OSCE checklist for blood transfusion

An OSCE checklist for blood transfusion is mostly about identification: the right patient, the right blood and the right paperwork, followed by careful observation and a clear plan for a reaction. Practise saying every check aloud.

OSCE checklist for blood transfusion: steps to practise

1. Confirm the prescription or authorisation and that consent is recorded.
2. Take baseline observations and record them before the blood arrives.
3. Check the patient has a working cannula and their identity band on.
4. Collect the blood only when ready to start, and check it against the local storage and timing rule.
5. At the bedside, ask the patient to state their name and date of birth if they can, and check these against the band and the blood pack, with a second checker if your policy requires one.
6. Check the blood group, unit number, expiry and look at the bag for leaks, clots or colour change.
7. Wash or rub your hands. Connect the right giving set and start at the rate stated.
8. Stay with the patient at the start, and repeat observations at the points your policy requires.
9. Tell the patient to report shivering, itching, breathlessness, back pain or any new feeling.
10. If there is a reaction, stop the transfusion, keep the cannula in place and call for help. Do not discard the pack.
11. Record the start and end times, volume given, observations and the identity checks.

What candidates commonly forget

- Saying the identification check aloud with every identifier.
- Baseline observations before starting.
- Checking the bag for damage and expiry.
- Staying with the patient at the start.
- Knowing to stop, keep the pack and escalate if a reaction happens.

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. Timing rules, observation points and who does the second check differ by country and hospital. Use the one in your course or local policy. 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

What is the most important check before a transfusion?

Positive identification at the bedside: the patient states their name and date of birth where able, and you check these against the band and the blood pack. Follow your policy for who performs the check.

What should I do if a patient has a reaction?

Stop the transfusion, keep the cannula in place, call for help and keep the pack. Then follow your local procedure.

Do I need consent for a transfusion?

Yes, and it should be recorded, unless an emergency rule applies. Follow your local law and policy.

Sources

- NICE NG24: Blood transfusion
- British Society for Haematology: administration of blood components
- NHS: Blood transfusion
- SHOT: transfusion aide memoire

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