

Mastering Checklist

What to bring (or send) to your mastering session:

- digital files - Aiff/Wav/SD2/DSD (minimum 16 bits & 44.1kHz resolution)
- 1/4" tape
- 1/2" tape
- DAT tape*

Please do NOT send MP3's/iTunes AAC or other lossy-compressed files.

They aren't suitable for mastering and won't do justice to your music.

How to prepare your material for mastering and beyond:

- Make your mix as good as possible. Mastering will improve your mixes, but don't expect problems in the mix to be fixed in mastering – fix them in the mix.
- A good mix doesn't have to be loud – by leaving the dynamics intact, we'll be able to give you an even better master. Compression within the mix is fine as long as it's not simply there to make everything louder.
- Please don't limit your master bus, mastering will take care of that if needed.
- Leave a few dB from 0dBFS as a cushion when printing your final mix, and avoid normalizing files.
- Allow ample time before and after the song start/end (including before/after fades).
- Don't sample rate convert or change bitrate. I.e. if you've worked at 24bit 48kHz during the project, print the mixes at the same resolution, without any conversion.
- Bounce down/print your mix to interleaved files for stereo, and 6 discrete files for 5.1. Please label channels appropriately (L, R, C, LFE, Ls, Rs).
- If delivering tape, include tones and mark the box with the levels used. Also make note of any Noise Reduction (e.g. Dolby SR, dbx, etc) used.
- Let us know your desired delivery format - whether it be a RedBook CD-Master, DDP, vinyl LP sides or individual audio files for digital distribution.
- If you know the order of the tracks, please include it with your files (e.g. a text file)
- Include ISRCs and UPC/EAN information if you have it.
- Remember to register your compositions and copyrights in order to retain and exercise your rights! Contact your national artist/composer organization for info.

* DAT tape is an obsolete format with serious longevity issues, and we recommend clients to transfer all DAT recordings as soon as possible to avoid total loss of valuable material!