

Technician Readiness Checklist

A practical self-assessment and seven-day starting plan for aspiring data center technicians.

For each checkpoint, record 0 = cannot explain yet, 1 = can explain with notes, or 2 = can demonstrate with a clear example. This is a self-assessment, not a certification or hiring prediction.

01. Safety and scope Score: ___ / 2

I can explain when to stop, obtain authorization and escalate instead of improvising.

02. Asset identification Score: ___ / 2

I can verify site, rack, unit, asset tag and ticket before touching equipment.

03. Hardware vocabulary Score: ___ / 2

I can distinguish power supply, drive, memory, NIC, BMC and management access.

04. Power awareness Score: ___ / 2

I can describe a redundant power path without assuming two cables prove independence.

05. Network layers Score: ___ / 2

I can separate physical link, addressing, name resolution and application symptoms.

06. Fiber handling Score: ___ / 2

I can explain connector cleanliness, compatibility, polarity and laser-safety limits.

07. Environmental evidence Score: ___ / 2

I can record an alert, timestamp, location and trend without changing setpoints.

08. Troubleshooting Score: ___ / 2

I can choose one low-risk test and say what each outcome would mean.

09. Change control Score: ___ / 2

I can check approval, procedure, rollback conditions and ownership before a change.

10. Ticket quality Score: ___ / 2

I can write observations, actions, results and next owner without guessing the cause.

11. Handover Score: ___ / 2

I can summarize impact, open risk, pending action and the next update time.

12. Interview evidence Score: ___ / 2

I can describe a real lab or work example without presenting simulated work as employment.

Total: ___ / 24. Choose the three lowest-scoring areas. Do not use a high total to skip safety training or role-specific authorization.

Your seven-day practice plan

Aim for 20-30 minutes a day. Use paper exercises, your own lab or an authorized training environment; these tasks do not require production-system access.

Day	Task	Evidence
1	Choose one target role. Mark the checklist and save one job description.	Three skill gaps
2	Draw a server and its network, management and power connections on paper.	Labeled diagram
3	Sort five symptoms into physical, addressing, DNS or application categories.	Reasoning notes
4	Complete the paper troubleshooting exercise on page 4.	One evidence-led ticket
5	Answer the five diagnostic questions on page 3 without notes.	Answers plus corrections
6	Explain a lab example in two minutes using scope, evidence, action and result.	Recorded or written answer
7	Repeat the checklist and plan the next week around unresolved gaps.	Updated plan

Choose your next three actions

1. My first gap: _____
2. My second gap: _____
3. My third gap: _____

A useful evidence standard

Save a diagram, a ticket, a test result and a short explanation. An honest, small portfolio is more useful than unsupported claims about tools you have never used.

Five diagnostic questions

Try the questions before reading the explanations. A good answer identifies both a useful next step and a limit to what the evidence proves.

1. A server has two power cords. Does that prove independent power feeds?

No. Confirm the documented power paths and intended redundancy with authorized staff. Cord count alone does not prove independence.

2. A hostname lookup fails but a service works using its IP address. What does this suggest?

Name resolution is worth investigating. It is a clue, not proof: check the hostname, configured resolver and the requested record before changing settings.

3. A replacement link is down. What should happen before reseating anything?

Confirm the correct asset and approved work, collect the existing link and device evidence, and follow the applicable procedure. Do not disturb an unrelated connection.

4. What makes a ticket update useful?

Time, affected asset, observed symptom, tests performed, actual results, current impact, next action and owner. Separate facts from hypotheses.

5. Can you call this checklist a professional certification?

No. It is a self-assessment and learning aid, with no accreditation or hiring guarantee.

Next free practice

Visit techloomix.com/data-center-interview-questions.html for more explained scenarios.

Paper exercise: write the handover

Scenario: At 09:05, a ticket reports an application unreachable on server DC-LAB-07. Monitoring shows its data port down. Its management interface remains reachable. A patch was changed at 08:58. No physical work has been authorized yet.

What you know vs. what you suspect

Known: application symptom, down data port, reachable management and a recent patch change.

Hypothesis: the patch path may be involved. Do not label the cable faulty without further evidence.

Field	Your entry
Scope and impact	
Evidence and timestamps	
Lowest-risk next check	
Required authorization	
Validation after approved action	
Next owner / next update	

Example opening update

09:12 - DC-LAB-07: data port reported down; management reachable. Reviewing the approved patch record and endpoint mapping. No cable changes made. Next: ask the network owner to verify the intended port and change scope. Root cause not confirmed.

Safety boundary and sources

Use site procedures and manufacturer instructions. Do not handle live power equipment or inspect optical connectors without the appropriate training, isolation and authorization. Never look into a fiber or optic.

References: Cisco, Inspection and Cleaning Procedures for Fiber-Optic Connections; Microsoft Learn, ping, ipconfig and nslookup command documentation. Full links are provided in the companion interview guide on TechLoomix.