



How to Work with A Live Model: **Industry Standards and Best Practices**

From private ateliers to public libraries, drop-in sketch groups to graduate level coursework, fashion illustration and photography, animation studios and corporate clients, workplaces run more smoothly when everyone starts out on the same page. This document is ten pages long and broken down into topics numbered one through ten (1-10) . The guidelines are for everyone: For models to know and share their rights. For instructors to understand what posing schedule is *safe* for a human body. For model coordinators to appreciate the demands models face working across multiple schools and job sites. For artists and students to consider basic classroom etiquette. Everyone to understand the practical baselines of how to set up a model stand, changing area, hygiene, equipment and comfort. Discover what is a liveable wage in the current dynamic marketplace in New York City and its environs. Learn about the rights art models have to advocate on their own behalf in the workplace. Whether you are using a live model in educational settings or a more informal environment, everyone is there to do their job; Be it teaching or learning or posing, nobody desires unnecessary complication or interruption during a session. Clear and respectful communication with the model/muse is the key for an inspiring and productive session. This is an evolving document. We thank you for reading it. You are the living embodiment of the Arts and Humanities!

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- NYC Art Models Guild

1. **Booking models** When booking a model for a job, it is important to communicate clearly, *in writing* via email about all the aspects of the job:

Rate of Pay/ Method of Payment/When Payment will be Made/Job Site

Location/Start time/End Time Institutions need to explain Employment status within an institution, Relevant rules and policies like Title IX (Sexual Harassment)

2. Model Pay Guidelines: Recommended Minimum Wages/Rates 2025

Purpose: This document establishes recommended minimum rates for models participating in life drawing/ figure modeling sessions. These guidelines aim to ensure fair, sustainable compensation, foster a culture of reciprocity, and reflect the value models contribute as collaborators. Discover your category.

- A. **Community Drawing Sessions:** Local drawing groups, grassroots art meetups, independent or volunteer-run sessions, small schools or collectives with low budgets, and nonprofits with operating budgets under \$500,000.
 - **Rate:** \$50/hour Minimum Pay: 3-hour minimum (model is paid for at least 3 hours, even if the session is shorter)
 - **Shorter Session Exception:** As an exception, 2–2.5 hour sessions may pay proportionally (e.g., \$50/hr × 2 hours = \$100). Whenever possible, organizers are encouraged to honor the full 3-hour minimum rate. This ensures models' time and energy are respected, supports livable compensation, and helps establish a sustainable cultural benchmark

B. Corporate / Media Hybrid Drawing Sessions

Examples: Well-funded institutions such as Major Art Schools, High-Tuition Programs Corporate clients, Commercial Businesses such as animation and game studios, Agencies, Media brands and **for-profit art clubs** all fall into a higher pay tier. This category also includes sessions where the model's image or likeness will be used for heavy social media promotion, filming, or any digital media content including behind-the-scenes footage. **It applies to all communities where a higher budget is accessible.**

- **Rate:** \$60-\$150+/hr based on scale, media usage, and client budget. 3 hour minimum
- **Minimum Pay:** 3-hour minimum even if the session is shorter

C. Artists: Our rates are inspired by [W.A.G.E. standards](#) WAGE is a non-profit that advocates for livable wages for artists. Models are also artists. Please use the wage calculator available on the site. We have thoughtfully adjusted for session type,

duration, and commercial value. By supporting these standards, you're affirming the same sustainability you would seek for your own creative work.

When you choose to work with these standards in mind, you're helping build a culture of reciprocity where both artists and models can thrive. Thank you for valuing this shared practice and investing in the health of our creative community.

\$15 is the additional amount recommended when requesting models to bring costumes

3. CANCELLATION POLICY

When you book and schedule a model, you are doing so with the understanding that the model is turning down other paid bookings. If for any reason you need to cancel a session, if the model cannot be rescheduled, the model must be paid in full. If you gain a reputation for booking models, canceling bookings and not paying for your cancellation, you will be removed from our roster.

4. Nature of the Session: Will it consist of long poses? Short poses or a combination of the two? Clothed or nude figure? Is this a fashion class? Will there be more than one model posing together? What is the setup like? Class size? Will a teachers assistant/class monitor be present with the instructor? Supplying this information helps the model to make an informed professional decision about whether or not to take the booking. Don't assume "everyone knows" what an art class is like as environments and assumptions vary wildly.

5. Facilities and setup

To provide a safe and comfortable working environment for an art modeling session, the following are required. **The model stand:** Whether raised or not, the spot where the model poses must have a clean surface with good traction, A clean mat to protect against slippage is suggested for slick surfaces; + a non toxic disinfectant spray to wipe down the mat after each use: if raised, a suitable step or step ladder with railing, depending on the height, is non-negotiable. If the stand has wheels, wheels must be locked while the model is posing. Any chairs, props, sticks/poles, foot blocks will be provided by the venue. Props must be arranged and secured in a manner stable and must not present tripping hazards. No one other than the model is to sit upon, lie down on, put their feet upon or stand upon the model stand.

6. Model Area: A place to change , decompress or just to be while not posing. This can be a room or a screened area, must be clean and private, with a comfortable chair, a stand or table, and a place to hang clothes and belongings. If it's a **fashion or costume class**, there needs to be a place to hang and spread out garments and accessories. Please provide a full-length mirror as it is quite helpful as well. Models may bring up to three changes/looks for a fashion class. *It is not acceptable to ask a model to change in a bathroom stall.* **No one** may enter the models room or touch a models belongings without the models permission. The model room is not a storage area for artwork. Model changing rooms need to be marked with a star or have a sign that says MODELS ROOM. **Hygiene:** Convenient access to drinking water and clean, functional bathrooms are a must. Handsoap, paper towels and hand sanitizer are to be provided. Please make sure trash is emptied and floors are mopped clean.

7. For Posing: Model comfort

- a. Temperature control. Whether nude or costumed, a model must be able to control the temperature of the space. A minimum of two heaters and a fan, with appropriate extension cords, should be available.
- b. Supports for posing. Whether a session is long poses or short, a variety of types of seats, pads and cushions for standing, sitting, and lounging, including options with back support, are essential to avoid damaging joints and nerves. All of these should be clean, with fabrics and drapery washed and sanitized regularly. No one wants to sit or stand on soiled items.
- c. Windows and doors must be covered or blinds lowered while the model is posing.
- d. No required uncomfortable poses (i.e. twists, long standing poses) If the model is unable to hold a pose for fear of injury and strain the model has the right to change pose in event of discomfort or injury
- e. Monitors/ Teachers Assistants must always present to enforce rules, ready to support models.
- f. No pressure to skip long break, pose beyond 20 minutes
- g. Right for models to be informed if there are complaints, and the nature there of, what's been said.

Safety Resources and Research: You may [use this page to search specific OSHA regulations](#), but the best way to tell if a space is safe and comfortable is to try it yourself! Does this step stool feel safe and stable to climb up and down a dozen times in a day? If you fell off the stand, would it be all the way off down to a concrete floor? Would you feel comfortable standing absolutely still at your room's temperature in the nude for six hours? Is there room here to change in and out of the Louis XIV gown you asked the model to bring? Put your coat

and bag down in the space for the model—is it covered in wet paint? Just put yourself in the model’s place—literally—and think about it for a minute. If you don’t have some element of the above available, even if you think they are situationally unnecessary, it’s important to notify models in advance of the booking so that they can bring what they need or make an informed decision to decline the booking. If you’re not sure, ask! Send a picture of the setup! Just have a conversation- it saves time for everyone.

5. Model breaks are mandatory

Models pose for 20 minute intervals receiving a 5 minute break once every 20 minutes.

If the model requires a longer break of 10 minutes it will be honored. Long breaks commence after the third or fourth pose is completed. Long breaks last 15-20 minutes. Breaks commence once the model gets off the stand. We understand you may want to leave early but that cannot be done at the expense of the models' well being. Of course, it’s entirely your choice to end a session early. Whether you end the session early or not, the model requires breaks to eat, stretch and use the toilet. Models pose multiple times per day, not just for your session. New York State law requires a long break be taken by the model. Please do not pressure the model to skip a long break or pose for 30 minutes at a stretch.

6. Communication with the Model: Language Boundaries

- A. Only the instructor, monitor or TA should communicate with the model directly.
- B. Students should not communicate directly with the model.
- C. If an artist needs to adjust a pose during a session for a long pose, approach one of the persons authorized who will communicate with the model. Having multiple people try and direct the model creates confusion and tension.
- D. Instructors are to use professional language referring to models’ appearance, body type, skull shape, anatomy, skin color.

E. Derogatory or triggering audible comments about a models hair, ethnicity, skin, age, weight, body shape, identity are not acceptable. Body shaming is not permitted. Terms like “bad hair” “ashy skin” “fat” or “exotic” are objectifying. Please be sensitive when referring to the human being working in the capacity of a model. Models are human beings who have feelings too.

Education Training in the Session for ALL Students: All new and returning students need to be informed of professional etiquette in the classroom *at the beginning of each semester before working with a live model*. Etiquette needs to be repeated in ALL sessions/classes. A lot of misunderstandings and tensions will be avoided and ensure the smooth running of a session for all parties: Teacher, Student, Model. Models have the right to be informed if there are complaints about them and the nature of what's been said. Models are committed to a collaborative partnership and there are always two sides to a story.

7. Institutions: All classroom rules and regulations of an institution should be clearly communicated in written form at the beginning of the semester or class session to

instructors, TA's, monitors, students, models, school administrators, janitors, admissions office staff, or anyone who may wind up being in that room for any reason. Rules and regulations should be posted in the studio for easy reference. Feel free to print and post these if you have nothing prepared.

1. Timing of poses.
2. Pose determination / correction.
3. No touching of the model.
4. Phone use.

8. Photography/ Cell Phone Use: POLICIES & GUIDELINES

1. No photos may be taken without the express permission of the model.
2. Phones need to be put away or moved out of sight during drawing sessions.
3. As a courtesy, put phones on vibrate mode.
4. Photos taken without permission of the model must be deleted immediately in front of the model.
5. If the model agrees to photos, a fee can be negotiated between the parties at the models discretion. The size of the fee depends on how the photos will be used. Will it be used by an institution? On a TV show? For personal use to finish a project? Let's look at some case studies below!

For Models - How to Earn Residuals from your Image

An Institution such as a community college, needs an archive and database of reference photos of the figure for students. These may be for anatomical, portrait, figure or costume references. Whether a model is supplying the photos themselves or the school has hired a photographer, there must be compensation for the model. These negotiations need to take place prior to the photoshoot models to insure you get the compensation you deserve.

Rates of Pay & Ownership: The standard compensation in the year 2020 was \$300.00 for an archive of reference photos with the understanding that *the images of the model are property of the model*. This means the model will be given copies of their photo images in a format *such as a drive*. The model reserves the right to lease these images of themselves. We suggest an agreement be put into writing signed and dated by both parties.

Further Use by the Model: Case Study. A model granted permission to an artist who was hired by a TV show to use their likeness in a scene. Since the standard commercial industry rate for photography was \$275.00 per hour at the time of the negotiation, the model and artist settled on a sum of \$300.00 to be paid to the model. Modeling is an occupation and a profession where we are paid for the use of our likeness.

Third Parties/AI/SocialMedia: No photos of a model may be sold to a third party or used for Artificial Intelligence or posted to Social Media without the express permission granted by the model. Models must be compensated for the use of their likeness. Being promised "exposure" is not payment. Like actors, art models are a class of performers. Please be discreet about sharing the work location publicly.

Personal Projects: Finishing a drawing/painting at home? You love the pose but have run out of time? As a rule of thumb, models charge for reference photos. It is up to the model and artists to negotiate a fee that is fair, if the model agrees. Each artist who wants to take a photo of the model will pay a model fee. Payments can be made in cash or by digital means such as PayPal, VENMO, Zelle or CASH APP. The suggested rate in 2025 is \$10 per photo.

Job Inquiries /Training for incoming models

Clear and prompt communication from institutions in all matters, including inquiries from models seeking work is professional. Do you hold auditions? If so what time of year? Are they paid? Do you schedule at least a month in advance? Is there steady scheduling with a minimum number of hours? Do you have standby procedures in place? Please communicate the models schedule, including cancellations and changes in an email or text promptly.

Publish each institution's pay rates & policies for nude, clothed, fit and photography
Please provide a MODELS HANDBOOK for incoming models and new hires.

9. RETALIATION & WORKPLACE RIGHTS

We all want to work in a clean, safe and mutually supportive work place. Models rarely speak up as silence is needed in the session. However no model should experience retaliation for raising issues of safety, health, sanitation or sexual harassment on the job site. Retaliation can take the form of job loss and threats. This is absolutely unacceptable and is against the law. Let's grow up and work together for everyone's benefit.

No required uncomfortable poses (i.e. twists, long standing poses) if the model is unable to hold a pose for fear of injury and strain. Right to change pose in event of discomfort or injury

Monitors/ Teachers Assistants must always present to enforce rules, ready to support models.

No pressure to skip long break, pose beyond 20 minutes

Right for models to be informed if there are complaints, nature thereof, what's been said. Is there a models' advocate? An intimacy coordinator?

Active model list available at each school.

10. PARKING Passes & Fees Further guidelines

Does the model have to travel by car to get to the job site? Are they going to need gas money?

Are they expected to bring props? If so please make sure to inform the model hired in advance of any parking fees or passes they may need at the job site. Specify if you are providing a parking pass or not. Models may ask for further compensation for the EXTRAS which are costing them money to bring to the session. The studio may supply desired props themselves.