

## Configuring

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# External steps

RICOH ProcessDirector lets you add steps that run a program outside of RICOH ProcessDirector. The external program can do special job-processing tasks and it can run on the same computer that has the RICOH ProcessDirector base product installed. It can also run on a Linux system that has a RICOH ProcessDirector secondary server feature installed, or on a Windows system that has an application server installed on it.

Because the processing is external to the processing that the RICOH ProcessDirector-provided steps do, this type of processing is called an external step.

External steps can access files in the spool directory for the job. When RICOH ProcessDirector creates a job from an input file, it creates a unique spool directory. The spool directory contains a copy of the input file and other files that provide information about the job. External steps can call programs that update existing files in the spool directory and write new files to the directory.

The default spool directory for a job is `/aiw/aiw1/spool/default/JobNumber` (*JobNumber* is the spool ID that RICOH ProcessDirector assigns to the job).

On an application server, the spool directory is mounted on the drive that you chose when you installed the application server. The default is `Z:\aiw1\spool\default\JobNumber`.

You can also create additional spool directories. These spool directories have names in this format: `/aiw/aiw1/spool/SpoolName/JobNumber` (*SpoolName* is the subdirectory name that the authorized user defined).

The programs that the external steps call can also create child jobs. The spool directory contains a `/aiw/aiw1/spool/default/JobNumber/children` subdirectory or a `/aiw/aiw1/spool/SpoolName/JobNumber/children` directory that external program can use to write its child jobs and their associated files. After it detects the child jobs and files, RICOH ProcessDirector can continue to process them.

## In this section:

### [Setting up external programs](#)

Before you start the configuration tasks for an external step, you need to set up the external program that the external step calls.

### [Setting up step templates for external steps](#)

You create a step template that contains the command that calls the external program. Then, you tune the step template so that it will run on the Linux or Windows system on which the external program is installed.

### [Setting up workflows for external steps](#)

After you create a step template to call an external program and tune the step template to run on the server that the external program is installed on, you add a step that is based on the step template to a workflow. You then assign the workflow to an input device, or use another method to assign the workflow to specific jobs.

### [Testing external step processing](#)

After you set up step templates for external steps and add steps to workflows, configure the method of workflow assignment and run test jobs before you run any production jobs.

Parent topic: [Preparing to use workflows](#)