



Jury Assessment Preparation Guide 2023-2024

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Professionals in the music industry volunteer their time as jurors to assess and score applications to the [Artist Development](#) and Juried Sound Recording programs ([Single/EP](#) and [Album](#)). FACTOR averages the juror scores and funds as many of the highest scoring applications as is possible within our budget.

The Artist Development Program is intended to provide support towards the professionalization and integration of early career artists into the music industry. The Juried Sound Recording Programs are competitive programs, to which artists should apply if they can demonstrate material marketplace activity and audience engagement.

For more information on program eligibility, please see FACTOR's program pages and guidelines. To learn more about our jury process, or apply to become a juror, see the [Become A Juror](#) page on our website.

General Tips

Start preparing early, especially if it's your first time applying to FACTOR. In order to create and submit an application, you must have an [artist profile and applicant profile](#). The artist profile tells FACTOR about your musical career; the applicant profile tells us who will receive funding if the project is approved. See step 3 and 4 of our [step-by-step guide to applications](#) for help.

The strongest applications have project plans that are specific and achievable. There are no tricks or secrets to being funded in our juried programs. Each application is scored on its merits alone.

Be professional. While creativity in your art and business is encouraged, ensure your materials are also polished and factual. Jurors will notice when you've spent time on the language and presentation of your application – and especially if you haven't.

Proofread your application. Double-check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation - and make sure the material you submit can be easily read and understood.

Quality, not quantity. Present your best material for assessment and only materials which are relevant to your proposed project. Be clear and concise, as this will aid jurors tasked with reviewing multiple applications.

Choose your genre wisely. FACTOR uses genre to match applications with appropriate jurors. When selecting your primary genre, the only consideration to make is which specialized jury group would best understand your art and plans. We do not tell jurors which genre you selected – the place to communicate that is in your application materials.

Assessment Materials

Refer to this section if you have questions about the mandatory information you will need to provide in an Artist Development or Juried Sound Recording application. Some of these elements are not applicable to all three programs (as noted).

Artist Bio

Context. Your biography is your opportunity to give the jurors a quick foundation on your artist group. Assume the jurors have no prior knowledge and provide the essential information any juror needs to know about your artist group.

Relevance. Only include information relevant to the artist group you are applying for. For example, if you're applying to make a classical children's album, you may not need to include information about your experience in hard rock bands from decades ago.

Where do I upload my artist bio? Your Artist Bio will need to be uploaded to the Component Information section of your Application.

Goals (Juried Sound Recording programs only)

Describe your project. Provide an overview of your project to give jurors a high-level understanding of what you plan to achieve.

Realistic expectations. Explain what results you're hoping to see, and how they will be measured. Be grounded. Many artists would love to tour Japan, but you need to have a plan to achieve that.

Be concise. Three or four paragraphs is enough for most applicants.

Save the specifics for later. You will be asked to provide a detailed marketing plan on how you will achieve your goals in another section of your application – don't double up.

Assessment Track(s)

Upload assessment tracks in MP3 format only. Maximum file size is 50MB.

Don't upload more assessment tracks than required. Submit one (1) track for the Artist Development program. Submit two (2) tracks for the Juried Sound Recording Single/EP and Album programs. Additional tracks will not be sent to jurors.

Which track should I upload? Choose eligible recording(s) that you feel are the strongest representation of your recent work. If you're not sure what an eligible track is, take a look at the program guidelines.

How good should the recording(s) be? The simple answer is as good as they can be within your resources. Jurors are advised not to judge tracks based on technical production quality as long as they can hear all of the musical elements. Jurors want to hear you at your best, so provide the best recording you can.

Instrumental tracks. If you submit an instrumental track, the jury will assess the lead melody instrument(s) by the same criteria they would for a lead vocal (see "Assessment Criteria" below).

Vocals. If you intend to include vocals on the final master of your assessment track(s), do not upload a recording that doesn't include vocals. Even a scratch take is fine. One of FACTOR's scoring criteria is for vocals and lyrics. Jurors may give you a 0 in that category which would substantially impact your score.

Lyrics. Include lyrics for any non-instrumental assessment track(s) you upload, preferably in PDF format.

Proposed Changes

Juried Sound Recording programs applicants: Keep it simple. Describe the differences between the assessment tracks provided and your vision for the final recording. Try to keep it practical. For example, "we plan to add live drums and cello" might be better than "we plan to achieve a deep, percussive sound."

For the Artist Development Program, the delivery track can be the same song or composition that you submitted as your assessment track. If you have made no changes to the assessment track, then you may upload the exact same recording on Completion. However, if you are claiming costs related to the production of the assessment track, or if you indicated that you made changes to the assessment track, then the delivery track you upload upon Completion must be the newly produced or modified track.

Artist Development Plan (Artist Development only)

The Artist Development Plan can be found under the Component Information section. Fill in the three main questions - detailing where you are in your career and what your strategy/plan for growth is in the coming year, estimating how much you will spend on each development activity, and describing how the development activities will contribute to your overall strategy/plan.

Marketing Plan (Juried Sound Recording: Single/EP and Album)

Your Marketing Plan is 25% of your score. A strong marketing plan is essential. Jurors are industry experts and expect a high level of detail. Concrete targets and projections are often a part of this. In this section you should be able to demonstrate recent market success and accelerating momentum in your career via quantifiable metrics in any applicable spheres of activity.

The plans. You've laid out your overall goals and expectations in the Goals section. Now break down exactly how you're going to achieve them, and who you'll be working with to accomplish your plans.

The impact. Be sure to detail the expected impact of the initiative and the results you hope to achieve. Be realistic – jurors will be looking for reasonable, measurable goals and projected results.

New to marketing plans? Refer to our [sample marketing plan guide](#) available in the [Applicant Resources](#) page on our website.

Team (Juried Sound Recording: Single/EP and Album)

Your Team is 15% of your score. Your team can include managers, record labels, agents, publicists, promoters, digital content specialists, and more. Jurors are instructed to evaluate an artist's ability to accomplish their goal with the team in place. Demonstrate how their skills and resources can be leveraged to accomplish your plan.

Additional Materials

The following items could help improve your application:

One or two professional photos.

A producer or engineer biography if you're applying to make recordings. Limit the bio to one page.

Letters of support from your team and extended network that will be assisting you with your project. If there are multiple letters, please combine them into a single PDF.

Tour dates (past and upcoming): If you have hundreds of dates, summarize them. For example, it's probably enough to say you played 28 dates in Europe to rooms with capacities of 200 – 300 people instead of listing every date. Whenever possible, please group similar information into one combined PDF.

Assessment Criteria

Artist Development

Song (writing, arrangement, composition, etc.)	/25
Vocals/Lyrics (style, range, *musical dynamic, *emotional impact, etc.)	/25
Musicality (performance, skill, technique, interpretation, etc.)	/25
Artist Development Plan/Presentation (including additional materials)	/25
TOTAL	/100

Juried Sound Recording

Song (writing, arrangement, composition, etc.)	/25
Vocals/Lyrics (style, range, *musical dynamic, *emotional impact, etc.)	/20
Musicality (performance, skill, technique, interpretation, etc.)	/15
Marketing Plan/Presentation (including additional materials)	/25
Team (consider organizational capabilities and support network if self-managed)	/15
TOTAL	/100

*If your assessment track(s) are instrumental or Jazz/Classical standards, the following elements will be considered in place of Vocals / Lyrics:

Instrumental tracks. Jurors will evaluate the lead melody instrument for the criteria listed under Vocals/Lyrics.

Jazz/Classical standards. Jurors will consider the artist's interpretation or arrangement where criteria would otherwise relate to original songs.

Resources

[Artist Development Program Guidelines](#)

[Juried Sound Recording: Single/EP Program Guidelines](#)

[Juried Sound Recording: Album Program Guidelines](#)

[Marketing Plan Guide](#)

[FACTOR's Glossary of Standard Terms and Business Policies](#)

[Guides & Tips for Applicants](#)