



## Case Study

# Delivering large-scale testing with Surpass – with CPA Canada



This case study explores how the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada, and its provincial partners (collectively 'CPA Canada') operates, some of the challenges it faces and how Surpass flexibility and security enables it to provide large single-day testing events across Canada.

Discover:

- How Surpass was able to deliver large-scale single day events for CPA Canada
- The Surpass security and flexibility that could be the perfect solution to any organisation wanting to deliver large single-day testing events
- The flexibility with Surpass to turn any large venue into a test center
- The benefits of using SecureClient for high-stakes exams

## About CPA Canada

CPA Canada is a Canadian national accounting examination board that was established in January 2013 following a merger between the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA), the Certified General Accountants of Canada (CGA Canada) and the Society of Management Accountants of Canada (CMA Canada). With more than 220,000 members, CPA Canada is one of the largest national accounting bodies in the world.

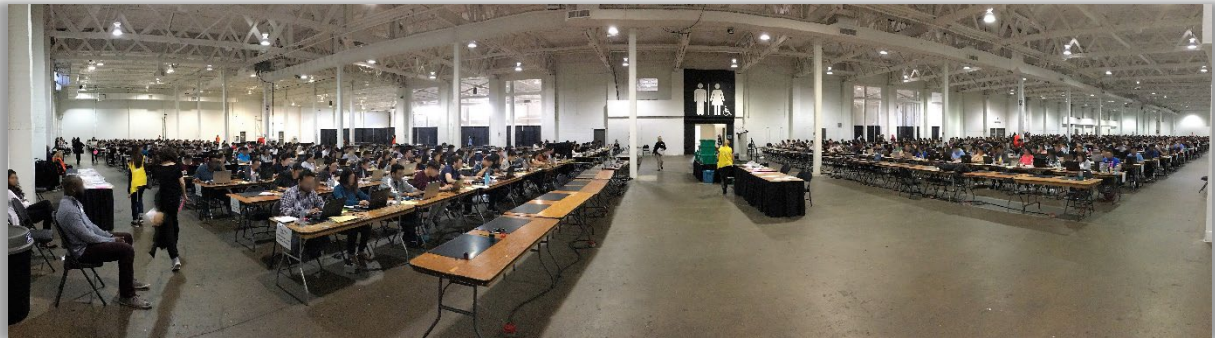


## Aims and key challenges

CPA Canada has delivered tens of thousands of exams across Canada. When examinations were suspended during the pandemic, CPA delivered examinations to thousands of students via rented hotel rooms and computers, with live proctors monitoring these rooms.

CPA Canada needed to find a technology partner who could help them continue to provide their large-scale, single-venue testing. A typical exam sitting for CPA Canada exams in Toronto, Ontario, sees almost 1,500 students tested concurrently at an individual location. In order to cater for such a large number of candidates, established test centers were not an option and CPA Canada had to rely on large venues such as exhibition centers that could be repurposed.

CPA Canada, with its provincial partners, typically hired a venue, then set up computers and internet to create a test center and provided backup devices with the availability to connect to the internet via different methods in preparation for any network issues.



## The method

CPA Canada uses Surpass to deliver three key exams:

- The preparatory programme (PREP) which is a university equivalent program with 14 different modules. These 14 different ends-of-module exams are run four times a year.
- The professional education program (PEP) which is a graduate-level program.
- The common final examination (CFE) which is the last step before becoming a Chartered Professional Accountant in Canada.



For preparatory course examinations, PEP examinations, and the CFE, all CPA students/candidates received profession supplied laptops at the examination writing centers to write their exams. These laptops were pre-loaded with Surpass (SecureClient) software.

The Surpass SecureClient application locked down computers so that no other programs or files could be accessed during an examination. The application automatically uploaded all responses into the Test Administration system within Surpass.

Working alongside Surpass Assessment for its end-to-end assessment platform (Surpass), CPA Canada administered exams through the provision of appropriately sized venues, along with quality

rental laptops and suitable Wi-Fi connectivity to create pop-up style test centers across the breadth of Canada.

## The solution

- Surpass enabled CPA Canada to turn any large venue into a test center.
- Some venues were large-scale, the largest single venue in Toronto, Ontario accommodating almost 1,500 candidates. The biggest exam administered can be seen at the Common Final Exam (CFE) which is typically delivered in September over three days, where over 18,000 exams are delivered, representing over 6,000 concurrently on each day.

Through the combination of security, a locked-down browser, and the flexibility to deliver anywhere, the Surpass platform enabled CPA Canada to deliver these large-scale exams and effectively turn any venue into a pop-up test center. CPA Canada also took the decision to integrate their existing marking software with Surpass, utilising the Surpass APIs and allowing them to fully focus on the item banking and delivery aspects of the project.

As a bi-lingual country, it was also important that tests could be delivered and administered in multiple languages, so support for French-Canadian was introduced alongside the many other language options already available in Surpass.

Read more about CPA Canada's exams here:

[CPA examination software | CPA Canada](#)

## Results

*By using the Surpass platform, CPA Canada have been able to successfully scale up their operation and deliver at its peak more than 50,000 exams to aspiring accountants each year. "The software was MUCH easier to write the exam. Having nice functionality made it much easier to format responses, and the formulas work flawlessly. I feel like it took me way less time to answer questions, making for an overall better experience..."*

**CPA Canada Candidate**

Surpass' extensive experience in this area has proven invaluable in working to transition CPA Canada to the Surpass Platform, improving the candidate experience and making the process more efficient without compromising on security.

The Surpass SecureClient ensured a fair and secure examination process for these accountancy candidates and allowed candidates to display their knowledge and express their competency to become a Canadian Chartered Professional Accountant.

**Learn more and get in touch at [www.surpass.com](http://www.surpass.com)**