OSCE checklist for bed making

An OSCE checklist for bed making covers hand hygiene, handling linen safely, a smooth tight bottom sheet, neat corners, comfort and safety in the finished bed. Practise both an empty and an occupied bed.

OSCE checklist for bed making: steps to practise

1. Check the patient's condition and whether the bed is empty or occupied. Explain and gain consent if the patient is in it.
2. Wash or rub your hands, put on an apron, and bring the clean linen on a clean trolley.
3. Do not put used or clean linen on the floor.
4. Put the bed at a safe working height and make sure the brakes are on.
5. Remove the top linen and place it straight in the linen bag. If occupied, turn the patient with care and keep them covered.
6. Roll the bottom sheet towards the centre, and place and tuck the clean bottom sheet, tight and smooth.
7. Add any draw sheet or protective sheet if needed.
8. Replace the top sheet and covers loosely over the feet, with neat corners.
9. Change the pillow cases, and place the pillows so the patient can be comfortable.
10. Return the bed to the lowest safe height, put the call bell and belongings in reach and set side rails as the risk assessment says.
11. Dispose of linen and aprons, wash your hands and document if needed.

What candidates commonly forget

- Not shaking linen, which spreads dust and germs.
- No creases under the patient.
- Safe bed height and brakes.
- Call bell within reach.

- Rail use according to risk assessment, not by habit.

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. Corner folds, which sheets you use and linen disposal depend on the ward and country. Use your local method. 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

Why not shake linen when making a bed?

It spreads dust and microbes. Roll or fold used linen inward and place it straight into the linen bag.

How do I avoid pressure damage?

Keep the bottom sheet smooth and free of creases and crumbs, and check the skin when you turn the patient.

What is different with an occupied bed?

You change one side at a time and keep the patient covered, warm and safe while you turn them.

Sources

- NICE CG179: Pressure ulcers
- National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (Scotland), chapter 1: standard precautions
- NHS National Services Scotland: linen guidance

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