

Standard NBME Web-Based Testing Requirements

The standard NBME web-based testing requirements outlined below apply to exams delivered over both wired *and* wireless networks. Examinees may take a web-based exam on either Macs or PCs. Any combination of fixed desktops, institutional laptops, or examinee personal laptops may be used for exam delivery.

Dedicated technical support staff with “Admin” privileges is required prior to and on the test days.

Hardware

- Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10
- Mac OS version 10.11, v10.12, v10.13, v10.14, v10.15
- 1 GHz processor or higher
- 17” or larger color monitor recommended (Desktops)
- 13” or larger color monitor recommended (Laptops)
- A minimum screen resolution of 1024 x 768
- 32-bit color setting enabled
- Turn off Windows updates or virus scanner updates to avoid interruptions during the exam.
- Virtual machines and applications are not allowed.
- iPads/tablets are not allowed.

Browser

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 11
- Safari 9 or higher
- Google Chrome¹
- Mozilla Firefox¹

Browser Settings

- JavaScript, CSS, Cookies and Pop-ups all enabled
- If possible, disable toolbars, and Adware/Spyware programs to prevent slowness.
- TLS 1.2 or higher

Internet/Network Bandwidth

- Broadband (DSL, Cable or T1)
- 256Kbps or higher per workstation

Network Security

Some level of encryption must be in place for wireless networks while the exam is in progress. SSL can be supplemented with another security protocol, such as but not limited to WEP, WPA or WPA2.

Secure Browser

A Secure Browser is required to administer an NBME web-based exam; this application “locks down” the computer and prevents examinees from accessing other software applications during the exam. The Secure Browser will also detect any programs running on the examinee’s computer that could compromise exam content.

The Secure Browser application does not require configuration or administrator rights to install and is downloaded on test day when the examinee URL is provided by the Chief Proctor.

Workstation Certification for Institution-owned Computers*	The NBME provides a utility that checks the computer for web-based testing compatibility and launches a sample test. This utility must be run on each computer in the testing room prior to test day. Fourteen days prior to the test date, you will receive an email with a URL, a unique ticket number and instructions to run the Workstation Certification utility. Do not forward this email to examinees – it is for institutional use only.
Workstation Certification for Examinee-owned Laptops	<p>Examinees with personal laptops are required to run a separate Workstation Certification check. Prior to test day, forward the URL and Workstation Certification instructions from the 'Prior to Test Day' section of the Chief Proctor's Manual to examinees. Do not send examinees the unique ticket number used for the institutional version of the utility.</p> <p>Examinees with personal laptops should also be advised to arrive early to re-run Workstation Certification to detect any problems with the local firewall.</p>
Additional Computers	Extra desktop/laptop computers should be available to replace computers that may malfunction during the test session. These spares should be enabled for wired and wireless LAN use.

¹Chrome and Firefox support is limited to the current version plus one previous version due to forced automatic updates.

* Please review the Chief Proctor Instructions for additional details regarding Workstation Certification.