

# THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S STATISTICS REPORT ON THE SUPREME COURT FOR THE EASTER TERM OF 2025

## Supreme Court of Jamaica

### The Chief Justice's Easter Term Statistics Report for 2025

#### OVERALL QUANTITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS (EASTER TERM)

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Case clearance rate (%)	<b>83.05</b>	<b>75.02</b>	<b>74.19</b>
Hearing date certainty rate (%)	<b>82.79</b>	<b>79.64</b>	<b>79.76</b>
Case file integrity rate (%)	<b>97.07</b>	<b>97.70</b>	<b>97.92</b>
Average time to disposition of cases (years)	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.60</b>
Clearance rate on outstanding Judgments (%)	<b>73.48</b>	<b>75.98</b>	<b>69.18</b>

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## MESSAGE FOR EASTER TERM 2025 – SUPREME COURT

The Easter Term 2025 performance data provides an important opportunity to assess the progress of the Supreme Court in improving efficiency, managing caseloads, and addressing the longstanding issue of the backlog at the court. While there have been measurable gains, the statistics also highlight areas where targeted reform and sustained effort are required if we are to achieve equilibrium and long-term clearance of outstanding matters.

For the Easter Term, the Supreme Court recorded a weighted clearance rate of approximately 83.05%. This represents a modest improvement and establishes a new performance threshold on this metric. However, it remains below the level required to eliminate the backlog. It is important to note that this overall figure masks significant disparities among registries, with clearance rates ranging from a low of 41.10% in the Home Circuit Court to a high of 136% in the Commercial Division.

Notwithstanding these variations, this term marks the tenth consecutive term in which the Supreme Court has achieved a clearance rate exceeding 70%. While this consistency is noteworthy, it also signals that the Court has reached a plateau. Over approximately three years, there has been no appreciable movement beyond this level. For the Court to achieve equilibrium — where the number of cases disposed of equals the number of new filings — the clearance rate must reach at least 100%. To meaningfully reduce the backlog, the rate must be sustained at 115% to 120% over several years.

This plateau necessitates a closer examination of internal workflows, particularly within the civil registry. A comprehensive review will therefore be undertaken in the first quarter of 2026 to identify procedural bottlenecks and to develop improved workflow and work process solutions.

It is anticipated that this exercise will result in a more efficient mechanism for managing non-contested matters that can be addressed on paper. For example, applications for default judgments and the signing of orders already made, are taking longer than is desirable and will be prioritised during the reform process.

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In parallel, steps are being taken to implement a full docket system in 2026. Currently, a docket system is in place for personal injury claims filed in 2023 and 2024. The expectation is that all cases filed from 2025 onwards will be fully managed under the docket system, while preparations continue for the transition of older cases. This initiative will be supported by structural changes within the civil registry to better align staffing and processes with docket management.

The Ministry of Finance and the Public Service has been working closely with the Judiciary to facilitate the necessary reorganisation of the registry's support staff structure. Subject to the approval of the proposed framework, implementation is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2026.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the Commercial Division as the best performing division over the past year. The results reflect a remarkable turnaround, achieved largely through a shift in attitude, strengthened commitment, and deliberate improvements to workflow and work processes.

I wish to thank the judges, staff, and stakeholders for their continued efforts to enhance the productivity of the Supreme Court. The reforms underway are already yielding positive results, and their full impact is expected to be realised in the months ahead with full implementation.

**The Honourable Mr. Bryan Sykes, OJ, CD  
Chief Justice of Jamaica**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Jamaican judiciary is currently experiencing a watershed moment marked by significant changes in its overall performance. To date the most notable improvements have been seen in the parish courts, however the Supreme Court is also making steady progress in some key areas and as the strategies and policies that drive these changes persist it is expected that in the foreseeable future the case clearance rate will attain the desired heights and accordingly the backlog rates be suppressed to sustainable levels. At the core of its strategic plan, the judiciary has set out to attain a backlog free status, a feat which requires substantial mobilization of resources and the pursuit of deliberate strategy which are so far yielding positive outcomes. The growth being experienced in the performance of the Supreme Court, which has now attained new steady-state growth paths in efficiency is attributable to the visionary leadership of the Honourable Chief Justice of Jamaica, Mr. Bryan Sykes and the improving quality of leadership within the individual registries. Naturally, there remain variances in performances across divisions, but the general path is steady and has a positive gradient.

This Easter Term report contains a range of data and performance measurements on all Divisions of the Supreme Court, in addition to the High Court Division of the Gun Court which is housed at the Supreme Court and utilizes its resources. The report is extensive, covering several major areas of case flow progression and therefore provides crucial insights, which can potentially inform the operational efficiency of the Supreme Court and the policy design of the relevant state actors. Among the key highlights from this report is that the Supreme Court recorded a clearance rate, which is a 2.50 percentage points decline when compared to the corresponding period in the

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previous year. Nevertheless, this is a commendable output for a single quarter.

A total of 4298 new cases were entered the Supreme Court across all Divisions/sections in the Easter Term of 2025 while 3415 cases were disposed. The total number of new cases filed in Term fell by 5.25% when compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. The number of cases disposed in the Term decreased by 3.05% when compared to the similar period last year. The Family Division and the High Court Civil (HCV) Division with 1483 or 34.50% and 1281 or 29.80% respectively of the total number of new cases filed accounted for the largest shares of incoming cases in the Easter Term.

Among the other major findings from this Easter Term Statistics Report is that the weighted average case clearance rate across the four Divisions was roughly 83.05%, an improvement of 3.15 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The case clearance rate provides a measure of the number of cases disposed, for every new case entered/filed in a given period. The average of roughly 83% across the Divisions suggests that for every 100 new cases entered in the period, roughly 83 were also disposed (not necessarily from the new cases entered). The case clearance rates for the Easter Term of 2025 range from a low of 41.10% in Home Circuit Court to a high of 136% in the Commercial Division. The Family Division had the second highest case clearance rate in the Supreme Court in the Term with a rate of 88.06%, followed by the High Court Division of the Gun Court with 86.77%. The overall clearance rate of roughly 83.05% for the Easter Term is the tenth consecutive Term that the Supreme Court has exceeded the 70% mark and is an indication of a higher equilibrium rate of output for the Supreme Court as a whole, although there are variances across divisions.

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The report also generated the estimated times to disposition for matters resolved in the respective Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025. The estimated average times taken for cases to be disposed range from a low of 19.50 months (1 year and 7 months) in the Estate Division to a high of 56 months (4 years and 8 months) in the High Court Civil Division. The overall average time to disposition for the Divisions of the Supreme Court in the period was roughly 31.17 months (roughly 2 years and 7 month), approximately the same as the corresponding period in the previous year.

The standard definition of a case backlog, which has been adopted by the Jamaican Court system is a case that has been in the system for more than two years without being disposed. Using this yardstick, the overall on-time case processing rate for cases disposed in the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025 was approximately 59% which suggests that roughly 59 of every 100 cases disposed were done within two years, roughly the same as the previous year. This result implies that roughly 41% of the cases disposed in the Easter Term were in a state of backlog at the time of disposition, representing a crude proxy of the overall gross case backlog rate for the Supreme Court. The Estate and Family Divisions with on time case processing rates of 83% and 75% respectively fared best on this metric in the Easter Term, thus also having the lowest gross case backlog rates at the end of the period with 17% and 25% respectively.

The hearing date certainty rate is a vital measure of the robustness of the case management and scheduling apparatus in the court system. It provides an indication of the likelihood that dates set for hearings will proceed on schedule without adjournment. In the long run, the hearing date certainty rate will be positively correlated with the clearance rate, thus the higher the hearing

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date certainty rates, the higher the clearance rates over time. Similarly, in the long run higher hearing date certainty rates will correlate with lower case backlog rates, thus there is a negative association between these two variables. The hearing date certainty, which computes the rate of adherence to hearing dates scheduled, ranges from an approximate low of 74.25% in the Home Circuit Court to a high of 90.52% in the High Court Civil Division in the Easter Term of 2025. The weighted average hearing date certainty across all the Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025 was roughly 82.79%, which is an indication that there was a roughly 83% probability that a matter scheduled for hearing will proceed without adjournment. Similar data on the estimated trial date certainty rates in isolation are also provided in the relevant chapters of the report. The estimated trial date certainty rates are generally lower than the overall hearing date certainty rates in the Divisions of the Supreme Court.

This report again demonstrates decisively that external factors and third parties account for a sizeable share of the reasons for adjournment of cases and hence persistently long waiting time or delays in case dispositions. The prominent reasons for adjournment in the Easter Term of 2025 are similar to those observed over the past seven (7) years of statistical reporting. Among the common reasons for adjournment cited in this report are the non-appearance of parties and/or attorneys, absenteeism of witnesses and investigating officers, incomplete files, files not found, documents to be filed, statements outstanding, ballistic and forensic reports outstanding among others. Some factors contributing to delays are within the court's sphere of direct influence and significant efforts are being made to minimize and eventually eliminate these incidences. The greater problem however appears to be the absence of culture of collective responsibility where all court participants/stakeholders fully embrace that they play a crucial role in contributing to

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efficient case progression and thus optimal usage of the court's time and their own time. It appears that unless this culture is engendered and that the weaknesses identified among the relevant case participants/stakeholders in this report are aggressively addressed, then the Supreme Court, even at its most optimal resource utilization will not be able to dispose of its cases within the shortest conceivable times. The existing constraints present a complexity in scheduling of hearings with matters getting longer future dates than they could otherwise. There are however major targeted reform efforts which are currently underway in the Supreme Court, geared towards backlog reduction, more efficient scheduling, greater specialization of judicial assignments and broader structural reforms aimed at bolstering productivity. It is forecasted that within the next 18 months these reforms will start to yield genuine advances in the overall efficiency of case processing.

The casefile integrity rate measures the proportion of cases which are scheduled for court and are able to proceed in a timely manner without being adjourned for reasons of missing, lost or incomplete files, matters wrongly listed for court and other related factors which are attributable to the inefficient handling of records and case scheduling by the court's registries.

Using the High Court Civil Division as a proxy, the data reveals that the case file integrity rate was 97.70%, an increase of 0.63 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. This result suggests that for every 100 case files that were part of court hearings in the Easter Term of 2025, roughly 2 more were able to proceed, as compared to the corresponding period in 2024, without being adjourned due to one of the named factors which impair case file integrity. The prescribed international standard for the case file integrity rate measure is 98% -

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100%.

The below tables provide case activity summary for the Easter Term of 2025 as well as critical on-time case processing rates, crude gross backlog rates and key performance forecast for 2025.

**See below Supreme Court case activity summary for the Easter Term of 2025:**

Division	New cases Filed	Aggregate number of cases disposed	Clearance Rate (%)	Average time To Disposition (months)	Hearing Date Certainty Rate (%)
High Court Civil (HCV)	1281	964	75.25	56.24	90.52
Estate	1132	805	71.11	19.50	83.19
Family	1483	1306	88.06	24.14	86.44
Commercial	133	181	136.00	22.42	85.75
Home Circuit Court	163	67	41.10	30.51	74.25
Gun Court	106	92	86.77	34.46	76.59
<b>Gross/Weighted Average</b>	<b>4298</b>	<b>3415</b>	<b>83.05</b>	<b>31.21</b>	<b>82.79</b>

*Note: Data on the smaller divisions/courts, namely the Revenue Court, Insolvency and Admiralty were inconclusive at the time of producing this report, hence their exclusion. They will however be included in the upcoming annual report for 2025.*

**See below summary of the on-time case processing rate and the proxy case backlog rate (%)**

Among other important performance metrics, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) The on-time case processing rate
- (ii) Crude proxy case backlog rate

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The on-time case processing rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case backlog rate provides an estimated measurement of the proportion of cases, which are unresolved for more than two years as at end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Selected performances metrics for the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025**

Division of the Supreme Court	Resolved/Disposed cases	Unresolved cases which had some administrative or court activity in the Easter Term of 2025	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
High Court Civil (HCV)	964	6812	282	29.46	70.64
Family Division	1483	4806	980	75	25
Estate Division	1132	2256	667	83	17
Commercial Division	181	405	120	66.30	33.70
Home Circuit Court	67	897	40	59	41
Gun Court	92	389	54	41.30	53.70
<b>Gross/Weighted Average</b>	<b>3919</b>	<b>15565</b>	<b>2143</b>	<b>59.01</b>	<b>40.99</b>

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## Vital Forecasts:

### Forecast of case activity in the Divisions of the Supreme Court in 2025

Division	Forecasted number of new cases	Forecasted number of disposed cases	Forecasted Case Clearance Rate (%)
<b>High Court Civil Division</b>	5090	3212	63.10
<b>Family Division</b>	4515	4176	92.49
<b>Estate Division</b>	3628	2999	82.66
<b>Home Circuit Court</b>	324	208	64.20
<b>High Court Division of the Gun Court</b>	321	298	92.83
<b>Commercial Division</b>	499	324	64.93
<b>Revenue Division</b>	6	5	83.33
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>14383</b>	<b>11223</b>	<b>77.70</b>

*Note: Forecasting done using the method of exponential smoothing*

The above table provides a forecast of the number of cases filed and disposed in each division/section of the Supreme Court in 2025 as well as the projected case clearance rates. The forecasted number of new cases entering the Supreme Court in 2025 is 14383 while the forecasted number of disposed cases across the divisions/sections is 11223. These predicted values would produce a weighted case clearance rate of 77.70% in 2025.

### Forecast for Judgments Reserved and Delivered in 2025

Forecasted number of Judgments Reserved	Forecasted number of Judgments Delivered	Forecasted clearance rate on Judgments (%)
287	291	101.39

*Note: Forecasting done using the method of exponential smoothing*

The Supreme Court is expected to sustain its positive direction in clearing outstanding judgments in 2025. Using the method of exponential smoothing, with a smoothing constant >0.50, it is forecasted that 291 judgments will be delivered by the Supreme Court in 2025 and 287 new ones will be reserved. This produces a forecasted clearance rate on judgments of 101.39% in 2025, which suggests that for every 10 judgments reserved in that year, roughly 10 judgments are expected to be delivered.

## METHODOLOGY

Guaranteeing the reliability and validity of the data used to produce the periodic statistics reports for the Jamaican Courts is of utmost importance as we seek to produce a data driven enterprise for policymaking and operational decisions. As a result, a robust and verifiable system of data production has been created in both the Parish Courts and the Supreme Court. In the Supreme Court, each Division has a set of data entry officers whose daily responsibility is to enter data on new cases and as necessary update all case activity and events as the matters traverse the courts. Such updates are done electronically using the Judicial Enhancement Management Software (JEMS) software, which has been evolved to cater for a wider range of data capture and reporting needs. In all Divisions, live court data is also recorded in JEMS from inside court by the Clerks. In order to assure the integrity of the data that is entered in JEMS, data validators are specially assigned to scrutinize case files on a daily basis to ensure consistency with the electronic data and adequacy of data capture.

Once all data for the periods of interest are entered in the JEMS software and the necessary checks and balances completed, the data is then migrated to a Microsoft Excel friendly platform, from where it is extracted, the statistical data processed and reports generated, primarily using the RStudio, Maple and SPSS software. Statistical reports are generated for each of the three Terms, which constitutes the operating year for the Supreme Court, as well as for the vacation period mainly for the Civil Registries. These reports culminate with an Annual Statistics Report. Such reports are published on the website of the Supreme Court, however interim data required by stakeholders may be requested through the office of the Chief Justice.

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## **Structure of Report**

This is a comprehensive statistical report on case activity in the various Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025. Each of the first six chapters focus on case activity and performance metrics in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, the Family Division, the Estate Division, the Commercial Division, the Home Circuit Court and the High Court Division of the Gun Court. The last two chapters summarize aggregate case activity across the Divisions of the Supreme Court, presents the clearance rate for civil Judgements and the courtroom utilization rate estimates for the Easter Term of 2025. In each chapter, a wide range of measurements and other information are presented which places case and court activity in each Division in their peculiar perspectives and context. A glossary of statistical terms and key performance measures used in his reports are also outlined at the end of the report. The report is meant to be more of an information piece for both internal and external stakeholders, forming the basis for interventions geared at enhancing efficiency and fostering a culture of court excellence.

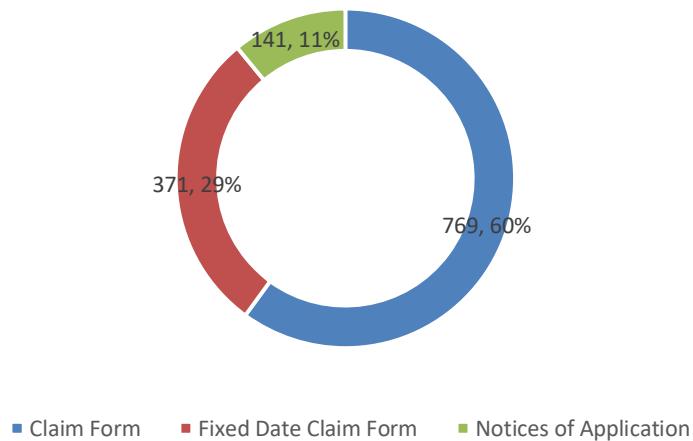
## CHAPTER 1.0: HIGH COURT CIVIL (HCV) DIVISION

The ensuing analysis examines the various measures of the efficiency of case handling in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025.

A total of 1281 new cases were filed in the High Court Civil Division during the Easter Term of 2025, representing a roughly 19% increase when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The below chart provides a summary of the breakdown of the new cases filed in terms of the primary methods of origin, that is, whether they were filed by way of a Claim Form or Fixed Date Claim Form. Notably, there are a minority of matters filed in the High Court Civil Division which are done by means of Notices of Application.

**Chart 1.0: Claim Forms and Fixed Date Claim Forms for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

**Distribution of New Cases Filed**



***Number of observations = 1281***

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The above chart highlights the proportional distribution of cases filed in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division in the Easter Term of 2025 which originated either by way of a Claim Form or Fixed Date Claim Form. The data shows that 769 or 60% of this sample were filed by way of Claim Forms while 371 or 29% were filed by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms and the remaining 141 or 11% were filed by way of Notice of Application. In general, the number of matters filed by way of Claim Forms tend to outstrip those filed annually by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms and Notices of Application in the High Court Civil Division of the Supreme Court. The method by which a case is filed, be it by way of a Claim Form, Fixed Date Claim Form or Notice of Application has an impact on the path that the matters travel in the court. Matters filed by way of Claim Forms tend to have more processes along the case flow continuum and tend on average to take a longer time to be disposed than those filed by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms and Notices of Application, both of which tend to follow a very similar path.

Tables 1.0 below provides an analysis of the reasons for adjournment of High Court Civil cases in the Easter Term of 2025.

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**Table 1.0a: Leading reasons for adjournment for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Claimant to file documents	1014	21.04
Claimant's documents not served or short served	474	9.83
Defendant to file documents	323	6.70
Claimant to comply with order	278	5.77
Parties having discussion	219	4.54
No parties appearing	182	3.78
Pending settlement	103	2.14
Claimant not available	111	2.30
Claimant's attorney absent	109	2.26
Matter referred to mediation	107	2.22
Claimant's documents not served or short served	103	2.14
Letter indicating "no objection" outstanding	102	2.12
Defendant's attorney absent	90	1.87
Claimant's attorney needs time to take instruction	85	1.76

**Total number of adjournments/continuances = 4820**

There were total of 4820 incidences of adjournments/continuance in the Easter Term of 2025, an increase of 4.51% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. The above table summarizes the leading reasons for adjournment for the Easter Term of 2025, using the contextual definition outlined above. It is seen that the three dominant reasons for adjournment were claimants to file documents with 1014 or 21.04% of all events of adjournments/continuance, claimant's documents not served or short served with 474 or 9.83 and adjournments for defendants to file documents with 323 or 6.70%. Adjournments for claimants to comply with order with 278 or 5.77% and adjournments due to parties having discussions with a view to settlement with 219 or 4.54% rounds off the top five reasons for

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adjournment in the High Court Civil Division of the Supreme Court during the Easter Term of 2025. The leading reasons for adjournment enumerated above, accounts for approximately 68.46% of the total reasons for case adjournment/continuance in the period. As with previous reports, it is evident that a significant proportion of the total adjournments were due to factors related to the lack of readiness or preparedness of case files and cases themselves and the absenteeism of parties and attorneys for court hearings. While some of the reasons for adjournment strongly suggest weaknesses in case flow management, record keeping and scheduling practices, the overwhelming majority of the incidences of reasons for adjournment are associated with external factors which are not directly controllable by the High Court Civil Division. A special team of Judges and court staff have been convened by the Honourable Chief Justice of Jamaica to oversee a series of reforms to the High Court Civil Division. As a result, a number of simultaneous targeted projects are currently being pursued to improve the efficiency with matters are scheduled for court and assigned to Judges and to strengthen the registry processes which surround case flow and case progression management. The last three years of pursuing these initiatives have yielded rich dividends with the High Court Civil Division defying all statistical odds to emerge as one of the better performing divisions in the Supreme Court in terms of case clearance rate. It is anticipated that the reforms will eventually have a meaningful impact on reducing both the net and gross backlog rates in the Supreme Court to sustainable levels. Much of these reforms are however being undertaken from the supply side. According to Priest (1989) in his famed congestion hypothesis, deep reforms such as those currently being undertaken in the High Court Civil Division of the Supreme Court can have a material influence on reducing the case backlog, however the hypothesis purports that this will cause an attendant

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increase in demand as litigants will respond to a more efficient court operation by increasing demand thus placing a strain on the supply of judicial services. Based on this hypothesis there will therefore invariably be some amount of delay at the equilibrium level that a court has to tolerate. However, the objective should be to achieve an equilibrium point where the level of delay is at its lowest and the corresponding average time taken to dispose of cases is also at its lowest. The persistent efforts of the High Court Civil Division of the Supreme Court are showing ominous signs of being able to achieve this steady state sustainable equilibrium point in the foreseeable future.

**Table 1.0b: Case File Integrity Rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Number of adjournments/continuances	Number of adjournments due to missing files, matters wrongly listed and matters left off the court list	Proxy Case File Integrity Rate (%)
4820	111	97.70

In the very strictest sense, the case file integrity rate measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. Case file integrity is based on three pillars - availability, completeness and accuracy. In the above table, the number of adjournments resulting from missing files, matters wrongly listed for court and matters left off the court list is used to compute a proxy rate for the case file integrity. The table shows that there were 111 combined incidences of adjournments due to these deficiencies in the Easter Term of 2025,

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resulting in a case file integrity rate of 97.70%, which means that roughly 2.30% of the total adjournments were due to one or more of factors that affect case file integrity. Using the same parameters, the case file integrity rate, a slight increase of 0.63 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. A re-engineering of the document management processes in the High Court Civil Division and a strengthening of the human resources in the records section of this Division continued to be pursued to create a sustainable system of marshalling file readiness. This will redound to the benefit of the High Court Civil Division in improving the rate of progression of cases filed to mediation and to court hearings and thus promote a timelier scheduling and other actions leading up to the disposition of cases filed. It will also contribute to an improvement of the rate of handling of notices of discontinuances filed which will assist in improving the timely disposition of cases.

**Table 2.0: Selected trial and pre-trial case counts for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Trial matters/hearings	Frequency	Percentage
Court Trials	172	38.91
Motion Hearing	20	4.52
Assessment of Damages	161	36.43
Trial in Chambers	89	20.14
<b>Total trial matters</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table shows the breakdown of the case counts associated with selected pre-trial and trial hearings in the High Court Civil Division in the Easter Term of 2025. The table shows 442 combined cases which were heard across the four listed types of hearings, of trials in open court with 172 or 38.91% accounted for the largest share while assessments of damages with 161 or

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36.43% of the total ranked next. The 89 cases or 20.14% of the total which had trials in chamber and the 20 cases or 4.52% which had motion hearings rounds off the list.

**Table 3.0 Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Hearing dates set	Hearing dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
3198	512	84%

The overall hearing date certainty of a court provides a good metric of the extent to which dates, which are scheduled for hearings are adhered to and therefore speaks to the reliability of the case scheduling process. A sample of 3198 dates scheduled for either trial or various pre- trial hearings, both in Court and in Chamber, revealed that 512 were 'adjourned' on the date set for commencement. The resulting estimated overall hearing date certainty figure of approximately 84% suggests that there is a roughly 84% probability that a date set for a matter to be heard would proceed without adjournment for reasons other than some form of 'continuance' or settlement. This is an increase of roughly 2.15 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. When trials in open court is isolated, the trial certainty rate for the HCV Division for the Easter Term is estimated at 75.00%, an improvement of 3 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024 and when trial in chambers is isolated the estimate rate is 76%, an improvement of 5 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. These results represent resilient outcomes as the HCV continues its aggressive reform agenda to improve the efficient processing of cases and the overall productivity of the registry.

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The ensuing analysis will go further into explaining where on the continuum of a matter traversing the system are adjournments are most likely to occur. This will involve an analysis, termed a breakout analysis that will examine the incidence of adjournments particularly at assessment of damages and case management conference hearings.

The below tables provide indices of scheduling efficiency in the Supreme Court by measuring the number of days of matters being scheduled for assessment of damages and court trials respectively compared to the number of available court days.

**Table 4.0a: Index of scheduling efficiency for Assessment of Damages in the HCV Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Number of available court days in the Easter Term of 2025	Number of days' worth of assessment of damages scheduled	Approximate ratio
81	195	2.41

An important indicator of the problems associated with the scheduling of HCV matters comes from an assessment of the number of court days which were available for the Supreme Court during the Easter Term of 2025, 81 all told and the number of days' worth of assessment of damages which were scheduled (a total of 195). It is shown that for every court day available, approximately 2.4 days' worth of matters were scheduled, an improvement of roughly half a day when compared to the corresponding period in 2024, a clear signal of continued improvements in the efficiency with cases are being scheduled for these matters. Historically, a high incidence of adjournments has plagued the assessment of damages courts. The latest improvements seen are partly a result of the creation of a docket system which allows for specific Judges to preside

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over cases to their closure. This creates the opportunity for higher levels of efficiency in case flow progression management and this appears to be yielding incremental success. There is indeed, still some way to go and continuous reforms needed to attain the desired level of equilibrium in hearing date certainty and case clearance.

**Table 4.0b: Index of scheduling efficiency for court trials in the HCV Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Number of available court days in the Easter Term of 2025	Number of days' worth of court matters scheduled for court trial per court	Approximate ratio
81	179	2.21

Another important indicator of the problems associated with the scheduling of HCV matters comes from an assessment of the number of court days which were available for the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025, 81 all told, and the number of days' worth of court trials which were scheduled per court (a total of 179). It is shown that for every day available, 2.21 days' worth of matters were scheduled, a fraction increase of 0.25 of a day when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. In practice this implies that the High Court Civil Division was slightly less efficient with scheduling and the use of judicial time for open court trials when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. Hence, continued vigilance and reforms are required in this area, however it should be significantly helped by the ongoing plans to create a more Judge managed, technology driven system of scheduling and case progression management in the division, anchored by a docketing system.

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**Table 5.0: Probability distribution of the incidence of adjournments/continuance for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Type of Incidence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Case Management Conference	269	7.71
Pre-Trial Review	200	5.73
Trial in open court	319	9.14
Trial in chamber	279	7.99
Assessment of damages	246	7.05
Judgment Summons Hearing	181	5.18
Applications	1997	57.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>3491</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table takes a large, representative sample of reasons for adjournment and records the stages of the case flow process at which they are observed. The results here are broadly similar to those which were observed in the previous two years. Trial hearings account for a combined 15.04% of the adjournments in the sample while case management conferences account for 7.71% but it was the incidence of adjournments at the applications stage which again took the spotlight, accounting for 57.20% of the total incidence of adjournments. Pre-trial reviews and judgment summons hearings 5.73% and 5.18% respectively of the sample rounds off the list. As stated earlier, continued improvements in the overall scheduling apparatus of the High Court Civil (HCV) Division will be crucial to reducing the persistently high incidence of adjournments which delay the disposition of cases and contribute to a sizeable case backlog.

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**Table 6.0: Hearing date certainty for Assessment of damages for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Hearing dates set	Dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
194	37	80.93%

The hearing date certainty rate for assessment of damages matters increased by 2.85 percentage points to 80.93% for the Easter Term of 2025, over that of the corresponding period in the previous year. There is a natural empirical and practical correlation between improving the scheduling efficiency index and improving the hearing date certainty rate. That is, better utilization of judicial time through more efficient scheduling invariable results in more certain dates and this ultimately translates into higher output.

**Table 8.0: Hearing date certainty for Case Management Conferences for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Hearing dates set	Dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty
897	85	90.52

Case management conferences form an important part of the preparation of cases for further judicial activities. Matters scheduled for case management conferences will typically be set for a fixed time and day in accordance with the available resources. These matters had a hearing date certainty of 90.52% in the Easter Term of 2025, an improvement of 2.88 percentage points when compared to the comparable period in 2024, representing the first time on record that the hearing date certainty rate for Case Management Conferences have climbed above the 90% mark, a step in the right direction.

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**Table 9.0: Requisitions for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Action	Frequency
Requisitions Issued	134
Responses to requisitions	23
Requisition clearance rate	17.16%
Requisitions per 100 case files (approximation)	2

In considering the efficiency with which civil matters flow through the court system, the number of requisitions and the ratio of requisitions to case files is an important metric. The rate at which responses to requisitions are filed and the share quantum of requisitions issued can have a profound impact on the length of time that it takes for some civil matters to be disposed. In the table above it is shown that there were 125 requisitions for the Term. The requisition clearance rate for Easter Term of 2025 was 17.16%, an increase of 5.51 percentage points compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Continuous interventions aimed at increasing public sensitization on the proper and timely completion of documents filed by litigants and their attorneys at the various stages along the civil case flow continuum are vital to creating and sustaining improved outcomes in this area.

**Table 10.0: Chamber hearing case count distribution for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Case Management Conference	697	22.81
Pre-trial review	522	17.08
Applications (Various)	1794	58.70
Judgment summons hearing	43	1.41
<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>3056</b>	<b>100</b>

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The above table summarizes the distribution of case counts for matters heard in Chamber in the High Court Civil Division in the Easter Term of 2025. It is seen that the total number of cases heard in Chamber hearings for the Term was 3056, the highest proportions of which were applications of various types with 1794 cases heard or 58.70% of the list. The general applications category speaks to a non-exhaustive list of various types of applications which come before the High Court Civil (HCV) Division. Case management conferences were a distant second with 697 cases or 22.81% of the listed case types heard in Chamber during the period while pre-trial reviews with 522 cases heard or 17.08% and Judgment summons hearings with 43 cases heard or 1.41% of the list rounds off the top five chamber hearings during the Easter Term.

Among the leading types of applications filed in the Easter Term of 2025 were applications to file annual returns, applications for injunction, applications for first hearing, applications for court orders and applications for extension of time to file defense.

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Table 11.0: Methods of disposition for the year Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Application Granted	109	11.31
Application Refused	12	1.24
Attorney Admitted to Bar	2	0.21
Claim form expire	29	3.01
Claim Form Invalid	3	0.31
Company complied	3	0.31
Consent Judgment	11	1.14
Consent Order	29	3.01
Damages Assessed	45	4.67
Discontinued	101	10.48
Dismissed	36	3.73
Dismissed through Special Backlog Reduction Project	2	0.21
Final Order	64	6.64
Judgment	7	0.73
Judgment Delivered	20	2.07
Matter Withdrawn	15	1.56
Notice of Discontinuance noted	203	21.06
Order (Chamber Court)	19	1.97
Order Granted for Transfer	1	0.10
Settled	148	15.35
Settlement Order	1	0.10
Struck Out	92	9.54
Transfer to Civil (Ordered)	1	0.10
Transfer to Commercial (Ordered)	1	0.10
Transfer to parish court	1	0.10
Written Judgment Delivered	9	0.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>100.0</b>

An understanding of the distribution of the methods of case disposal is an essential metric to gaining insights into the efficiency of case handling in the courts and into operational planning.

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It is seen that there were 964 High Court Civil cases disposed in the Easter Term of 2025, a decrease of 5.15% from the lofty heights achieved in the corresponding period in 2022. The largest proportion of the cases disposed, 203 or roughly 21.20% were a result of notices of discontinuance filed, followed by the matters settled with 148 or 15.50% and applications granted with 104 or 10.90%.

**Table 12.0: Time to disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

## Descriptive Statistics (months)

Number of observations	964
Mean	56.2367
Median	49.0000
Mode	14.00
Std. Deviation	43.6578
Skewness	.856
Std. Error of Skewness	.081
Range	288.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	290.00

One of the most important metrics, which can be used in assessing the efficiency of case handling, is the time to disposition. An understanding of this measure is crucial to influencing both internal and external policies, necessary to bolster the timely delivery of justice. The above table provides crucial insights on the average time to disposition of matters in the HCV Division for the Easter Term of 2025. The 964 cases disposed in the year reveal an estimated average time to disposition was 56 months or roughly 4 years and 8 months, roughly the same as the comparable period in 2024. The oldest matter disposed in the year was 290 months old or roughly 24 years old while the lowest time that a matter took to disposition was roughly two months. The median time to

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disposition is 49 months while the mode stands at 14 months. The time to disposition was 4. The standard deviation is an indication of a modest variation of the durations to disposal around the mean and suggests that the times to disposition do not on average vary widely.

**Table 13.0: Breakdown of time to disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 – 12	144	15.04
13 – 24	138	14.42
25 – 36	113	11.72
37 – 47	76	7.88
48 & over	487	50.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table provides a more detailed breakdown of the average time to disposition. It is seen that of the 964 cases disposed during the Easter Term, the largest proportion, 487 or 50.93% took four years or more to be disposed. 144 cases or roughly 15.04% of the cases disposed took a year or less while 138 or 14.40% took between 13 and 24 months to be disposed. The remaining proportion of the cases disposed was accounted for by the intervals 25 – 36 months with 113 or 11.72% and the 37 - 47 months' interval with 76 or 7.88% of the disposals. It is of note that roughly 29.46% of the matters disposed of in the Easter Term took two years or less, compared to approximately 28.14%, which took more than two years during the year.

A number of projects are currently underway to redress these and other structural deficiencies and in so doing produce a more sustainable system of operation which will eventually see cases being disposed much faster in years to come.

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Table 14.0: Clearance rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
1281	964	75.25%

The case clearance rate is an important metric, which complements the case disposal rate. It is calculated as the ratio of incoming active cases to disposed cases. A ratio of 100% is an indication that for every new case filed, a pre-existing case is also disposed. It is an important measure in placing the time to disposition of matters into context and to providing a deeper understanding the case carriage burden that is being faced by the different Divisions. In the Easter Term of 2025, the High Court Civil Division recorded a case clearance rate of 75.25%, representing an increase of 6.15 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

## Other performance measures

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) The on-time case processing rate
- (ii) The case turnover ratio
- (iii) The disposition days
- (iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate

The on-time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases

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resolved, for every unresolved case in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 15.0: Selected performances metrics for the High Court Civil (HCV) Division in the Easter Term of 2025**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated disposal days for unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
964	6812	0.14	2607	282	964	29.46	70.64

The results in the above table show a case turnover rate of 0.15, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were 'heard' in the Easter Term of 2025 and still active at the end of the period, another 14 were disposed, 2 percentage points higher than the corresponding period in the previous year.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. Based on this general criterion, a case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on-time case-processing rate for the High Court Civil Division in the Easter Term of 2025 is roughly 30% which reflects the proportion of High Court Civil cases in the period which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is estimated at 71%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of 71% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates.

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The crude backlog rate is an improvement of 2 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2025. The results suggest that of the 6812 cases, which had some court activity in the Easter Term of 2025 and were still active at the end of the period, roughly 4768 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

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## **CHAPTER 2.0: FAMILY DIVISION**

The ensuing analysis examines the various measures of the efficiency of case handling in the Family Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025.

A total of 1483 new cases were filed in the Kingston (91%) and Montego Bay Registries of the Western Regional Family Court (9%) during the Easter Term of 2025. The below table provides a breakdown.

**Table 16.0a: Breakdown of cases filed in the Family Division in the Easter Term of 2025**

Type of cases	Frequency	Percent
Matrimonial FD	85	5.73
Matrimonial FD Declaration of Paternity	3	0.20
Matrimonial FD Division of Property	40	2.70
Matrimonial FD Divorce	803	54.15
Matrimonial FD Divorce-children	502	33.85
Matrimonial FD Guardianship & Custody	27	1.82
Matrimonial FD Guardianship	8	0.54
Matrimonial FD Maintenance	3	0.20
Matrimonial FD Mental Health Act	10	0.67
Matrimonial FD Nullity	2	0.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>1483</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table provides a breakdown of the nature and location of new matters filed in the Family Division during the Easter Term of 2025. As is typical, the largest proportion of the new cases filed were divorce matters (with or without children involved) which accounted for 1305 or 88%. More specifically divorce matters filed involving children accounted for 502 or 33.85% of the divorce cases filed. Matters of division of property, guardianship and custody accounted for next highest proportion of divorce cases filed during the Easter Term of 2025.

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Table 16.0b: Petitions filed for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Type of petition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Petition for dissolution of marriage*	1305	68.29
Amended petition for dissolution of marriage	604	31.61
Petition for Nullity	2	0.10
<b>Total Petitions filed</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Number of amendments per petition	0.46	

\*Includes petitions involving children

The above table summarizes petitions filed in the Easter Term of 2025. It is shown that a total of 1911 Petitions (new or amended) were filed, 1305 or 68.29% were petitions for dissolution of marriage, compared to 604 or 31.61% which were amended or further amended petitions for dissolution of marriage. The analysis further suggests that the ratio of petitions to amended petitions is 0.46 or in other words for every 100 Petitions for dissolution of marriage there is roughly 46 amended Petitions for dissolution of marriage during the Easter Term of 2025, an improvement of five percentage points compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The number of petitions for dissolution of marriage which were filed in the Easter Term of 2025 decreased fractionally by 0.87% while the number of amended petitions filed decreased by 20.52% There continues to be a need for a sustainable reduction in the number of amended requisitions filed per requisition in order for the public to realize the true gains from the significant improvements in the operational efficiency of the Family Division which have resulted from far reaching process flow reforms.

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Table 17.0: Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute filed for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Case Status	Frequency
Decree Absolute	2068
Decree Nisi for dissolution of marriage	1979
Decree Nisi for nullity of marriage	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4051</b>
<b>Ratio of Decrees Nisi to Decrees Absolute Filed</b>	<b>1.04</b>

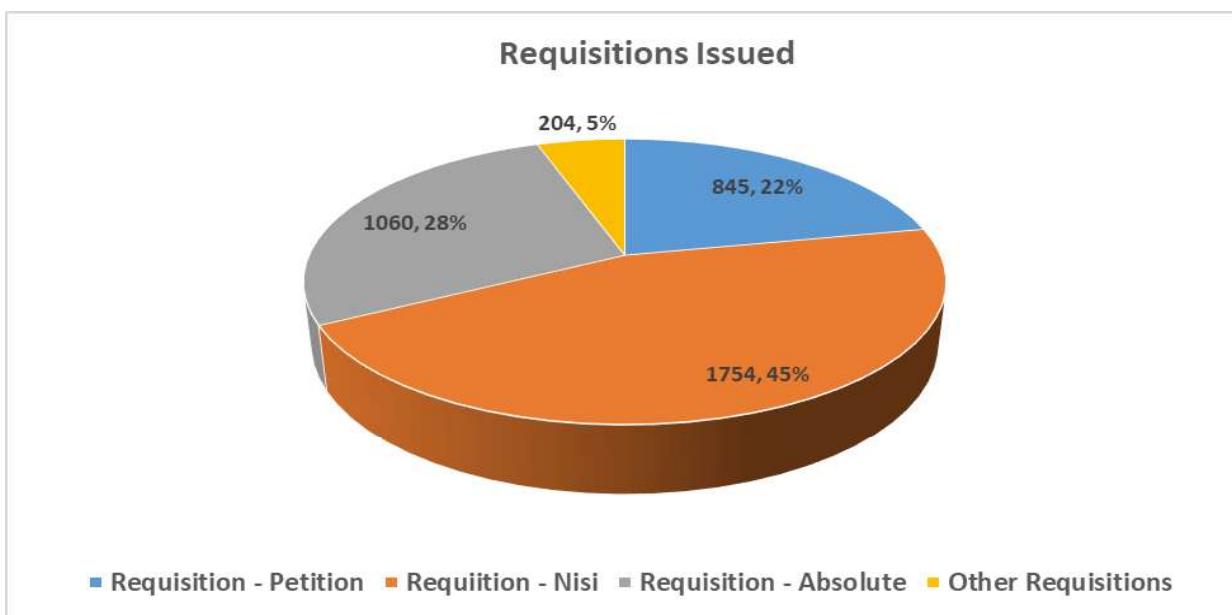
It is seen in the above table that for every 100 Decrees Nisi filed there were roughly 104 Decrees Absolute filed during the Easter Term of 2025, an increase of 11 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. One caveat to note is that Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute would have originated at various times outside of this specific period of analysis. The data suggests that the number of Decrees Absolute filed increased by an impressive 27.82% while the number of Decrees Nisi filed decreased by 17.76% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The stage of a matter at which requisitions have mostly occurred has an impact on the production rate for both Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute Granted.

A sampling distribution of the incidence of requisitions at the key stages of the typical lifecycle of a matrimonial matter - Petition, Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute is shown in the chart below.

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Chart 3.0: Distribution of the stages of requisitions for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025



The data suggests that a total of 3863 requisitions were issued across the Kingston and Western Regional Supreme Court Registries of the Family Division, an increase of 29.63 percent when compared to the corresponding Term in 2025. The number of requisitions filed at the petition stage decreased by 12.16% when compared to the corresponding Term in 2024, while the number filed at the Decree Nisi stage increased sharply by 40.77%. The number of requisitions filed at the Decree Absolute stage decreased by 37.31% when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. As with previous reports, it is seen in the above chart that there is a greater probability that a requisition will be made at the stage of Decree Nisi, with an estimated 45% incidence, while roughly 28% of the proportion of requisitions were filed at the Absolute stage and 22% at the petition stage.

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The data decisively suggests that the high incidence of requisitions continue to be a challenge for the Family Division, particularly at the Decree Nisi stage.

**Table 18.0: Methods of Disposals for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Claim Form Invalid	1	0.08
Consent Order	9	0.69
Decree Absolute Granted	1136	86.98
Decree Absolute set aside	1	0.08
Decree Nullity Granted	2	0.15
Dismissed	8	0.61
Final Judgment	2	0.15
Final Order	53	4.06
Finalized by death of Petitioner	1	0.08
Matter Withdrawn	6	0.46
Notice of Discontinuance noted	62	4.75
Settlement Order	1	0.08
Struck Out	21	1.61
Transfer to Civil (Ordered)	2	0.15
Transfer to family division (Ordered)	1	0.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>1306</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*NB: WR means Western Regional Registry*

The above table reveals that 1306 Family cases were disposed during the Easter Term of 2025, a decline of 4.35% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. A proportion of 86.98% or 1136 were attributable to Decrees Absolute Granted while 62 or 4.75% were due to Notices of Discontinuance filed, accounting for the top two methods of disposition in the Easter Term of 2025. As indicated earlier, a high incidence of requisitions continues to be a deterrent to the overall speed of disposition of cases in the Family Division of the Supreme Court and this will need to be improved in order to realize the fullness of the gains from a now

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significantly more efficient and better organized registry. This will require further education and the compliance of the attorneys. There has however been a notable general improvement in the overall average time to disposition of divorce cases filed, a result that appears to be largely a result of operational and logistical improvements in the processes of the Family Registry.

**Table 19.0: Requisitions summary for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Action	Frequency
Requisitions Issued	3765
Number of requisitions per 100 files	68
Number of responses to requisitions	1015
Requisition response rate	26.96%

The incidence of requisitions is especially important in assessing the efficiency with which Family matters move through the court system. A total of 3765 requisitions were issued during the Easter Term of 2025, an increase of 17.25% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. This produces a ratio of cases handled to requisitions issued of 0.68 which suggests that for every 100 cases handled on which there was activity during the Easter Term there were 68 requisitions filed, exactly the same as the corresponding period in 2025. The requisitions response rate increased by 5.60 percentage points when compared to the Easter Term of 2024.

Below is an outline of the ideal delivery standard and process flow for the disposition of divorce matters in the Matrimonial Division of the Supreme Court.

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Table 20.0: Outline of ideal delivery time standard and process flow for the disposition of divorce matters

Stage 1	Task	Existing Staff	Current time (days)	Proposed Staff	Proposed Time (days)
Petition/ Decree Nisi/ Decree absolute	Receive document and record skeleton party and document information in JEMS	2	3	3	1
	Enter and scanning of documents in JEMS	3		3	
	Update of case party information in JEMS				
Petition/ Decree Nisi/ Decree absolute	Retrieve file and maintain filing room (Records officer)	0		2	
	Sorting of manual documents – punching and placing of documents on file, writing of party information and suit number on file jacket	0	3	4	1
Petition/ Decree Nisi/ Decree absolute					
	Record in JEMS file location and move manual file to physical location.	0	3	2	1

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	Updating and scanning of signed petition in JEMS.  Issuing notice via email.				
	Vetting and signing of petition by Deputy Registrar	1	5	1	2
	<b>Mandatory waiting period for service of petition and filing of application for decree nisi (14-84 days)</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>14</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Task</b>				
<b>Decree Nisi</b>	Vetting of Decree Nisi by Deputy Registrar & legal officers	1	<b>40</b>	<b>2</b>	20
	Vetting and signing of Decree Nisi by Judge		<b>14</b>		1
	<b>Mandatory waiting period between granting of decree nisi and application for decree absolute</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Task</b>				
<b>Decree Absolute</b>	Vetting of Decree Absolute by Senior officer	0	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	7
		Vetting and signing of Decree Absolute by Judge		<b>5</b>	

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<b>Total</b>			<b>131</b> <b>(26wks)</b>		<b>78</b> <b>(16wks)</b>
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## Notes

1. At stage one the current staff and proposed staff is the same three, this is so as formally the matrimonial department has three data entry clerks. However, these clerks are currently assigned to attend court and chambers full time. The proposed is with the view of these data entry clerk be relieved of court duties.
2. At stage two in addition to the existing deputy registrar and legal officer, the proposal is for one additional legal officer (GLG/LO1) for the proposed time line to be achieved.
3. At stage two, if the signing of decree nisi by judge/master within one day is to be achieved, files must be processed by judge/master on the day and within the time the decree nisi is scheduled and return to the matrimonial registry on the same day.
4. At stage two – for the processing decree nisi with 20 days is to be achieved it is proposed that two senior officers are available at stage one, sorting and vetting, to prevent application for decree nisi
5. At stage three, if the signing of decree absolute by judge within one day is to be achieved, judges must process files on the day and within the time the decree absolute is scheduled and return to the matrimonial registry on the same day.
6. The proposal supports the following standards
  - a. Upon filing of petition, the matrimonial department will respond within **5 working days**. The response will be communicated by email if available or manual notice in the notice box, for the signed petition to be collected or to collect requisition to petition.
  - b. Upon filing of application for decree nisi, the matrimonial department will respond within **23 working days**. The response will be communicated by email if available or manual notice in the notice box, for the signed decree nisi to be collected or to collect requisition to decree nisi.
  - c. Upon filing of application for decree absolute, the matrimonial department will respond within **11 working days**. The response will be communicated by email if available or manual notice in the notice box, for the signed decree absolute to be collected or to collect requisition to decree absolute.
7. This model is built on the assumption of expeditious responses from the attorneys and their clients so as to eliminate delays.

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Table 21.0: Court/Chamber hearings for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Action	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Applications	461	75.45
Case Management Conference	101	16.53
Motion Hearing	8	1.31
Pre-trial Hearing	15	2.45
Trial	29	4.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows the distribution of the types of matters brought before the Court for the period under examination. The data shows that an incidence of 614 hearings either before open court or chamber, slightly more than twice that of the corresponding period in the previous year. This is part of a broader effort in to streamline case process flows in the Supreme Court to create greater levels of efficiency and productivity. The largest proportion, 461 or 75.45% were applications followed by 101 or 16.53%, which were Case Management Conference (CMC) matters. The hearing event with the third highest incidence in this category is trials which accounts for or 4.75% of the total.

Among the dominant types of applications filed in the Family Division during the Easter Term were applications for custody and maintenance, including spousal maintenance, applications to declare entitlement to property, applications to appoint legal guardian and applications for substituted service.

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Table 22.0: Top five reasons for adjournment for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	71	9.97
Additional documents to be filed	23	3.23
Parties having discussions with a view to settlement	21	2.95
Applicants documents not served or short served	18	2.53
Defendant to file documents	15	2.11

**Total incidence of adjournments (N) = 712**

As with all Divisions of the Supreme Court, an important metric of court efficiency are the reasons for adjournment of court matters. The data suggests that there were 712 incidences of adjournments in the Family Division for chamber and open court hearings in the Estate Term of 2025, a notable increase when compared to the corresponding period in 2024, largely on account of the increased number of court and chamber hearings. The largest proportion of these adjournments were for claimants to file documents with 71 or 9.97%, additional documents to be filed with 23 or 3.23% parties having discussions with a view to settlement and applicant's documents not served or short served each with 21 or 2.95% and defendant to file documents with 18 or 2.53%. The Family Division continues to make efforts to improve internal efficiency, enhance overall case management and to bolster external stakeholder engagement which is critical to reducing delay and improving the timely resolution of cases which are heard in chamber or open court.

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**Table 23.0: Hearing date certainty for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Court/Chamber hearing dates set	Hearing dates Date adjourned (excluding continuance)	Hearing date certainty rate
767	104	86.44

The Family Division has shown improvement in the overall hearing date certainty rate, despite the significant increase in the number of hearings. It is seen that of the 767 combined incidence of Court and Chamber hearings in the Easter Term of 2025, 104 were adjourned for reasons other than intrinsic procedural factors. This produces a moderate 86.44% hearing date certainty rate, an increase of 3.12 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. For every 100 hearing dates scheduled, the approximate number that proceeded without adjournment in the Term is approximately 86. When trial matters are isolated, the trial date certainty rate is 76%, which is 2.50 percentage points above that of the previous year.

**Table 24.0: Time to disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025.**

## Descriptive Statistics (months)

Number of observations	1306
Mean	24.1456
Median	13.0000
Mode	12.00
Std. Deviation	29.0785
Skewness	3.483
Std. Error of Skewness	.069
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	317.00

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The overall average time to disposition of all cases resolved in the Family Division during the Easter Term of 2025 is roughly 24 months. The modal/most frequently occurring time to disposition was however 13 months and the median is 12 months. The high positive skewness suggests that a substantial portion of the cases disposed were resolved in less than the overall average time.

The oldest matter disposed was approximately 26 years old while on the other end of the spectrum there a few matters filed which were matters filed which disposed within two months, due to discontinuances. The scores had a standard deviation of roughly 29 months, which indicates a wide variation in the distribution of the times to disposition in the period. The skewness measure returns a large positive value which strongly indicates that a markedly larger proportion of the times to disposition were lower than the overall mean.

**Table 25.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Time Interval	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	577	44.18
13 - 24	403	30.86
25 - 36	140	10.72
37 - 47	48	3.68
48 & over	138	10.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>1306</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table provides a more detailed breakdown of the estimated times to disposition for Family matters in the Easter Term of 2025. It is seen that of the 1306 matters disposed during the Term, the largest proportion, 577 or roughly 44.18% were disposed within a year, followed by the 403 or 30.86% which were disposed in 13 – 24 months. Taken together this result suggests

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that 981 or 75.04% of Family Division matters which were disposed during the Term were done in two years or less from the time of initiation, a decline of 0.17 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. 140 or roughly 10.72% of all family matters disposed in the Easter Term of 2025 took between 25 and 36 months to be disposed. It is of note that 138 or 10.57% of the cases disposed in the Family Division in the Easter Term of 2025 took four or more years to be resolved, largely on account of lengthy delays in external filings from case parties. As with the previous 5 years, the estimates however clearly suggest that a decidedly larger proportion of matters, which were disposed of during the year, took two years or less. It has been established that under near ideal circumstances, Family cases can be disposed within 4-6 months after filing, however in the Easter Term of 2025, roughly 12% of the cases resolved met this standard. Through its successful pursuit of process flow re-engineering, the Family Division has made considerably strides towards guaranteeing the public that if filings made by litigants and attorneys meets the requisite standards and requisitions are responded to in a timely manner then divorce cases can be resolved without delay (i.e., within 4 – 6 months).

**Table 26.0a: Case clearance rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
1483	1306	88.06%

The above table shows that there were 1483 new cases filed during the Easter Term of 2025 while 1306 were disposed. This produces a case clearance rate of 88.06%, suggesting that for every 100 new cases; roughly 88 were disposed in the Term. The result represents a roughly 5.24 percentage points increase when compared to the Easter Term of 2024.

### Other performance measures

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) **The on-time case processing rate**
- (ii) **The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) **The disposition days**
- (iv) **The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on-time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 27.0: Selected performances metrics for the Matrimonial Division in the Easter Term of 2025**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated Disposition days for unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
1306	4806	0.27	1352 days	980	1306	75%	25%

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The results in the above table show a case turnover rate of 0.27, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were handled in the Easter Term of 2025 and still active at the end of the Term, another 27 were disposed. This result forms part of the computation of the case disposal days which reveals that the cases that went to court which were unresolved at the end of the Term will on average take 1352 days or 3.70 more years to be disposed, barring special interventions. This metric does not however always have significant practical meaning when focusing on a single Term of court activity.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. Based on this general criterion, a case that is disposed within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on-time case-processing rate for the Family Division in the Easter Term of 2025 is approximately 75%, which reflects the proportion of Family cases in the Easter Term of 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the proxy case backlog rate is 25%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 25% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This further suggests that of the 4806 cases, which had some court activity during the Easter Term and were still active at the end of the period, 1201 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed. This is a slight worsening by roughly 6% when compared to the corresponding Term in 2024.

**CHAPTER 3.0: ESTATE DIVISION**

This section turns to the analysis of the progression of matters in the Probate and Administration Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025.

A total of 1132 new cases were filed in the Estate Division during the Easter Term, representing a slight decline of 0.15% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

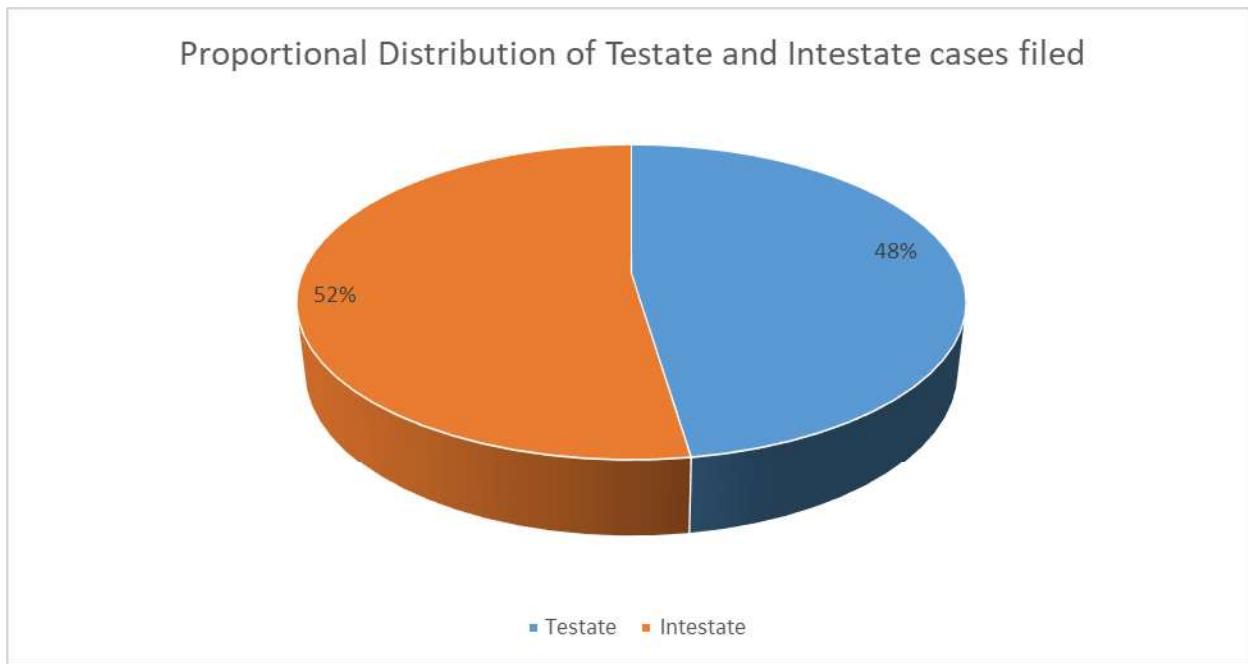
**Table 28.0: Summary of Oaths filed during the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Oaths	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Supplemental Oaths	1043	48.00
Oaths	1132	52.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>2175</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Ratio</b>	<b>0.92</b>	

The above table suggests there were a total of 2175 combined Oaths and supplemental Oaths filed in the Easter Term of 2025, of which 1132 or 52.00% were initial Oaths filed, compared to 1050 or 48.00% which were Supplemental Oaths. The ratio of Oaths to Supplemental Oaths is 0.92, which suggests that for every 100 Oaths there were 92 Supplemental Oaths filed during the Term, a statistic which has potentially adverse implications for the speed of disposition of matters, an increase of 19 percentage points when compared to the Easter Term of the previous year. It is of note that the Supplemental Oaths in this data set are not all related to the cases filed during the Easter Term of 2025 and also includes further Supplemental Oaths filed. Continued intervention to reduce the incidence of Supplemental Oaths are an important part of the way forward as the Division seeks to persist in improving its productivity and becoming backlog free in the shortest possible time.

Over the past five years, the Estate Division has established itself as a model of efficiency in the Supreme Court, with consistent performances ranking them among the highest case clearance rates and lowest times to disposition. Continued process flow re-engineering will ensure that the efficiency of the Probate Division continues to improve over the course of the rest of the year, guaranteeing high service levels to the Jamaican public.

**Table 5.0: Sampling Distribution of Testate and Intestate cases filed during the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**



**Sample size = 998**

Using a sample of 998 cases, the above chart shows that an estimated 48% of the new cases filed in the Estate Division during the Easter Term of 2025 were Testate matters (matters with a Will in place prior to death) and 52% were Intestate (having no Will in place). This proportional distribution is similar to the corresponding period in 2024.

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**Table 29.0: Action sequence for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Action Status	Frequency
*Granted	689
*Grants Signed	677
<b>Ratio of Granted Applications to Grants Signed</b>	<b>0.98</b>

*\* Some of these relate to cases originating before 2025*

In the process of disposing a typical matter handled by the Registrar, a case will be granted after satisfactory review and then the Grant is signed which closes the case. In the above data we elucidate the ratio of granted applications to Grants signed which reveals an impressive ratio of 0.98, suggesting that for every 100 granted applications, there were 98 Grants signed (though not necessarily from the number granted). This is a slight increase of 1.5 percentage points when compared to the previous year.

**Table 30.0: Case action and requisitions summary for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Action Status	Frequency
Number of cases actioned	3598
Requisitions Issued	1160
Number of responses to requisitions	687
Number of requisitions issued per case file	0.29
Requisitions clearance rate	59.22%
Average days between final requisition filed and Grant of Probate/Administration	22

The number of requisitions made, the length of time that it takes for requisitions to be retuned and the time to disposition after issuing requisitions, are important to understanding the efficiency of the flow of matters in the Estate Division. It is seen that there were 1160 requisitions issued while 3598 individual matters were actioned in the period, representing a ratio of 0.29 requisitions per case file actioned. This means that for every 100 cases actioned there were 29 requisitions issued, a decline of 7 points when compared to the previous year.

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There were 687 responses to requisitions in the Estate Division in the Easter Term of 2025, producing a requisitions response rate of 59.22%, an increase of 6.05 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. Further analysis suggests that the average time from the issuing of final requisitions to the Grant of Probate was 22 days, a decline of 1 day when compared to the similar period in 2024. The number of requisitions issued in the Estate Division during the Easter Term declined by 14.45% when compared to the similar period in the previous year.

**Table 31.0: Methods of Disposal for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Application Granted	19	2.36
Application Refused	5	0.62
Claim form expire	1	0.12
Consent Order	1	0.12
Final Order	2	0.25
Grant ad colleganda Bona signed	1	0.12
Grant by Representation signed	3	0.37
Grant of Admin De Bonis Non signed	5	0.62
Grant of Admin De Bonis Non W/A signed	6	0.75
Grant of administration signed	368	45.71
Grant of Double Probate signed	2	0.25
Grant of probate signed	269	33.42
Grant of Resealing signed	28	3.48
Letters of Administrator with W/A signed	26	3.23
Matter Withdrawn	2	0.25
Notice of Discontinuance noted	51	6.34
Struck Out	3	0.37
WR Grant of administration signed	13	1.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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The summary of the methods of disposal for the Estate Division for the year are contained in the above table. It is shown that of the 805 cases disposed during the Easter Term of 2025, an increase of 6.83% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The largest proportion, 671 or 84.72% was a result of various Grants Signed. Notices of Discontinuance and matters disposed by applications granted account for the next highest proportions of the methods of disposition.

**Table 32.0: Dominant reasons for adjournment of Estate matters for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	40	29.20
Defendant to file documents	16	11.70
Claimant's application not in order	15	10.90
No parties appearing	9	6.60
Claimant's documents not served or short served	6	6.70

**Total number of adjournments = 137**

The top five reasons for adjournment for Estate matters that went to court in the Easter Term of 2025 are summarized in the above table above. It is shown that of the 137 incidences of adjournments in the period, the largest proportion were for the reasons of 'claimant to file documents' which accounted for 40 or 29.20% of the total. This was followed by adjournments for defendants to file documents and no parties appearing with 11.70% and 10.90% respectively of the total number of adjournments. The overall incidence of case adjournments increased by 20.51% when compared to the corresponding rates in the previous year.

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**Table 33.0: Hearings summary for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percent
Application	304	86.61
Case Management Conference	16	4.56
Pre-Trial Review	15	4.27
Trial in Chamber	9	2.56
Trial in Open Court	7	1.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table provides a summary of the types of hearings conducted in Chamber and Open Court in the Estate Division during the Easter Term of 2025. The hearing of applications with roughly 86.61% of the total was dominant followed by pre-trial reviews with 15 or 4.27% and case management conferences with 4.56%. Applications to prove copy will and applications for directions account for the highest shares of applications filed.

**Table 35.0: Hearing date certainty for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Court/Chamber hearing dates set	Hearing dates adjourned (excluding continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
351	59	83.19

The above table addresses the extent of adherence with dates set for court/chamber matters in the Estate Division for the Easter Term of 2024. It is shown that there were 351 incidences of dates scheduled for Chamber or Court, 59 of which were adjourned for reasons other than 'continuance'. This produces an overall hearing date certainty rate of 83.19%, an indication that for the Easter Term there was a roughly 83% chance that a matter set for court would proceed

without the date being adjourned. This is an increase of 3.05 percentage points when compared to the similar period in 2022. When trial matters are isolated, the trial date certainty rate is roughly 77.50%, which is 1.85 percentage points above the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 36.0: Age of matters disposed for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

**Descriptive Statistics (months)**

Number of observations	805
Mean	19.5032
Median	13.0000
Mode	13.00
Std. Deviation	31.21471
Variance	974.358
Skewness	5.161
Std. Error of Skewness	.087
Range	271.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	269.00

The above table provides a summary measure of the overall estimated times to disposition for the 805 cases disposed during the Easter Term. The estimated average time to disposition is 19.50 months or approximately 1.63 years, slightly higher than that of the Easter Term of 2024. This result was however acutely positively skewed by the existence of a few large times to disposition, which have markedly increased the average. This large positive skewness therefore suggests that the substantially larger proportion of the times to disposition were below the overall average time. The standard deviation of 31.21 months supports the deduction that there were scores that varied widely from the mean, in this case skewing the average upwards. The

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margin of error of these estimates is plus or minus 2 months or 0.15 years. The oldest Estate matter disposed in the Easter Term was 269 months or roughly 22.42 years old while there were a few matters, which took as low as two months to be disposed, representing the lowest times to disposition in the period. Of the 805 Estate cases disposed during the Easter Term of 2025, 125 or 15.53% originated in 2025.

**Table 37.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 – 12	372	46.21
13 – 24	295	36.65
25 – 36	68	8.45
37 – 47	19	2.36
48 & over	51	6.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table shows that of the 805 Estate matters disposed in the Easter Term, the largest proportion of which, 372 or 46.21% were disposed in 12 months or less, followed by 295 or 36.65%, which were disposed within a time interval of 13 to 24 months. Taken together this data suggests that an impressive approximated 83% Estate matters which were disposed of in the Easter Term took two years or less. 8.45% each of the cases were disposed within an estimated time frame of between 25 and 36 months, 2.36% took between 37 and 47 months and 6.34% took an estimated time of over 48 months or more than four years to be disposed. The relatively high proportion of cases disposed within a year and two years respectively continues to augur well for the current efforts to significantly reduce the length of time that it takes for cases to be disposed and potentially eliminate case backlog in the foreseeable future. These gains should

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continue to improve public confidence in judicial processes geared towards resolving Estate matters in the country and also have a positive effect on economic activity through higher real estate investments in shorter period of time. The Estate Division continues to make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog.

**Table 38.0: Case clearance rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
1132	805	71.11%

Using the data on the number of cases filed and disposed in the period under examination, a case clearance rate of approximately 71.11% is derived, an increase of 1.15 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The result suggests that for every 100 cases filed and active in the Easter Term, roughly 6971 were disposed. It is a rare event that this division fails to meet the international standard of 90% - 100%, nevertheless the results show tremendous resilience. The Division experienced impressive gains in the number of cases disposed in the period but this was outpaced by the increase in the number of new cases filed, hence the fall in the case clearance rate. The Estate Division continued its process flow re- engineering throughout the Hilary Term and the improvements are expected to continue to reap significant economies of scale in the short run, further reinforcing the position of the Division among the top performing business units in the Supreme Court and creating the

impetus necessary to attain the performance targets which have been set out by the Honourable Chief Justice Mr. Bryan Sykes.

**Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) The on-time case processing rate**
- (ii) The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) The disposition days**
- (iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on-time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

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Table 39.0: Selected performances metrics for the Estate Division in the Easter Term of 2025

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate	Estimated case disposition days for the unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate
805	2256	0.36	1014 days	667	805	83%	17%

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.36, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were 'heard' during the Easter Term of 2025 and still active at the end of the period, another 36 were disposed, an improvement of 5 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. This result forms part of the computation of the case disposal days which reveals that the cases that went to court which were unresolved at the end of the year will on average take 1014 days or just under 3 years, barring special interventions.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on-time case-processing rate for the Estate Division in the Easter Term of 2025 is roughly 83%, which reflects the proportion of cases in the Easter Term of 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the case backlog rate is 17%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of 17% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This is a slight increase of roughly 0.75 percentage points when compared to the Easter Term of 2024. The data further suggests that of the 2256

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cases, which had some court activity in the Easter Term of 2025 and were still active at the end of the period, 384 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

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## CHAPTER 4.0: THE HOME CIRCUIT COURT

The analysis now turns to a look at case activity in the Home Circuit Court for the Easter Term of 2025.

**Table 40.0: Distribution of the top six new charges brought for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

A total of 207 new cases were filed in the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court during the Easter Term of 2025, an increase of 4.50% when compared to the Easter Term of 2024.

**Table 40.0: Leading reasons for adjournment for the Easter Term of 2025**

Reason for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Matter not reached	65	3.60
Defence and prosecution to engage in discussions	56	3.10
To settle legal representation	45	2.50
For disclosure	43	2.40
For investigating officer to attend	43	2.40
Crown to take instruction	38	2.10
Defence Counsel Absent	38	2.10
For bail application	38	2.10
Ballistic Certificate Outstanding	36	2.00
For antecedence	29	1.60
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>23.90</b>

*Note: Total number of adjournments 1788*

The above table provides a summary of the leading reasons for adjournment in the Home Circuit Court for the Easter Term of 2025. An examination of the prominent reasons for adjournment in the period reveals that the leading reason for adjournment was due to matters

not reached with 65 or 3.60%, followed by adjournments for the defence and prosecution to engage in discussions with 56 or 3.10% and adjournments to settle legal representation with 45 or 2.50%, rounding off the top three. Other commonly occurring reasons for adjournment during the Easter Term include adjournments to settle legal representation, adjournments for disclosure and adjournments for investigating officer to attend court, adjournments for Crown to take instruction and defence council absent.

When the data is further disaggregated, it is revealed that the main reasons for delay at the Plea and Case Management and Mention are those due to outstanding ballistic certificates, outstanding forensic certificates, statements outstanding, CFCD outstanding, accused absent, the defence needing time to take instructions and for the defence and prosecution to engage in discussions. The data further reveals that there was moderate incidence of repeats of the reasons for adjournment at the trial stage which would have occurred previously at the plea and case management stage for cases making that progression. The data reveals that the dominant reasons for adjournment at the trial stage were adjournments for investigating officer to attend, accused absent and defence counsel absent.

There continues to be compelling evidence from the above list of reasons for adjournment, suggesting that third party entities, namely the defence bar, the police, the prosecution, the state lab services contribute significantly to the delays experienced in the progression of cases in the Home Circuit Court. Indeed, the data suggests that only a small share of the reasons for

adjournment listed are attributable to deficits in the court's operational procedures. In fact, in many ways the data strongly suggests that once criminal cases are ready, they tend to move at a fairly rapid pace towards disposition and many of the roadblocks to case progression are primarily due to the named third party entities. The Supreme Court continues to work assiduously on improving the skill sets of its case progression officers and in bolstering the general efficiency of the operating procedures and scheduling apparatus of the criminal registry. Over the past two and a half years, the Plea and Case Management Court has for example been strengthened and the incidence of adjournments in this court reduced. The overall incidence of reasons for adjournment suggests that external parties are directly responsible for over 85% of the reasons for delay as operationalized by this measurement. The Criminal Registry of the Supreme Court continues to work on improving its overall efficiency in an effort to improve case management and to expedite case outcomes within the desired overall standard of two years or less. It is clear however that the core causes of delays in the Home Circuit Court are largely due to factors concerning external parties. The traditional claim that the inadequacy of courtrooms is a significant cause of delays should also be refuted as the courtroom utilization rate of under 65% suggests that there is some spare resource capacity, albeit in limited proportion in the Supreme Court. The ability of the Home Circuit Court to effectively and efficiently schedule cases requires some improvement and the attention of the court's leadership is fully invested in finding scientific resolutions in this regard. The overall effectiveness of the scheduling science in the Home Circuit Court continues to be constrained

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by a high incidence of adjournments which can be largely associated with third party inefficiencies.

The data suggest that there were roughly 2 adjournments per case heard in the Home Circuit Court in during the Easter Term of 2025.

**Table 41.0: Hearing date certainty summary for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Type of hearings	Hearing date certainty rate (%)
Mention and/Plea and Case Management Hearing	81
Bail Applications	74
Sentencing hearings	75
Trial hearings	67
<b>Total/Overall Average</b>	<b>74.25</b>

The date scheduling certainty for each Division of the Supreme Court is an important metric, which examines the extent to which dates, which are set for various types of hearings, are adhered. A low result has implications for the capacity of the court to adequately estimate the duration of a matter, for the capacity of courtrooms and Judges to absorb certain caseload and for the general system of scheduling. The data suggests that roughly 26 of every 100 hearing dates set during the Easter Term of 2025 were adjourned. This suggests an overall hearing date certainty rate of roughly 74% which is another way of saying that for every 100 criminal matters scheduled for court, roughly 74 were able to proceed without adjournment for reasons other than those procedural, for example for Trial, Bail Application, Pre-trial hearing, Sentencing and

Plea and Case Management. This result is just over 1 percentage point less than that of the corresponding period in 2024. When trial matters are isolated, the trial certainty rate revealed is 67%, a decline of just 0.50 percentage point when compared to the corresponding period in 2024 while Plea and Case Management Conferences had a hearing date certainty rate of 81%, a decline of roughly 2 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024.

Continuously improving the trial and overall hearing date certainty rates are of utmost importance to enhancing the efficiency of the court system. The court continues to work on improving the mechanism used to schedule cases for hearings and in so doing aid in reducing the incidence of adjournments.

As illustrated and discussed earlier, the cooperation and preparation of the prosecution, defence attorneys and other stakeholders as well as improved case management within the Home Circuit Court are also crucial the attainment of fostering the required gains. Some of the internal concerns, which will need to be reviewed as time progresses, are outlined below:

Firstly, the setting of a limited number of trial matters each week requires great precision in estimating the length of time that such trials will last. Failure to do this with accuracy and through the application of a scientific approach in consultation with all relevant parties will likely result in an under-utilization of judicial time either by way of many matters ending earlier than proposed or trials lasting longer than expected which could affect subsequent matters scheduled for the particular courtrooms. Furthermore, if the estimated duration of trials is not precisely determined then the proposed back up list, which should be triggered when a firmly

set trial matter breaks down in court, will prove very difficult to manage and could potentially worsen the currently fragile trial date certainty rates. In like manner, there are also some concerns over whether the scheduling of the start time for trial matters should be restricted to particular days in each week. It could be argued that unless the estimated duration of trials set is precise or near precise then imposing such restrictions could sub-optimize the use of judicial time.

Another set of concerns surround the utility of the Plea and Case Management Court as under the new Committal Proceedings Act, some of the case management that usually takes place in the lower courts now take place in the Supreme Court. Plea and case management conferences at the Supreme Court may not always therefore be principally focused on trial readiness but also aspects of case file readiness, which were previously handled at the parish court level. This arguably increases the average length of case management conferences and potentially creates added scheduling complexities in the Home Circuit Court. Here, the strength of the Case Progression Officers who help to marshal the readiness of cases is critical and must necessarily be always strong in order to sustain efficient use of judicial time. Any weaknesses in pre-case management also threaten the ability to guarantee that a back-up trial list will be successful. Poor hearing and trial date certainty rates, as obtains currently, may also be a function of the lack of adequate compliance with court orders and weak pre-case management practices. The speed and adequacy of compliance with orders such as those for outstanding documents to be furnished, for the defence and prosecution to agree on facts and for plea and case

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management forms to be returned so that issues can be understood are impediments to case progression and hearing date certainty.

**Table 42.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposal for Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Accused deceased	2	1.45
Formal verdict of not guilty	15	10.87
Found guilty	5	3.62
Found not guilty	19	13.77
Matter settled	1	0.72
No evidence offered	16	11.59
No Evidence Offered	4	2.90
No further evidence offered	16	11.59
Nolle Prosequi*	33	23.91
Not Indicted	12	8.70
Other	3	2.17
Plead guilty	5	3.62
Transferred to Parish Court	6	4.35
Withdrawn	1	0.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*Included for computational convenience*

The above table summarizes the methods of disposal for a sample of charges disposed during the Easter Term of 2025. A total of 67 cases were disposed in the Home Circuit Court during the Term, an increase of 2.50% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Apart from Nolle Prosequi entered by the DPP, matters disposed due to persons found not guilty accounted for the highest share of charges disposed with 13.77%, followed by matters disposed due to no further evidence offered and no evidence offered each with 11.59%.

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A useful measure of efficiency in the criminal court is the conviction rate as displayed below.

**Table 43.0: Distribution of Criminal conviction rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Sample of charges disposed	Total number of guilty outcomes	Estimated Conviction rate (%)
138	12	<b>8.70</b>

The above table shows that of the sample of 138 criminal charges disposed in the Home Circuit Court, 10 were because of guilty outcomes, whether by way of a verdict or a plea. This represents a conviction rate of 8.70% which suggests that there is a roughly 9% probability that a matter could end in a guilty outcome, using the Easter Term of 2025 as a proxy.

**Table 44.0: Descriptive statistics on the times to disposition of all charges for Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

## Descriptive Statistics (months)

Number of observations	138
Mean	30.5158
Median	15.8979
Mode	16.76 <sup>a</sup>
Std. Deviation	31.67745
Skewness	.690
Std. Error of Skewness	.208
Range	122.72
Minimum	1,00
Maximum	120.28

The above table provides a descriptive statistical summary on the times to disposition for matters

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resolved in the Home Circuit Court in the Easter Term of 2025. The overall average time to disposition seen is 30 months or 2.50 years, a decline of a year when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The skewness of the distribution is weakly positive which is an indication that a slightly proportionately larger share of the times to disposition fell below the overall mean time to disposition. The maximum time taken to dispose cases in the Home Circuit Court during the year was 120 months or roughly 4 years while the minimum time to disposition was approximately a month.

**Table 45.0: Breakdown of time to disposition of charges for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

**Descriptive Statistics (months)**

Time Interval	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	58	42.03
13 - 24	24	17.39
25 - 36	2	1.45
37 - 47	10	7.25
48 & over	44	31.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table provides a summary of the estimated time to disposition for the 138 cases disposed in the Home Circuit Court during the Easter Term of 2025. It is shown that the largest proportion of matters disposed took a year or less to be disposed, accounting for 42.03% of the disposals. This is followed by matters taking 48 months or more to be disposed which accounted for 31.88% of the total and matters which took between 13 and 24 months to be disposed which accounted for 17.39% of the total. Approximately 1.45% of the disposals took 25 – 36 months to be resolved, while 7.25% took between 37 and 47 months to be disposed, rounding off the intervals. Cumulatively, 59.42% of the matters disposed in the period took two years or less, an

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improvement of 12.50 percentage points when compared to the corresponding Term in 2024.

The remaining cases disposed took over two years to be disposed. Using 2025 Easter Term data as a proxy, there is a roughly 59% chance that a case entering the Home Circuit Court will fall into a state of backlog, using the 24 months' definition of reasonable time which is established in the Jamaican judiciary. Improvements in the science that is applied to scheduling and case management as a whole, paired with significant improvements in third party delay factors discussed earlier has enormous potential to reduce the probability of a case backlog to a remote incidence.

**Table 46.0: Case clearance rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
163	67	41.10%

In the Easter Term of 2025, the Home Circuit Court recorded an overall case clearance rate of 41.10%, representing a slight increase of 1.05 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024

## **Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

**(i) The on-time case processing rate**

**(ii) The case turnover ratio**

**(iii) The disposition days**

**(iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on-time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 47.0: Selected performances metrics for the Home Circuit Court in the Easter Term of 2025**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Disposition days	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
67	897	0.07	5214	40	27	59	41

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.05, which is an indication that for every 100 criminal cases, which were active in the Easter Term of 2025 and still active at the end of the Term, another 6 were disposed.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on-time case-processing rate for the Home Circuit Court in the Easter Term of 2025 is approximately 58%, which reflects the proportion of cases resolved during the Term which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the proxy case backlog rate is approximately 41%, an

indication that an estimated proportion of 41% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This further suggests that of the 897 cases, which had some court activity during the Easter Term and were still active at the end of the period, 368 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

**CHAPTER 5.0: HIGH COURT DIVISION OF THE GUN COURT**

The ensuing analyses provides an overview of case activity in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025. In particular, this section outlines data related to matters initiated, matters disposed, adjournments and the distribution of trial and mention matters during the year. One hundred and six new Gun Court cases were filed during the Easter Term of 2025, a decline of 2 or 1.85% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The dominant charges filed in the period were illegal possession of firearm, illegal possession of ammunition and shooting with intent.

**Table 48.0a: Most frequently occurring reasons for adjournment for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Reason for Adjournment	Frequency	Percent
For file to be completed	565	13.30
Ballistic Certificate Outstanding	295	7.0
Statements Outstanding	255	6.0
For disclosure	241	5.70
DNA Result Outstanding	177	4.20
Scene of Crime Statement Outstanding	176	4.10
Scene of Crime CD Outstanding	165	3.90
Crown not ready	118	2.80
For Antecedent	116	2.70
Matter not reached	104	2.50
Witness Absent	96	2.30
Defense Counsel Absent	95	2.20
Subpoena Witness	92	2.20
Medical Certificate Outstanding	92	2.20
Forensic Certificate Outstanding	90	2.10
Other documents outstanding	65	1.50

**Total number of adjournments and continuances (N) =1821. NB: Other documents outstanding include scene of crime reports, police officer statistics and outstanding miscellaneous certificates.**

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The above table outlines the top reasons for adjournment in the Gun Court for the Easter Term of 2025, including continuances. At the top of the list were adjournments for file to be completed with 565 or 13.30%, ballistic certificate outstanding with 295 or 7.00%, statements outstanding with 255 or 6.0% and adjournments for disclosure with 241 or 5.70%. As with previous reports, a significant proportion of the reasons for adjournment are due to third party factors. The situation continues to necessitate targeted engagement by the judiciary.

**Table 49.0b: Stages of Adjournment**

Stages of Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Application for Bail	682	16.1
Application for Release of Motor Vehicle	2	.0
Mention	1392	32.8
New (first before Court)	452	10.6
Other	9	.2
Part Heard	365	8.6
PCMH and Bail Application	64	1.5
Plea and Case Management	290	6.8
Sentence	127	3.0
Trial with Judge and Jury	2	.0
Trial with Judge Only	859	20.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4244</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above dataset provides a summary of the stages of adjournments (including continuances) for matters adjourned during the Easter Term of 2025. It is seen that the largest proportion of

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these adjournments took place at the mention stage accounting for 32.80%, followed by adjournments at the trial stage with roughly 20.20% and adjournments at the new – first before the court stage with 10.60% and at the plea and case management stage with 6.80%.

**Table 50.0a: Distribution of types of hearings for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Application for Bail	190	11.1
Application for Release of Motor Vehicle	2	.1
Mention	437	25.6
New (first before court)	2	.1
New (first before Court)	112	6.6
Other	17	1.0
Part Heard	227	13.3
PCMH and Bail Application	32	1.9
Plea and Case Management	151	8.8
Sentence	89	5.2
Trial with Judge and Jury	1	.1
Trial with Judge Only	447	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1707</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Trials accounted for the highest incidence of hearings during the Easter Terms of 2025, accounting for 26.3% of the total while mention court hearings with 25.60% was next and bail application hearings and part heard hearings round off the tops four incidences of hearings.

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Table 50.0b: Hearing date certainty summary for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Type of hearing dates	Estimated hearing date certainty rate (%)
Mention hearings	78.89
Plea and Case Management hearing	86.25
Bail Applications	79
Sentencing hearings	75.45
Trial hearings	63.25
<b>Total/Overall Average</b>	<b>76.59</b>

The date scheduling certainty for each Division of the Supreme Court is an important metric, which examines the extent to which dates, which are set for various types of hearings, are adhered. A low result has implications for the capacity of the court to adequately estimate the duration of a matter, for the capacity of courtrooms and Judges to absorb certain caseload and for the general system of scheduling. In the table above it is shown that an overall hearing date certainty rate of roughly 76.59% was recorded which is another way of saying that for every 100 criminal matters scheduled for court, roughly 77 are able to proceed without adjournment for reasons other than those procedural, for example for Trial, Bail Application, Sentencing and Plea and Case Management. This represents a decline of roughly 1.5 percentage points when compared to the Easter Term of the previous year. When trial matters are isolated, the trial certainty rate revealed is 63.25%, an increase of 1.25 percentage points when compared to the Easter Term of 2024, the second consecutive quarter of contraction.

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Table 51.0: Methods of case/charge disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage
Accused Deceased	3	1.0
Conditional Nolle Prosequi	3	1.0
Found Guilty	28	9.3
Found Not Guilty	42	13.9
Guilty Plea	1	.3
No Case Submission Upheld	25	8.3
No Evidence Offered	67	22.20
No Further Evidence Offered	63	20.9
Nolle Prosequi	16	5.3
Plead Guilty	33	10.9
Remitted to Parish Court	3	1.0
Transferred to Gun Court	13	4.3
Transferred to Parish Court	5	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*\*\*Inactive cases, included here for computational convenience*

The above table summarizes the methods of disposition for the charges disposed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court for the Easter Term of 2025. It is seen that there were 302 charges which became disposed or inactive, the largest proportion of which were a result of no evidence offered – discharged and guilty pleas which accounted for 67 or 22.20% and 63 or 20.90% respectively of the total. In third were disposals due to persons found not guilty with 28 or 13.90%. The 302 charges disposed is the equivalent of 92 unique cases, representing a decline of 5.32% when compared to the Easter Term of 2024.

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**Table 52.0: Estimated Conviction rate in the Gun Court for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Number of charges disposed	Number of Guilty outcomes (i.e., guilty verdicts and guilty pleas)	Conviction rate (%)
302	24	7.95

The overall conviction rate in the Gun Court is summarized in the above table. It is seen that of the 302 disposed charges in the Easter Term of 2025, 24 were a result of either a guilty plea or a guilty verdict. This produces an overall conviction rate of 7.95% for Gun Court charges resolved during the Term, approximately 1.60 percentage points below the rate in the corresponding period in 2024. The following table delves further into the conviction rate, by the substantive matter.

**Table 53.0: Time to disposition (from case file date) for charges disposed of in the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

## Descriptive Statistics (in months)

Number of charges disposed	302
Mean	34.4567
Median	27.2050
Std. Deviation	35.189
Skewness	2.789
Std. Error of Skewness	.140
Range	287.68
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	284.42

The above table summarizes the time taken to dispose of cases in the Gun Court in the Easter Term of 2025, counting from the date cases were filed. It is seen that the estimated average time

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to disposition from the date of case is approximately 34 months, an increase of roughly 2 months when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The data set for this measure is positively skewed, indicating that proportionately more of the times to disposition fell below the overall series mean. The estimated maximum time to disposition for the data set is approximately 9 years. The estimated minimum time to disposition from the date of filing was roughly a month. The median time to disposition of roughly 27 months is notably lower than the mean time.

**Table 55.0: Breakdown of times to disposition (from case file date) for the charges disposed in the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Date Interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 - 12	85	28.15
12 - 24	56	18.54
25 - 36	46	15.23
37 - 47	37	12.25
48 & over	78	25.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table provides a further breakdown of the estimated time to disposition for the charges disposed in the Easter Term of 2025, counting from the case file date. The data shows that the largest proportion of the disposals using this method took a year or less. This interval accounted for 85 or 28.15% of the disposals and was followed by charges taking over 48 months to be disposed with 78 or 25.83%. A further 18.54% of the charges were disposed within 25-36 months, 15.23% took 25 – 36 months and the remaining 12.25% took between 37 and 47 months to be disposed. Roughly 47% of the cases disposed were resolved within two years.

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It must be noted that the increase in the number of cases disposed which took more than two years is largely a result of inactive cases in the gross backlog which were reactivated.

**Table 56.0: Case clearance rate for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
106	92	86.79%

One hundred and four new cases were filed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in the Easter Term of 2025 while 92 cases were also disposed or inactivated (including many which originated before the Term) leading to a clearance rate of exactly 86.79% for the period. This output represents a 7.28 percentage points increase when compared to the corresponding period in 2024.

## **Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) The on-time case processing rate**
- (ii) The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) The disposition days**
- (iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on-time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of

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cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 57.0: Selected performances metrics for the Gun Court in the Easter Term of 2025**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated disposition days for unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy case backlog rate (%)
92	389	0.24	1521	54	92	41.30	53.70

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.32, which is an indication that for every 100 cases which were 'heard' during the Easter Term of 2025 and still active, 24 pre-existing cases were disposed.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on-time case-processing rate for the Gun Court in the Easter Term of 2025 is approximately 41.30%, which reflects the proportion of Gun Court cases in the Easter Term of 2025, which were disposed within 2 years.

**CHAPTER 6.0: COMMERCIAL DIVISION**

This chapter presents data on case activity in the Commercial Division in the Easter Term of 2025 as well as important performance measurements and year on year comparisons where applicable.

**Table 58.0: Cases filed in the Commercial Division in the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Division	Number of new cases filed
Commercial	133

In the Easter Term of 2025, 133 new cases were filed, a decrease of 12.52% when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The Commercial Division currently steadily averages over 500 new cases per year and its productivity is important in sending signals to economic agents both in a country and internationally.

**Table 59.0: Sampling distribution of the top six reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Commercial Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Reasons for adjournment	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	12.05
Claimant's document not served	10.15
Part Heard in Progress	10.15
Defendant to file documents	7.95
Matter referred to mediation	7.90
Parties having discussions with a view to settlement	7.20
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>55.52</b>

**Number of observations (N) = 149**

The above table provides a sampling distribution of the top five reasons for adjournment in the Commercial Division for the Easter Term of 2025. A total of 149 such incidences sampled reveal that adjournments due to claimant to file documents with 12.05%, claimant's documents not

served with 10.15 and part-heard in progress each with 10.15% accounted for the top three reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Commercial Division for the Easter Term. The top six reasons for adjournment/continuance documented from the sample accounts for 55.52% of the total. These leading reasons for adjournment listed are largely attributable to factors which are not within the direct realm of direct court control.

**Table 60.0: Sampling distribution of cases with chamber hearings for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Hearings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Applications (Various)	243	48.6
Case Management Conference	41	8.2
Pre-trial review	24	4.8
Judgment summons hearing	192	38.4
<b>Sample size</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table summarizes a sample of 500 cases which had chamber hearings in the Commercial Division during the Easter Term of 2025. As with the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, the hearing of various applications for relief sought dominates the list with roughly 48.60% of the matters with chamber hearings. Judgment summons hearings with 192 or 38.40% and case management conference with 41 or 8.20% rounds off the top three incidence of chamber hearings.

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**Table 61: Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty in the Commercial Division for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Type of hearings	Estimated Hearing date certainty rate (%)
Case Management Conferences	90.15
Trials in Chamber, Trials in Open Court and Assessments of Damages	75.50
All hearings combined	85.75

The above table breaks down the hearing date certainty rates for two significant types of hearings and also gives the overall rate for the Easter Term of 2025. It is shown that Case Management Conferences had an estimated hearing date certainty rate of 90.15% for the period, up by 5.25 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024, while the combined weighted hearing date certainty rate for trials in chamber, assessments of damages and open court is estimated to be 75.50%, an increase of 2.95 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The overall hearing date certainty rate when all types of hearings are considered is approximately 85.75%, an increase of 3.55 percentage points over the corresponding period in 2024. The continued general improvement in the hearing date certainty of the Commercial Division is a step in the right direction as over time this will translate into higher case clearance rates and generally greater productivity. The efficiency of the Commercial Division is an important signal for economic activity in Jamaica.

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Table 62.0: Requisitions summary for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Requisitions Issued	Requisition Responses	Requisitions clearance Rate	Requisitions issued per 100 case files
74	58	78.38	24

\*This figure includes requisitions filed on matters originating prior to 2025

The above table provides a summary of the response rate for requisitions issued in the Commercial Division in the Easter Term of 2025. It is shown that 74 requisitions were issued in the year while there were 58 responses filed, thus producing a requisitions clearance rate of 78.38%, an increase of 2.55 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. This requisition clearance rate suggests that during the Easter Term, for every 10 requisitions issued, roughly eight responses were filed. Additionally, there was an average incidence of 24 requisitions per 100 case files in the Commercial Division for the Term.

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Table 63: Methods of disposition for the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Agreed to pay by installment	3	1.66
Application Granted	4	2.21
Application Refused	2	1.10
Consent Order	3	1.66
Judgment	3	1.66
Judgment Delivered	1	0.55
Judgment in Default of acknowledge of Service	3	1.66
Judgment in default of defence	1	0.55
Judgment on Admission	3	1.66
Matter Discontinued	145	80.11
Matter Withdrawn	4	2.21
Settled	2	1.10
Struck Out	2	1.10
Transfer to Commercial (Ordered)	3	1.66
Written Judgment Delivered	2	1.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data suggests that 181 cases in the Commercial Division were disposed in the Easter Term of 2025, an increase of 19.58% when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. Disposals by way of matters discontinued with 145 or 80.11% accounted for the largest share of disposals in the period of reporting.

**Table 64.0: Time to disposition for Commercial cases disposed in the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

**Descriptive Statistics (in months)**

Number of observations	181
Mean	22.4152
Median	13.0000
Mode	13.00
Std. Deviation	18.5678
Skewness	1.893
Std. Error of Skewness	.220
Range	80.00
Minimum	3.00
Maximum	83.00

The above table shows that the estimated average time to disposition for the 181 Commercial cases disposed in the Easter Term of 2025 is 22.41 months or approximately 1 year and nine months, just over two months shorter than the average in the corresponding period in 2024. The maximum time to disposition observed from these cases is roughly 7 years while the lowest is roughly three months. It is of note that the modal and median times to disposition were both 13 months, encouraging signs of continued progress in the overall time taken to resolve commercial matters. The positive skewness observed also suggests that the proportionately more of the commercial cases disposed in the Easter Term of 2025 took less time than the overall mean.

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**Table 66.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for Commercial cases resolved in the Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 – 12	67	37.02
12 – 24	53	29.28
25 – 36	30	16.57
37 – 47	31	17.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table provides a breakdown of the times to disposition for the cases disposed in the Commercial Division in the Easter Term of 2025. It is seen that the largest proportion of these cases were disposed of within a year, accounting for an impressive 37.0% of the disposals. This is followed by 53 or 29.28%, which took between 12 and 24 months to be disposed and 31 or 17.13% and 30 or 16.57% respectively which took between 37 – 47 months and 25 – 36 months to be disposed. Taken together, the data suggest that 66.30 of the cases disposed in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term of 2025 were resolved within 2 years.

**Table 67.0: Case clearance rate for the Commercial Division for Easter Term ended July 31, 2025**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
133	181	136%

One hundred and thirty-three new cases were filed in the Commercial Division in the Easter Term of 2025, while 181 cases were disposed which yields a case clearance rate of 136%. This result suggests that for every 10 new cases filed in the year, roughly 14 cases were disposed,

an improvement of roughly 46 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024.

#### **Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) The on time case processing rate**
- (ii) The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) The disposition days**
- (iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Easter Term of 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

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Table 68.0: Selected performances metrics for the Commercial Division for the Easter Term of 2025

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Disposition days	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
181	405	0.45	811 days	120	61	66.30	33.70

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.45 which is an indication that for every 100 cases which were 'heard' in the Easter Term of 2025 and still active, another 45 were disposed, an increase of 14 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it remains unresolved for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on-time case-processing rate for the Commercial cases in the Easter Term of 2025, is a commendable 66.30% which reflects the proportion of Commercial cases in the Easter Term of 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is a 33.70%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 34% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This further suggests that of the 405 cases which had some activity during the Easter Term and were still active at the end of the period, 136 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

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## CHAPTER 7.0: Aggregate Case Activity, Outstanding Judgments, Courtroom Utilization and Guest Contribution from a selected Division of the Supreme Court

### Aggregate Case Clearance Rate

Analysis of the productivity of the judiciary, subject to its resource constraints is an important metric for gauging efficiency and for informing policy and operational interventions. Among the key measures of court productivity is the case clearance rate. The below table provides a summary of the collective case clearance rate for the Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025.

**Table 69.0a: Gross case clearance rate for the Easter Term of 2025**

Total cases filed	Total cases disposed	Gross Case clearance rate
4298	3415	83.05

The above table provides an aggregate summary of the clearance rates in the Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025. The data suggests that 4298 new cases were filed/entered across the Divisions reviewed during the Term, a decrease of roughly 4.79% when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. There were 3415 cases disposed across the Divisions of the Supreme Court during the Easter Term, an increase of 7.28% when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. These results yield an overall case clearance rate of roughly 83.05% representing, an increase of 8.03 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024 and suggesting that for every 100 cases filed/entered during the period, roughly, 83 were also disposed. In the Easter Term of 2025, the Divisions

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with the highest case clearance rates were the Commercial Division with 113.46%, the Family Division with 88.42% and the High Court Civil Division with 75.12%.

## Aggregate Case Activity for the past two calendar years

**Table 54.0: Summary of new cases filed and cases disposed in the Supreme Court (2023 – 2024) [Selected Divisions]**

Division	Aggregate number of new cases filed in 2024	Aggregate number of cases disposed in 2024	Case Clearance Rate (%) - 2024	Aggregate number of new cases filed in 2023	Aggregate number of cases disposed in 2023	Case Clearance Rate (%) - 2023
High Court Civil (HCV)	4934	3135	63.54	4264	2706	63.46
Family	4252	4651	109.3	4499	4073	90.53
Estate	3540	2809	79.35	3452	2778	80.47
Commercial	471	445	94.48	610	324	53.11
Home Circuit Court	301	169	56.15	350	187	53.43
Gun Court	363	297	81.82	338	275	81.36
Revenue Court	3	1	80.00	8	9	112.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>13864</b>	<b>11507</b>	<b>83.00</b>	<b>13521</b>	<b>10352</b>	<b>76.56</b>

*Note: Excludes Insolvency and Admiralty Cases and thus deviates from the overall aggregates*

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## Case Activity Summary for the Easter Term of 2025

The below table provides a summary of core case activity for each Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025.

**Table 71.0: Aggregate case activity in the Easter Term of 2025**

Division	New cases Filed	Aggregate number of cases disposed	Clearance Rate (%)	Average time To Disposition (months)	Hearing Date Certainty Rate (%)
High Court Civil (HCV)	1281	964	75.25	56.24	90.52
Estate	1132	805	71.11	19.50	83.19
Family	1483	1306	88.06	24.14	86.44
Commercial	133	181	136.00	22.42	85.75
Home Circuit Court	163	67	41.10	30.51	74.25
High Court Division of Gun Court	106	92	86.77	34.46	76.59
<b>Gross/Weighted Average</b>	<b>4298</b>	<b>3415</b>	<b>83.05</b>	<b>31.21</b>	<b>82.79</b>

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The above table provides an important summary of case activity in the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025. It is shown that 4298 cases were filed/entered across the Divisions of the Supreme Court during the Term, with the highest proportion accounted for by the Family Division with 1483 or 34.50%. The High Court Civil Division with 1281 new cases filed or 28.32% and the Estate Division with 1132 or 26.34% accounts for the next highest shares of new cases filed during the Easter Term.

The Family Division and the High Court Civil Division with 1306 or 38.24% and 964 or 28.23% respectively account for the highest share of case disposed during the Easter Term of 2025. The Commercial Division and the Family Division with case clearance rates of 136% and 88.06% recorded the highest case clearance rates, followed by the High Court Division of the Gun Court with a case clearance rate of 86.77%. The overall case clearance rate for the Supreme Court for the Easter Term of 2025 is roughly 83.05%, an increase of 8.03 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The High Court Civil (HCV) Division accounted for the longest average time to disposition with cases taking an average of roughly 56 months (4 years and 4 months) to be disposed. The High Court Division of the Gun Court is next with an average time to disposition of approximately 35.87 months (approximately 3 years) while Estate and Commercial Divisions with estimated average times to disposition of 19.50 months (roughly 1 year and 6 months) and 22.42 months (1 year and 10 months) respectively account for the lowest average times to disposition for matters resolved in the Easter Term of 2025. The overall weighted average time taken to dispose of the cases resolved in the period was roughly

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31 months (two years and 7 month), approximately the same as the previous year. The Divisions of the Supreme Court remained steady on hearing date certainty rates during the Easter Term, registering an overall outcome of 82.79%, 3.15 percentage points higher than that of the corresponding period in 2024.

## **Judgments Reserved and Judgments Delivered**

This sub-section provides a summary of the civil judgments reserved and delivered in the Easter Term of 2025.

**Table 72.0: Summary of Judgments Reserved and Delivered in the Easter Term of 2025**

Number of Judgments reserved on cases	Number of Judgments delivered on cases	Clearance rate for case Judgments	Number of Judgments reserved on applications	Number of judgments/rulings delivered on applications	Clearance rates for rulings on application (%)
132	97	73.48%	128	91	71

A total of 132 judgements were reserved in the Easter Term of 2025 while a total of 97 judgments were delivered. This output led to a comparatively modest clearance rate of 73.48. The result represents a 2.50 percentage points decline when compared to the corresponding period in 2024. The decline may be partly explained by the general decline in outstanding judgments in the civil divisions and the increased demand for civil adjudication but there may also be underlying operational inefficiencies which require further investigation.

In terms of rulings on applications, it is seen that there were 128 rulings on applications reserved during the Easter Term of 2025 while 91 were disposed, producing a clearance rate on rulings on

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application of 71%, an improvement of 1.05 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2024.

## **Estimated Courtroom/Hearing Utilization Rate in the Easter Term of 2025**

Using a sample of cases heard in open court in the Easter Term of 2025, the courtroom utilization rate for the Supreme Court was estimated to be 59%, roughly the same as the corresponding period in 2024 and suggests that just about 3 of every 5 available hours for hearings were utilized in the period. The significant and successful use of virtual hearings, particularly in relation to civil matters in the Supreme Court has essentially eliminated available physical courtroom space as a resource constraint to total productivity of the Supreme Court as whole and the civil divisions in particular. This is expected to contribute positively to the utilization of judicial time going forward.

## **Modes of hearing in the Civil, Probate and Matrimonial Divisions in the Easter Term of 2025**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Supreme Court started moving a significant proportion of its hearings online in order to mitigate potentially crippling effects on court operations. Since then, virtual hearings have steadily become a mainstream part of the daily operations of the court.

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**Table 73.0: Sampling distribution of the modes of hearing for civil matters in the Supreme Court in the Easter Term of 2025**

	Percentage (%)
In person	5.94
Teleconference	0.05
Video conference	94.01
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Sample size = 5645*

It is seen in the above sample summary that the overwhelming majority of hearings conducted in the combined High Court Civil, Commercial, Family and Estate Divisions of the Supreme Court were done by video conference, accounting for an estimated 94.01% of hearings conducted, while in person hearings accounted for 5.94% and teleconferences accounted for 0.05% of this representative sample of hearings in the period. The general improvement in hearing date certainty rate which is being observed in civil cases since the latter part of 2021 is partly a result the mass movement of cases online, a process which started in 2020, but have now becoming customary place. It has essentially removed courtroom space as a constraint on court productivity, paving the way for greater efficiency in the court's operation.

**CHAPTER 8.0: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Supreme Court of Jamaica continues to perform overall at its best rates on record. The overall case clearance rate of 83.05% is one of its bests on record, and such rates of over 80% for the Jamaican Supreme Court are now common place. This is a significant improvement of over 20 percentage points when compared to the five years prior. It means that the Supreme Court is gradually improving efficiency and making inroads into its case backlog. Concomitant with the overall increase in case clearance rate has been an overall improvement in hearing and trial date certainty rates, although the strides in these areas are less impressive so far, due to the lagged effect of case clearance on these metrics. The overall average time to disposition in the Supreme Court has remained a bit stubborn despite the general advances in other key metrics indicated, however as efficiencies continue to improve across divisions, the forecast is for the average time taken to dispose of cases to also start to decline. There are still variations in the level of productivity across divisions, with the Family Division continuing to maintain robust output across nearly all metrics, the Commercial Division continued two years of marked gains in efficiency and the High Court Civil Division continuing what is nothing short of a noteworthy turnaround in performance. The Estate Division has seen some marginal declines in case clearance rates over the past two years, but this is partly due to a surge in new cases filed. This division nevertheless continues to maintain the lowest time to disposition in the Supreme Court. The High Court Division of the Gun Court and the Revenue Court continues to maintain relatively strong output. The overall situation across divisions in the Supreme Court is one of continued advances which will undoubtedly result in much higher levels of efficiency in case movement as time progresses. It is a testament to the visionary leadership of the Honourable Chief Justice Mr. Bryan Sykes and the quality of leadership in the various registries and courts.

### Glossary of Statistical Terms

**Clearance rate:** The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is 110/100 or 110%.

**Note:** The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system.<sup>i</sup>

**Disposal rate:** As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

**Note:** A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system.<sup>ii</sup>

**Trial/hearing date certainty:** This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and

40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

**Courtroom utilization rate:** The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

**Case congestion rate:** The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

**Case File Integrity Rate:** Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the casfile integrity is 100%

**Standard deviation:** This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are **around** the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

**Outlier:** An outlier is a value that is either too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

**Skewness:** This is measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

**Range:** This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

**Case backlog:** A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

*Source:*

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRateS.pdf>

*<sup>i</sup> Source:*

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRateS.pdf>

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**Hilary Term:** The first of the High Court Terms, usually spanning the period from early January to just before the start of Easter. In 2019, the Easter Term ran from January 07 – April 12.

**Easter Term:** The second of the High Court Terms, usually spanning some days after the end of Easter through to the end of July. In 2019, the Easter Term was between April 25 and July 31.

**Michaelmas Term:** The Term in the High Court which usually spans a period from mid- September through to a few days before Christmas. In 2019, the Michaelmas Term spanned September 16 through to December 20.

**Weighted Average:** Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups, and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court.

A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

**Continuance and Adjournment:** In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment'. Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates but continuances do not.

**Exponential smoothing:** Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older the data, the less priority ("weight") the data is given; newer data is seen as more relevant and is assigned more weight.

**Crude Proxy:** A rough estimate

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