OSCE checklist for oxygen administration

An OSCE checklist for oxygen administration treats oxygen as a drug: check the prescription or target, choose the device, start, monitor the saturation and reassess. Practise saying what you would do if the patient is not improving.

OSCE checklist for oxygen administration: steps to practise

1. Check the prescription or target range for this patient. If it is an emergency, say who authorises oxygen under your policy.
2. Wash or rub your hands. Check the oxygen supply, flow meter and the device are ready.
3. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, explain and gain consent.
4. Ask about breathing difficulty, chest pain and any long-term lung disease, because the safe target may differ.
5. Position the patient upright if possible, and measure baseline saturation, without delaying oxygen in an emergency.
6. Choose the device and flow rate that match the order, and fit it comfortably.
7. Start the oxygen, and check the equipment is connected and flowing.
8. Measure oxygen saturation again, with respiratory rate, pulse and level of consciousness.
9. Reassess after the change and adjust only within the prescription.
10. Say what you would do if the patient is unwell or the target is not met: call for senior help.
11. Record the device, flow, saturation and time. Keep the area free from flames and smoking.

What candidates commonly forget

- The target range and who sets it.
- Checking the patient's lung history.
- Monitoring the patient after changing flow.
- Safety: no smoking or naked flames.
- Skin and ear care under the tubing.

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. Target ranges and device names vary by country and guideline. Use the version your course teaches. 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

Do I need a prescription for oxygen?

In most settings yes, though emergencies may have a different rule. Follow your local policy.

What do I monitor on oxygen?

Oxygen saturation, breathing rate, pulse and alertness, plus how the patient feels.

Why ask about lung disease?

Some patients with chronic lung disease need a lower target. The prescriber sets it.

Sources

- British Thoracic Society: emergency oxygen guideline

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