NextGen UBE — Venue Network Conversation Guide

A pre-conversation guide for venues and network providers supporting a NextGen UBE administration.

Purpose. This guide is intended to help venue and IT teams understand the topics NCBE will want to discuss as we plan for the administration. It is not a worksheet and does not need to be completed in advance. We are looking to build a shared understanding of the actual testing environment, identify any questions that require follow-up, and plan together for a reliable exam-day experience.

1. The Testing Environment

Our conversation will begin with the physical testing setup. Network readiness depends on how candidates are distributed across the site, not simply on the venue's overall internet speed.

- **Candidate distribution** — the expected number of candidates overall and in each testing room, including accommodations rooms.
- **Room configuration** — the size and layout of testing spaces and how candidate seating relates to the wireless environment.
- **Technical contacts** — the venue IT team and, where applicable, the network provider or other technical partners who understand the site's infrastructure.

2. Internet Capacity & Availability

We will discuss the internet connection serving the testing area and, importantly, how much of that capacity will actually be available to the exam.

- **Connection capacity** — download and upload capacity serving the testing area.
- **Shared traffic** — whether the connection is dedicated to the exam or shared with other venue activity, events, guests, or systems.
- **Protected capacity** — whether the exam's portion of the connection is separated, reserved, or otherwise protected from competing traffic.
- **Exam-day availability** — whether the stated capacity is continuously available or requires advance activation, configuration, or coordination with an ISP or network provider.

3. Wireless Coverage in Each Testing Room

Because candidates connect from their assigned seats, we will look at the wireless environment room by room rather than treating the venue as a single network space.

- **Access-point capacity** — the number, make/model, and wireless standard of access points serving each room.
- **Access-point placement** — where access points are physically located in relation to candidate seating.
- **Wireless environment** — channel configuration and other nearby wireless networks or events that may create competing demand or interference.
- **Coverage validation** — whether coverage has been checked from the actual candidate seating areas and what that testing showed.

Understanding the Path from the Room to the Internet

A strong internet circuit is only one part of site readiness. We will also want to understand the infrastructure that carries exam traffic from candidate devices to that connection.

4. The Network Path

For each testing room, we will talk through the path exam traffic follows — from the room's access points, through switches and other equipment, and ultimately to the internet.

- **End-to-end path** — the major connections and network equipment that carry traffic from the testing room to the internet.
- **Link capacity** — the speed of the connections along that path and whether any component represents a lower-capacity point.
- **Actual negotiated speed** — whether critical links have been verified at the speed at which they are actually operating, rather than relying only on rated specifications.
- **Physical media** — whether critical links use copper cabling, fiber, direct-attach connections, or another medium.

Why this matters: A venue may have a 1 Gbps, 5 Gbps, or 10 Gbps internet connection, but that number alone does not establish whether the same capacity can successfully reach hundreds of candidate devices in a particular room.

5. Redundancy & Resilience

Even a well-designed network can experience a disruption. We will discuss what backup capability exists and whether it is truly independent of the infrastructure it is intended to protect against.

- **Secondary connectivity** — whether a second internet connection exists, its capacity and provider, and what infrastructure it shares with the primary connection.
- **Failover behavior** — how traffic moves to the backup connection, how long that transition takes, and what candidates experience during it.
- **Failover testing** — whether the backup path has been tested under realistic conditions and what the result was.
- **Backup power** — whether network equipment, room lighting, and candidate power are supported by UPS, generator, or other backup power.

6. Exam-Day Operations

We will also talk through how the network will be supported and observed during the administration so that issues can be identified and addressed quickly.

- **On-site support** — the primary and backup technical contacts who will be available during testing.
- **Network monitoring** — what the venue can monitor during the exam and what information can be reviewed with NCBE if troubleshooting is needed.
- **Change management** — any planned network, firmware, equipment, or configuration changes in the days immediately before or during the administration.
- **Room-start flexibility** — for multi-room sites, whether administrator instructions and room starts can be offset when useful to distribute network demand.

7. Preparing for the Conversation

No written response is required before we meet. If possible, please have someone participate who can speak to the venue's wireless environment, internal network architecture, internet connections, redundancy, and exam-day technical support. It is completely fine if some answers are not immediately known; we can identify those items together and determine what follow-up is needed.

Our goal: NCBE, the jurisdiction, and the venue should leave the conversation with a shared understanding of the testing environment — what is already strong, what still needs to be verified, and what contingencies should be in place before exam day.