

EXAM BLUEPRINT GUIDE

# Nutanix Certified Services - Core (NCS-Core) 7 Beta Exam



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Disclaimer:

The Nutanix Certified Services - Core (NCS-Core) 7 Exam Blueprint Guide provides an overview of the objectives that must be mastered to achieve the NCS-Core 7 credential. Nutanix does not offer any guarantees that this guide will ensure a candidate's success in achieving the NCS-Core 7 certification. All information in this guide is subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of Nutanix.

# 1. The Exam

## 1.1 Purpose of Exam

The Nutanix Certified Services - Core (NCS-Core) 7 Beta Exam will measure a candidate's Service Delivery ability to successfully conduct customer-facing engagements for the purposes of gathering requirements, deploying and configuring Nutanix clusters and additional portfolio products, performing basic troubleshooting, utilizing Nutanix support resources, and engaging in customer-focused knowledge transfer. Successful candidates demonstrate mastery of these Core Nutanix Professional Services skills and abilities.

## 1.2 Number of Questions

The NCS-Core 7 Beta Exam consists of 108 multiple-choice and multiple-response questions.

## 1.3 Pricing

There is no cost for the NCS-Core 7 Beta Exam.

## 1.4 Passing Score

The final score will be determined by examining the results from the Beta Exam period, determining which exam items performed well, and evaluating each candidate's results, based on only the items that performed well.

This process can take from 4-6 weeks from the time the Beta period has ended. Once the evaluation is complete, candidates will receive their scores. Candidates who have passed will not need to take the live exam.

## 1.5 How Objectives Relate to Questions on the Exam

Objectives summarize what the test is designed to measure. These objectives are developed by Services Subject Matter Experts based on identified services fundamental tasks that relate to utilizing Nutanix products and technologies.

Once the initial development process is complete, these objectives are verified using an external group of individuals in the actual job role. Finally, a number of questions is determined for each objective, which relates directly to the criticality of the task in the job role.

## 1.6 Languages

The Beta Exam is available in English.

## 1.7 Time Limit

The time limit for the exam is 180 minutes.

## 1.8 Scheduling and Taking the Exam

The NCS-Core 7 Beta Exam is delivered via remote proctoring or in-person at select test centers.

If you select remote proctoring, after registering for the exam and providing valid identification, you will receive information on how to take the exam from your location using a web browser. Because the exam is remote proctored, you will be provided with a locked down, monitored, secure exam experience.

If you select in-person testing, you will be able to select a test center near you. On the day of the exam, you will need to arrive at the test center 15 minutes prior to the exam start time with a valid government-issued ID.

## 1.9 Certification Tracks

The NCS-Core 7 Beta Exam is the prerequisite for the Nutanix Certified Services Certification Program tracks. Passing this exam results in achieving the NCS-Core 7 certification.

The certification requires a passing score on the exam. While it is not required that you attend the NCS-Core course, this Nutanix training covers the objectives on the exam. Details on the recommended training course are provided in [Section 4](#).

## 1.10 Retake Policy

If a candidate fails an exam on the first attempt, he or she is allowed two additional attempts. There is a seven-day waiting period between attempts. Like the first attempt, these are paid for individually and Nutanix recommends that you allow sufficient time between attempts to be properly prepared and to maximize your chances for success.

Please note: After three attempts, you will be unable to take the exam for 60 days, after which you can email [university@nutanix.com](mailto:university@nutanix.com) and request that your attempts are reset. Nutanix recommends you utilize the time to thoroughly review this guide and the related references and/or take the recommended training for this exam.

## 1.11 Exam Security

Nutanix reserves the right to refuse certifying a candidate who violates exam security policies. This includes copying and redistribution of exam material, using any type of study material during the exam itself, attempting to photograph exam items and taking an exam using a false identity. Your identity is captured as part of the exam registration process and must be validated before you will be allowed to take the exam.

## 1.12 Recertification

Once you have passed the Nutanix Certified Services - Core (NCS-Core) 7 exam and achieved the NCS-Core 7 certification, it will remain valid for three years.

To maintain your certification status, you must either renew your existing certification with the latest version of NCS-Core or pass an advanced NCS Professional, Master, or Expert Level certification.

## 1.13 Benefits of Certification

- Digital badge from Credly that you can share on social media
- Access to the Certification store at <http://store.nutanix.com> for shirts, mugs, and more
- Opportunity to participate as a SME to develop future exams

# 2. Intended Audience

A candidate with a NCS-Core 7 certification is capable of successfully and independently executing core Nutanix Professional Services. The candidate can facilitate a kickoff call, provide customer deliverables, and present knowledge transfers and closeouts. The candidates can also troubleshoot basic connectivity issues, locate and interpret log files, and leave the Nutanix environment in a production-ready state. Candidates are typically Cloud and Virtualization professionals with about 1-3 years of consulting experience.

## 3. Objectives Covered in the NCS-Core 7 Beta Exam

### 3.1 Introduction

It is recommended that candidates are capable of successfully and independently executing a Service Delivery Kit by facilitating a kickoff call, deploying Nutanix clusters using Foundation, and providing customer deliverables and knowledge transfers before attempting the Nutanix Certified Services – Core 7 exam. It is also recommended that the candidate complete the training course described in [Section 4](#) prior to taking the exam.

### 3.2 Objectives

Prior to taking this exam, candidates should understand each of the following objectives listed below; along with related tools, the candidate should have experience with documentation relevant to the objective. Please note that some documentation requires access via the Support Portal. Information on creating an account for use with the Support Portal can be found [here](#).

Additionally, some objectives within this exam require access and knowledge of the Nutanix Service Delivery Kits (SDK), which are available [here](#).

All objectives may also be referenced in other product documentation not specifically highlighted below. The candidate should be familiar with all relevant product documentation or have the equivalent skills.

#### Section 1 – Conduct Pre-delivery Activities

Objective 1.1: Review, analyze, and execute delivery workflow.

##### Knowledge

- Review, consume, and interpret a service delivery kit (SDK)
- Determine stakeholders from which to gather key information
- Review, consume, and interpret the scope of work
- Review and consume a project schedule
- Review, consume, and interpret bill of materials (BoM)

##### References

- [Questionnaire in the Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)
- [Service Delivery Kit - HCI Cluster Deployment - Predelivery Questionnaire](#)
- [Nutanix Physical Networking Best Practices Checklist](#)
- [Network Requirements](#)
- [Predelivery in the Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)
- [Prepare Factory-Imaged Nodes for Imaging](#)

## Objective 1.2: Conduct a discovery session.

### Knowledge

- Gather key customer requirements provided within the pre-delivery questionnaire
- Given a customer use case, explain pre-requisites for a successful project delivery
- Given a completed pre-delivery questionnaire, identify additional work required to complete the project
- Present information to the customer to confirm understanding of key technical specifications, constraints, etc.
- Discuss Nutanix best practices based on customer environment

### References

- [AHV Networking Best Practices](#)
- [Data-at-Rest Encryption](#)
- [Global Storage Guidelines for Heterogeneous Clusters](#)
- [Configuring Foundation VM by Using the Foundation GUI](#)

## Objective 1.3: Ensure site readiness for deployment.

### Knowledge

- Physical environment prerequisites are completed:
  - Rack space compatibility and load capacity
  - Sufficient power and cooling are available
  - Physical network configuration is completed
  - Engineering-certified network SFPs and associated cabling requirements
  - Customer infrastructure is available
- Customer configuration/support prerequisites are completed:
  - Network configuration is completed
  - Technician availability
  - Access to the data center
  - Change control

### References

- [VLANs](#)
- [Appliance Overview](#)
- [Connecting the Nodes](#)
- [Installation and Troubleshooting of portable Foundation \(Foundation App\)](#)
- [NX-HW – NIC Cable and Transceiver Support Guide](#)
- [Specifications and Requirements](#)

Objective 1.4: Prepare installation environment.

Knowledge

- Download required binaries
- Complete Foundation Configuration
- Prepare hardware required for installation
- Configure environment for remote deployment, as applicable

References

- [Software Bundled in This Release](#)
- [Changing the IPMI Password](#)
- [Hypervisor ISO Images](#)
- [Nutanix Configuration Maximums](#)
- [Delivery Phase in the Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)
- [Options for Resolving 192.168.5.0/24 Subnet Overlap](#)

## **Section 2 – Conduct Delivery Activities**

Objective 2.1: Perform hardware installation according the field installation guide.

Knowledge

- Complete rack and stack
- Complete network and power cabling based on best practice guidelines
- Perform inventory of delivered components specified in the BoM

References

- [Rack Mounting Prerequisites, Operating Environment, and Cautions](#)
- [Prepare Bare-Metal Nodes for Imaging](#)
- [Fixing IPMI Configuration Issues](#)
- [Setting IPMI Static IP Address](#)
- [Setting up Foundation Central](#)
- [Foundation Central Overview](#)
- [Creating a Cluster from NX Nodes](#)
- [About Open vSwitch](#)
- [How to re-configure IPMI using ipmitool](#)
- [Field Installation Overview](#)

## Objective 2.2: Deploy the environment using Foundation.

### Knowledge

- Complete out-of-band/remote-hand configuration, if required
- Start Foundation, confirm service availability
- Complete cluster configuration information
- Resolve any issues preventing Foundation from completing successfully
- Confirm Prism Element/Central accessibility
- Validate cluster health check using NCC
- Complete Prism Central deployment and licensing

### References

- [Cisco Nexus Best Practices](#)
- [Using Nutanix Network Crashcart Script to configure AHV Networking](#)
- [Fixing Imaging Issues](#)
- [Setting Up the Network](#)
- [Cannot Create Cluster or Add Nodes to Existing Cluster](#)
- [Discovering Nodes in a VLAN-Segmented Network](#)
- [Considerations for Bare-Metal Imaging](#)
- [Foundation Use Case Matrix](#)

## Objective 2.3: Configure the deployed environment.

### Knowledge

- Complete Prism Element and Prism Central configurations as per the Deployment Checklist/Questionnaire
- Complete hypervisor configuration, as applicable
- Deploy and configure management plane
- Update the environment using LCM
- Complete cluster security/hardening:
  - STIG compliance
  - CVM hardening, certificate management, and licensing/capacity planning validation, as applicable

### References

- [Configuring HTTP Proxy](#)
- [AHV Security Hardening](#)
- [CVM Security Hardening](#)

- [PCVM Security Hardening](#)
- [Security Hardening](#)
- [LCM Inventory/Update Fails if DNS Servers Are Not Reachable](#)
- [Rebuild Capacity Reservation](#)
- [Configuring Cluster Lockdown in Prism Element](#)
- [Data Locality](#)
- [Upgrade Process - What Happens During an Upgrade](#)
- [Nutanix Acropolis Dynamic Scheduler](#)
- [Syslog Modules](#)
- [Configuring the Remote Syslog Server Settings](#)

Objective 2.4: Configure basic services within the deployed environment.

#### Knowledge

- [Fit check](#)
- [Basic VM migration](#)
- [Cluster conversion](#)
- [Cluster expansion](#)

#### References

- [Which Alerts Automatically Generate a Support Case with Nutanix Support](#)
- [Enabling Pulse](#)
- [Unsupported Features](#)
- [Create Bandwidth Throttling Policy](#)
- [Remote Site Configuration](#)
- [Upgrade Related Documentation](#)
- [Nutanix Data Efficiency](#)
- [Fault Tolerance: FT1 vs FT2](#)
- [Microsoft SQL Server Database Workloads on Nutanix Introduction](#)
- [Verifying the Cluster Health](#)
- [Nutanix Disaster Recovery Guide](#)
- [Configuring Active Directory Authentication in Prism Central](#)

- [Nutanix Move Deployment](#)
- [Conditions for Application-consistent Snapshots](#)

Objective 2.5: Conduct the test plan based on customer requirements.

#### Knowledge

- Conduct tests for:
  - Manageability
  - Availability
  - Networking
  - Operational
- Document results
  - Capture screenshots as supporting evidence, as applicable
- Discuss and finalize success criteria for test plan

#### References

- [X-Ray Guide Overview](#)
- [Data Protection and Disaster Recovery Best Practices](#)
- [LACP and Link Aggregation](#)
- [How to Enable, Disable, and Verify LACP on AHV hosts](#)
- [Nutanix-Recommended Physical Network Designs](#)
- [Installing a Custom Certificate as "Trusted" on PE or PC](#)
- [AHV Metro Recovery Workflows](#)

Objective 2.6: Troubleshoot and address deployment and configuration issues.

#### Knowledge

- Troubleshoot common deployment issues
- Take appropriate post-troubleshooting actions, such as:
  - Determine when and how to escalate
  - Re-execute tests
  - Add exceptions as applicable

#### References

- [Configuring an SMTP Server](#)
- [Prerequisites for Prism Central Installation](#)
- [Expanding a Cluster](#)

- [Enabling LACP and LAG \(AHV Only\)](#)
- [Registering a Cluster with Prism Central](#)
- [Logging Into Prism Central](#)

### **Section 3 – Conduct Post-Delivery Activities**

Objective 3.1: Create and/or modify deliverables.

#### Knowledge

- Run as-built documentation tools
- Recognize and update project deliverables, as required
- Update custom images based on environment, as required
- Update diagram based on a specific configuration, as applicable

#### References

- [Questionnaire- Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)
- [As\\_Built\\_Tool & Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)
- [Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)
- [Post Delivery - Deployment Service Delivery Kit \(SDK\)](#)

Objective 3.2: Conduct knowledge transfer sessions.

#### Knowledge

- Demonstrate cluster and Prism Central operations pertaining to the customer environment (e.g., dashboard, LCM, VM CRUD, storage management, CVM)
- Demonstrate support portal
- Demonstrate support case handling
- Educate the customer on general best practices

#### References

- [Troubleshooting Tips](#)
- [SDK Closeout PowerPoint Template](#)
- [VM High Availability in Acropolis](#)
- [Infrastructure Deployment or Expansion - Knowledge Transfer PowerPoint](#)

## 4. NCS-Core 7 Training Recommendations

### 4.1 Course Recommendation

Nutanix offers the NCS-Core course that provides training on the objectives tested for in the exam. For more information on this course, visit <http://www.nutanix.com/partners/consulting/training/ncs-core-certification>.

The course details are as follows

The [Nutanix® Certified Services \(NCS\) Core Learning Plan](#) enables you to deliver a wide range of services including cluster deployment, data protection, migration, and fitcheck services. It trains you how to deliver professional services engagements based on the Nutanix Consulting Services delivery methodology.

## 5. Resources

### 5.1 Test Drive

You can also take a Nutanix Cloud Platform (NCP) Test Drive by clicking [here](#).

### 5.2 Nutanix Community Edition

The Nutanix Community Edition is a free product that allows you to deploy a Nutanix Cloud Platform. To download the software and build your own environment for exam preparation, click [here](#).

### 5.3 The Nutanix Community

Connect with cloud builders from around the world, learn from IT Pros in your industry and share experiences on the Nutanix Community. The community maintains an area focused on Nutanix certifications, which is located [here](#).

### 5.4 Nutanix Cloud Infrastructure Demo: AOS + PC

To access a Demo Setup with the latest AOS of Prism Clusters and Prism Element [demo.nutanix.com](http://demo.nutanix.com).

### 5.5 Additional Nutanix Services Training Resources

Find a wealth of additional Core resources [here](#).

## NUTANIX

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