OSCE checklist for anthropometric measurements

An OSCE checklist for anthropometric measurements covers weight, length or height, head circumference, mid-upper arm circumference and BMI: check the equipment, position the person correctly, measure carefully, record and plot the result.

OSCE checklist for anthropometric measurements: steps to practise

1. Wash or rub your hands. Check the scales, length board and measuring tape are clean and working.
2. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent. For a child, involve the parent or carer.
3. Remove shoes, heavy clothing and any objects that change the reading.
4. Weigh the person on scales set to zero, standing or sitting still. Weigh a baby without clothes or a nappy on a baby scale, as your policy says.
5. Measure length lying down for babies and small children, and height standing for older children and adults. Follow your growth standard for the cut-off.
6. Keep the head straight, and the body and feet in the correct position, then read to the nearest unit your policy requires.
7. Measure head circumference at the widest part of the head, with the tape level and snug.
8. Measure mid-upper arm circumference at the midpoint of the upper arm, if required.
9. Work out BMI if required, and compare with the right chart for age and sex.
10. Plot the values on a growth chart or record them, and explain the findings to the patient or parent.

What candidates commonly forget

- Zeroing the scale.
- Right position and clothing for each measure.

- Using the right chart for age and sex.
- Taking the measure twice if unsure.
- Explaining the result in plain words.

Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy. Cut-offs for lying or standing measurement, charts and units depend on the country and age group. Use the growth standard in your course. You can practise with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. See also the general OSCE nursing checklist.

Common questions

Which anthropometric measurements are in an OSCE?

Usually weight, height or length, head circumference, mid-upper arm circumference and BMI. Check your course list.

Why zero the scale?

A scale that does not read zero gives every result a built-in error.

Which growth chart do I use?

Use the one your service or course specifies, matching age and sex.

Sources

- WHO child growth standards
- NHS: BMI calculator

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