

# risr/assess

## case study

THE COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
OF CANADA



LE COLLÈGE DES  
MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE  
DU CANADA

**Industry:**

Medical education and training

**Location:**

Canada

**Size:**

42,000 members

## about the CFPC:

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), a voluntary membership-based organization, establishes the standards for and accredits postgraduate family medicine training in Canada's 17 medical schools. Representing more than 42,000 members, it reviews and certifies continuing professional development programs and materials that enable family physicians to meet certification and licensing requirements.

The CFPC provides high-quality services, supports family medicine teaching and research, and advocates on behalf of the specialty of family medicine, family physicians, and the patients they serve.

### the background:

The CFPC delivers a vital service overseeing and awarding certification in family medicine to medical professionals in Canada. For over 50 years the CFPC has administered a national certification examination and, as part of the examination, successfully run Simulated Office Orals (SOOs also know as OSCEs) twice a year for the past 35 years; candidate numbers are now in the 1800 - 2000 range annually. With the exams running in French and English, and managed across 17 examination centers, this is a huge administrative undertaking.

Digitalization was an option, however there was a difficult history within Canadian institutions due to a series of unsuccessful trials within the region that had led to the cancellation of a selection of online exams. This created an understandable level of skepticism and without an instigating factor, the perceived potential risks outweighed the rewards for high-stakes exams.

### the challenge:

The emergence of Covid-19 in March 2020 triggered the need for change. Initially, the college made the necessary decision to make the certification judgements based on the written component of the examination alone, suspending the SOOs for 2020 and 2021.

This allowed time for the thorough investigation of a longer term solution to support the running of SOOs digitally, this solution needed to replicate the standards expected by their own organization, the licensing regulatory bodies, and provide convenience to the end users. Short term they needed to make the exams pandemic resistant.

## the solution:

The CFPC knew an 'out of the box' solution wouldn't work for them, the exams were unique, the volume of candidates large and the stakes were high, they needed a specialist system and partner.

As the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) had recently pivoted their written exams to online, the CFPC reached out for guidance and the RCPSC recommended **risr/assess** System.

After a thorough request for proposal process, **risr/** once identified as the vendor of choice, and the CFPC formed a true partnership from the beginning, the relationship focused on collaboration and mutual respect as a foundation. This allowed the teams the freedom to challenge each other and ask the 'hard' questions to allow all sides to fully explore new ideas and problem solve. **risr/** defined best practice and respectfully worked to spec, whilst questioning and asking questions to support the rationale and ensure the best decisions were being made for the right reasons. The CFPC team learned this was not about administering the exam the same way as before, but just with everyone using their own computer; it required fundamental change and business processes were examined and rebuilt.

The CFPC knew that their success, was **risr/** success and they would always be supported.

*"The team worked hard to ensure our needs were identified and met - from negotiated platform enhancements deemed essential by both sides, finding new ways of proctoring our exam, to participating closely with our exam team and our change management processes, I felt they prioritized the quality of their work ahead of the number of hours we had contracted to pay for."*

Brent Kvern, Associate Professor, College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)

## the process:

Having over 22 years of experience in providing assessment solutions within the medical sector, **risr/** has developed standardized delivery methodology and frameworks to ensure successful outcomes for all customers. This incorporates the 'soft-side' of any digital transformation such as stakeholder/candidate management and cultural changes. Working with the CFPC's team and stakeholders, the dual team was able to tailor the process to ensure maximum engagement and de-risk the project.

**The methodology includes the following phases.**

- 1) Scoping and analysis:** The CFPC and **risr/** coordinated a single site examination-delivery command centre (during the pandemic), building the skill sets of the individuals who would ultimately be running the exams and ensuring a pattern of communications that would support this growth. Through a series of exam fit exercises and analysis of the needs of the assessors and end users, the scope of the project was defined. This included the introduction of several enhanced features which shaped phase two of the project. The scope also included the introduction of TeamCO to support the proctoring services.
- 2) Enhanced service offering:** The teams collaborated to identify features key to successful SOO delivery. This included:
  - An electronic marking system.
  - Analyzing approaches to scheduling and avoiding examiner / candidate conflicts of interest
  - The creation of ID checking and proctoring through the exam processes.
  - The facilitation of 'observer functionality' to allow spot checks to be conducted at unscheduled times as a consistency check.
  - A new bilingual chat functionality system, facilitating a dialogue between end users/ candidates, examiners and the **risr/** team to allow issues to be triaged.
  - The addition of note taking functionality for candidates, to remove the need for notepads and minimize the risk of shared information.
  - A new waiting room function at the beginning of the examination to facilitate logging in and appropriate exam starts
  - Adding an option to record encounters.

**3) Training:** After the development of the new features the teams conducted training in a bespoke sandbox environment, tailored to the needs of the individual user. **risr/** hosted weekly sessions to ensure changes to the platform worked, feedback from the CFPC exam team was obtained and **risr/** provided guidance to help gradually increase CFPC's practical skills and knowledge whilst having plenty of interactive time to ask questions.

**4) Configuration:** The **risr/** team supported the high-level set up and then integrated configuration into the on-going training to empower the users to be confident for future development.

**5) Go live:** Prior to the 'go live' stage, pilots and user acceptance testing was conducted, and the feedback incorporated into the design and configuration of the system. Close contact was maintained throughout to resolve any user queries and provide support.

**6) Ongoing support:** The teams maintain regular scheduled contact as well as reactive support as issues arise.

## the results:

The Autumn SOO delivery was a huge success. 50 examiners plus SOO leads as observers and proctors assessed 72 candidates, to ensure the exam delivery was fair and equitable. Additionally **risr/** supported the CFPC "command centre", supporting candidates and examiners through any technical issues, ensuring all 72 candidates completed their assessments in full.

The overall feedback was extremely positive. The students appreciated the constructive change and benefited from a reduction in hotel and travel costs, and the knowledge that their carbon footprint was reduced. For examiners, the electronic marking was an enormous step forward.

Ultimately for the college, the SOOs were once again an integral part in their assessment process, whilst their administrative and scheduling burden was eased.

The pilot was so successful that in the spring of 2022 the college are confidently delivering the assessments to 1600 candidates, with the dedicated **risr/** team on hand to support where needed.

*The **risr/** unified platform consists of three configurable modules focusing on assessment preparation, delivery and analysis. Available as standalone products, or any combination of the three, the modules use the latest technological innovations to cater to all areas of assessment.*

## **risr/apply**

Simplifies all of your scheduling, booking and payment administration for exams and courses. It helps you to manage the candidate application process alongside the recruitment of examiners, ready for scheduling into your assessment platform.

## **risr/assess**

Helps you prepare and administer exams whether they are written or digital, offline or online. Examiners save hours of time with our complete exam management system and automated MMIs, OSCEs and online exams.

## **risr/advance**

Makes it easy for you to collect, store and present all your candidate assessment evidence in one place. You can track progress and give your candidates the insight they need to direct their learning journey.