OSCE checklist for fundal height measurement

An OSCE checklist for fundal height measurement covers explaining the task, positioning the woman, finding the top of the uterus, measuring in centimetres between the fundus and the symphysis pubis, plotting the result and acting if it is small or large for the dates.

OSCE checklist for fundal height measurement: steps to practise

1. Wash your hands, introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain what you will do and obtain consent.
2. Ask the woman to empty her bladder and lie semi-reclined, not flat, with her abdomen exposed, her legs straight or slightly bent as your policy says, and privacy.
3. Gently feel the abdomen with both hands to find the top of the uterus, called the fundus.
4. Use a non-stretchable tape measure with the numbers facing down so you are not influenced by them.
5. Hold the tape at the top of the fundus and measure along the long axis of the uterus to the top of the symphysis pubis.
6. Turn the tape over, read the measurement in centimetres and note the gestational age.
7. Compare the measurement with the gestation and with earlier measurements, using the method your unit uses.
8. Plot the measurement on the growth chart your unit uses.
9. If a single measurement is below the expected range, or growth is slow or static over time, or it is much larger than expected, tell the midwife or doctor, who may arrange a scan.
10. Wash your hands, explain the result to the woman and record the measurement.

What candidates commonly forget

- Not emptying the bladder
- Using a stretchy tape

- Looking at the numbers while measuring
- Not plotting on a chart or comparing with earlier measurements
- Not reporting a measurement that does not match the dates

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.

Practise the hands-on steps with a classmate or in a skills lab, because an AI patient cannot watch your technique. You can practise the talking part with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. Next, try Midwifery: Routine antenatal appointment at 34 weeks. Back to the OBG nursing OSCE page: OBG nursing OSCE, or see the full OSCE checklist list.

Common questions

What is the OSCE checklist for fundal height?

Explain and get consent, empty the bladder, position, find the fundus, measure from the fundus to the symphysis pubis in centimetres with the numbers facing down, compare with gestation, plot and report.

Why measure with the numbers facing down?

So that your reading is not influenced by what you expect to see.

What does a small measurement mean?

It may mean the baby is small or not growing well, or that the dates are wrong. It needs review by a midwife or doctor, often with a scan.

Sources

- NICE NG201: antenatal care
- NMC: standards of proficiency for registered nurses

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