

# American Inns of Court and American Board of Trial Advocates

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## What is the Trial Academy?

The American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) Foundation and the American Inns of Court are proud to announce their joint sponsorship of the American Inns of Court/ABOTA Trial Academy. The purpose of the Trial Academy is to equip collaborating local ABOTA chapters and American Inns of Court to produce “**learning by doing**” educational experiences to teach beginning lawyers basic trial skills. The detailed, step by step instructions for production of a Trial Academy are set out in the comprehensive program materials now available to all ABOTA chapters and American Inns of Court.

## How does it work?

A typical Trial Academy involves groups of either 16 or 24 participants (groups of eight are needed). The number of faculty—comprised of experienced trial lawyers—corresponds to the number of participants (roughly 16–24) and fluctuates depending upon how much time each person is able to commit to the program. Participants are generally pupil or associate level members of a local Inn of Court, and the faculty come from local ABOTA chapters or senior members of the partnering Inn.

The academy is conducted in two successive weekend sessions.

- The first weekend is devoted to learning specific practice skills. During these sessions students are recorded performing jury selection, direct examination, cross examination and persuasive oral argument. Following the exercise faculty members meet with each student individually to evaluate that student’s performance.
- During the second weekend, students are assigned to trial teams and try a mock case before a judge and jury. After the conclusion of the trial, faculty members and mock jurors meet with the trial teams to offer a constructive critique of each team’s performance.

## Why should we do this?

There are three major advantages to the Trial Academy program:

1. This is a “**program in a box.**” You are provided a comprehensive set of materials including a factual trial problem, skill exercises, and a step by step planning, marketing, production, and execution guide, which has been road tested and approved by AIC and ABOTA.
2. Trial Academy is **short in duration.** The program is designed to last for three days spread over two successive weekends. This allows people to participate without missing days of work.
3. Trial Academy is **both local and economical.** Because the program is organized and run by local chapters and Inns, and the participants come from the local Inns, there are no travel or hotel costs. The overall cost for holding a Trial Academy program can be kept very low, and the fees for participants are also able to be kept to a reasonable rate.

## How do we get started?

### FIND A PARTNER.

American Inns of Court and ABOTA encourage their chapters to partner with each other to provide this unique trial skills program for beginning lawyers; arrangements should be made at the local level.

- **To find an ABOTA chapter near you**, visit the ABOTA website <https://www.abota.org/> and search their chapter map. Feel free to reach out to the listed ABOTA contact directly to begin discussions.
- **To find an American Inn of Court near you**, visit the American Inns of Court website [home.innsofcourt.org](http://home.innsofcourt.org) and use the “Find an Inn” feature in the header bar. Then you can reach out to the appropriate chapter relations director—found in the “About Us” section—to find the best contact for the Inn.

## DOWNLOAD THE MATERIALS.

Go to the Trial Academy web page [[home.innsofcourt.org/trialacademy](http://home.innsofcourt.org/trialacademy)] to download—at no cost—all the materials you need to hold the program.

- **Part I: Overview and Logistics**—All the information you need to plan your program including: planning committee emails, sample marketing materials, budget worksheets, and logistical matters. The purpose is to make it as easy as possible to recreate the program while still allowing your team to put its own stamp on the program.
- **Part II: The Fact Pattern**—This fact pattern, which involves a pedestrian-vehicle collision, was created specifically for use in the AIC/ABOTA Trial Academy, by Professors William S Bailey, Esq. of the University of Washington in Seattle, WA and Frederick C. Moss of the Dedman School of Law in Dallas, TX.
- **Part III: Faculty Orientation & Training** (Handbook & PowerPoint Presentation)—While your faculty will be experts in the law and trial advocacy, they may still need some training on how to successfully deliver this kind of educational experience; to ensure success, everyone needs to work from the same script. The PowerPoint supports the orientation and training for the program; it is complete with a timing schedule and speaking notes for the trainers/presenters.
- **Part IV: Certificate of Completion**—The certificate facilitates participants being approved for CLE credit, and distributing certificates at the conclusion of the Trial Academy training is also a nice way to wrap up the experience for all involved.

## Who do we contact for more information?

Additional questions can be answered by contacting one of the partner organizations:



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### American Board of Trial Advocates



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