

Life Model Professional Conduct and Information

(Courtesy of the Life Models Society)

Thank you to LMS for most of the information provided here. MLD doesn't intend to bog you down with details, but we have a duty of care and are committed to promoting professionalism as much as safety. Please take the time to read it or print it off for your records.

Note for prospective members of the Life Models Society Membership

If you would rather not publish any details online and would prefer to be on a printed list of models only then consider becoming a member of the [Life Models Society](#). You will be asked to pay a small membership fee and submit your phone number, suburb and a one line description of yourself. These details are printed on the LMS models list, which is sent out to subscribers every quarter. The organisations and individuals who subscribe to the list contact models from the list and offer them work.

Clients Bookings

Some employers hire a range of different models, others form a short list of tried and trusted models. It may take up to a year before you start getting regular work. When someone rings to offer you work, they will tell you the time, date and address of the venue where you will be modelling.

You should also make sure you get the name and number of a person to contact in case any happens. It is also professional to ask them for further details about the class, whether s/he would like you to bring anything (props, costumes), what sort of poses they will be expecting (short or long, one long pose, etc.) and so on.

What to bring

When you model, you should always bring a robe to wear when not posing, a sheet to sit on for longer poses (to place over the often dirty cushions and seating provided by the venue), something with which to tie up your hair if it is long, and keep a copy of the standard working conditions handy in case you are ever asked what they are!

You may also like to bring:

- an electronic timer
- a pair of thongs or slippers (the floors of art studios are often dirty)
- a bottle of water and
- perhaps some props or cushions of your own for poses

What happens when you go to model

When you arrive at the venue, you will usually be greeted by the person running the class. He or she should then show you a private changing area, and indicate where the nearest toilets are. You then change into your robe and slippers, and wait for the class to begin. It is best to arrive about ten minutes before the class begins.

Drawing sessions typically start with a series of short poses (usually 2-5 minutes, although you will occasionally pose for as little as 30 seconds) to help the artists warm up. After this, most classes go on to longer poses of 10-20 minutes (note that 20 minutes is the maximum you should be asked to stay in the same pose).

If the artists want you to hold a pose for longer than 20 minutes, they should mark your position with chalk or masking tape at the end of the first 20 minutes, give you a break of 5-10 minutes, and then help you get back into the same pose.

Pay

Rate: The preferred minimum rate of pay for life models is \$27.00 an hour, with a minimum callout payment of 2 hours. Some venues pay more than this; a few are still paying less. If a venue offers you work for less than \$20 per hour, we recommend that you remind them about the LMS minimum recommended rate. Photographic work is paid at a higher rate (see photographic work section below).

Form of payment: When doing work for small art societies or private jobs, life models are usually paid in cash or by personal cheque. Larger groups and organisations (e.g. community centres) may issue cheques in the name of their institution or organisation, in which case they will ask whether you have an Australian Business Number (ABN). If you do, you will usually need to write out or bring an invoice for the modelling payment (add 10% GST to the bill if you are collecting GST). If you don't have an ABN, you can get around this by filling in a GST exemption form, and declaring that you model as a private recreational pursuit or hobby.

Some models work under a pseudonym, to preserve their privacy. If you choose to do this, there are two ways you can handle this when being paid by cheque. Either you can ask for the cheque to be issued in your real name (in which case you may need to remind the teacher to address you by the pseudonym!), or arrange with your bank to accept cheques addressed to your pseudonym.

Universities and TAFEs typically put models on the payroll and pay directly into their bank accounts, deducting tax from their earnings. If you get work at one of these institutions, remember to bring along your tax file number and banking details, as you will need to fill in employee forms.

Personal issues

Always make sure that you are clean when modelling. Female models should keep track of when their periods are due, and bring tampons. (when using tampons, make sure you tuck the string in to avoid the "hanging string" embarrassment!). Male models are often concerned about getting erections, but experienced models say these are in fact very rare!

If one turns up, bear in mind that the people drawing you will probably be as embarrassed as you and will most likely pretend it isn't there. Try to see it as a positive reflection on your virility!

Remember also that the people drawing you may not be as comfortable as you with nudity. Make sure you wear your gown when you are not posing. Never walk around, chat informally or negotiate pay or conditions when naked. It is also best to avoid making eye contact with the people who are drawing you when you are modelling: some people find this intimidating.

Possible difficulties

Venue: The person running the class should ensure that you have a warm, comfortable environment in which to model. If the room is cold, you have a right to insist that they heat it effectively. A good compromise can be modelling clothed or with socks and a hat on while the room warms up. Sometimes the modelling space will be heated by one or two small heaters,

which can start to burn you if you model too close to them. Don't suffer in silence: ask the teacher or someone in the room to move the heater!

Another potential problem is being asked to do a long reclining pose... on a cold, hard laminex table! If this happens, you could lie on your clothes or robe as a temporary measure, but politely suggest that they arrange a blanket, mattress or cushions for future sessions (a gym mat can be a good option in high schools). An alternative is to bring your own rug or cushions with you to classes so that you know you will always have something to sit or lie on.

Last minute crises: If you injure yourself or fall ill before you have to model, you should always try to replace yourself by finding another model on the list to do your job on the day. Once you have found someone, contact the venue and let them know who will be modelling instead. If crisis strikes too late for you to do this (e.g. a car accident on the way to the job), ring the venue and let them know.

*******Failing to turn up to a job without explanation, warning or finding a replacement model is very bad form, and will probably result in you not being hired again by that venue (so ensure you have a contact number)*******

Posing problems: If a pose is starting to become agonising, do not feel obliged to suffer your way to the end! Ask how long there is to go for that pose, and if it is longer than you can endure, let the teacher know that you are suffering and ask if you can either end the pose there or modify it to reduce the pain. After a difficult pose, make sure you stretch your muscles. If you are asked to do a pose with which you are uncomfortable, either because it is painful or for other reasons (e.g. it is suggestive, and you are not happy about this), you are within your rights to refuse to do it.

Double booking: If the venue has made a mistake and booked two models for the same session, both of whom are prepared to work, both models should be paid! If both of you are prepared to work, you can take it in turns to model or model together as a pair.

Dubious employers: The great majority of artists and art teachers are considerate, respectful and friendly towards models. However, very occasionally you may encounter someone who behaves in a disrespectful or otherwise undesirable manner (e.g. making suggestive comments or advances, allowing someone who is not part of the class to come in and watch). If this happens, put on your gown and tell them to stop (or inform the teacher of the class if the person responsible is a student). If the behaviour persists, or if you feel very threatened, get dressed, walk out and inform MLD or the Life Models Society.

If you are asked to model by someone you are not sure about, particularly for a photographic job, there are a few measures you can take.

- It can help to contact the LMS and ask about the artist in question.
- You can arrange to meet the artist in a neutral space and look at samples of his or her work (remember that if you are asked to remove your clothes, you are working and should be paid the minimum callout rate).
- You can ask to see the artist's website or for a contact number from a gallery that represents them.
- Another possibility is to arrange for an escort from the LMS to go with you to the first modelling session.

Unauthorised photography: When you are posing in a drawing or sculpture class, you are being paid the standard rate of \$27 per hour. Occasionally, one of the artists may want to take a photograph of you so they can finish their work at home after class. If you are not comfortable with this, refuse, or put on some clothing and assume the pose so that you are not nude in the photograph. Be aware that photographic modelling is \$75.00 per hour!