inholland
university of applied sciences

International Music Industry Lab

Course guide 2025-2026

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

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Subjects

Subject title	ECTS	Course code
IMI Lab Group Project	30	3822IMIE1A
IMI Lab Individual Portfolio		3822IMIE1B

Content subjects

At IMI Lab, music is much more than a product—it's a way to connect, inspire, and bring people together. We know that music shapes lives and communities, so our lab goes beyond the usual lectures and assignments. Here, you'll be part of a community where learning happens through experience, creativity, and collaboration.

In IMI Lab, you'll join students from different programs to work alongside top industry partners like elrow, c/o Pop, Proper, and Patronaat. These partners don't just give you assignments; they work with you as real collaborators. Together, you'll tackle big questions and challenges in today's music industry—issues that even experienced professionals are looking to solve. Think of it as a chance to work on "wicked problems" that need fresh perspectives and creative solutions.

Why IMI Lab?

This program is designed to be fun, engaging, and relevant to what you care about right now. It's about exploring the music world on your terms, learning by doing, experimenting, and discovering what excites you. You'll be guided by coaches with extensive music industry experience and supported by researchers from the Lectoraat Innovation in the Music Industry, who are there to help and mentor you every step of the way.

Each year, we take part in events like the Amsterdam Dance Event, where you'll get to immerse yourself in the heart of the industry. Guest speakers from diverse music sectors join us regularly, offering insights and firsthand experiences. Plus, we're flexible, jumping on unique learning opportunities as they arise—whether it's hackathons, conferences, or industry meetups.

Throughout the semester, you'll set your own learning goals with support from personal coaches, and by the end, you'll have a portfolio showcasing everything you've achieved. IMI Lab also gives you a one-of-a-kind chance to build a network with current and future music professionals, paving the way for exciting opportunities in the industry. And it's not just work—we make time to dive into the creative side of music, listen together, and connect over shared passions.

IMI lab Challenges: Shaping the Future of the Music Industry

At the IMI Lab, we're passionate about building an inclusive, sustainable, and engaging music industry where everyone can thrive. Here, students work alongside experienced coaches, researchers, and industry partners to tackle real-world challenges. Each semester brings new projects and partners, keeping the experience dynamic and relevant. Six main research themes provide the foundation of our work, each offering a unique angle to explore and develop solutions for a healthier, more sustainable music industry. Students can count on engaging in a project within one of these core themes, diving into key issues that shape the future of music.

Mental health in the Music Industry: The music industry can be a high-stress environment, with its fast pace, long hours, and constant pressure. Together, we'll examine the unique mental health challenges facing industry professionals and create practical solutions to make the music world a healthier place to work. (Example project: c/o pop Mental Health Challenge)

Digital Technology's Influence on the Music Industry: From AI and social media to blockchain, digital technology is transforming the music industry every day. Our projects focus on understanding these changes and finding ways for artists, businesses, and fans to benefit, while ensuring fair practices for everyone involved. (Example project: Utopia Music Challenge)

Music industry sustainability: How can the music industry reduce its environmental impact? From production to events, we'll explore ways to make the industry greener without sacrificing its creativity or growth potential. Working with partners, we'll develop ideas that balance sustainability with the music sector's artistic and economic goals. (Example project: Haarlem Vinyl Festival)

Transforming Music Business: The music business is evolving quickly, and we're here to stay ahead of the trends. By understanding shifts in business models and technologies, we aim to help industry players adapt and succeed. Together, we'll look at real cases and propose strategies for today's ever-changing music landscape. (Example project: c/o pop Business Transformation)

Building an Inclusive Music Industry: We believe everyone should have the opportunity to succeed in the music industry. With this focus, we design projects that promote diversity and inclusion, making the industry more welcoming and representative. You'll work on practical solutions that open doors for people of all backgrounds. (Example project: Rave Scout Cookies Challenge)

Urban Music Ecosystems Enhancement: Cities thrive on music, and urban music scenes are essential to vibrant city life. We'll explore the different parts that make up a city's music ecosystem—venues, studios, schools, artists, and more—and find ways to strengthen them. Our projects aim to boost local culture, foster community, and contribute to economic growth through music. (Example project: Prospect Eleven Urban Music Challenge)

Learning outcomes

We work with three overarching learning outcomes or competences. These are:

1. Experimenting
   Based on analysis and via a process of successive iterations and development loops, the student designs and realizes creative solutions for complex problems from the urban area. This is done in collaboration with partners from the professional field and other disciplines from the creative sector.
2. Interdisciplinary collaboration
   The student brings in their own (professional) expertise and appreciates and uses the perspective. The active role in teamwork and constructive work ethic has led to a collaborative solution-oriented result.
3. Professionalization
   The student proactively manages their professional development by making content related choices and formulating personal learning issues and (SMART) learning objectives. Feedback received on professional conduct results in adequate self-reflection.

The learning objectives are:

- 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 solutions for your collaborating client's complex, wicked problem, in a multi- disciplinary environment, based on creative analysis.
- Critically reflecting on underlying conceptual perspectives and premises of a professional practice, using relevant scientific theoretical concepts. Formulating possible alternative points of departure and establishing the resultant consequences for society and/or professional practice.

To increase the relevance of learning, students are required to spend 4 hours a week to transfer what they learn in the labs to the learning outcomes of their home course. They will deliver a Personal & Professional Growth Portfolio. Students will be coached at in creating this portfolio.

Mode of delivery, planned activities and teaching methods

Creative Future lab and its partnerships provide you the context in which you can learn. Both individually and as a team. The lab educational approach is based on authentic leadership, design- driven research and self-directed learning.

It is believed that design thinking can solve complex problems and is educated to many professionals nowadays, also within Inholland. We guide students with a structure and tools and we send them off on a learning journey.

Our working method is inspired by the metaphor of a climbing wall: you climb towards the next boulder in order to get to the top. In line with our defined design thinking framework, we work with four big Climbs. Every Climb consist of a diverging and a converging phase.

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Prerequisites and co-requisites

- You are at least a third-year Bachelor student, or an Associate Degree student in the final phase of the study
- You are enthusiastic, creative, innovative and can work autonomously
- You can handle uncertainty and see this as a chance to learn
- You are passionate to tackle complex challenges together with stakeholders and peers
- Your development is self-directed supported by setting your own educational goals
- You choose your own educational path supported by a teachers' coaching and within the opportunities of your team
- You are open for new and pioneering forms of education and assessments: showcase portfolio and conscious reflection in and on action.

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

Within the lab track we use mandatory literature. Costs are approximately € 50.

Assessment methods and criteria

There is a Group Portfolio that consists of:

1. A Process Biography: a reflective document on the team development gives insights in the process, the team effort and the individual activities
2. The Design Rationale: shows the design decisions in the iterative codesign process and experimenting
3. The Experimental Outcome: the concept prototype and its value proposition and business model
4. The Final Presentation: for the collaborating partners.

In your Individual Portfolio, you will have freedom to explore yourself. Through regular coaching sessions and feedback, you will gain a deeper insight into your own sense of identity and purpose.

Lecturer(s)

Lab lead: Koos Zwaan PhD

Contact: imilab@inholland.nl

Visit: International Music Industry Lab