellowship a candidate believed to be well-qualified, other than a member of his or her family or law firm; such firm member or family member must be nominated by a Fellow not in said law firm or family of the candidate. The candidate may reside outside the state or country of the sponsoring Fellow.
- The candidate must be an attorney duly licensed to practice in the state and federal courts, at the trial or appellate levels, or in accordance with the rules and requirements of the licensing authority in the country in which they reside.
- At the time of admission, candidates must have been admitted to the practice of law for a minimum of twelve (12) years and be principally engaged in trial or appellate practice.
- The candidate must possess to an exceptional degree, the following qualifications:
 - superior skill and recognized ability in trial or appellate practice;

- (2) a history of engaging in activities which promote the best interests of the legal profession, and the highest standards and techniques of advocacy; and(3) excellent character and absolute honesty and integrity. There is no set minimum number of trials required to be considered, however, trial experience is required. That experience may be a lead role in just a few complex cases lasting years each and resulting in only a few trials over a long time, or it may be a long list of bench and/or jury trials of more modest nature. In multi-year class action or mass tort cases, lead counsel may be involved in extensive discovery, motion, and appellate practice and argue significant motions (e.g., class cert) that in effect are mini-bench trials.

Conduct of arbitration hearings as an advocate may be considered by the Admissions Committee as part of a candidate’s trial record. (Resolution of Executive Committee passed February 14, 2023)

An arbitration conducted using procedures with substantially the indicia of a bench trial is generally the type of arbitration that may be given greater weight than one that is not so conducted. If listing arbitrations on a trial list, some attention to the nature, duration and format of the proceedings should be detailed. List the arbitrator(s) and their contact info in lieu of “presiding judge.”

Identifying Candidates

Any IATL Fellow can nominate a candidate, but it is best to involve your State Chair and/or the State Chair of the candidate’s residence or principal office.

If you are an SPC Chair try to communicate regularly with Fellows in your jurisdiction to:

- Develop a pool of possible names to consider for nomination
- Discuss nominations of younger and otherwise diverse candidates
- Older candidates will be considered. For example, a 65 to 70-year-old candidate with no trials in the last five years can still be considered if they are still working cases, still considered a “force” to be reckoned with at courthouse and have high respect from peers and the judiciary.
- Look outside IATL to get ideas for possible nominations: ACTL, ISOB, ABOTA, etc.
- Ask judges in your area about the best trial lawyers that appear before their courts
- Consider asking IATL Staff to set up a conference call or Zoom conference with you (as the State Chair host) and invite other (or even all) fellows in your state or province to participate to brainstorm names. This has proven to be a effective way to involve other fellows in the nomination process and to develop a broader pool of possible candidates.
- Consider periodic socials or dinners with your state co-chairs and Fellows in your jurisdiction
- Use group emails and/or group telephone calls to develop possible candidate names
- Follow up and maintain momentum to vet new possible names and submit nominations
- Prepare a nomination Sponsor Profile Form and Trial List for review by your SPC Chair(s) and/or other Fellows in your jurisdiction before submitting to the Admissions Committee

Educate nominators to complete the FQ surveys sent out by the Executive Office and prompt others in their state to do the same Nomination Process for Sponsors

Mandatory Sponsor Profile Form and Trial List

IATL Executive Office staff can provide the appropriate version of the Sponsor Profile Form and Trial List template according to your needs. Please use the US Sponsor Profile Form or International Sponsor Profile Form accordingly. A Generic Sponsor Profile Form and Generic Trial List template are available should you need templates that don’t indicate IATL.

All forms can be obtained by request to info@IATL.net or downloaded from the IATL website on the Members Only page (login required).

- A candidate will not be considered by the Admissions Committee without complete information. Remember that for every judge and opposing counsel name, full contact information is required.
- The information needed is very detailed, especially the Trial List, which requires listing of past bench and jury trials, arbitrations, and appeals. The case name, court, location, judge and opposing counsel names, including full contact information (email, phone, and mailing address), are required.
- As a practical matter, such detail may only be available from the candidate or their firm. It is okay to talk to the candidate's partners/associates, paralegals, and even the candidate so long as IATL is not identified. The Generic Sponsor Profile Form and Generic Trial List template are best for this purpose.

Optional Supplementary Materials and Additional Comments on Trial List

- The IATL Sponsor Profile Form, Trial List template, your transmittal letter, and other supporting documents are your only opportunity to paint the full picture of the candidate and the nature of the cases they have handled. For example, if years were spent in complex case litigation as lead counsel for a party yet the case settled, or if lengthy motion practice, briefing, and appeals were involved, it is appropriate to briefly describe any additional information you want the IATL Admissions Committee to know in their consideration of the candidate.
- Press clippings, journal articles, other publications, and seminar presentations about the candidate or their cases are also relevant.
- Carefully review each IATL Sponsor Profile Form and supporting documents/materials entirely before submitting. Check for completeness and be sure your submission tells the full story of the candidate for the purposes of IATL admission.

International Candidates

Trial lawyers from countries other than the United States whose ability, skill, character, and integrity qualify them for membership may be considered in accord with criteria developed by the International Relations and Admissions Committees. Requirements for international candidates will be revisited and reviewed in future years. IATL Staff can provide you with the special Nomination Profile Form for an International candidate.

Public Service/Public Interest Candidates

The Public Service Fellow category was created in 2016 by the IATL Board of Directors. There is a check box on Page 1 of the US Sponsor Profile Form to indicate if a candidate qualifies as a Public Interest Fellow.

Typically, a Public Interest Fellow works for a government or nonprofit organization.

An IATL Public Interest Fellow who meets the requirements as determined by the Admissions Committee will receive the following:

- \$100 annual IATL dues
- Free Annual and Mid-Year Meeting registration for Fellow and guest/spouse
- Maximum room rate of \$200/night during the meeting (travel expenses are not covered)

Global Colleague Candidates

The Board of Directors may also elect as Global Colleagues individuals who are not Fellows but who are lawyers or judges in other countries that have a system of justice that does not closely model the common law system. The goal of inducting Global Colleagues is to expand the reach and fellowship of the Academy, exchange and share knowledge with lawyers from different legal systems, and promote and support the Rule

of Law. It shall be the purview of the Admissions Committee to determine which countries shall be subject to the admission criteria as Fellows or Colleagues.

Admissions Process

Nominations should be sent to the IATL Executive Office. Email

is preferred: info@iatl.net.

Or mail to:

1935 County Road B2 West, Suite 165
Roseville, MN 55113

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Committee to ensure that qualifications for nomination are observed and applied. The historic average admissions rate is around 75% of nominations.

Phase I: The candidate's nomination documents, and Fellow Questionnaires as completed by current IATL Fellows, are reviewed by an assigned Admissions Committee member. This Admissions Committee member will contact opposing counsel to get feedback on the candidate's reputation, skill, and ability in trial, as well as character and integrity. These factors determine whether a candidate is passed by the Admissions Committee into Phase II.

Phase II: Confidential feedback is obtained by the Admissions Committee from judges using the Judicial Questionnaire.

Common Reasons for Rejection by the IATL Admissions Committee

- Trial list is too light
- Lack of response or negative feedback from Fellow Questionnaires
- Lack of response or negative feedback from Judicial Questionnaires
- Negative feedback from opposing counsel
- Material questions about candidate's character, integrity, and/or temperament

An incomplete Sponsor Profile Form or Trial List may result in deferral. Incomplete contact information for judges or opposing counsel may result in deferral. A member of the Admissions Committee should contact the candidate's Sponsor to request remedial information if possible. If a candidate is rejected, the IATL Sponsor will receive email notice after the conclusion of the Admissions Committee meeting. The Admissions Chair may be able determine if a rejected nomination could be considered for resubmission in the future, after waiting for three years. The practice of the current Admissions Chair is to call each Sponsor of a rejected candidate.

If a candidate is rejected, please understand that the Admissions Committee and IATL Executive Office staff are limited in what information/explanation they can share due to the confidential nature of the process.

*This document is offered as a summary of the nomination process and does not change any existing IATL policy. To the extent that anything in this guide may conflict with any provision of the IATL Bylaws, any Board or Executive Committee policy or resolution, or any policy of the Admissions and International Relations Committees, then such shall supersede any conflicting provision herein.

Revised March 10, 2024