Certificate of Embodied Production

Public Standard

A process-based certification standard for sound recordings produced without grid correction, pitch correction, or generative AI used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content.

Version 1.6 | Effective October 29 2026

Muse Foundry LLC dba Musical Form Institute

The Certificate of Embodied Production is a certification mark of Muse Foundry LLC, pending before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

At a glance

- Certifies individual sound recordings only, not artists, labels, studios, or other entities.
- Verifies production process: no grid correction, no pitch correction, no generative AI used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content, and foundational tracks recorded together.
- Evaluation is based on required attestation and may be supplemented by analytical evaluation or production documentation.
- Certified recordings receive the designation CEP-Certified and are listed in the public registry.
- Does not evaluate artistic quality, genre, or commercial merit.

What the CEP certifies

The Certificate of Embodied Production certifies that a specific sound recording was produced under conditions that preserve the integrity of human performance as it unfolds in time.

Specifically, a CEP-certified recording meets all of the following criteria:

No grid correction. Performed timing was not quantized, snapped, nudged, time-stretched, or otherwise aligned to a fixed grid after performance.

No pitch correction. Performed pitch was not corrected or tuned after recording.

No generative AI. No generative artificial intelligence was used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content.

Non-generative tools used for technical, assistive, or signal-processing purposes are permitted, provided they do not generate musical content and otherwise comply with the timing and pitch requirements of this standard.

Foundational tracks recorded together. When the recording includes a rhythm section or other foundational ensemble parts, those parts were recorded together, in the same studio, at the same time.

Commitment to the take. Performances were not assembled from multiple takes to construct an idealized composite. Punch-ins are permitted. Vocal performances may be comped across full takes.

Certification applies to individual sound recordings only. It does not certify artists, producers, engineers, studios, labels, or any other person or entity.

What the CEP does not certify

The Certificate of Embodied Production does not evaluate artistic quality, genre, commercial viability, technical polish, or audience appeal. It does not constitute endorsement, promotion, or approval of any recording or associated commercial activity.

The CEP certification verifies process, not aesthetics. A certified recording is not certified as good. It is certified as having been produced under the conditions described in this standard.

Definitions

Definition: Grid correction

Any post-performance process that aligns, quantizes, snaps, nudges, time-stretches, or otherwise adjusts the timing of performed material to conform to a fixed temporal grid. This includes, without limitation, Beat Detective, elastic audio quantization, manual nudging to grid lines, and any substantially equivalent practice. Playing to a click track is not grid correction. Altering a performed take to conform to the grid after the fact is.

Definition: Pitch correction

Any post-recording process that tunes, normalizes, or adjusts the pitch of vocal or instrumental performances toward a target pitch. This includes, without limitation, Auto-Tune (when used for correction), Melodyne pitch editing, and any substantially equivalent practice. Audible pitch-based effects used clearly as creative effects are not pitch correction.

Definition: Generative artificial intelligence

“Generative artificial intelligence” or “generative AI” means any system, model, or tool that produces musical content, including but not limited to melodies, harmonies, rhythms, lyrics, vocal performances, instrumental performances, audio stems, or synthetic performance layers, through automated generation rather than direct human performance or composition. It excludes tools that perform non-generative, assistive functions such as signal routing, dynamic processing, noise reduction, or non-creative audio enhancement.

Generative AI voice conversion, voice cloning, or resynthesis is prohibited when its generated output is incorporated into the recording. This includes converting a human-performed part into a modeled voice, even when the original timing, pitch, phrasing, and lyrics are preserved. The restriction applies whether the generated material replaces an existing part or is added as another layer. Training a model on the applicant’s own recordings, or using authorized training material, does not provide an exemption.

Definition: Foundational tracks

Instruments that establish the core temporal and relational structure of the recording, such as drums, bass, rhythm guitar, keyboards, or other primary time-keeping instruments where present in the song. These are the parts where real-time coordination between musicians forms the temporal structure of the recording.

Definition: Musical elements

The expressive sonic content of a recording, including pitched, rhythmic, harmonic, lyrical, instrumental, or vocal material that forms part of the musical substance of the work.

Eligibility and submission

Any person may submit a released sound recording through an authorized public-source link for preliminary review. A recording may proceed to certification only when an artist, producer, label, rights holder, or other authorized representative completes the required attestation and authorizes the certification application.

Submission does not create any entitlement or expectation of certification. Certification is granted only upon a determination that the recording satisfies the standard under the evaluation procedures maintained by the Musical Form Institute.

Certification is available to any sound recording that meets the published standard, regardless of artist, label, genre, or commercial affiliation. Any promotional offer made to a specific group must be simultaneously available to the general public on the same terms.

To submit a recording for certification, visit musicalform.org or contact certifications@musicalform.org.

How recordings are evaluated

CEP evaluation is based on attestation and may be supplemented, where warranted, by analytical evaluation or review of session documentation. Because the CEP standard addresses production practices that are not fully visible in a finished audio file alone, the evidentiary base for certification is broader than audio analysis.

A signed attestation is required before certification is issued and establishes the primary evidentiary basis for certification. For released recordings submitted through a public-source link, the Musical Form Institute may conduct preliminary analysis before requesting the attestation. If the recording advances, the attestation must be completed by an artist, producer, label, rights holder, or other authorized representative.

Analytical methods, including third-party AI-content screening, are applied where warranted under the Musical Form Institute's current review methodology. These methods supplement expert judgment and the required attestation. The methodology is documented internally, includes controls

for known detection artifacts, is validated against certification outcomes, and is subject to periodic review.

The Musical Form Institute may request session files, production notes, or a description of the workflow used during and after the session as part of the evaluation process.

Certification outcomes

Each recording receives one of two public outcomes:

Outcome	Meaning
CEP-Certified	The recording meets the CEP standard. Certification is issued and the recording is listed on the public registry.
Not Certified	The recording does not satisfy the standard, or the evidentiary basis is insufficient to support certification. The recording does not appear on the public registry.

Recordings that satisfy the standard based on the combined evaluation are certified. Recordings that do not satisfy the standard, or where the evidentiary basis is insufficient, are designated Not Certified. The Musical Form Institute may request additional documentation before reaching a final determination. A recording that is under evaluation or pending additional documentation does not appear on the public registry until a final determination is made.

Public registry

Certified recordings are published to the public registry at registry.musicalform.org. Each entry includes a unique certification identifier, artist name, track title, release title, label, genre, ISRC (where available), certification date, certification type, and standards version. Registry entries are publicly accessible and searchable.

Use of the certification mark

The Certificate of Embodied Production certification mark is owned and controlled by Muse Foundry LLC. Authorization to use the mark is granted on a per-recording basis only.

The mark may be used in physical album packaging, digital artwork, album credits, liner notes, digital metadata, and promotional materials that clearly reference the certified recording. It must not be used in connection with uncertified recordings, to describe artists or entities as certified, or to imply endorsement beyond certification of the specific recording.

Authorization remains in effect for the certified recording unless certification is revoked, suspended, or withdrawn. Unauthorized or improper use may result in corrective action or withdrawal of authorization. Separate badge usage guidelines are provided upon certification.

Policies and appeals

- Certification is available to any sound recording that meets the standard, regardless of artist, label, genre, or commercial affiliation.
- Submission does not guarantee certification.
- Certification decisions are made independently and in good faith. They are not influenced by artistic, commercial, reputational, or promotional considerations.
- Certification may be suspended or revoked if materially false or misleading information was provided, or if the mark has been used in an unauthorized or misleading manner. The revocation process, including notice periods and response rights, is described in the CEP Certification Governance Framework.
- An applicant whose certification has been denied, suspended, or revoked may submit a written appeal. Where practicable, appeals are reviewed by an individual not involved in the original decision. The decision on appeal is final.
- Fee schedules and pricing information are available at musicalform.org.

Governance

The institutional authority, conflict of interest policies, audit commitments, and accountability structures governing all CEP certification activity are described in the CEP Certification Governance Framework, maintained separately by the Musical Form Institute. The current version is available upon request to governance@musicalform.org.

Version note

This document describes Certificate of Embodied Production Standard Version 1.6, effective October 29, 2026.

Version 1.6 adds an explicit clarification of the existing prohibition on generative AI voice conversion, voice cloning, and resynthesis, including when a human performance guides the generated output. It clarifies the conditions governing permitted assistive tools. The eligibility requirements are unchanged.

Each certification decision is governed by the version of the standard in effect at the time of certification. The Musical Form Institute may revise this standard. Revisions apply prospectively. Certifications issued under a previous version retain their validity.

CEP Quick Reference

For studios, engineers, producers, and artists

The standard in one line

A CEP-certified recording preserves performed timing and pitch without grid correction, pitch correction, or generative AI used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content, with foundational tracks recorded together.

Quick rules

- Record foundational tracks together, in the same room, at the same time.
- Punch-ins are allowed and encouraged. Full-take comping of non-vocal instruments is not.
- Click tracks are allowed. Quantizing performed material to the grid after the fact is not.
- Do not grid-align, nudge, slice-to-grid, Beat Detective, or apply similar timing correction on performed material.
- Do not pitch-correct performed material. Melodyne and Auto-Tune for correction are prohibited. Auto-Tune as an audible effect is allowed.
- Editing is allowed only if it does not change timing or pitch of performed material.
- Loops are permitted as a foundation if performances are not quantized to the loop.
- No generative AI stems, loops, melodies, harmonies, lyrics, or audio incorporated into the recording.

What is allowed

Multitrack recording. DAWs. Overdubs. Effects and signal processing. Click tracks and tempo maps. Punch-ins. Editing for noise, fades, and clean transitions. Looping (if not quantized). All modern and vintage recording tools, provided they do not alter the timing, pitch, or decision structure of the performed material.

Non-generative assistive tools used for signal routing, dynamic processing, noise reduction, mixing, mastering, or non-creative audio enhancement are allowed, provided they do not generate musical content or alter the timing or pitch of human-performed material.

What is not allowed

Grid-based timing correction. Post-performance pitch correction. Assembled or comped instrumental performances. Reconstruction of foundational ensemble tracks. Generative AI used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content. Any practice that achieves the same effect as the above, regardless of tool or method.

Frequently asked questions

What is the CEP, in one line? A certification for recordings that preserve performed timing and pitch without grid correction, pitch correction, or generative AI used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content.

Does the CEP prohibit all uses of AI? No. The CEP prohibits generative AI used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content. Non-generative assistive tools used for technical or signal-processing purposes are permitted when they do not generate musical content or alter performed timing or pitch.

Can I fix a mistake with a punch-in? Yes. Punch-ins are allowed and encouraged. The prohibition is on constructing an idealized performance by stitching together sections from multiple takes.

Can we comp together multiple full takes into one performance? No, for instrumental performances. Vocal performances may be comped across full takes.

Can we use a click track? Yes. Playing to a click is allowed. Altering a performed take to conform to the grid after the fact is not.

Can we build a tempo map from the drummer and then sync everyone else to it? No. If the goal is alignment after the fact, it is not CEP-compliant.

Can we loop our performances? Yes, as long as you do not quantize the loop.

We have a song based on a loop. Is that allowed? Yes, if you perform to it without syncing or quantizing your performances to the loop.

I'm a rap artist using loop-based instruments. Can this qualify? Yes, if the vocal performance remains as performed. No syllable-by-syllable assembly, no timing alignment to the grid, and no pitch correction.

What about Auto-Tune as an audible effect? Allowed as an audible creative effect only. Using it to correct pitch toward a target note is prohibited.

Can we edit for noise, fades, starts/stops, or clean transitions? Yes, as long as edits do not alter timing or pitch of performed material.

Can we use AI-generated stems, loops, lyrics, or other musical material? No. Generative AI may not be used to create, supply, replace, or reconstruct musical or lyrical content.

Who reviews the recording? The Musical Form Institute serves as the independent certifier. Certification decisions are made independently and are not influenced by commercial or promotional considerations.

How do I submit a recording? Visit musicalform.org or contact certifications@musicalform.org.