

Robin Sutherland Mastering - Delivery Guidelines

Thank you for choosing my mastering services.

Please review the following information and technical requirements to ensure a smooth and efficient mastering process. If anything is unclear, please don't hesitate to get in touch!

1. Turnaround Time

Singles/EP's: Typically completed within 2-3 business days from submission.

Albums: Typically completed within 7 business days from submission.

Turnaround times may vary based on current workload and project complexity. If you have a specific deadline, feel free to reach out with the details, and I'll do my best to accommodate.

2. Project Submission

Below are guidelines for preparing and submitting your project for mastering.

2.1. File Formats

Accepted Digital Formats:

WAV, AIFF, and other high-resolution formats up to 32-bit float and 192 kHz.

Compressed Formats:

MP3, M4A, AAC, etc., are not ideal unless encoded with a lossless codec. If only compressed files are available, please note this in your session documentation.

Physical Digital Formats: Acceptable mediums include hard drives, USB sticks, DAT, and CD/DVD (data discs preferred; CDR is acceptable).

Analogue Formats: 1/4 tape at 15 or 30 ips is acceptable. Please include alignment tones at 40 Hz, 100 Hz, 1 kHz, and 10 kHz at your specified reference level. Digital reference files are also a good idea.

2.2. Audio Specifications

Bit Depth and Sample Rate:

Maintain the original sample rate and bit depth of your DAW project. For example, if your session was recorded at 44.1 kHz, 16-bit, avoid upsampling to 96 kHz, 24-bit before sending for mastering.

Apple Digital Masters:

If you require Apple Digital Masters files, a minimum of 24-bit audio is required.

2.3. Headroom

Try to leave a few decibels (dB) of headroom. While precise meter readings are not crucial, tracks should sound good with adequate headroom to prevent clipping.

2.4. Master Bus Processing

Avoid Clipping:

Preferably received files should be free of clipping or brick-wall limiting on the master bus for perceived loudness, if it's for tonal or aesthetic reasons, this is ok. If you've mixed into bus compression or other master bus processing, keep those elements enabled, as removing them can significantly alter the feel and balance of the mix. Once a mix has been approved, it's generally unwise to make such changes at the mastering stage, as this may take the mix in a very different direction than what has been signed off by the artist.

Alternate Versions:

If master processing plays an important role in shaping the mix, it's essential that I receive the version most familiar to you and your team.

2.5. Tops and Tails

Include a few seconds of silence or noise at the beginning and end of your audio files. If fade-ins or fade-outs are preferred, include notes or audio examples indicating your preferences. Snipped song starts or endings can be repaired on request.

2.6. Edits and Crossfades

Use crossfades when editing individual takes or truncating bass tracks mid-cycle in your DAW to prevent digital clicks and pops. These artefacts can become more pronounced during mastering, so it's best to address them during the mixing process. Take time to carefully review your final mixes for any potential issues before submission.

3. Vinyl Pre-Masters

For vinyl projects, I provide a WAV file per side at the native sample rate of your project, typically 24-bit. This ensures optimal quality for pressing. As part of my service, I can check test pressings if they are sent to me, verifying that they meet our quality standards before full production.

I am also happy to collaborate with the cutting engineer of your choice to ensure the best results. Communication between the mastering and cutting stages is an important and often overlooked step towards achieving a balanced and high-quality vinyl release.

4. Pricing and Payment

Pricing is based on factors such as the number of tracks, project complexity, and desired turnaround time. For a detailed overview of current rates, please get in touch.

- Payment Terms: Payment is required after the mastering work is delivered.
- A card payment link will be sent once the project is complete.
- Payment is due within 15 days from the date of invoice.

5. Revisions and Approval

Revisions:

I offer revisions at no additional cost to ensure the final masters meet your expectations.

Revised Mixes:

If revised mixes are provided after the mastering work is completed, these may be subject to an additional charge at an hourly rate of 30€ per hour.

7. Contact Information

If you have any questions or need assistance, feel free to reach out! I'm always happy to help with any project needs or concerns.

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