



## RIAA AND GR&F CERTIFICATION AUDIT REQUIREMENTS RIAA ALBUM AWARD

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### **General Requirements:**

The RIAA recognizes the following Album Award tiers:

Gold – 500,000 Units

Platinum – 1,000,000 Units

Multi-Platinum – 2,000,000 Units (increments of 1,000,000 thereafter)

Diamond – 10,000,000 Units (increments of 1,000,000 thereafter)

### **Units are defined as follows:**

- Each permanent digital album or physical album sale count as 1 Unit for certification purposes.
- 10 permanent track downloads from the album count as 1 Unit for certification purposes.
- 1,500 on-demand audio and/or video streams from the album count as 1 Unit for certification purposes.

Requests for certification may be made by email to the RIAA. The following information must be made available:

Record Company

Label

Artist

Title

Configuration (full-length album, shortform album, multi disc set)

Level (Gold, Platinum and/or specified levels of Multi-Platinum)

Selection or Catalog Number

Release Date

Suggested Retail List Price (SRLP):

Genre

The RIAA certification program is open to member and non-member music companies. An audit consists of verifying requisite sales and streaming levels and then issuing a formal certification report.

RIAA certification entitles the authorized record company/artist to purchase official RIAA award plaques bearing the trademarked RIAA hologram seal from RIAA's licensed plaque manufacturers.

All certification audits are conducted, for a fee, by the firm Gelfand, Rennert and Feldman, LLC (GR&F) for the RIAA. If multiple certification levels are simultaneously certified, only one audit certification fee is charged.

Sales of albums in physical format become eligible for certification 30 days after the release date. Sales of albums in digital format become eligible at the release date.

Initial pre-orders of digital albums will not be counted towards certification. The pre-orders will count towards certification after the album is released and the user receives a copy of the digital album.

Only domestic sales and sales to U.S. military post exchanges are included. The requesting company must separate PX sales from other accounts on sales sheets. Export sales outside the United States are not included in certification.

Club sales and club free goods may be included towards certification. Product shipped to retail, mail order, record clubs, TV marketing and other ancillary markets are combined toward certified sales. All shipments to these accounts must be verified by the label.

In order to count for certification purposes only, physical and digital sales of the complete album must be sold at a) an average wholesale value of \$2 or more per unit or b) a suggested retail value of \$6 or more per unit.

Individual track downloads and streams must satisfy the requirements of the RIAA Digital Single Award in addition to the following criteria:

- Single-track downloads and streams, including those from singles released prior to the album release, must appear on some digital version of the album (e.g. standard, deluxe, explicit, clean, etc.). To be considered for certification, the requesting party must provide finalized label copies for all released Album UPCs. The Album label copies must delineate the tracks included on the Album along with each track's respective ISRC, and only those tracks whose ISRCs are so listed will count towards certification of the Album.
- Downloads and streams (both past and prospective) of tracks that appear only as bonus tracks on a retailer/service-exclusive version of an album may only include sales from that specific retailer/service. The RIAA & GR&F will require labels to confirm in writing that only sales from the specific retailer/service have been included in their reports for the exclusive tracks.
- For multi-artist compilation albums, single-track downloads and streams are eligible towards certification only if they have not previously been included toward the certification of a different album (such as the Artist's studio album). Conversely, the use of a track towards the certification of a multi-artist compilation will then preclude that track from being used toward any future certification of a different album. When applying for the certification of a multi-artist compilation album, the label will be responsible for confirming whether any tracks have been previously applied towards the certification of any other project. Similarly for standard Albums, the label will be responsible for

informing the RIAA and its auditors of any tracks which were used towards the certification of a multi-artist compilation album.

- For collaborative tracks with multiple primary artists (e.g. a duet) that appear on the respective studio album of each artist, single-track downloads and streams can count toward the certification of either/both album/s *only* if each artist appears as a primary artist on the track.
- Only official video streams (i.e. not user-generated content) are eligible. For the avoidance of doubt, only official videos hosted on either the Artist's or the Label's channel(s) will be immediately eligible for consideration. With respect to third-party hosted videos, if a music label is able to fully monetize an official video and receive reporting from the video-hosting platform (e.g. YouTube), and that the video-hosting platform's reporting does not consider the content to be UGC, then the streams are accepted. If a video-hosting platform flags the video hosted on a third-party channel as UGC, the video cannot be accepted, regardless of any monetization or licensing deals that the Artist/Label may have with the third-party channel.

For the avoidance of doubt, alternative versions of a track (e.g. remixes, instrumental versions, live, extended versions, etc.) are not eligible unless said alternative version is included on a version of the album.

Digital downloads are defined as tracks derived from a single sound recording that have been distributed directly or licensed from a record label for distribution from a legitimate Digital Service Provider (DSP). To count for certification, the price on which the download is based must reflect current market rate compensation to the record label. Thus, promotional track downloads of a free single do not count towards certification.

On-demand streams from DSPs that are reported to the record labels, whether paid by the consumer by subscription or free to the consumer through ad-supported services, will be accepted for certification.

All certifications are based on permanent downloads and on-demand streams distributed within the United States.

Promotional radio and press copies, cut-outs, inventory sell-offs, and surplus sales are not included toward certification.

For certifications for Greatest Hit albums, only track sales and streams that occur after Greatest Hits albums' release date can count towards RIAA album certifications. If the label chooses to have track sales and streams applied towards Greatest Hits certifications, then those track sales and streams are precluded from future inclusion in the original studio album. The RIAA and GR&F will require labels to confirm in writing that no track sales and streams are counted towards both a studio album and a Greatest Hits album, and the RIAA and GR&F may request additional testing of system reports to ensure validity. Due to the complicated nature of monitoring whether a track sale and/or stream has already been considered for album certification, Greatest Hits audits may require significant delays in the certification process.

### **Merch bundles, Ticket Bundles, and product packaging:**

Labels are required to identify all bundled sales when submitting for certification. Albums bundled (“Added Value”) with other products (e.g. concert tickets, merchandise, etc.) (“Standalone Product”) and sold to consumers can be eligible under RIAA’s Gold & Platinum Program if they meet the following requirements:

- For certification purposes only, the Added Value of the bundle has a suggested retail value premium of \$6 or more per album when compared to the retail value of the Standalone Product. For example, the Added Value of a bundle with 2 albums should have a suggested retail value premium of \$12 when compared to the retail value of the Standalone Product.
- The Standalone Product included in a bundle must be available for purchase separately where the consumer is given the choice of purchasing each component of the bundle individually. The Added Value component of a bundle cannot be marketed as a free giveaway.
- When the consumer is given the choice to redeem the album as a digital download or physical copy, only transactions proving the redemption of the album will be eligible to count toward certification.
- Redemption reports must identify the consumer’s country where the album was redeemed.
- Multi-disc sets are generally not considered bundles unless they are packaged with Standalone Products that would otherwise classify the music components as Added Value. For the avoidance of doubt, the RIAA reserves the right to approve or deny the eligibility of bundles or multi-disc sets at its sole and absolute discretion. If there is a question as to the eligibility of a product, please reach out to the RIAA prior to submitting a request for certification.

### **Certification Audit Requirements:**

1. Copy of product (CD or digital).
2. Label Copy for all configurations.
3. Retail prices for all configurations (computer printout or catalog). Not required for video.
4. Product release date.
5. Internal sales summary report reflecting only domestic commercial sales (total invoiced) and sales to U.S. military post exchanges. The report must not include export sales or any promotional or free distributions.
6. Club sales reports, if applicable (BMG Direct, Columbia House, other).

7. We may request additional documentation to support the certification(s) requested, including, but not limited to, internal sales detail reports, sales invoices, royalty statements rendered to artists, manufacturing records and distribution statements rendered by the Digital Service Providers.