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Dialogue loudness and delivery specs

The three checks that catch most rejected dialogue mixes, in the order to run them before you send a file out.

The targets

Programme loudness	**-23.0 LUFS**	Average loudness of the whole programme, measured as integrated loudness.
Maximum true peak	**-1 dBTP**	The true peak of the programme must not exceed -1 dBTP.
Loudness range	**No target**	EBU R 128 sets no loudness range target. Check the broadcaster's sheet for any limit they set.

The targets apply to everything in the programme together, so measure the whole mix. Dialogue, music and effects are measured as one. A peak reading alone does not show loudness, so both need checking.

1. Measure the whole programme

- [ ] **Export or bounce the full programme you will deliver**
  Do not measure the dialogue stem alone.
- [ ] **Read the integrated loudness on a loudness analyser**
  Aim for -23.0 LUFS. Result:
- [ ] **Note the loudness range**
  Check the broadcaster's sheet for any limit they set. Result:

2. Check the peaks

- [ ] **Read the maximum true peak**
  It should not exceed -1 dBTP. Result:
- [ ] **Listen to the master for squashing**
  A heavy limiter can land on -23.0 LUFS and still leave the dialogue sounding squashed.

3. Check the file

- [ ] **Frame rate matches the broadcaster's sheet**
- [ ] **Sample rate matches the broadcaster's sheet**
- [ ] **Channel layout matches the broadcaster's sheet**
- [ ] **Length matches the programme**
  A mismatch here is the most common reason a file is refused, and it has nothing to do with the sound.
- [ ] **Measure the delivered file, not an earlier mix**
  A later conversion can move the level.

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Worked example

A 12-minute interview film measures -18 LUFS integrated, and the true peak reaches -0.4 dBTP. The mix is 5 LU too loud.

Bring the master down by 5 dB, and the peak falls to about -5.4 dBTP. Measure again after the change, because the limiter on the master may have been working harder than you thought.

Common mistakes

- **Using the peak limit as the loudness target.** Peak and average are different measurements, and one does not stand in for the other.
- **Measuring the dialogue alone.** Music and effects can push the programme over target while the dialogue looks fine.
- **Using a platform's target as the broadcast target.** Use the spec your client or broadcaster has given you.
- **Hitting the number with a limiter.** Listen before you send.
- **Re-encoding after the check.** Measure the file you deliver.

Record each measurement

Mix version	Date	Integrated (LUFS)	True peak (dBTP)	Loudness range	File checked

Sources: EBU R 128, Loudness normalisation and permitted maximum level of audio signals (tech.ebu.ch/publications/r128). Targets checked against the EBU R 128 document on 5 November 2026. Platform and broadcaster specs differ, so check theirs before you export. Checked 5 November 2026.

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