
Certificate in Entertainment Law

Music Law and Licensing

Music Law and Licensing Glossary

A

Artist Agreement: An agreement between an artist and a record label, manager, or agent that outlines the terms of the relationship, such as compensation, royalties, and ownership rights.

B

Copyright: Legal protection for original works of authorship, including music, that gives the creator exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, and perform the work.

Compulsory License: A license that allows a person or entity to use a copyrighted work without the permission of the copyright owner, as long as they pay a set fee.

C

Clearance: The process of obtaining permission to use copyrighted material in a film, TV show, or other audiovisual work.

Derivative Work: A new work based on a pre-existing work, such as a remix or cover version of a song.

D

Distribution Agreement: An agreement between a record label and a distributor outlining the terms of how the label's music will be distributed to retailers and consumers.

E

Exclusive License: A license that grants one person or entity the exclusive right to use a copyrighted work, typically for a specified period of time.

F

Fair Use: A legal doctrine that allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research.

G

Grand Rights: The rights to perform a dramatic work, such as a musical or opera, in a live theatrical setting.

H

Harry Fox Agency: An agency that licenses mechanical rights for music publishers and songwriters in the United States.

I

Intellectual Property: Creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, and symbols, that are protected by copyright, trademark, or patent laws.

J

Joint Work: A work created by two or more authors who intend to merge their contributions into a single work.

K

Key Man Clause: A clause in a contract that allows one party to terminate the agreement if a key person involved in the deal leaves the company.

L

Licensing: The process of granting permission to use a copyrighted work in exchange for a fee or royalty.

M

Master Use License: A license that allows the use of a specific recording of a song in a film, TV show, commercial, or other audiovisual work.

Musician's Union: An organization that represents musicians and negotiates collective bargaining agreements with employers, such as record labels and concert venues.

N

Neighboring Rights: Rights related to the public performance and broadcast of sound recordings, separate from the rights of the underlying musical composition.

O

Ownership: The legal right to control, use, and profit from a work of music, including the copyright in the composition and the master recording.

P

Performance Rights Organization (PRO): An organization that licenses public performances of music and collects royalties on behalf of songwriters and publishers.

Public Domain: Works that are not protected by copyright and can be freely used by anyone, typically because the copyright has expired.

Q

Quid Pro Quo: Something given in exchange for something else, such as a license to use a copyrighted work in exchange for payment.

R

Recording Contract: An agreement between a recording artist and a record label that governs the recording, distribution, and promotion of the artist's music.

Remix: A new version of a song created by recombining or altering the original recording.

S

Synchronization License: A license that allows the use of a musical work in synchronization with visual media, such as a film, TV show, or commercial.

T

Termination Rights: The right of an author or creator to terminate a copyright license or assignment after a certain period of time.

U

Uniform Commercial Code (UCC): A set of laws that govern commercial transactions, including the sale of goods, leases, and secured transactions.

V

Work for Hire: A work created by an employee within the scope of their employment, where the employer owns the copyright instead of the employee.

W

Writer's Share: The portion of royalties paid to the songwriter for the public performance of a musical work, separate from the publisher's share.

X

XML Metadata: Extensible Markup Language (XML) used to describe and exchange information about music works, recordings, and rights data.

Y

YouTube Content ID: A digital fingerprinting system that allows copyright owners to identify and manage their content on YouTube, including monetizing user-uploaded videos that contain their music.

Z

Zoning Laws: Laws that regulate where certain activities, such as live music performances, can take place within a community to prevent noise complaints and other issues.