OSCE checklist for bandaging

An OSCE checklist for bandaging covers assessing the limb and skin, choosing the right bandage, applying it with even tension from the far end towards the body, and checking circulation afterwards. Compression bandaging for ulcers needs extra training, so say so.

OSCE checklist for bandaging: steps to practise

1. Check the order or plan, the reason for the bandage and the type needed.
2. Wash or rub your hands. Gather the bandage, padding, tape or clips.
3. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent.
4. Check the skin, any wound, pain, swelling and circulation: colour, warmth, movement and sensation.
5. Position the limb comfortably and support it.
6. Pad bony areas where needed.
7. Start at the far end and work towards the body, with even tension and an even overlap.
8. Keep fingers or toes visible so you can check them.
9. Secure the end with tape or a clip.
10. Recheck circulation, sensation and comfort straight away, and again later, because limbs can swell.
11. Explain what to report, such as numbness, tingling, colour change, swelling or pain, and record.

What candidates commonly forget

- Checking circulation before and after.
- Padding bony points.
- Tension that is even, not too tight.
- Leaving the end of the limb visible.
- Knowing that compression bandaging for leg ulcers needs assessment first.

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. Bandage types, layers, overlap and tension rules depend on the purpose and your local training. Follow your policy and ask before using compression. 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 direction do I bandage?

Usually from the far end of the limb towards the body, so that you do not trap fluid. Follow your course.

How tight should a bandage be?

Firm and even, not tight enough to cause pain, numbness or colour change. Check straight after applying.

Can I apply compression bandaging in an OSCE?

Only if your course says so. It needs a proper assessment of the limb first.

Sources

- St John Ambulance: how to put on a bandage
- NHS: Leg ulcer, diagnosis and why arteries are checked before compression
- NHS: Leg ulcer, treatment
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw NHS: pathway for safe soft lower leg bandaging

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