

NMC Test of Competence Preparation

The OSCE is designed to assess your ability to competently apply your professional nursing associate skills and knowledge in the UK. It is set at the level expected of nursing associates as they enter the profession (at the point of registration). This means you must show that you are capable of applying knowledge to the care of patients at the level expected of a newly registered nursing associate.

The examination tests your ability to apply knowledge to the care of patients rather than how well you can remember and recite facts. All of the test scenarios and any questions relate to current best practice and you should answer them in relation to published evidence and not according to local arrangements.

Assessment criteria

The OSCE is made up of various stations with additional preparation time.

Typical skills that will be tested either on their own or within a nursing associate scenario include:

- vital signs
- calculating drug dosages
- intramuscular and subcutaneous injections
- in hospital resuscitation (adult, child, baby)
- safe disposal of sharps
- medication administration
- peak flows
- wound care
- catheter care
- hand hygiene

Communication skills

Communication is central to nursing associate practice and will always be assessed during the OSCE's.

We assess the full range of communication skills (verbal, nonverbal and written) by observing the interaction between the candidate and a simulated patient (this may be an actor or a nursing manikin) and also by assessing your nursing associate documentation.

The examiner will assess your approach to the simulated patient all through the examination, and they will award marks for communication skills such as:

- clearly explaining a range of common conditions including anxiety, diabetes and skin problems etc.
- communicating with relatives and health care professionals and obtaining informed consent
- active listening
- dealing appropriately with an anxious patient or relatives
- share information and check understanding on lifestyle, health promotion or risk factors
- demonstrating compassion and care during communication
- clear documentation which meets current NMC guidelines
- professional behaviour

You should speak to the simulated patient as you would any patient you are meeting for the first time. If you are being assessed using a nursing manikin please remember to verbalise your actions and reasons for them in the same way that you would with a real patient.

Approach to the patient

- introduce yourself and explain or clarify the purpose of the nursing associate encounter
- check what the patient wants you to call them
- be polite, respectful, non-judgemental and maintain the patient's dignity
- be empathetic and acknowledge the patient's emotions or concerns and show sensitivity to any discomfort
- be sensitive to personal space – sit at an appropriate distance from the actor and be aware of their body language. If you move too close and the role player moves back, you are too close
- treat a nursing manikin as you would a real patient.

Explaining and advising

- establish what the patient already knows and wants to know
- explain clearly what you are going to do and why, so the patient can understand
- remember to always check if the patient has any questions
- offer appropriate reassurance
- do not alarm the patient but you must be able to explain the need for urgent action if it is required
- always check the patient has understood

- do not routinely over-simplify names for parts of the body. It is reasonable to expect most people will know common body name such as 'bladder', 'ovary', 'womb' and 'vein'. If you doubt a patient's understanding, check and alter your approach to meet the patient's individual needs. This is an important skill.
- treat a nursing manikin as you would a real patient

Involving patient in management

- respect patient autonomy. This includes competent explaining skills as above
- explain information and its implications so the patient can make an informed choice about any nursing associate actions
- check the patient's understanding and feelings about the proposed nursing associate interventions.
- treat a nursing manikin as you would a real patient