International Music Industry Lab

Course guide 2026-2027

Semester	Fall and Spring (semester 1 and 2)
Inholland location(s)	Haarlem
Inholland faculty	Creative Business
Language of instruction	English
Cycle	Bachelor level
Number of ECTS	30

Subjects

Subject title	ECTS	Course code
IMI Lab Group Project	30	4325IMIL1A
IMI Lab Individual Portfolio		4325IMIL1B

Content subjects

Music is part of everyday life. It helps people express themselves, brings communities together, and shapes how we experience the world around us. Yet its broader value is often overlooked. Music is still mainly approached as entertainment or as an economic product, while its social and cultural impact remains underused.

At the International Music Industry Lab (IMI Lab), we believe that music is more than a commodity. Music has the potential to address global and societal challenges by connecting with people on a personal level. The music industry plays a crucial role in this by acting as a responsible force within the wider music ecosystem.

The IMI Lab aims to contribute to the transformation of the music industry from within. We believe the industry can become more inclusive, sustainable, and open, while remaining culturally, socially, and economically relevant.

Why IMI Lab?

At IMI Lab, you do not just study the music industry. You actively engage with it. During one full semester, you collaborate with music industry partners such as elrow, c/o Pop, Proper, and Patronaat. Together, you will work on real-world challenges in the music industry and society, and develop ideas, concepts, and strategies that strengthen the industry's impact beyond profit alone.

You will work with a design thinking approach that helps you understand complex challenges in the music industry and how to translate them into practical and creative solutions. This process includes generating ideas, testing and refining them, and learning through experimentation and reflection.

You will collaborate in multidisciplinary teams with students from different programs within and beyond Inholland University of Applied Sciences. This reflects professional practice in the music industry, where complex challenges require diverse perspectives and expertise. Working in these teams helps you develop collaboration skills and prepares you for professional life.

The IMI Lab offers a hands-on learning environment. Throughout the semester, you are supported by coaches with extensive industry experience and researchers from the Lectoraat Innovation in the Music Industry. They provide guidance, feedback, and expertise to support your professional and personal development.

The lab is closely connected to the professional field through events such as the Amsterdam Dance Event and regular guest lectures. Alongside project work, you set personal learning goals, build music industry knowledge, expand your professional network, and explore your future role within the music industry.

Learning sessions and projects for the IMI lab take place at the Slachthuis in Haarlem
The Slachthuis is a small-scale concert venue for local music in the Haarlem area. This environment is inspiring and directly connected to trends and developments in the music industry. This is relevant for you to connect with the music scene in a more intimate manner. This is a creative and alternative space which allows for creativity and makes a change from a more traditional classroom setting.

IMI Lab challenges
Each semester, IMI Lab collaborates with music industry partners who introduce new, real-world challenges. This ensures that the course content remains relevant and closely connected to current developments in the field. While the specific challenges vary, they always align with one of the research themes below, which together form a continuous research line within the IMI Lab. Each theme offers a different perspective on contributing to a healthier and more sustainable music industry.

Transforming the music business
The music business is constantly evolving. Projects within this theme focus on changes in business models, markets, and technologies, and explore how music organizations can adapt to these developments. Students analyze real-world cases and develop strategies for a rapidly changing industry. Example project: c/o Pop Business Transformation

Mental health in the music industry
The music industry often involves high pressure, irregular working hours, and intense competition. Projects within this theme examine mental health challenges faced by professionals and explore ways to create healthier and more sustainable working conditions. Example project: c/o Pop Mental Health Challenge

Digital technology and the music industry
Digital technologies such as AI, social media platforms, data analytics, and blockchain are reshaping the music industry. Projects within this theme focus on understanding these developments and exploring how artists, organizations, and audiences can benefit from them in fair and responsible ways. Example project: Utopia Music Challenge

Strengthening urban music ecosystems
Urban music scenes play an important role in cultural life and local economies. Projects within this theme explore how urban music ecosystems function, including venues, studios, artists, education, and policy. Students develop interventions aimed at strengthening local music scenes and increasing their cultural, social, and economic value. Example project: Prospect Eleven Urban Music Challenge

Music, sustainability, and social justice
This theme focuses on the role of music in addressing environmental, cultural, and social challenges. Projects explore how the music industry can contribute to sustainable development, social inclusion, and cultural diversity. Topics include greener production practices, more sustainable events, and improving access and representation within the industry. The aim is to support systemic change while balancing creativity, economic viability, and responsibility toward people and the planet. Example projects: Rave Scout Cookies Challenge; Haarlem Vinyl Festival

Learning outcomes

You will work on these overarching learning outcomes:

- Experimenting
  Based on analysis and via a process of successive iterations and development loops, you design and realize creative concepts for complex problems for your challenge. This is done in collaboration with partners from the professional field and other disciplines from the creative sector.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
  You bring in your own (professional) expertise and appreciate and enrich this perspective. Your active role in teamwork and constructive work ethic connects to a collaborative solution-oriented result.
- Qualification
  You develop knowledge and skills essential for professional and societal engagement. You strive to become a proficient and innovative practitioner in your discipline by developing research methodologies, expanding your knowledge base, and effectively utilizing relevant tools and technologies. Apply and relate lab specific knowledge and perspectives to your own discipline and professional practice.
- Socialisation
  Integrating into and collaborating with diverse groups and communities. Engaging in teamwork with peers, partners, and the broader community for interdisciplinary learning and collective problem solving.
- Authentic Leadership
  Cultivating authentic leadership skills by gaining deeper self-awareness, exploring personal ambitions and talents, and using feedback and reflection to enhance professional growth and performance

The learning objectives are:

- Perform research on a chosen topic.
- Critically analyse and integrate scholarly and professional literature to support your research.
- Develop, test, and refine different approaches through development processes.
- Contribute knowledge and skills to the lab community, enhancing collective transdisciplinary learning and problem-solving.
- Actively engage others in your learning journey, reflecting on and valuing the collaborative process.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback from peers, coaches and experts. Actively collaborate with network partners and community members to achieve shared goals.
- Independently initiating and achieving innovative cooperation with external partners that result in a prototype of an economic and/or societally relevant product or service.
- Developing innovative and relevant concepts for your collaborating partners' complex and wicked problem, in a multi- disciplinary environment, based on creative analysis.
- Critically reflecting on underlying conceptual perspectives and professional practice, using relevant theoretical concepts. Formulating possible alternative approaches and establishing the consequences for society and/or professional practice.

Mode of delivery, planned activities and teaching methods

The lab and its partnerships are the context in which you learn. Both individually and in the team context. The educational approach focuses on authentic leadership, design thinking, co-design, research and self-directed learning.

You will use the design thinking method to examine the complex problems. Your semester will follow the phases of design thinking: Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test. This provides a clear structure and method along with other tools so you can focus on your learning journey.

Your lab working method uses the metaphor of climbing. You will work with four 'Climbs' as part of the diverging and converging phase. At each 'climb' you will share and get feedback on your project process and concept.

Prerequisites and co-requisites

- You are at least a third-year Bachelor student, or an associate degree student in the final phase of study.
- You are enthusiastic, creative, innovative and can work independently.
- You see uncertainty as a chance to learn.
- You are passionate about tackling complex, real-world challenges, together with industry experts, stakeholders and peers.
- Your development is self-directed supported by setting your own educational goals
- Your educational path is determined by your interests and supported by coaching
- You are open to new forms of education and assessments and learning in a context that connects to society, and in which you reflect on your learning process.

Recommended or required reading and/or other learning recourses/tools

Within the lab course we have mandatory literature. Costs are approximately € 50.

Assessment methods and criteria

Group Project

You will join a team of 4-5 other students, from different courses and backgrounds. Over 20 weeks, you will work on your team's 'challenge'. You will come into direct contact with experts and local stakeholders and co-design approaches to the challenges with them.
Your Group Project has two documents and a final presentation:

- **Design Rationale**
  This is a group document that can be shared with the collaborating partners. It explains the finished concept in detail, including the design process, explaining decisions made along the way, and which feedback received contributed to the final concept. It outlines costs for implementation of your concept and guidelines for the partners to implement your concept.
- **Process Biography**
  This is a group document for internal use, for your project group and coach and assessor. It is a reflective document that details the stages of the team's development, your group evaluation and feedback processes. It gives insight into the group process, the team effort and the individual contribution of each project member.

- **Final presentation**
  You and your group will present the final concept to peers, the lab community and collaborating partners.

Personal Road Map – Individual document
Your **Personal Road Map** is a detailed overview of your learning journey throughout the semester. You have freedom to choose what you include and how you present it. You will have coaching and feedback sessions, with your coach and peers. You will also have several moments for formative feedback where you give feedback to your peers and receive feedback from them and your coach.
Your Personal Road Map has one document and a final presentation.

You will be assessed on the following aspects:

- **Qualification**
  You develop knowledge and skills essential for professional and societal engagement. You strive to become a proficient and innovative practitioner in your discipline by developing research methodologies, expanding your knowledge base, and effectively utilizing relevant tools and technologies. Apply and relate lab specific knowledge and perspectives to your own discipline and professional practice.
- **Socialisation**
  Integrating into and collaborating with diverse groups and communities. Engaging in teamwork with peers, partners, and the broader community for interdisciplinary learning and collective problem solving.
- **Authentic Leadership**
  Cultivating authentic leadership skills by gaining deeper self-awareness, exploring personal ambitions and talents, and using feedback and reflection to enhance professional growth and performance

Lecturer(s)

Koos Zwaan, PhD: Lab Lead and Inholland Research Professor of Innovation in the Music Industry

Joran van Pol: Coach, professional DJ and music industry expert

Remco van Eijndhoven: Coach, professional musician and music industry expert

Pieter Breek, PhD: Lab Community Developer and researcher

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Visit: International Music Industry Lab