

Hello everybody!

I'm Kelly Kennedy and I'm Robert Johnson. We're both Senior Quality Review Specialists with Compensation Service Quality Assurance.

We'll be introducing you to a Practicum designed especially for RVSRs. We'll talk about the purpose and provide a demonstration on how to review the case and navigate the Practicum system to record your rating decision.

First, we want to cover the purpose of the Practicums.

In partnership with the Office of Field Operations, we've created Practicums to mirror a case that has been marked as ready for decision, or RFD, and you'll be reviewing the case, determining which disabilities to rate, and recording your rating decision on the case by answering a series of questions.

The purpose is to comply with a law that requires VA to make sure rating decisions on specific disabilities reach the same outcome no matter where the decision was made. So, a rating decision on an identical claim for a disability made at the New York Regional Office should match a rating decision for the same claim made at the San Diego Regional Office.

When you begin this Practicum, it will be as if you received a claim marked RFD. You'll review the case, determine what disability or disabilities need to be addressed, and then answer a series of questions for one disability at a time to record your rating decision on it.

Now, we'll provide a brief demonstration.

We're going to walk you through how to complete the Practicum and navigate the system, so you're familiar with how it works.

Once you select the link from TMS, you'll be taken to this screen. This Practicum is designed only for RVSRs and the Edge web browser must be used to log into TMS. The end product and the date of claim for the claim you will be reviewing are shown here as well. Take note also of the information on how to complete the Demographic screen. [Select Continue.](#)

On this screen you'll enter your first and last name and select Compensation for Your Business Line. Note that this field might be labeled Service or Your Service/Business Line instead of Your Business Line – either way, select Compensation from the drop-down options. Then select your office location – *for example, select Nashville, if your office is VA Regional Office number 320 in Nashville, Tennessee.* **Select Submit.**

When you take the Practicum, please take a moment to read these instructions. The EP and date of claim are shown here again.

The light blue Resources Button has a link to these instructions, in case you need to refer back to them later as you continue through the Practicum. The Resources Button also contains links to Part 3, Part 4, and the Evaluation Builder – please use these if needed to help you make your rating decision on the RFD case.

The Case Button in the upper left corner will open the case that has been marked ready for decision. You'll need to review it and determine which disabilities you need to rate.

Please pause on this screen before selecting 'Continue,' open the RFD Case, review it, and decide what disability or disabilities you need to rate. So, now let's see what the case will look like.

This is how the RFD case will appear when you select the case button. Make sure to read the Assumptions document, as it provides important information that will assist you in completing the Practicum.

In particular, take note of the fact that the case may not contain the full range of documents you would expect to see for actions that were taken prior to the current claim you are reviewing. The Practicum cases are streamlined and typically include only those historical documents that are pertinent to a review of the current claim. Additionally, note that all signatures on documents in the RFD case should be considered proper and acceptable for VA purposes.

The documents are in one, long string, with the most recent documents on top and the oldest documents at the bottom. You can use the Table of Contents feature to display a list of the documents in the case.

The Table of Contents can be found by clicking the fly-out menu in the top-left corner of the screen, then selecting the arrow to expand the list. You can then use the bookmarks on the left-hand column to go to the document you want to view.

You have the ability to adjust the size of the documents to the way you prefer to view them. To do this, use the “Fit to width/Fit to page” button and the “+” and “–” buttons. Or, if you choose, you may set the view to two pages at a time.

As you review the case, take note of what disabilities you need to address for the RFD claim and what your decision is on each disability.

When you are finished reviewing the case, select X in upper right corner to close the case. You may also leave the case open while you enter your rating decision via the Practicum assessment questions.

And now Robert will demonstrate how to navigate the Practicum assessment.

Thanks Kelly. I'll share my screen now. So, after you review the case, you are still here on the Instructions screen. Selecting 'Continue' certifies that you've viewed the demo video and read the instructions on this screen. Once you are ready to make your rating decision on the RFD case you just reviewed, then **select Continue**. Remember, you can access these Practicum Instructions from the Resources Button if you need to refer to them again as you move through the Practicum.

Now, you're actually in the Practicum System that captures your rating decision. These are the questions that you will be asked about your rating decision for one disability at a time. Please notice that you can still access the case and the Resources on each screen in the upper left corner.

Let's say you decided the first disability to address is Acne. Select the radio button next to **Acne** and then **select Submit**. The Submit button at the top and bottom are the same.

This is the next question asking you about your rating decision on the disability that you selected to adjudicate based on your review of the RFD case. This has all the possible types of rating decisions you can make on the case, but you'll have to determine which decision applies for each issue you're addressing based on your review of the case.

Notice at the top that the disability you selected, Acne, is displayed reminding you that is the disability you are rating.

After your review of the RFD case, you determined the first disability to decide is Acne. This question is asking what decision do you want to make on this disability? Grant, increase, confirm and continue, deny, or defer.

Notice the last radio button – *No adjudicative decision is necessary* – select this if you realize you made a mistake and did not mean to select Acne. Selecting this will allow you to go back and select a different disability to decide. So, you've decided that the disability of Acne is not the correct one to make a rating decision on based on the review of the RFD case. So, you'll **SELECT NO ADJUDICATIVE DECISION IS NECESSARY** and then **select Submit**.

If you answer No here, you'll be taken to the end of the Practicum without having made any rating decision so be careful. You'll answer Yes to start over and select a different disability to decide. **SELECT YES** and then **select Submit**.

Now you're back at the beginning. Let's select Asthma as the first disability you want to address after reviewing the RFD case. **SELECT Asthma** and then **select submit**.

Again, this is the next question asking you about your rating decision on the disability that you selected to adjudicate.

Notice at the top that the disability selected, Asthma, is displayed reminding you that is the issue being rated.

So, after your review of the RFD case, you've decided the first disability to adjudicate is Asthma, and you've confirmed this is correct. This question is asking what decision do you want to make on this disability?

Your decision is to grant it, so select **Grant Service Connection** and then **select Submit**.

This is the next question asking you about your rating decision on the disability of Asthma that you selected to adjudicate. Again, notice Asthma is shown at the top reminding you what disability you are rating.

This is something you need to know. The questions that appear after you answer the decision question may differ depending on which decision you select for each disability. For example, if you select “Deny service connection” as your decision, you will not have an evaluation question to answer for that disability. Instead, the subsequent questions will specifically relate to the decision you made for that particular disability.

If you select *There is no evaluation necessary*, you’ll be taken to the end of the Practicum without having made any rating decision so please be careful. There will also be an option to start over from the beginning.

Instead, please notice the Back button in the top right corner area. The Back button at the top and bottom are the same. If you select it, you will be taken back to the previous screen asking what decision do you want to make on this disability – grant, increase, confirm, et cetera? And, on that previous screen, you can also select “No adjudicative decision is necessary” to start over to begin the Practicum again.

But, in this example, you’ve decided to grant service connection at 10 percent, so **select 10%** and then **select Submit**.

This is the next question asking you about your rating decision on the disability of Asthma that you selected to adjudicate. Notice Asthma is still shown at the top as a reminder.

Also notice there is a Back Button on this screen, too. If you select it, you will be taken back to the previous screen asking what evaluation do you want to assign?

You can manually type a date in the box or use the Calendar box. So, **input the date** and **select Submit**.

You have two options on this screen.

If you select No, that means you have no more disabilities to rate on the case you reviewed, and you'll be taken to the end of the Practicum.

If you select Yes, that means you have more disabilities to rate on the case you reviewed, and you will be taken to the first screen you saw that has the list of disabilities to select from.

The Practicum has captured your whole adjudicative decision on this issue. You've decided that the only disability in the RFD case was Asthma. In the previous questions, you have already identified Asthma as the disability to address, the adjudicative decision is to grant service connection, the evaluation to assign is 10%, and you selected the effective date of the grant.

In this example, **select No** and then **select Submit**.

On this screen, you can type any comments you have about the answers you provided or any comments on the Practicum in general. If you don't have any comments, you can leave the box blank.

After you select Submit, you'll receive an immediate Feedback report explaining the expected rating decision on the RFD case along with supporting references.

After reviewing the Feedback report, close the Practicum and return to the Content Structure screen in TMS to complete the Evaluation. You can provide additional comments in the Evaluation, too. Please note that you must complete the Evaluation in order to receive credit in TMS for completing the Practicum.

After completing the TMS Evaluation, simply close TMS because it takes several minutes for a green checkmark to appear showing the Evaluation was completed.

That brings us to the end of our demonstration, so we'll stop screen-sharing now and Robert will wrap things up for us.

We hope this explanation of the purpose and demonstration on how to navigate the rating decision questions helps you in completing today's Practicum.

When opening the Practicum, please take time to read the instructions and pause on that screen to review the RFD case and make your decision on what disabilities to address in your rating decision; one disability at a time.

Thank you for your time and participation, and good luck with the Practicum!