

Why Can't I Hear Anything?

Troubleshooting Guide

So you want to hear stuff? You're in the audio studio, so that's probably important. Before we can diagnose why you can't hear anything, we first need to figure out what it is you're trying to listen to.

IF YOU ARE TRYING TO HEAR –

Audio Passing through the XLR Wallplates: See steps 1, and then 6-10

Audio from a non-DAW Computer Application (ie YouTube, Spotify, SoundCloud, Video Playback, etc.): See steps 1 and 2

Audio Playback from your DAW: See steps 1, and then 11-12

Audio from Live Room Monitors: See steps 1, and then 3-4

Audio from Talkback Mic: See steps 1, and then 3-5

1) Make sure the orange-taped master volume knob is turned up

You'll usually need to give the knob a good few twists, and insure that the volume is set to at least -30dB.

BE CAREFUL – Setting the volume at a high level before playing sound can damage both the speakers and your hearing. Always start with the volume at -100, and slowly turn it up as you're playing back or auditioning your material.

2) Insure that the “iMac” button is selected on DADman

This will be located under the “source select” tab under your outputs and next to your master fader. When iMac playback is activated, the button will turn blue.

3) Insure that the “Live Room” button is selected on DADman

This will be located under the “foldback” tab, which is under the source select tab. When activated, the button will turn blue.

4) Turn up the Big Knob connected to the speakers in the Live Room

It's literally a Big Knob brand Big Knob. Make sure that it's turned up.

5) Select the “Talk” option on DADman

In order for the talkback microphone to pass through the speakers, you’ll need to activate the Talkback Microphone by pressing the “Talk” button on DADman. This is located to the left under your Outputs. If it’s activated, it will turn green.

Alternatively, you can open up your DAW and insure that the Input Monitor is activated on the Talkback channel. For info on the Input Monitor, see step 8.

6) Make sure you have properly routed your audio through the patchbay

For a refresher on using the patchbay, check out the “patchbay” video under “Video Guides” in the “Guides” folder located on the Desktop of the iMac.

7) Apply gain on DADman

In order for a microphone to put out a decent signal and be properly heard/recorded, gain will need to be applied to the microphone. You can do this by turning up the fader on the input that the microphone is routed to through the patchbay, ie: if the microphone is routed to Avid Matrix Digital Card 1, Input 1 on the patchbay, gain will need to be applied on “Pre 1” on DADman.

While checking your microphone, adjust the fader until the meter to the left of the input is hitting just below the yellow area. **BE CAREFUL:** Applying too much gain can cause your audio to clip, which will add audible distortion to your recording. If the audio going to your input is hitting the red portion of the visual meter, you’ve applied too much gain.

8) If you're using a condenser microphone or Cloudlifter, make sure you've applied phantom power

Condenser microphones do not produce audio without phantom power. To apply phantom power, find the input your microphone is routed to on DADman, and press the button in the top left corner labeled "48".

REMEMBER: DO NOT SEND PHANTOM POWER DIRECTLY TO A RIBBON MICROPHONE OR IT WILL BREAK!!

9) Open up your DAW

Whether it be Pro Tools, Logic, or Audition, sound from the wallplate will not properly pass through the speakers until you've actually opened up your DAW on the iMac.

10) Activate the Input Monitor on whatever channel you'd like to hear

This is the final step in order to hear audio from the wallplates through your speakers. In Pro Tools, you can either activate the Input Monitor button or the Record Enable button. In Logic, you must use the Input Monitor. The Input Monitor is located on each individual channel, notated with the letter "I". When activated, the button will turn green.

11) Make sure that your DAW session is configured to a sample rate of 48k

Our studio is setup to run at a sample rate of 48k, so anything played through a DAW that's above or below that sample rate will not properly pass through the speakers. To check the sample rate in Pro Tools, go to Setup – Session. To check the sample rate in Logic, go to File – Project Settings – Audio.

If you're bringing in a pre-existing session that's at a different sample rate, please ask for assistance at the CFI Desk to help ready the computer for your alternate sample rate.

12) If you're importing audio into your session, make sure that audio is imported at 48k

A lot of the times, backing tracks and the like that are imported into your DAW will be at a lower sample rate than 48k, which will not properly pass through our speakers. In order to insure that your audio is imported at the correct sample rate, you will need to convert it upon import.

In Pro Tools, in the Import window, make sure you select "Convert Clip" in the center dialog box before finalizing your import. When importing audio in Logic, make sure you select to convert the files in the pop-up window before finalizing your import.