OSCE checklist for airway management

An OSCE checklist for airway management starts with safety and help, then opens the airway with simple manoeuvres, adds adjuncts and oxygen, and calls for expert help early. This is our own practice list.

The checklist, step by step

1. Check the area is safe, put on gloves and call for help.
2. Check the response. Shout, shake gently and give a clear command.
3. Open the airway with a head tilt and chin lift. Use a jaw thrust if you suspect a neck injury.
4. Clear the mouth if you can see an obstruction, and use suction if it is available.
5. Look, listen and feel for breathing, and note noises such as snoring or gurgling. If breathing is absent or not normal, start CPR.
6. Insert an airway adjunct of the right size if the patient tolerates it, then reassess. A patient who gags needs a different plan.
7. Give oxygen, and use a bag and mask with a good seal, ideally with two people.
8. Reassess after each step, and say what you see.
9. Say that skilled help would consider a more advanced airway, and that capnography would confirm it.
10. Hand over clearly, and record what you did.

What candidates commonly forget

- Calling for help at the start.
- Using a jaw thrust if a neck injury is possible.
- Reassessing after every step.
- Getting a good mask seal.
- Speaking your findings aloud.

How to use this list

This is our own practice checklist. Exam bodies mark in their own way. Use it to build a routine, then say each step aloud as you do it. You can also practise with an AI patient on this site, and try one station free with no sign-up. For a general station frame, see the general OSCE checklist.

Common questions

What is the order for opening the airway?

Start with simple manoeuvres, then suction, then adjuncts and bag-mask ventilation, and call for skilled help early.

Which guidelines cover difficult airways?

The Difficult Airway Society publishes guidelines for difficult intubation, and Resuscitation Council UK covers airway care in resuscitation.

Is this a marking sheet?

No. It is our own list for practice.

Sources

- Resuscitation Council UK: Adult advanced life support guidelines 2025
- Difficult Airway Society: guidelines
- European Resuscitation Council: Guidelines 2025

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.