

Session Manager's Handbook

Basic Inquiry (Vancouver Life Drawing Society)

Revision Date: April 14, 2022

Introduction	1
Session Management Tour	2
Before you begin managing	2
Managing your session	3
The day before your session	3
When you show up at the Studio	3
As participants arrive	3
During the session	4
After your session	6
Managing beyond your session	6
And when you can't manage...	7
Frequently Asked Questions	8
Managing Your Robostrar Roster	8
How does someone access Robostrar software?	8
What is a session roster, and how do I use mine?	8
Managing Your Models	9
What are typical pose schedules for various types of sessions?	9
What do I do if my model doesn't show up?	11
Managing Your Session Participants	11
What do I do if someone shows up without a preregistration?	11
What's the story with newsprint?	12
What do I do in an emergency?	12

Introduction

As a session manager, you are both an ambassador and administrator for Basic Inquiry. You will be the primary contact most members, non-members, and models have with the Society. You are the authoritative figure to whom artists look for guidance and information. In managing your session, you will open and prepare the studio, set up the lighting, welcome attending artists, direct the model, answer the phone, and maintain a safe, orderly, and secure drawing

environment throughout the session. At the end of your session, you'll perform light janitorial duties and close the studio.

This guide walks you through the various procedures of Session Management, and is organised as a light tour of your typical responsibilities followed by a longer reference section of Questions & Answers (FAQs) on particular procedures. Read the first section (the tour) thoroughly, and at least browse the second section informationally, before your first session.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask any Board Member, or send an email to board@lifedrawing.org.

Session Management Tour

Before you begin managing

Before your very first session, there are a few things you should familiarise yourself with. Several of these are best done by another session manager, so work out a time before or after the session of some other manager who can agree to help orient you to these things:

- Get another volunteer or session manager to show you how to use your keys to open the front gate (which is tricky!) and the back door, and where to empty the trash.
- Learn where the studio “house lights” switches are—there are several—and, most importantly, how to use the “stage lighting array” control panel next to the cement pillar. While you're there, get a brief tour of the thermostat, which is important for heat in the winter and air-con in the summer.
- Learn where the fire extinguisher and first aid kit are located.
- Review the *New Model Orientation Guide* on our website so you are familiar with the procedures we promise models they and you will follow in our Studio:
<http://www.lifedrawing.org/new-model-faq.html>
- Understand the general “pose schedule” or “session format” of your session, and how your three hour session will break out as a series of what duration poses, in what order, and with what breaks. You have some flexibility for minor adjustments here on a day-to-day basis but in general should stick within the advertised parameters of your “type” of session (“regular” vs. “gesture” vs. “long-pose,” for example).

You are responsible for this ensuring you have working familiarity with all of these systems before you start.

FAQs:

- [How does someone access Robostrar software?](#)
- [What are typical pose schedules for various types of sessions?](#)

Managing your session

The day before your session

Make sure you have your Studio keys and a well-charged internet-capable device (smart phone, tablet, or laptop) to bring with you. Check the online roster for your session to review your registered participants, as well as to look for any special session-comments that might be posted electronically on your roster.

FAQs:

- [How does someone access Robostrar software?](#)
- [What is a session roster, and how do I use mine?](#)

When you show up at the Studio

Arrive at the Studio at least 30 minutes before your session. Turn on the lights and just the air conditioning/HVAC, and set up music if you desire. (Some managers prefer no music, and some models prefer to set their own.) Review the posted **Safety Plan** to remind yourself of its contents and note any changes or updates.

For artists, make sure the drawing horses are organised in a circle, and do a quick tidy up of the counters, dishes, etc., if anything was left out by the previous session manager. In the washroom, wipe down the sink, handles, and toilet bowl and make sure there are paper towels set out for drying hands. (Extra supplies are in the cabinets or supply closet.)

Open your session roster on Robostrar using your device so you are ready to take attendance. You may prefer to leave the front gate locked while you do some of this preparation, but open the front door to your participants for seating no later than 20 minutes before your session.

As participants arrive

Greet participants at the front door and check off their name on your roster as “in attendance.” **All Basic sessions require ticketed pre-registration via Robostrar**, so if someone shows up who is *not* registered for your session you will have to either persuade them to register on the spot or turn them away at the door. Sometimes artists make their own scheduling mistakes and

arrive for sessions other than the ones they've signed up for. In either event, if they cannot register and get their name on your roster, you'll have to turn them away. (See [What do I do if someone shows up without a preregistration?](#) for more options.)

Sometimes walk-ins show up at the Studio—usually during, rather than at the start of, sessions—and need to be pointed to the website for guidance.

For participants that Robostrar identifies as newcomers (👤 icon), welcome them especially to the Studio and point out quickly the drawing boards, clips, and newsprint available to them; also the toilet and exits. Participants that Robostrar identifies as your fellow members of the Society (👥 icon) are ones you might call on for assistance if something unusual crops up in your session.

Greet your model(s) when they arrive, and ensure their familiarity with the session format. New models may be more comfortable with you timing their individual poses rather than timing themselves.

During the session

Try to start and end precisely on time, even if it means truncating the last pose. At the beginning, briefly introduce yourself and your role in charge of the session. Introduce the model and announce the pose schedule of the day's session. Point out the model tip jar (tipping is strictly optional).

You are the first-line responder to any situations, usual or unusual, that arise during your session. You must identify yourself as such and act as such. You should courteously but diligently point out and enforce core studio policies as posted in the studio and as noted here:

1. Only you are to direct the model. The model is not to be photographed or touched. Photography in the studio when the model is on the stand or not fully clothed is strictly prohibited (regardless of the model's explicit permission). Even if artists claim only to be "photographing their work" please publicly announce "no photography in the studio when the model is on the stand" and encourage them to film their work during break or after sessions.
2. Ensure fair/equitable studio seating: **Artists are entitled to only one drawing horse or easel.** If artists are monopolizing more than one drawing horse and the session is at or close to full capacity you will have to direct them to give up their surplus area.
3. Instruct anyone interfering with the model's ability to pose, or with other participants' ability to draw, or with the general security and acceptability of the studio environment, to leave the studio immediately. (Based on the gravity of things, you might issue a one-time

warning prior to evicting them.) If necessary, halt the session—tell the model to break the pose, and other participants to stop drawing—until the offender has left the studio, and please report such incidents to board@lifedrawing.org.

During posing, help your model observe timings (either of each pose, if they ask for your help timing sessions, or when a span of poses of one duration shifts to a span of poses of some new duration). Adjust the stage lighting on the model as necessary and help with any necessary model props (chairs, poles, pillows and electric heaters). Discourage putting weight on any ropes hanging from the ceiling. If mid-pose a model is shaking or visibly suffering in any way due to overextension or limb placement fatigue, encourage them to pause, stretch, and either resume the pose or switch to a new one. While you may make suggestions of type of pose and overall positioning, don't insist on precise arrangements; respect their understanding of their body's abilities and limits and leave them in control of their final pose choices.

If you have to “tape” a model's pose so that he or she can return to the same pose after a break, talk to the model about your intent and what you are doing as you do it, *do not touch the model*, and do not delegate this job to any other participant in the Studio. Usually it is sufficient to tape the position of feet and hands as they make contact with the floor or other fixed surfaces.

At the start of each break, announce to participants how long the break is and when you'll resume.

Throughout your session, keep an ear on both the front door and the telephone. (It's helpful if you choose a seat near the door, and take the portable phone from its charger in the closet to your seat for your session.) You both want to meet, and check off on your Roster, late-coming pre-registered attendees, and intercept walk-ins from the street before they enter the drawing area and interrupt a pose in progress.

Basic's Studio is in a “transitional” neighbourhood and has experienced occasional problems with people wanting to enter the studio who are drugged, deranged, or disoriented. You should seek to discourage these people from entering the studio, and if they enter, encourage them to leave as soon as possible. Basic is *not* open to the general public and no one has any particular “right” to be in the studio at any point in time. Do not physically engage with intruders but feel free to call on other participants to help you quickly resolve such situations. While the fire code discourages you from locking the front door during sessions, use your best judgement. Closing the emergency grate shortly after the start of your session has a discouraging effect on passerby attempts to open the door. Please report any incidents of this form to the board (board@lifedrawing.org), and in the event of *any* sort of emergency call 911 and report your location (1011 Main Street).

After your session

At the end of the session, please thank the model and your participants, and ask their help in tidying their work areas before leaving. Make sure the model takes the contents of the tip jar and is aware they will receive payment for their session by e-transfer within a week. (If models have questions you cannot answer about pay, encourage them to contact their model booker.) Keep an eye out as people leave for articles participants like to leave behind: cellphones, pencil boxes, water bottles, etc. If you can return these to their owners, great; otherwise for low-value things (pencils and water bottles), simply leave them on the front desk as Lost-and-Found. For higher value articles (wallets and cellphones), put them out of sight somewhere in the back closet and send a note describing the article and its location to board@lifedrawing.org. The registrar will then contact all of your session participants by email in an attempt to track down the item's owner. Before exiting the Studio, check the studio phone for any missed messages: sometimes the owners will have called in to see if someone has turned in their property.

Once your last participant has left, please spend 10 minutes tidying the studio for the next session manager. If you are letting yourself out the back, **lock the front door and the gate** at this time. Return chairs to a circular position around the stage and props to their location. **Unplug all electric heaters** and empty the trash or recycling if any are more than half full. **If you are leaving by the front gate re-lock the rear door**. Make sure the thermostat is off, the telephone returned to its cradle, and that all of the stage lights are off. Take a minute to review your roster's attendance record, and to take stock of whether there is anything about your session or the condition of the studio you wish to report (either by adding a note to your roster or by email to board@lifedrawing.org). Lastly, turn the house lights off, and leave by your preferred exit locking it fully behind you. (The front gate and front door have separate key-operated locks; the rear door has a key-operated deadbolt and a pull-operated close lock.)

FAQs:

- [How does someone access Robostrar software?](#)
- [What is a session roster, and how do I use mine?](#)
- [What do I do if someone shows up without a preregistration?](#)
- [What do I do if my model doesn't show up?](#)
- [What's the story with newsprint?](#)
- [What do I do in an emergency?](#)

Managing beyond your session

As an ambassador and frontline volunteer at Basic, your observations and suggestions for how to make the Studio a better place and how to make the Society better fit the needs of its members

and the Vancouver drawing community are *always* welcome. We encourage you to engage with Basic’s board of directors and with the other session managers filling out our weekly roster. Your presence at AGMs, when you can make it, helps give other participant members—artists who draw in your sessions—a friendly face and contact point for their own participation and potential contributions to the Society. Your help in and outside of sessions in identifying reliable, competent people who seem to be enjoying and getting a lot out of Basic—and encouraging them to join the Society, to volunteer, even potentially to Session Manage—helps develop and sustain the collaboration that drives this almost forty-year-old “institution.”

By way of compensation for your volunteering, you will receive a free ticket to your Robostrar account every week. These tickets are yours to use as you see fit, for drawing at sessions other than your own, whenever you choose to use them. Try to get to other another manager’s session every so often to make connections and evaluate alternate approaches.

And when you can’t manage...

In the event you cannot attend one of your own sessions, you will need to arrange your own replacement from the ranks of present or past Session Managers. While you can make a last minute emergency e-mail appeal to the full list of your managerial colleagues, it’s often better to have identified, in advance, one or two other managers who can support each other closely, with you covering one of their sessions when they need to miss one, and then you being able to count on them covering one of yours when you miss one. Remember Basic is entirely run by volunteers like yourself, so there is no one “on deck” to replace you—unless they *volunteer* to!

As soon as you have identified a replacement manager for your session, please notify registrar@lifedrawing.org of the date of changed session and the name of the manager who will replace you. The registrar will shift management for that session to your designated replacement, giving them access to your Roster. You will have to coordinate with your replacement on keys, access to the studio, etc. In these regards currently-active managers are often better candidates for your replacement than past managers (who may no longer have keys).

In the event you cannot make your session and cannot source a qualified replacement, please notify board@lifedrawing.org at least 24 hours before the session itself. The session will be immediately cancelled and all participants will have their tickets refunded. Depending on how soon before the session you cancel, Basic may also have to pay the model for the engagement. Since this is an undesirable situation for all involved, repeated uncovered cancellations may lead to your being asked to step down as a Session Manager.

Less dramatically, all things come to an end, and someday you will want to step down from your weekly session. If you discuss this in advance with your own session’s regular participants, you

may find one interested in stepping up as a volunteer to replace you. Likewise, the earlier the Board knows of your plans the more efforts it can put into advertising and recruiting a replacement.

Your feedback on this guide is also welcome. Please feel free to send any comments, at any time, to board@lifedrawing.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

Managing Your Robostrar Roster

How does someone access Robostrar software?

Robostrar is Basic's online ticket management and seat registration system. You can access it from the web browser in any internet device, such as your smart phone, at its home URL (<http://www.lifedrawing.org/register>). From the Studio, you can connect to the internet using either your phone's data connection, or via the free wifi Basic provides. (Wifi connection details are posted on the bulletin board in the Studio.) If you are connecting from a cell phone, or are directing a participant to connect from their own cell phone, you can also use the Robostrar QR scan code posted on the entry wall to the Studio. This scan code is a short-cut for the URL, above, that opens the software in your web browser.

Everyone who uses Robostrar, and each artist who wishes to attend a Basic session, requires their own account with their own unique email address and password. Creating an account is easy and takes only a minute or two. You can usually teach your personal devices to remember your email address and password for you so login is straightforward. You can also reset your account password from the login page if you forget it.

What is a session roster, and how do I use mine?

A Robostrar roster shows all of the participants currently registered for a session, and allows you to record their actual attendance. In addition it provides a place to exchange simple messages about your session with scheduling admins.

Once you have logged into your Robostrar account, the **register** tab shows a list of all upcoming sessions arranged by date. Robostrar identifies sessions you manage to the right of the

2022-04-20 Wednesday 7pm-10pm	gesture (Ruan)	SOLD OUT	<input type="checkbox"/> notify me (by email) if a seat opens
2022-04-21 Thursday 10am-1pm	regular (Marcel)	13	You manage this session. (Show Roster)
2022-04-21 Thursday 7pm-10pm	regular (Alex)	9	Register Seat

“available seat” count. Click on the blue “Show Roster” link to see that session’s roster. (Only you and Robostrar administrators can inspect your session’s roster.)

Here is an example session roster:

Roster For Your Session

2022-04-21 Thursday 10am-1pm

Participants:

1. [Nick Jackiw](#) (manager)
2. [Marcel](#) (model)
3. [Jose Echaniz](#) 🎨
4. [Jaime Jones](#) 🎨
5. [Ema Lucey](#) 🎨

add to notes

1 attending + 13 unregistered seats

Notes:

Nick Jackiw: “Please remind participants of the upcoming AGM!”

Of the three registered artists, only one has been marked as attending this session. (Maybe the doors have just opened, and the other two have yet to show up.) Two of the registered artists are identified as members of the Society (🎨) and one as attending her first session (👶). In addition, there is a note at the bottom reminding the session manager to make an announcement in session. To use the roster,

- Check the checkmark next to pre-registered participants names as they show up at the studio. Some participants may show up late; mark them as attending whenever they arrive.
- Click “Add to notes” to leave your own comment at the bottom for scheduling admins to see. You might leave a comment like “model was 10 minutes late” or “we need paper towels.” For urgent things, though, it’s probably better to email the relevant Basic volunteer (or board@lifedrawing.org) directly!

The roster for a session stays open to you until 11:59pm the night of your session, in case you want to add notes, review attendance, etc.

Managing Your Models

What are typical pose schedules for various types of sessions?

Below are some typical schedules for common types of sessions. You may vary the pose and break timings at your discretion, while sticking within the generally-advertised scope of your session. Be sensitive to your model’s comfort and adjust as necessary. You can also review

<http://www.lifedrawing.org/schedules.html> for a brief public description of your session's current format.

<p><u>Regular Session</u></p> <p>0:00 Warm Ups 5 x 1-minute poses 5 x 2-minute poses 3 x 5-minute poses 3 x 10-minute poses</p> <p>1:00 **** 20-minute break **** 1:20 30-minute pose 1:50 **** 5-minute break **** 1:55 30-minute pose 2:25 **** 5-minute break **** 2:30 30-minute pose</p>	<p><u>Gesture Sessions (version 1)</u></p> <p>0:00 30 x 30-second poses 0:15 30 x 1-min poses 0:45 **** 15-minute break **** 1:00 45 minutes of 2-minute poses 1:45 **** 15-minute break **** 2:00 12 x 5-minute poses</p>
<p><u>Single-session Long Pose</u></p> <p>0:00 Warm Ups 5 x 2-minute poses 3 x 5-minute poses</p> <p>0:25 **** 5-minute break **** 0:30 25-minute pose 0:55 **** 5-minute break **** 1:00 25-minute pose 1:25 **** 20-minute break **** 1:45 25-minute pose 2:10 **** 5-minute break **** 2:15 25-minute pose 2:40 **** 5-minute break **** 2:45 15-minute last long pose</p>	<p><u>Gesture Sessions (version 2)</u></p> <p>0:00 22 x 2 minute poses 0:45 **** 15-minute break **** 1:00 15 x 3-minute poses 1:45 **** 15-minute break **** 2:00 12 x 5-minute poses</p>

What do I do if my model doesn't show up?

If the model fails to show up on time, encourage your audience to wait for up to 15 minutes. Models confirm their sessions 24 hours in advance, so a traffic delay is more likely than that they have simply forgot or abandoned their session. If after 15 minutes you still have no model you should cancel the session with apologies to participants, and assure them their tickets will be refunded to them. Be sure to notify board@lifedrawing.org or registrar@lifedrawing.org immediately in that event any ticket refunds are needed!

If you have confirmation the model is on their way but tied up more than a few minutes, you can also try recruiting an interim model from your audience. (Surprisingly, this works more often than not. Many people harbour a curiosity about posing that your crisis gives them a chance to explore!) They can pose clothed or nude as they prefer, and don't need to follow your official pose schedule. If someone volunteers, treat them with the same dignity as any model, and allow them to complete whatever pose they're in—and your participants are drawing—when the late model arrives. Finally, if they've posed for more than a few minutes, please send a note with their name to registrar@lifedrawing.org so they receive a complimentary session ticket in gratitude.

Managing Your Session Participants

What do I do if someone shows up without a preregistration?

Occasionally artists show up wanting to draw without appearing on your roster. Unfortunately you cannot let them into the session unless they are rostered. If there are more than a few minutes before your session starts **and if your Roster says there are still seats available in your session**, you can encourage them to sign on to Robostrar themselves and register a ticket for your session. (Robostrar is programmed to limit sales to our Safety Plan's documented seating capacity, so please don't admit people based on open seats visible in the studio; admit them based on pre-registered seats on the software.)

Tickets can be purchased and registered for sessions right through to the end of the session time. Just-in-time registration will be easy for participants if they've already used Robostrar—and so have an account already—and have a smart phone with them. But it may be more than they—or you—want to “bite off.” In that case, please apologise to them but insist that our rules are strict; pre-registration is required for all sessions and if their name does not appear on your roster, you can't let them in. Direct their inquiries or complaints to board@lifedrawing.org (and please report there yourself any problems that arise in this regard).

Since Robostrar launched mid-COVID in early 2021, participants have in general been very good at respecting our pre-registration requirement.

What's the story with newsprint?

Before COVID, Basic Inquiry used to sell newsprint to participants who didn't want to bring their own. During early COVID, we ceased supplying newsprint to avoid sharing supplies. As of Spring 2022, and thanks to a generous donor, we are now offering newsprint free of charge. However, this will only last as long as people don't exploit it. Encourage your participants to help themselves to "a few sheets" of newsprint "for use *during* the session" (say less than 10 for regular sessions, maybe a few more for gesture sessions) from the supply in the gray cabinet by the washroom. But please discourage anyone from taking a thick stack or planning to leave the studio with blank newsprint!

What do I do in an emergency?

The short answer is: assert your authority and manage the problematic situation as effectively as you can.

See the boxed paragraphs in the "During your session" section, above, for discussions of problematic participants and problematic passerby who come in the front door. Other types of emergencies may involve physical injury to a participant, physical risk to the studio (fire, flood, electrical problems), or both. There is a first-aid kit and a fire-extinguisher in the studio for the simplest of these problems, but if a first-aid kit or a fire-extinguisher is the solution, then the situation is not yet an emergency.

In an emergency:

- Call **911** or better, instruct one of your able participants by name to call **911, report the situation and location, and to confirm to you when they have done so.**
- In the event someone is incapacitated or unconscious, unless they are in jeopardy of outside forces (fire, for example) do not attempt to move them and keep others away from them until someone identifies themselves as a certified medical professional or first-responder.
- In the event the studio environment is itself at risk, instruct people including the model to evacuate by whichever egress is safer, and once you have ensured the premises are empty including the washroom to evacuate yourself. Try to remain in the vicinity until 911 responders arrive and can take control of the situation.
- Once you yourself are safe, notify the Board, and any session manager colleagues that you know, about the situation by the most effective communication means you have at your disposal. If you have no telephone contacts or cannot reach anyone able to take control of the situation by telephone, contact the Board by email: board@lifedrawing.org.