OSCE checklist for neurological examination

An OSCE checklist for neurological examination is usually built around a limb: inspection, tone, power, reflexes, coordination, sensation and gait. This is our own practice list.

The checklist, step by step

1. Wash your hands, introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent. Ask about pain, and about weakness or numbness.
2. Expose the limbs and ask the patient to stand or sit comfortably.
3. Look at posture, wasting, twitching, tremor, scars and skin. Compare both sides.
4. Test tone by moving each joint passively, and say what you feel.
5. Test power in the main muscle groups against your resistance and compare sides.
6. Test reflexes with the hammer and compare sides. In the legs, test the plantar response.
7. Test coordination: finger to nose in the arms, heel to shin in the legs.
8. Test sensation: light touch, pinprick and vibration or joint position, always with the eyes closed and comparing sides.
9. Watch the patient walk, then turn and walk back. Test heel and toe walking if safe.
10. Say that you would also examine the cranial nerves, the spine and the vessels, and check the back for pain.
11. Cover the patient, thank them, wash your hands and summarise your findings.

What candidates commonly forget

- Comparing left with right every time.
- Testing sensation with the eyes closed.
- Asking about pain before you move a limb.
- Watching gait, not only the bed examination.

- Giving a pattern, such as upper motor neurone or lower motor neurone, rather than a list of signs.

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 many parts are in a neurological examination?

Many courses use inspection, tone, power, reflexes, coordination and sensation, then gait. Learn the sequence your own course teaches.

When is the patient's face part of a neurological examination?

In a full neurological examination you check the cranial nerves too. Our cranial nerve checklist has a practice order.

Is this the examiner's marking sheet?

No. It is our own practice list.

Sources

- NICE: Stroke and TIA in over 16s (NG128)
- NICE: Parkinson's disease in adults (NG71)
- NHS: Parkinson's disease

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