



Audio Quality

One master, every platform.

Mastering your tracks, file specs, and how loudness normalization actually behaves on Anghami, Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, YouTube Music and TikTok.



6

PLATFORMS COVERED

1

MASTER FILE NEEDED

One master, delivered once through WKS, reaches every platform below — but each service normalizes playback loudness to its own target once your track lands. The shared file spec and mastering checklist are laid out once, then each platform's own section covers only its loudness target and the handful of things that differ.

Last updated: September 2026. This guide is produced by WKS Music Distribution as an independent walkthrough of how each platform handles loudness and audio quality — it is not official documentation published by Anghami, Spotify, Apple, Amazon, YouTube, or TikTok. Of the six, only Spotify publishes an exact loudness target in its own artist documentation; every other figure in this guide is an informed, independently-measured estimate and is labeled as such where it appears. Normalization targets and encoding pipelines change over time, so verify anything critical against the platform's current documentation.



CONTENTS

Table of contents

–	Before You Start & Shared Steps	3
	01 Anghami	4
	02 Spotify	5
	03 Apple Music	6
	04 Amazon Music	7
	05 YouTube Music	8
	06 TikTok	9
–	Contact & What's Next	10

Tap any line above to jump straight to that section. A bookmark panel with the same navigation is also available in the sidebar of most PDF readers.



BEFORE YOU START

What every master needs

- **Format: WAV or FLAC** — never deliver an MP3 as your master; it's already lossy and re-compressing it for streaming compounds the quality loss.
- **Bit depth: 16-bit minimum, 24-bit recommended** — 24-bit gives Apple Music room to badge your track as an Apple Digital Master and gives Amazon's HD tier something to work with.
- **Sample rate: 44.1 kHz minimum** — use your session's native rate rather than upsampling a lower-rate mix.
- **Channels: stereo** (or true dual-mono if your source genuinely has no stereo image) — single-channel mono files are rejected outright by several platforms.
- **True peak: -1 dBTP or lower** — this is headroom for the lossy encoder, not a loudness target.

SHARED STEPS

The mastering checklist every release follows

- 1 Mix and master with headroom — leave your master around -1 dBTP true peak so nothing clips when it's transcoded to each platform's streaming codec.
- 2 Target roughly -14 LUFS integrated as a universal baseline — most major platforms normalize at or near this figure, so a master built around it plays back consistently everywhere.
- 3 Preserve dynamic range — normalization only adjusts overall volume, not the crushed dynamics of an over-limited master, so heavy limiting buys you nothing and costs you punch.
- 4 Export at your session's native bit depth and sample rate as WAV or FLAC — no MP3, no extra sample-rate conversion.
- 5 Deliver the single master file to WKS — it's distributed as-is to every platform, which then applies its own normalization on playback.

The sections below cover each platform individually — but only their specific loudness target and anything that differs from this shared spec, so you're not re-reading the same checklist six times.



Anghami

The leading streaming platform across the MENA region — also streams in Dolby-enhanced high quality.

LUFS TARGET

≈ **-14**

TRUE PEAK

≤ **-1 dBTP**

MIN ENCODE

320 kbps

PLATFORM DIFFERENCES

Extra prerequisites

- Minimum accepted encode: 320 kbps, 44,100 Hz, stereo — deliver your WAV/FLAC master well above this floor and let WKS's encoding handle the rest.

Where it breaks from the shared steps

- Anghami doesn't publish an exact LUFS normalization target the way Spotify or Apple do; deliver to the shared -14 LUFS baseline and it will sit comfortably in line with other tracks on the platform.

GOOD TO KNOW

- If a file fails Anghami's minimum specs check, re-export at 320 kbps / 44.1 kHz stereo rather than trying to patch the existing file.
- Anghami's high-quality Dolby streaming tier rewards a clean, well-headroomed master — avoid brickwalled masters that leave nothing for the enhanced codec to work with.



Spotify both turns loud masters down and boosts quiet ones up — within limits.

LUFS DEFAULT

-14

TRUE PEAK

-1 dBTP

LOUD PRESET

-11 LUFS

PLATFORM DIFFERENCES

Where it breaks from the shared steps

- Spotify officially publishes three listener-facing normalization presets — Quiet (-19 LUFS), Normal (-14 LUFS, the default most listeners hear), and Loud (-11 LUFS).
- The boost given to quiet masters is headroom-limited, not a flat amount — Spotify leaves 1 dB of true-peak headroom when lifting a track, so a quiet master with little headroom won't reach the full -14. Spotify's own example: a -20 LUFS master peaking at -5 dBTP is only lifted to about -16 LUFS, not all the way to -14.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Mastering hotter than -14 LUFS gains nothing — Spotify just turns it back down, and you keep the crushed dynamics without any loudness benefit.
- If your master is louder than -14 LUFS, Spotify's own guidance is to keep True Peak below -2 dBTP (rather than -1) to avoid extra distortion during encoding.
- Spotify is the only platform in this guide that publishes an exact loudness target in its own artist documentation — the figures on the other platform pages are informed estimates, not numbers those platforms have confirmed themselves.



Apple Music

Sound Check normalizes without limiting, and a 24-bit delivery can qualify your track for the Apple Digital Masters badge.

SOUND CHECK

unpublished

TRUE PEAK

−1 dBTP

ADM BIT DEPTH

24-bit

PLATFORM DIFFERENCES

Extra prerequisites

- For Apple Digital Masters eligibility: 24-bit resolution at your session's native sample rate (44.1, 48, 88.2, 96, 176.4, or 192 kHz) — a 16-bit file can't qualify no matter how it's re-exported.
- ALAC or FLAC lossless compression is acceptable for delivery; MP3 or other lossy sources are not.

Where it breaks from the shared steps

- Apple has never published an exact Sound Check target — its own Apple Digital Masters documentation describes the mechanism (it stores a track's loudness and adjusts gain accordingly) but names no number. Independent measurement commonly puts it around −16 LUFS, quieter than Spotify's published −14, but treat that figure as a well-supported estimate, not an official spec.
- Audible clipping caused by hitting the encoder too hot is a direct reason a track fails to qualify for the Apple Digital Masters badge, separate from Sound Check playback itself.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Deliver your highest native resolution to WKS, not an upsampled file — upsampling a 16-bit mix to 24-bit doesn't make it eligible for Apple Digital Masters.
- The Apple Digital Masters badge is a quality signal to listeners, not a ranking or algorithmic boost.



Amazon Music

Amazon's HD and Ultra HD tiers reward a high-resolution delivery, on top of standard loudness normalization.

LUFS TARGET

unpublished

TRUE PEAK

 ≤ -2 dBTP

HD TIER

24-bit

PLATFORM DIFFERENCES

Extra prerequisites

- 24-bit delivery gives Amazon's HD/Ultra HD lossless tiers a genuine high-resolution source to serve.

Where it breaks from the shared steps

- Amazon hasn't published an official loudness target. Independent measurement puts its normalization close to Spotify and YouTube, around -14 LUFS, and suggests it only turns loud content down rather than boosting quiet masters — but neither figure comes from Amazon's own documentation, so treat both as informed estimates.
- A True Peak ceiling of -2 dBTP (tighter than the -1 dBTP baseline) is commonly cited for Amazon's encoding pipeline specifically, again based on outside testing rather than a published spec.

GOOD TO KNOW

- If you want your release eligible for Amazon's HD or Ultra HD badges, make sure the file you deliver to WKS is genuinely 24-bit at its native sample rate, not just relabeled.
- Since Amazon likely doesn't boost quiet masters, don't master unusually quiet expecting the same lift you'd get on Spotify.



YouTube Music

YouTube's own systems don't publish an exact figure, but its behavior is well-documented through what creators can see for themselves.

LUFS CEILING

≈ -14

TRUE PEAK

-1 dBTP

BOOSTS QUIET

No

PLATFORM DIFFERENCES

Extra prerequisites

- If your release also ships as a video, deliver WAV at 48 kHz for the video asset; audio-only delivery to YouTube Music can stay at 44.1 kHz.

Where it breaks from the shared steps

- YouTube doesn't publish an exact LUFS target in its own documentation, but its normalization is directly observable: right-click any video and choose 'Stats for nerds' to see the exact gain adjustment applied. Widespread independent testing consistently converges on roughly -14 LUFS.
- That normalization only turns loud content down; multiple independent tests agree it does not boost quiet tracks — a master at -18 LUFS plays back at -18 LUFS, not turned up to -14.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Don't master unusually quiet for a YouTube Music release expecting the platform to bring it up to match louder tracks — the evidence says it won't.
- A master built to the shared -14 LUFS baseline plays back essentially untouched here.



Short-form playback rewards a master that still 'breathes' — over-limited masters read as flat on video.

LUFS RANGE

unpublished

TRUE PEAK

−1 dBTP

DYNAMIC RANGE

Preserve it

PLATFORM DIFFERENCES

Where it breaks from the shared steps

- TikTok doesn't publish an official LUFS target, and independent estimates vary more here than for any other platform in this guide — informal testing has put its normalized playback anywhere from about −10 to −16 LUFS depending on the source and method used.
- Because clips are short and paired with visuals, a heavily brickwalled master with no dynamic movement reads as flat against the video, even though the loudness number looks fine on paper.

GOOD TO KNOW

- A master fine-tuned for Spotify or Apple Music will play back perfectly well on TikTok without any extra work — there's no need for a separate short-form export.
- If a section of your track is likely to be the viral clip (the hook, the drop), make sure that section specifically isn't over-compressed in the master.



WRAP UP

Thanks for reading

One well-made master, delivered once through WKS, covers every platform — each service just applies its own normalization on top at playback time. Get the loudness and headroom right at the source and you never have to think about it per platform again.

NEED HELP?

HELP CENTER

wks.agency/help

SUPPORT

wks.agency/contact

ALL GUIDES

wks.agency/guides

FOLLOW WKS

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter/X](#)

[YouTube](#)

distro@wksagency.com

DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

One upload, every store

Spotify, Apple Music, TikTok and 66 more, delivered from a single upload.



NEXT IN THIS SERIES

Guide 3 of 6 — Album Artwork

Cover art size and format requirements, design best practices, and the most common reasons artwork gets rejected.