OSCE depression checklist

An OSCE depression checklist asks about mood and interest, then sleep, appetite, energy and concentration, then risk and support, and ends with a plan. This is our own practice list.

The checklist, step by step

1. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent. Use a calm, unhurried tone.
2. Ask an open question about how the patient has been feeling.
3. Ask about low mood and loss of interest, and how long these have lasted.
4. Ask about sleep, appetite, weight, energy, concentration, and feelings of guilt or worthlessness.
5. Ask directly about thoughts of self-harm or suicide, and about plans.
6. Ask about any past episodes, any high or restless periods, and any family history.
7. Ask about alcohol and drugs, medicines, and any physical illness.
8. Ask about work, relationships, money and who supports the patient.
9. Ask about ideas, worries and what the patient hopes for.
10. Summarise and name the problem in plain words.
11. Explain the options, the safety net, and the follow-up.

What candidates commonly forget

- Asking about suicide directly.
- Asking about high moods, to separate bipolar illness.
- Asking about alcohol and physical causes.
- Naming the problem back to the patient.
- Giving a clear safety net.

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 original examination stations, see the PLAB 2 stations list.

Common questions

How is depression assessed in practice?

By history and by asking about the symptoms. The NHS page on depression symptoms lists them, and NICE sets out how to assess and treat it.

Do I need to name a score?

Only if the task asks. Know the common questionnaires, but your exam will say what is expected.

Is this a marking sheet?

No. It is our own list for practice.

Sources

- NICE: Depression in adults (NG222)
- NICE: Self-harm, assessment and management (NG225)
- NHS: Symptoms of depression in adults

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