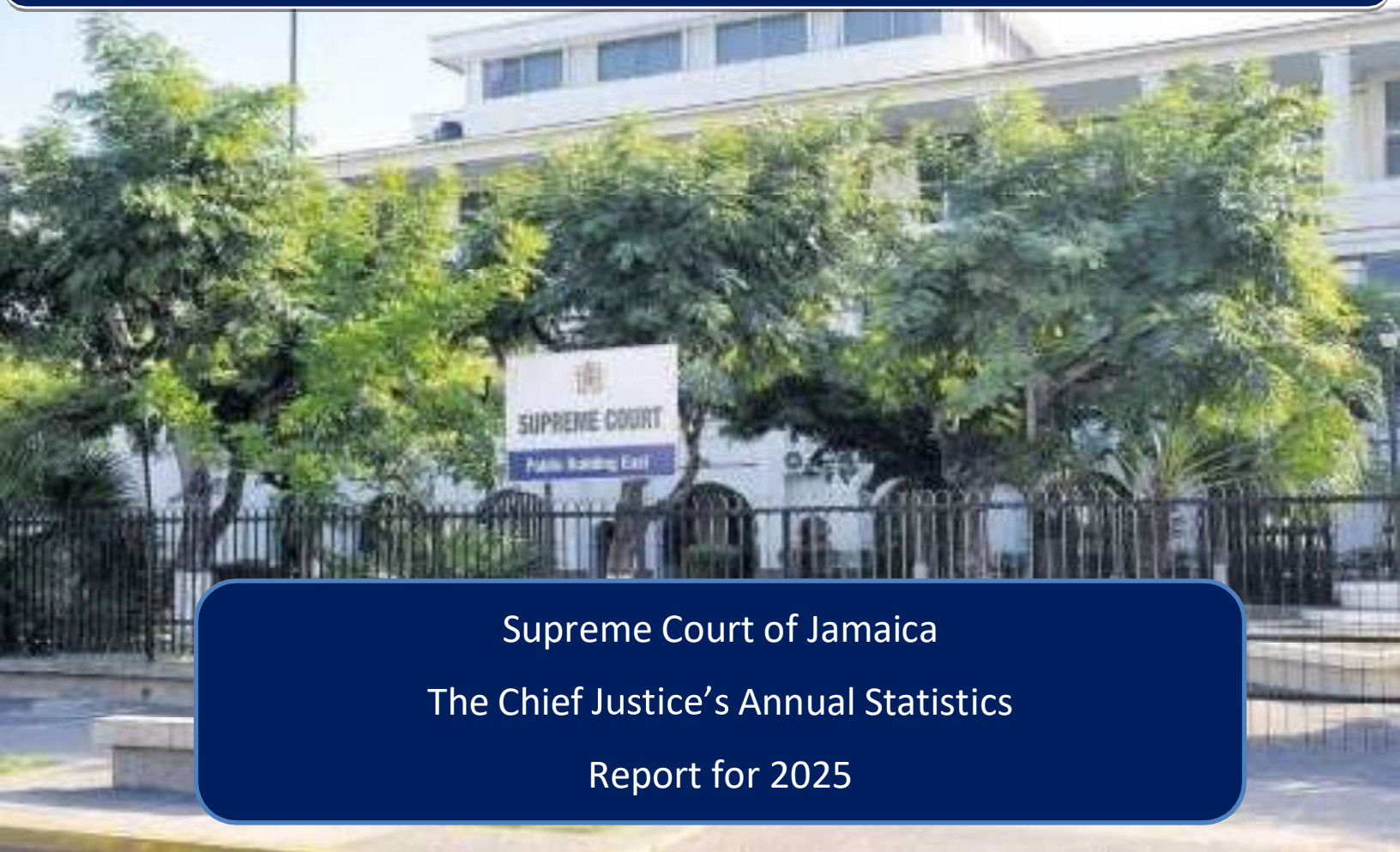


THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S ANNUAL STATISTICS REPORT ON THE SUPREME COURT FOR 2025



Supreme Court of Jamaica The Chief Justice's Annual Statistics Report for 2025

OVERALL QUANTITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Case clearance rate (%)	85.86	83.00	76.56
Hearing date certainty rate (%)	77.37	77.45	74.39
Case file integrity rate (%)	97.82	96.76	97.47
Average time to disposition of cases (years)	2.25	2.79	2.76
Clearance rate on outstanding Judgments (%)	109.73	112.96	115.66

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary and introduction provide a comprehensive overview of the Chief Justice's Annual Statistics Report for 2025 regarding the Supreme Court of Jamaica. It serves as a critical diagnostic tool for assessing the operational health and trajectory of the Supreme Court of Jamaica. By utilizing a range of quantitative metrics—including case clearance rates, hearing date certainty, and average disposition times—the report provides a transparent account of the judiciary's performance across its various divisions. This reporting cycle is characterized by a commitment to data-driven decision-making, aiming to identify both systemic efficiencies and areas requiring targeted intervention. The findings within this report reflect a judiciary in transition, showing a steady multi-year improvement in the overall ability to resolve cases. The report also emphasizes the evolving nature of the court's operations, particularly the high reliance on video conferencing to maintain accessibility and continuity in the High Court Civil, Commercial, Matrimonial, and Estate Divisions. Ultimately, this report functions as a strategic roadmap, using historical data and predictive forecasting to guide the court toward its goal of becoming a model of judicial efficiency.

The Supreme Court demonstrated significant progress in 2025, marked by a continued upward trend in its overall case clearance rate. This core metric, which measures the court's ability to dispose of cases relative to new filings, rose to 85.86%, up from 83.00% in 2024 and 76.56% in 2023. This improvement suggests that the court is increasingly effective at managing its total workload. A cornerstone of the court's performance in 2025 was its focus on clearing outstanding judgments, achieving a clearance rate of 109.73%. This indicates that the judiciary is successfully reducing the backlog of reserved judgments from prior periods. Furthermore, the average time required to reach a

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final disposition across all cases was 26.94 months, or roughly 2.25 years, while the case file integrity rate—a measure of administrative reliability—reached a high of 97.82%. Operational reliability is further evidenced by a stable hearing date certainty rate of 77.37%. This metric underscores the extent to which scheduled hearings actually proceed as planned, which is essential for a predictable and reliable case scheduling process. Notably, the vast majority of hearings in civil matters were conducted via video conference, accounting for 92.40% of all sessions. Despite these broad gains, divisional performance varied significantly. Among the major divisions, the Commercial Division led the way by maintaining a strong 132.86% case clearance rate. The Family Division also performed robustly, clearing 110 cases for every 100 new filings (a case clearance rate of 110%). The High Court Civil (HCV) and Home Circuit Court divisions faced the most substantial hurdles, with backlog rates reaching approximately 64% in both. The HCV division, which handles the largest volume of cases, also recorded the longest average disposition time at 46.50 months. The Gun Court stood out for its timely processing, with an on-time case processing rate of 84.26%, meaning a large majority of its cases are resolved within established time standards. Overall, the Supreme Court is on a positive trajectory, with forecasting models predicting sustained success in clearing judgments and improving efficiency through 2026. However, the report indicates that reducing the persistent backlog in the Civil and Home Circuit Courts remains a primary strategic priority for the upcoming judicial year of 2026.

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2025

See below Supreme Court case activity summary for 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)	4934	3135	74.24	46.50	80.75
Family	3749	4124	110	44.24	78.44
Estate	3218	2935	91.21	19.36	80.04
Commercial	420	558	132.86	22.52	84.87
Home Circuit Court	260	138	53.08	41.00	69.13
Gun Court	389	244	62.72	16.57	71
Revenue Court	2	3	150%	-	-
Insolvency	7	4	57.14	11.54	-
Admiralty	2	4	200%	13.75	
Gross/Weighted Average	12,981	11,145	85.86	26.94	77.37

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

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 2024. These measures are summarized in the table below:

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2025

Selected performances metrics for the Supreme Court in 2025

Division of the Supreme Court	Resolved/Disposed cases	Unresolved cases which had some administrative or court activity in 2025	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
High Court Civil (HCV)	3453	9089	1225	35.66	64.34
Family Division	3749	4124	2971	72.04	27.96
Estate Division	2935	3372	2363	80.51	19.49
Commercial Division	558	821	337	60.40	39.60
Home Circuit Court	169	1189	-	36	64
Gun Court	244	556	-	84.26	15.74
Total/Weighted Average	1851	3192	1724	61.48	38.52

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2025

Vital Forecasts:

Forecast of case activity in the Divisions of the Supreme Court in 2026

Division	Forecasted number of new cases	Forecasted number of disposed cases	Forecasted Case Clearance Rate (%)
High Court Civil Division	5094	3783	74.32
Family Division	3940	4179	106.07
Estate Division	3276	3002	91.64
Home Circuit Court	275	146	53.09
High Court Division of the Gun Court	394	251	63.71
Commercial Division	425	500	117.65
Revenue Division	3	4	83.33
Total/Weighted Average	13,407	11,865	88.50

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 2026 as well as the projected case clearance rates. The forecasted number of new cases entering the Supreme Court in 2026 is 13,407 while the forecasted number of disposed cases across the divisions/sections is 11,865. These predicted values would produce a weighted case clearance rate of 88.50% in 2026.

Forecast for Judgments Reserved and Delivered in 2026

Forecasted number of Judgments Reserved	Forecasted number of Judgments Delivered	Forecasted clearance rate on Judgments (%)
292	301	103.08

Note: Forecasting done using the method of exponential smoothing

The Supreme Court is expected to sustain its positive direction in clearing outstanding judgments in 2026. Using the method of exponential smoothing, with a smoothing constant of >0.50, it is forecasted that 292 judgments will be delivered by the Supreme Court in 2025 and 301 new ones will be reserved. This produces a forecasted clearance rate on judgments of 103.08% in 2026, 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. For the civil divisions, 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 the High Court Division of the Gun Court, the Home Circuit Court and the Revenue Court, the new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) is utilized. In all divisions, live court data is also recorded in the systems from inside court by the Court Clerks. In order to assure the integrity of the data that is entered into the systems, 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 into the systems, 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

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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.

Structure of Report

This is a comprehensive statistical report on case activity in the various Divisions of the Supreme Court in 2025. Each of the first six chapters focus on case activity and performance metrics in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, the Matrimonial Division, the Probate Division, the Commercial Division, the Home Circuit Court and the High Court Division of the Gun Court. The last chapter summarizes the aggregate case activity across the Divisions of the Supreme Court, presents the 2025 clearance rate for civil Judgements and the courtroom utilization rate estimates. 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 year ended December 31, 2025. The below chart provides a summary of the breakdown of new cases filed in the High Court Civil Division across the different Terms/periods in 2025.

A total of 4651 new cases were filed in the High Court Civil Division in 2025, representing a decline of 5.74% compared to the previous year. Sample data from the new cases filed further reveals that approximately 54% of these cases were filed by way of Claim Forms while roughly 37% were filed by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms and 9% were filed by way of Notices 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.

The table below provides an analysis of the sampling distribution of reasons for adjournment or continuance of High Court Civil cases in 2025.

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2025

Table 1.0: Leading reasons for adjournment for year ended December 31, 2025

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Claimant to file documents	2721	21.80
Parties having discussion	997	7.80
Claimant's documents not served or short served	804	6.29
Defendant to file documents	781	6.11
No parties appearing	762	5.96
Claimant to comply with comments from NEPA	651	5.09
Claimant not available	498	3.90
Judge unavailable	421	3.29
Letter indicating no objection outstanding	415	3.25
Defendant not available	397	3.11
Pending settlement	365	2.86
Matter referred to mediation	364	2.85
Claimant's attorney absent	349	2.73
File not found	319	2.50

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2025

Defendant's attorney absent	238	1.86
Defendant's Document not served	231	1.81
To produce documents	212	1.60
Sub-Total	10525	82.33

Total number of adjournments/continuances = 12784

The above table summarizes the leading reasons for adjournment for the year ended December 2025 in which it is seen that the three dominant reasons for adjournment were claimants to file documents with 2721 or 21.80% of all events of the adjournments, adjournments for parties to have discussions with 997 or 7.80% of the adjournments and claimant's documents not served or short served with 804 or 6.29% of the adjournments. Adjournments for defendants to file documents with 781 or 6.11% and due to no parties appearing with 762 or 5.96% and claimants to comply with comments from NEPA rounds off the list of leading reasons for adjournment in the High Court Civil Division in 2025. The top fifteen reasons for adjournment enumerated above, accounts for approximately 82.33% of the sample of reasons for case adjournment/continuance during the year. Notably, the leading reasons for adjournment in 2025 were quite similar to the distribution in 2024. Similar to the 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.

There are currently several ongoing projects and reforms in the High Court Civil Division which have been engineered by Chief Justice Bryan Sykes and a dedicated backlog reduction team of

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Judges, the Registrar and support personnel. These initiatives are contributing to the gradual improvements in the productivity of the High Court Civil Division and will be expected to make a dent into the divisions backlog over the coming 12 – 18 months.

Table 2.0: Case File Integrity Rate for the year ended December 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 (%)
12,784	279	97.82%

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 279 combined incidences of adjournments due to these deficiencies in 2025, resulting in a case file integrity rate of 97.82%, which means that roughly 2.82% of the total adjournments were due to one or more of factors that affect case file integrity. The case file integrity rate declined by 0.98 percentage points compared to the previous year.

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Table 3.0: Sampling distribution of case counts for selected hearings for the year ended December 31, 2025

Trial matters/hearings	Percentage
Open Court Trials	48.20
Motion Hearing	4.98
Assessment of Damages	27.24
Trial in Chambers	17.01
Total trial matters	100

The above table shows the breakdown of the case counts associated with selected HCV pre-trial and trial hearings in the High Court Civil Division in 2025. The data sampled indicates that the largest proportion was accounted for by open court trials with 48.20%, assessments of damages with 27.24%, trial in chambers with 17.01%, following by motion hearings with 4.98%.

Table 4.0 Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty for the year ended December 31, 2025

Hearing dates set	Hearing dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
9,572	1843	80.75

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 representative sample of 9,572 dates scheduled for either trial or various pre-trial hearings, both in Court and in Chamber, revealed that 1843 were ‘adjourned’ on the date set for commencement. The resulting estimated overall hearing date certainty figure of 80.75% suggests that there is a roughly 81% probability that a date set for a matter to be heard would proceed without adjournment for reasons other than some form of ‘continuance’ or

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settlement. This result represents a fractional decline of 0.85 percentage points compared to the previous year. When trials in open court is isolated, the trial certainty rate for the HCV Division for 2025 is estimated at 71.98%, fractional increase of 0.78 percentage points compared to the previous year and when trial in chambers is isolated the estimate rate is 72.05%, a fractional decline of 0.40 percentage points when compared to the previous year.

The ensuing analysis will go further into explaining where on the continuum of a matter traversing the system 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 5.0a: Index of scheduling efficiency for Assessment of Damages in the HCV Division for the year ended December 31, 2025

Number of available court days in 2025	Number of days' worth of assessment of damages scheduled	Approximate ratio
221	230	1.04

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 in 2025, 221 all told and the number of days' worth of assessment of damages which were scheduled (a total of 230). It is shown that for every court day available, approximately 1 days'

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worth of matters were scheduled, a fractional improvement of 0.01 percentage point when compared to the previous year; reflective of slightly better use of judicial time. These results reflect continued improvement in the effectiveness of scheduling and management of the assessment of damages court which was once plagued by inefficient scheduling practices and low case clearance rates.

Table 5.0b: Index of scheduling efficiency for court trials in the HCV Division for the year ended December 31, 2025

Number of available court days in 2025	Number of days' worth of court matters scheduled for court trial per court	Approximate ratio
221	389	1.76

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Another important indicator of the problems associated with the scheduling of High Court Civil Division matters comes from an assessment of the number of court days which were available for the Supreme Court in the 2025, 221 all told, and the number of days' worth of court trials which were scheduled per court (a total of 389). It is shown that for every day available, 1.76 days' worth of matters were scheduled, a fractional improvement of 0.10 percentage points compared to the previous year. There continues to be a need to implement a more scientific method of scheduling which simultaneously accounts for a number of probabilistic variables. The anticipated implementation of an advanced case management system in the High Court Civil Division will be tremendously useful in this respect.

Table 6.0: Probability distribution of the incidence of adjournments/continuance for the year ended December 31, 2025

Type of Hearing	Percentage
Case Management Conference	7.45
Pre-Trial Review	6.85
Trial in open court	13.91
Trial in chamber	7.1
Assessment of damages	5.05
Judgment Summons Hearing	4.99
Applications	54.65
Sample size	100

The above table utilizes 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 21.01% of the adjournments in the sample while case management conferences account for 7.45% but it was the incidence of adjournments at the applications stage which again took the spotlight, accounting for 54.65% of the total incidence of adjournments. Pre-trial reviews and judgment summons hearings 6.85% and 4.99% 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.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty for Assessment of damages for the year ended December 31, 2025

Hearing dates set	Dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
303	49	83.83%

There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of dates scheduled for matters of assessments of damages over the past four years. In 2025, the estimated hearing date certainty rate for assessments of damages cases increased by 2.46 percentage points. The advances in recent years in the efficiency in scheduling and progression of assessment of damages matters represents a significant turnaround and has contributed to the general improvements in the productivity of the High Court Civil Division.

Table 8.0: Hearing date certainty for Case Management Conferences for the year ended December 31, 2025

Hearing dates set (Sample)	Dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
997	127	87.26

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 87.26% in 2025, an improvement of 1.42 percentage points when compared to the previous year.

Table 9.0: Requisitions for the year ended December 31, 2025

Action	Frequency
Requisitions Issued (estimated)	369
Responses to requisitions (estimated)	85
Requisition clearance rate	23.04%
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 361 requisitions for the year. The requisition clearance rate for 2025 was 23.04% which is 2.45 percentage points higher than the previous year. Continuous interventions aimed at increasing public sensitization on the proper and timely

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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: Methods of disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Method of Disposition	Count	Percentage
Agreed to pay by installment	1	0.03
Application Granted	345	9.99
Application Refused	39	1.13
Attorney Admitted to Bar	31	0.90
Claim form expire	94	2.72
Claim Form Invalid	32	0.93
Company complied	11	0.32
Consent Judgment	21	0.61
Consent Order	33	0.96
Damages Assessed	67	1.94
Discontinued	919	26.62
Dismissed	343	9.93
Dismissed as part of backlog reduction intervention project	19	0.55
Disposed 2014	6	0.17
Disposed SC12	12	0.35
Final Order	331	9.59
Fixed date Claim form expire Judgment	19	0.55
Judgment Delivered	34	0.98
Judgment on Admission	106	3.07
Matter Withdrawn	1	0.03
Med - Settled Fully in Mediation	43	1.25
Notice of Discontinuance noted	5	0.14
Order (Chamber Court)	102	2.95
Matter Settled	33	0.96
Settlement Order	514	14.89
Struck Out	1	0.03
Case Transfer	221	6.40
Written Judgment Delivered	45	1.30
	25	0.72
Total	3453	100.00

An understanding of the distribution of the methods of case disposal is an essential metric to

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gaining insights into the efficiency of case handling in the courts and into operational planning.

The data reveals that the High Court Civil Division disposed an unprecedented number of cases in 2025, numbering a comparatively impressive 3453, eclipsing the previous year's record; representing an increase of 10.14%. The largest proportion of the cases disposed were by way of matters discontinued which accounted for 919 or 26.62% while matters settled ranked next with 514 or 14.89%. Cases resolved by way of applications granted and matters dismissed with 345 or 9.99% and 343 or 9.93% respectively rounds off the leading methods of disposition in the High Court Civil Division in 2025.

Table 11.0: Time to disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Descriptive Statistics (months)

Number of observations	3435
Mean	46.50
Median	32.00
Mode	11.00
Std. Deviation	36.5467
Skewness	1.19
Range	427
Minimum	< 2
Maximum	429.00

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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 2025. The 3435 cases disposed in the year reveal an estimated average time to disposition was 49.55 months or roughly 4 years and 2 months. The oldest matter disposed in the year was 429 months old or roughly 14.3 years old while the lowest time that a matter took to disposition was roughly two months. The median time to disposition was forty months or approximately 32 months while the mode was 11 months. The positive skewness of roughly 1.15 suggests that there were proportionately more disposals, which took lower time to disposition than those which took higher than the average time.

Table 12.0: Breakdown of time to disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	627	18.25
13 - 24	598	17.41
25 - 36	435	12.66
37 - 47	342	9.96
48 & over	1433	41.72
Total	3435	100.0

The above table provides a more detailed breakdown of the average time to disposition. It is seen that of the 3435 matters disposed in the year, the largest proportion, 1433 or 41.72% took four years or more to be disposed. 627 cases or roughly 18.25% of the cases disposed took a

year or less while 598 or 17.14% took between 13 and 24 months to be disposed. The remaining proportion of the cases disposed was accounted for by the intervals 37 – 47 months with 9.96% and the 25 – 36 months’ interval with 12.66% of the disposals. It is of note that roughly 35.66% of the matters disposed of in 2025 took two years or less, compared to approximately 64.74%, which took more than two years during the year. Deficiencies including frequent adjournments, low trial/hearing certainty and the attendant problems with date scheduling certainty as well as the incidence of requisitions may be among the factors accounting for the majority of matters taking more than two years to be disposed. As indicated earlier, a number of new process re-engineering initiatives are underway in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, which are expected to eventually contribute appreciably to a reduction in the average time to disposition for the High Court Civil (HCV) Division.

Table 13.0: Clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
4651	3453	74.24

***261 or 7.56% of the cases disposed, originated in 2025**

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 2025, the High Court Civil Division recorded a case clearance rate of 74.24%, an improvement of 10.70 percentage

points compared to the previous year. In the past three years, the weighted average case clearance rate in the High Court Civil division has consistently exceeded 60%. Despite the fact that this is still below the desired 100% and over to start making serious inroads into the case backlog, it nonetheless represents a major milestone as the years preceding saw annual case clearance rates average below 30%; sometimes falling below 20%. The progress noted is as a result of several simultaneous projects which are being engineered by the backlog reduction committee which is spearheaded by the Honourable Chief Justice of Jamaica, 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 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

Table 14.0: Selected performances metrics for the High Court Civil (HCV) Division in 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 (%)
3453	9089	0.38	961	1225	3453	35.66	64.34

The results in the above table show a case turnover rate of 0.38, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were ‘heard’ in 2025 and still active at the end of the year, another 38 were disposed, an improvement of 4 percentage points when compared to the previous year. 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 961 days (approximately 2.67 years) to be disposed, barring special interventions or other unanticipated circumstances.

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 2025 is 34.66%, which reflects the proportion of High Court Civil cases in the year, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is estimated at

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64.66%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of 65% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. The results suggest that of the 9178 cases, which had some court activity in 2024 and were still active at the end of the year, roughly 5908 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

CHAPTER 2.0: FAMILY DIVISION

The ensuing analysis examines the various measures of the efficiency of case handling in the Family Division for the year ended December 2025.

A total of 3749 new Family cases were filed in 2025, a decrease of 11.83% when compared to the previous year, the second consecutive year of decline. 365 or 9.74% of these cases were filed at the Western Regional Registry in the second city of Montego Bay while the remaining 3384 or 90.26% were filed at the Supreme Court Registry in Kingston. The number of new cases filed at the Western Regional Registry in Montego Bay represents an increase of 18.12% when compared to the previous year, while the number of new cases filed in the Supreme Court Registry in Kingston fell by 14.18% when compared to the previous year.

It is of note that as a whole, 30.83% of the Family cases filed involved children, an increase of 0.92 percentage points when compared to the previous year. Additionally, 0.24% of the new cases filed were nullity cases and 3381 cases were divorce cases, accounting for 90.1`8% of new case activity in the Family Division of the Supreme Court.

Table 15.0: Petitions filed for the year ended December 31, 2025

Type of petition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Petition for dissolution of marriage*	3281	52.57
Amended petition for dissolution of marriage	2951	47.28
Petition for Nullity	9	0.14
Total Petitions filed	6241	100
Number of amendments per petition	0.90	

*Includes petitions involving children

The above table summarizes petitions filed in 2024. It is shown that a total of 6241 Petitions for either dissolution of marriage or Nullity (new or amended) were filed, 3257 or 52.57% were petitions for dissolution of marriage, compared to 2951 or 47.28% which were amended or further amended petitions for dissolution of marriage. The analysis further suggests that the ratio of petitions to amended petitions is 0.90 or in other words for every 100 Petitions for dissolution of marriage there is roughly 90 amended Petitions for dissolution of marriage in 2025, an increase of roughly 9 percentage points when compared to the previous year; a result which suggests that were slightly less than 1 amendment per petition filed during the year. There was a decline in both the incidence of petitions and amended filed in 2025 when compared to the previous year. The data continues to suggest that any case filing which meet the required standards of accuracy and completeness as published on the website of the Supreme Court will quite probably be able to obtain a disposal within 4-6 months.

Table 16.0: Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute filed for the year ended December 31, 2025

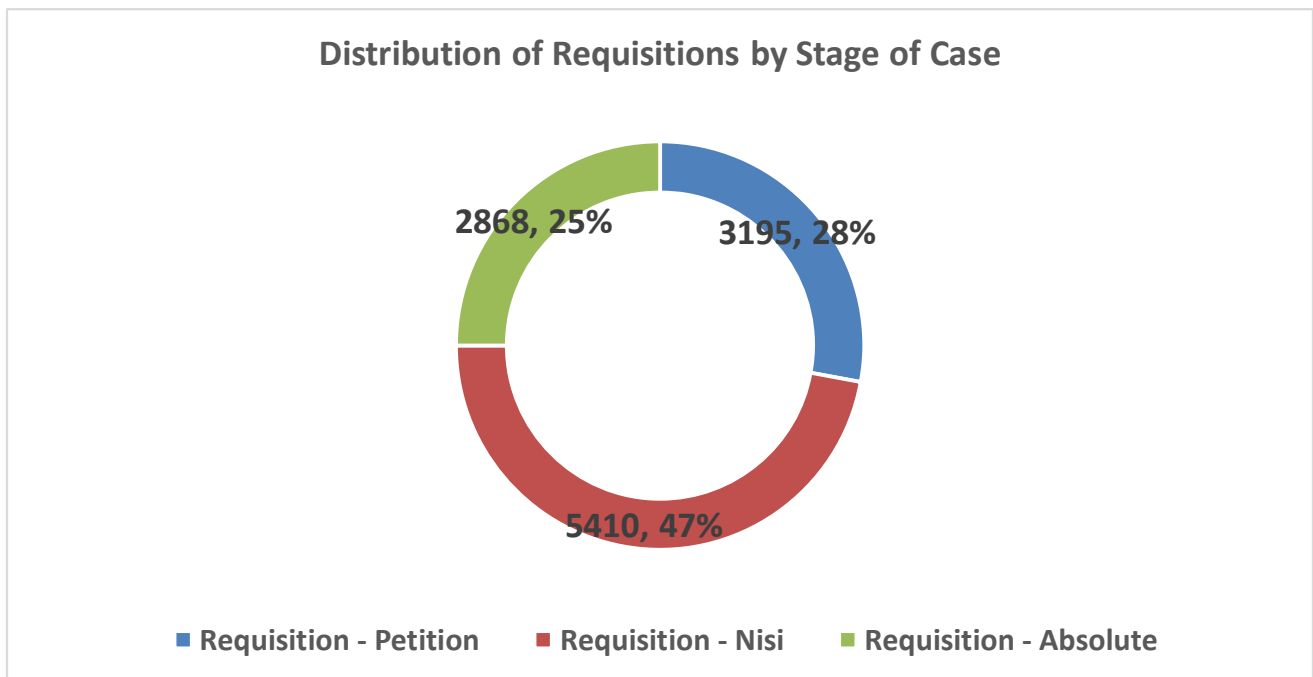
Case Status	Frequency
Decree Absolute	5147
Decree Nisi for dissolution of marriage	5324
Decree Nisi for nullity of marriage	10
Total	10481
Ratio of Decrees Nisi to Decrees Absolute Filed	1.03

It is seen in the above table that for every 100 Decrees Nisi filed there were roughly 103 Decrees Absolute filed in 2025, which is the same output as that of 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 fell by 14.19% while the number of Decrees Nisi filed fell by 8.33% when compared to 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.

Chart 1.0: Distribution of the stages of requisitions for the year ended December 31, 2024



The data suggests that a total of 11,473 requisitions were issued at the three primary stages of a divorces case at the Kingston and Western Regional Supreme Court Registries combined, a decline of 6.66% when compared to the previous year, reversing the trend of increases over the two previous years.

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The number of requisitions filed at all three stages of case progression experienced decreases compared to the previous year. 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 approximately 47.0% incidence while petitions filed at the Decrees Absolute and Petition stages accounted for approximately 25% and 28% respectively of the total. The data continues to suggest that specific interventions are needed particularly at the stage of Decrees Nisi in order to bolster the speed of disposition of matters by reducing the incidence of requisitions. These advances will be crucial to ensuring that the divorce matters can be concluded ideally within 4-6 months or at most 8-12 months of filing. The overall reduction in the incidence of requisitions issued is an indicator of improved efficiency in case filing and processing and improvements in the impact of communication with litigants concerning the appropriate filing of case documents.

Table 17.0: Methods of Disposals for the year ended December 31, 2025

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage
Application Refused	3	0.07
Claimant/Petitioner Deceased	1	0.02
Consent Order	7	0.17
Decree Absolute Granted	2399	58.17
*Disposed	31	0.75
Final Judgment	1	0.02
Final Order	177	4.29
Finalized by death of Petitioner	2	0.05
Finalized by death of Respondent	4	0.10
Judgment	3	0.07
Matter Discontinued	15	0.36
Matter Withdrawn	3	0.07
Notice of Discontinuance noted	812	19.69
Null and void	1	0.02
Struck Out	422	10.23
Transfer	5	0.12
WR Decree Absolute Granted	202	4.90
WR Decree Nullity Granted	1	0.02
WR Notice of Discontinuance noted	35	0.85
Grand Total	4124	100.00

NB: WR means Western Regional Registry

NB: 492 or 10.94 % of the cases disposed in 2022 were originated in said year.

**Exact method unspecified*

The above table reveals that 4124 Family cases were disposed in 2025, a decrease of 11.33% when compared to the previous year. A proportion of 63.07% or 2601 were attributable to Decrees Absolute Granted (Western Regional and Kingston Registries combined) while 457 or 11.08% were due to Notices of Discontinuance filed, accounting for the top two methods of disposition in 2025. Matters disposed by final orders with 177 or 4.29% of the cases resolved accounted for the next highest method of disposition. It is of note that 459 or 11.13% of the cases disposed of in 2025, actually originated in said year, which is roughly the same proportion of cases disposed as the previous year, though the absolute number saw a decline. This further

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represents 12.24% of the new cases filed in 2025, which is also roughly the same proportion as the previous year. The ongoing process flow re-engineering and enhanced engagement of stakeholders should continue to drive improvements in this area in 2025 and by the end of said year, it is forecasted that up to 18% of new cases filed will be disposed in the same year of filing. The current trends suggest that the Family Division could conceivably realize the target of disposing the majority of cases filed within 6-8 months, however the case progression mechanism has to work with a high degree of efficiency for this to happen and the cooperation of the attorneys and litigants in properly filing documents and expeditiously responding to requisitions will be crucial.

It is of note that 3886 or 94.23% of the 4124 family cases disposed were attributable to the Kingston Registry while 238 or 7.66% were accounted for by the Western Regional Registry in Montego Bay. The Kingston Registry experienced a 97.33% increase in the number of cases disposed while the Western Regional Registry experienced a decline of 31.21%.

Table 18.0: Requisitions summary for the year ended December 31, 2025

Action	Frequency
Requisitions Issued	11473
Number of requisitions per 100 files	82
Number of responses to requisitions	3671
Requisition response rate	32%

The incidence of requisitions is especially important in assessing the efficiency with which Family matters move through the court system. A total of 11473 requisitions were issued in 2025 while there were 3671 responses to requisitions. The number of requisition responses in 2025 represents a slight decline of 2.08% when compared to the previous year. This made a major contribution to the aggressive gains in case clearance rate recorded by the Family Division in 2025. The number requisitions issued per 100 case files handled in 2025 fell slightly by 3 percentage points when compared to the previous year, netting a figure of 82 per 100 cases handled during the year (2025). This is a positive sign for the improved accuracy of filings by litigants.

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 19.0: 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)
	Receive document and record skeleton party and document information in JEMS	2	3	3	1
	Enter and scanning of documents in JEMS Update of case party information in JEMS	3		3	
Petition/					
	Retrieve file and maintain filing room (Records officer)	0		2	
Decree Nisi/					
	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
Decree absolute					
	Record in JEMS file location and move manual file to physical location. Updating and scanning of signed petition in JEMS. Issuing notice via email.	0	3	2	1

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	Vetting and signing of petition by Deputy Registrar	1	5	1	2
	Mandatory waiting period for service of petition and filing of application for decree nisi (14-84 days)		14		14
Stage 2					
Stage 2	Task				
Decree Nisi	Vetting of Decree Nisi by Deputy Registrar & legal officers	1	40	2	20
	Vetting and signing of Decree Nisi by Judge		14		1
	Mandatory waiting period between granting of decree nisi and application for decree absolute		30		30
Stage 3					
Stage 3	Task				
Decree Absolute	Vetting of Decree Absolute by Senior officer	0	14	2	7
	Vetting and signing of Decree Absolute by Judge		5		1
Total			131 (26wks)		78 (16wks)

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 relived 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 pre vet 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.

Table 20.0: Court/Chamber hearings for the year ended December 31, 2025

Action	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Applications	1521	69.29
Case Management Conference	359	16.36
Motion Hearing	49	2.23
Pre-trial Hearing (PTH)	73	3.33
Trial in Open Court	8	0.36
Trial in Chamber	185	8.43
Total	2195	100.00

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 2195 hearings either before open court or chamber, an increase of 6.04% when compared to the previous year. The largest proportion, 1521 or 69.29% were applications followed by 359 or 16.36%, which were Case Management Conference (CMCs) matters. The event with the third highest incidence in this category is trials in chamber which accounts for 185 or 8.43% of the total. Pre-trial hearings with 73 or 3.33% and motion hearings with 49 or 2.23% of the total rounds off the top 5 events enumerated in this category. The probability distributions of the events in this table are broadly consistent with that which was observed in the previous three years.

Table 21.0: Leading applications in the year ended December 31, 2025

Application type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Application for division of property	351	21.94
Applications to manage affairs	144	9.00
Application to appoint legal guardian	118	7.38
Application for maintenance	52	3.25

Sample size/number of observations =1600

Further analysis of the types of application brought before the Court suggests that applications for division of property with 351 or 21.94% accounted for the largest share. This is followed by applications to manage affairs with 144 or 9.00% of the observations, while applications to appoint legal guardian with 118 or 7.38% and applications for maintenance with 52 or 3.25% each of the applications round off the top four applications.

Table 22.0: Leading reasons for adjournment for the year ended December 31, 2025

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	415	39.22
Defendant to file documents	119	11.25
Parties having discussions with a view to settlement	109	10.30
To comply with court order	55	5.20
For Social Enquiry Report	42	3.97
For mediation to be completed	44	4.16

Total incidence of adjournments (N) = 1058

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 1058 incidence of adjournments in the Family Division for chamber and open court hearings in 2025, representing

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an increase of 4.94% when compared to the previous year, the third consecutive year of increase in this metric. The largest proportion of these adjournments were for claimants to file documents with 415 or 22.74%, defendant to file documents with 119 or 11.25% and adjournments for parties to have discussions with a view to settlement accounting for 109 or 10.30%. The listed reasons for adjournment account for 74.10% of the total incidence of adjournments in 2025. Continued effort to improve internal efficiency and to improve overall case management and external stakeholder engagement are critical to reducing delay and improving the timely resolution of cases which are heard in chamber or open court.

Table 23.0: Hearing date certainty for the year ended December 31, 2025

Sample of Court/Chamber hearing dates set	Hearing dates Date adjourned	Hearing date certainty rate (%)
1897	409	78.44

The possible over-scheduling of cases is affirmed by the above table, which computes the date scheduling certainty of the Family Division. It is seen that of the sample of 1987 combined incidence of Court and Chamber hearings in 2024, 409 were adjourned for reasons other than intrinsic procedural factors. This produces a moderate 78.44% hearing date certainty rate, an increase of 3.70 percentage points when compared to the previous year, representing the second consecutive year of improvement in this metric. For every 100 hearing dates scheduled, the approximate number that proceeded without adjournment in 2025 is 78. When trial matters are isolated, the trial date certainty rate is an estimated 71%, up by 4 percentage points when

compared to the previous year.

Table 24.0: Time to disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Descriptive Statistics (months)	
Number of observations	4124
Mean	44.2378
Median	17.0000
Mode	11.00
Std. Deviation	75.04328
Skewness	1.0895
Range	428.00
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	396.00

The overall average time to disposition of all cases resolved in the Family Division in 2025 is roughly 44 months, an improvement of roughly 2 months when compared to the previous year.

The mean was affected by a significant number of older matters which were disposed during the year. Notably, the modal or most frequent time to disposition during the year was 11 months, while the median was 17 months. The positive skewness suggests that a larger portion of the cases disposed were resolved in less than the overall average time. In situations like these, the median is thought to be a better measure of central tendency than the mean.

The oldest matter disposed was approximately 33 years old while on the other end of the spectrum there were matters filed which disposed within a few months, most likely due to discontinuances or open court proceedings. The scores had a standard deviation of roughly 75 months, which indicates a wide variation in the distribution of the times to disposition in the period.

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Table 25.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	1705	41.34
13 - 24	1266	30.70
25 - 36	412	9.99
37 - 47	80	1.94
48 & over	661	16.03
Total	4124	100.0

Note: The average time taken to dispose of cases resolved in 0-12 is 8.5 months.

The above table provides a more detailed breakdown of the estimated times to disposition for family matters in 2025. It is seen that of the 4124 matters disposed in 2025, the largest proportion, 1705 or roughly 41.34% were disposed within a year, followed by the 1266 or 30.70% which were disposed in 13 – 24 months. Taken together this result suggests that 2971 or 72.04% of Family Division matters which were disposed during the year were done in two years or less from the time of initiation, a 3.64% increase when compared to the previous year. 412 or roughly 9.99% of all Family matters disposed in 2025 took between 25 and 36 months to be disposed, while 80 or 1.94% took between 37 and 47 months to be disposed. It is of note that 661 or 16.03% of the cases disposed in the Family Division in 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 three 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 2025 less than 15% of the cases resolved satisfied this target, largely on account of the often slow rate of compliance with requisitions issued and the attendant errors in filings submitted to the registry by external parties. The Family Division continues to work on achieving optimal efficiency

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in its internal processes in order to guarantee the public that if filings made by litigants and attorneys meets the requisite standards and are requisitions are responded to in a timely manner then divorce cases can be resolved without delay.

Table 26.0a: Case clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
3749	4124	110%

* It is of note that 459 or 11.13% of the cases disposed of in 2025, actually originated in that year. This further represents a mere 12.24% of the new cases filed during the year, a slight decrease in proportion of 0.22 percentage points when compared to the previous year.

The above table shows that there were 3749 new cases filed in 2025 while 4124 were disposed.

This produces a case clearance rate of 110%, suggesting that for every 100 new cases; roughly 110 were disposed in the year. An important caveat is that the cases disposed did not necessarily originate in the stated year. The result represents a marginal increase of 0.62 percentage points when compared to the previous year, representing the second consecutive year in which the Family Registry has decidedly exceeded the 100% case clearance rate mark. The clearance rates for family matters may also be broken down by location of registry, as shown below:

Table 26.0b: Case clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025 (by registry location)

Registry location	Number of new cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
Kingston Registry	3384	3886	114.83%
Montego Bay Registry	365	238	65.21%

The above table shows that when the case clearance rate is done by registry location, the Family Registry in Kingston cleared roughly 115 cases for every 100 new cases filed, an increase of roughly 6 percentage points when compared to the previous year, while the Western Regional Registry in Montego Bay cleared approximately 65 for every 100 cases filed, a notable decline of 47 percentage points compared to the previous year. Both registries continue to make operational improvements which are expected to increase the proportion of cases resolved within a 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 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 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

Table 27.0: Selected performances metrics for the Family Division in 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	Approximate On-time case processing rate (%)	Approximate Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
4124	5411	0.76	480 days	2971	4124	72.04	27.96

The results in the above table show a case turnover rate of 0.81, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were handled in, 2025 and still active at the end of the year, another 76 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 year will on average take 480 days or roughly 1.32 more years to be disposed, barring special interventions.

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 2025 is

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approximately 72.04%, which reflects the proportion of Family cases in 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the proxy case backlog rate is approximately 27.96%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion 28% 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 5411 cases, which had some court activity in 2025 and were still active at the end of the year, 1515 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

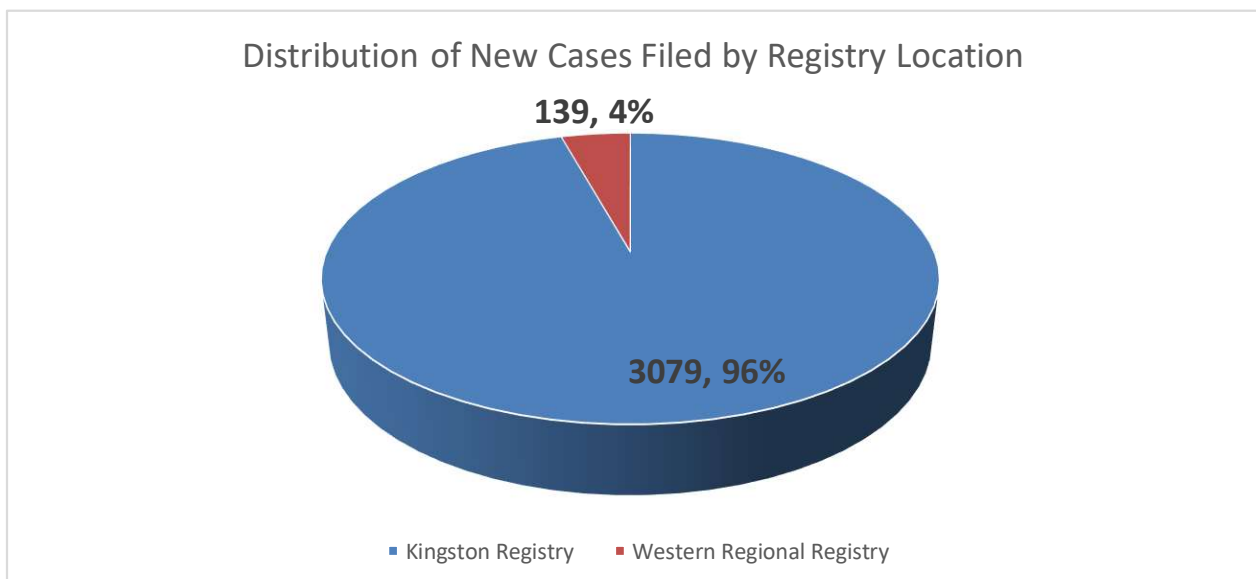
CHAPTER 3.0: ESTATE DIVISION

This section turns to the analysis of the progression of matters in the Estate Division for the year ended December 31, 2025.

A total of 3218 new Estate cases were filed in the Estate Division in the year ended December 2025, a decrease of 9.10% when compared to the previous year. 139 of these new cases were filed at the Western Regional Registry, an increase of 28.70% when compared to the previous year while the remaining 3079 were filed at the Registry in Kingston. The output for the Kingston Regional Registry represents a 9.68% decrease in the number of new cases filed when compared to the previous year.

Separately, there were 76 instruments of administration filed in 2024, representing 2.36% of all new matters handled by the Estate Division during the year. The 3218 new estate cases filed in 2025 represent roughly 46.62% of all cases handled by the Estate Division during the year.

Chart 2.0: Distribution of Estate cases filed, by Registry in the year ended December 31, 2025



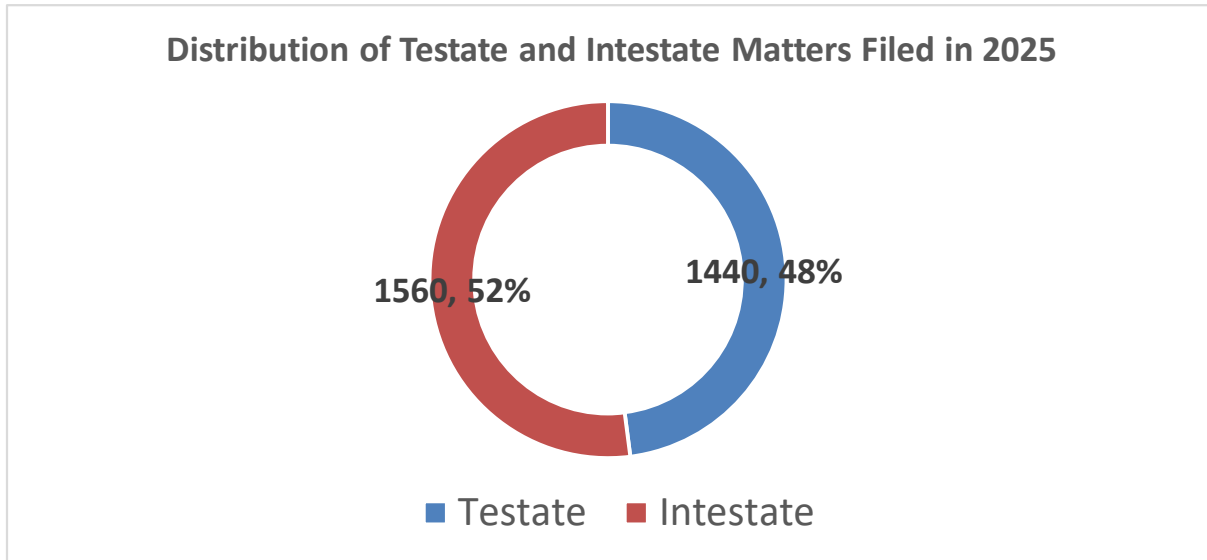
As shown in the above chart, 3079 or 96% of the new Estate cases filed in 2025 took place at the Registry in Kingston while the remaining 139 or 4.0% were filed at the Western Regional Registry in Montego Bay. The results represent a 1 percentage point decline in the proportion filed at the Kingston Registry and a 1 percentage increase in the proportion filed at the Western Regional Registry.

Table 18.0: Summary of Oaths filed during the year ended December 31, 2025

Oaths	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Supplemental Oaths	2512	43.84
Oaths	3218	56.16
Total	5730	100
Ratio	0.78	

The above table suggests there were a total of 5730 combined Oaths and supplemental Oaths filed in 2025, of which 3218 or 56.16% were initial Oaths filed, compared to 2512 or 43.84% which were Supplemental Oaths. The ratio of Oaths to Supplemental Oaths is 0.78, which suggests that for every 100 Oaths there were 78 Supplemental Oaths filed during the year, 2 percentage points lower than the previous year. It is of note that the Supplemental Oaths in this data set are not all related to the cases filed in 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.

Chart 3.0: Sampling Distribution of Testate and Intestate cases filed as at December 31, 2025



Sample size = 3000

The above chart shows that an estimated 48% of the new cases filed in the Estate Division in 2025 were Testate matters (matters with a Will in place prior to death) and 52% were Intestate (having no Will in place). These estimates were derived using a sample of 3000 cases filed in 2025 and are broadly similar to the distribution in the previous five years.

Table 19.0: Action sequence for the year ended December 31, 2025

Action Status	Frequency
*Granted	2736
*Grants Signed	2770
Ratio of Grants to Grants Signed (Approximately)	1.01

* Some of these relate to cases originating before 2025. *Excludes Applications Granted.

In the process of disposing a typical matter handled by the Deputy 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 a ratio of approximately 1.01, suggesting that for every 100 granted applications, there were 101 Grants signed (though not necessarily from the number granted). This outstanding result is 1 percentage point above the previous years' figure, the second continuous year of increase.

Table 20.0: Case action and requisitions summary for the year ended December 31, 2025

Action Status	Frequency
Number of cases actioned	6904
Requisitions Issued	6307
Number of responses to requisitions	4534
Number of requisitions issued per 100 case files actioned	91
Requisitions clearance rate	71.89%
Average days between final requisition filed and Grant of Probate/Administration	18

The number of requisitions made, the length of time that it takes for requisitions to be returned 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 6307 requisitions issued while 6904 individual matters were actioned in the period, representing a ratio of 91 requisitions per 100 case files actioned, a rise of 7 percentage points when compared to the previous year. Further analysis suggests that the average time from the issuing of final requisitions to the Grant of Probate was 18 days, an improvement of 1 day when compared to the previous year, the third consecutive year of improvement.

Table 21.0: Methods of Disposal for the year ended December 31, 2025

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Application Granted	25	0.85
Application Refused	6	0.20
Fixed date Claim form expire	2	0.07
Grant by Representation signed	2	0.07
Grant of Admin De Bonis Non signed	18	0.61
Grant of Admin De Bonis Non W/A signed	28	0.95
Grant of administration signed	1370	46.68
Grant of Double Probate signed	4	0.14
Grant of probate signed	1078	36.73
Grant of Resealing signed	101	3.44
Letters of Administrator with W/A signed	79	2.69
Matter Withdrawn	1	0.03
Notice of Discontinuance noted	107	3.65
Struck Out	9	0.31
WR Grant of administration signed	63	2.15
WR Grant of probate signed	30	1.02
WR Grant of Resealing signed	6	0.20
WR Notice of Discontinuance noted	6	0.20
Total	2935	100

*WR is Western Registry, **W/A is with Will Annex

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 2935 cases disposed in 2025, an increase of 4.49% when compared to the previous year. The largest proportion, 2700 or 91.99% was a result of various Grants Signed. Notices of Discontinuance and matters disposed by Letters of Administration W/A signed for the next highest shares of cases disposed with 113 or 3.85% and 79 or 2.69% respectively. Grants of Administration signed and Grants of Probate signed with 1443 or 53.07% and 1108 or 41.04% accounts for the largest share of Grants Signed.

Table 22.0: Dominant reasons for adjournment of Estate matters for the year ended December 31, 2025

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	212	52.35%
Defendant to file documents	55	13.58%
Claimant to comply with order	39	9.63%
Claimant to serve documents	31	7.65%
Parties having discussion with a view to settlement	27	6.67%
Sub-Total	364	89.88

Sample size = 405

The leading reasons for adjournment for Estate matters that went to court in 2025 are summarized in the above table above. It is shown that of the 202 incidences of adjournments in the period, the largest proportion were for the reasons of 'claimant to file documents' which accounted for 212 or 52.35% of the total. This was followed by adjournments for defendants to file documents and claimant to comply with order which accounted for 55 or 13.58% and 39 or 9.63% respectively of the total number of adjournments. The top five reasons for adjournment are rounded off by claimants to serve documents and parties having discussions with a view to settlement which accounted for 7.65% and 6.67 respectively of the top five reasons for adjournments in the Estate Division during the year. As with previous reports, most of these reasons also featured prominently in the list of reasons for adjournment in the Family and High Court Civil Divisions during the year.

Table 23.0: Leading applications for the year ended December 31, 2025

Application	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Application to prove copy will	201	26.27%
Application to be declared spouse	87	11.37%
Application for directions	51	6.67%

Sample size = 765 applications

The above provides a deeper analysis of the dominant types of applications made in 2025. It is shown that applications to prove copy will account for the largest proportion of applications with 201 or 26.27% of the total, followed by application to be declared spouse with 87 or 11.37% of the total number of applications and applications for directions with 51 or 6.67%. This data set was derived from a sample of 765 application incidences.

Table 24.0: Hearing date certainty for the year ended December 31, 2025

Estimated number of Court/Chamber hearing dates set	Hearing dates adjourned (excluding continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
1107	221	80.04

The above table addresses the extent of adherence with dates set for court/chamber matters in the Estate Division for 2025. It is shown that there were an estimated 1107 incidences of dates scheduled for Chamber or Court, 221 of which were adjourned for reasons other than 'continuance'. This produces an overall hearing date certainty rate of 80.04%, an indication that for 2025 there was a roughly 80% chance that a matter set for court would proceed without the date being adjourned. This is an increase of roughly 2.72 percentage points when compared to

the previous year. When trial matters are isolated, the trial date certainty rate is roughly 71.30%, 4 percentage points above the figure in the previous year.

Table 25.0: Age of matters disposed for the year ended December 31, 2025

Descriptive Statistics (in months)

Number of observations	2935
Mean	19.3553
Median	13.0000
Mode	11.00
Std. Deviation	22.1897
Skewness	6.246
Std. Error of Skewness	.048
Range	393.00
Minimum	2.00
Maximum	395.00

The above table provides a summary measure of the overall estimated times to disposition for the 2935 cases disposed during the year. The estimated average time to disposition is roughly 19 months or approximately 1.6 years, roughly the same as the previous year. 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. This is supported by the results for the estimated median time to disposition of 13 months and the most frequently occurring time to disposition of just 11 months. The reasonably large standard deviation of 22.19 months supports the deduction that there were scores that varied widely from the mean, in this case skewing the average upwards. The oldest Estate matter disposed in the year was 395 months old or approximately 33 years old while there were a few

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matters, which took under three months to be disposed, representing the lowest times to disposition in the year. Of the 2935 Estate cases disposed of in 2025, a notable 641 or 21.84% originated in that year, roughly 3 percentage points below the previous year, the second consecutive year of decline in this measure.

Table 26.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	1393	47.46
13 - 24	970	33.05
25 - 36	281	9.57
37 - 47	119	4.05
48 & over	172	5.86
Total	2935	100.0

Note: The average time taken to dispose of cases resolved in 1 year in the above table is approximately 8.5 months.

The above table shows that of the 2935 estate matters disposed in the year, the majority, 1393 or 47.46% were disposed of in 12 months or less, followed by 970 or 33.05%, which were disposed of within a time interval of 13 to 24 months. Taken together this data suggests that an impressive approximated 80.51% of Estate Division matters which were disposed of in 2025 took two years or less. 9.57% each of the cases were disposed within an estimated time frame of between 25 and 36 months, 4.05% took between 37 and 47 months and 5.86% 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 improve public confidence in judicial processes geared towards at 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.

Table 27.0: Case clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
3218	2935	91.21%

**641 or 21.84% of the cases disposed originated in 2025, roughly 3 percentage point below 2024. This represents the case disposal rate.*

Using the data on the number of cases filed and disposed in the period under examination, a case clearance rate of approximately 91.21%, an impressive increase of approximately 11.86 percentage point when compared to the previous year. The result suggests that for every 100 cases filed and active in the 2025, roughly 91 were disposed.

The Estate Division continues to reinforce its standing as one of the top performing divisions in the Supreme Court on most of the key performance indicators.

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 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

Table 29.0: Selected performances metrics for the Estate Division in 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 (%)
2935	3372	0.87	420	2363	2935	80.51	19.49

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.87, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were ‘heard’ in 2025 and still active at the end of the year, another 87 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 year will on average take 420 days or just over a year, barring special interventions.

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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 2025 is 80.51%, which reflects the proportion of cases in 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the case backlog rate is 19.49%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 19% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This output is roughly the same as that of the previous year. The data further suggests that of the 3372 cases, which had some court activity in 2025 and were still active at the end of the year, 641 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

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CHAPTER 4.0: THE HOME CIRCUIT COURT (Summary Report)

The analysis now turns to a look at case activity in the Home Circuit Court for 2025. A total of 260 new cases filed in 2025 while 138 cases were disposed. This produced an estimated case clearance rate of 53.08%, a marginal decline of 3.07 percentage points compared to the previous year. The leading charges heard in the Home Circuit Court in 2025 includes murder, rape and sexual intercourse with a person under 16, which is typical of the trend over the past several years.

On an annual basis, there are a number of factors which affect the progression of criminal cases towards disposition. The below table uses a sample of hearings in 2025 to identify the most common reasons for adjournment.

Table 30.0: Leading reasons for adjournment/continuance for the year ended December 2025

Reason for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Defence and prosecution to engage in discussion	202	9.68
For Disclosure	199	9.54
Defense Counsel Absent	136	6.52
Crown to take instruction	131	6.28
To settle legal representation	129	6.18
For Investigating Officer to attend Court	123	5.90
For bail application	117	5.61
Matter not reached	103	4.94
Sub-Total	1185	26.74

Sample size = 2086

From the data sampled, the above table summarizes some of the most common reasons for adjournment in cases heard in the Home Circuit Court in 2025. Using a sample of 2086

incidences of adjournments, it is shown that adjournments for the defence and prosecution to engage in discussions, defence counsel absent and for disclosure were the leading reasons for adjournment during the year. As with the previous year, overall, a significant proportion of the reasons for adjournment imply third party responsibility. Apart from the reasons for adjournment listed in the table above, other factors such as statement outstanding, ballistic certificate outstanding, forensic report outstanding and SOC CD (CFCD) outstanding also featured noticeably on the list of common reasons for adjournment of cases, the responsibility for which is largely shared in some proportion by the police and relevant state lab facilities. Adjournments for files to be completed, which also featured, is a further example of third party responsibility for case adjournments in the Home Circuit Court. In such instances, the prosecution bears primary responsibility.

The leading reasons for adjournment listed in the above Table accounts for 54.65% of total incidences of adjournments/continuance in the Home Circuit Court in 2025. The data suggest that there were an estimated 3.25 adjournments per case heard in the Home Circuit Court in 202, which is 0.16 percentage points lower than the previous year, the second consecutive year of partial declines in this metric.

The reasons for adjournment—led by discussions between the defense and prosecution (9.68%) and disclosure issues (9.54%)—represent significant systemic bottlenecks for the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court of Jamaica.

The high frequency of these specific issues (totaling 26.74% of the sample for just the top eight reasons) leads to several critical consequences for the Jamaican justice system. Frequent

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adjournments prevent the court from reaching its "clearance rate" targets. When cases are not disposed of, they contribute to a "gross backlog," which in Jamaica is defined as any case in the system for more than 24 months.

Delays caused by disclosure issues or absent counsel can infringe upon a defendant's right to a trial within a reasonable time. The Court of Appeal has previously awarded compensation to appellants whose rights were breached due to undue delays.

Every adjournment carries a cost for both the state and the parties involved. This includes the waste of judicial time and resources, as well as potential "wasted costs" orders against attorneys who are ill-prepared.

High adjournment rates for "Matter not reached" (4.94%) or "Defense Counsel Absent" (6.52%) lower the "trial date certainty" rate. This makes the court's schedule unpredictable, frustrating witnesses, police officers, and victims who attend court only to have the matter postponed.

Based on judicial strategies currently being implemented or proposed in Jamaica to address these issues, the Criminal Division should consider the following:

Tighten Judicial Case Management:

Instead of leaving the pace of the case to the attorneys, judges should take a more active role in managing the timeline.

Pre-Trial Disclosure Deadlines:

Establish and enforce strict deadlines for disclosure to prevent the 9.54% of adjournments currently caused by this issue.

Trial Readiness Hearings:

Use "settlement conferences" or "readiness hearings" to ensure all parties are prepared before the

actual trial date is set.

Implement the "Docket System":

Chief Justice Sykes has been advocated for a docket system where specific teams (judges, masters, and staff) are assigned a stock of cases from filing to disposition. This increases accountability for each case's progress.

Enforce "Wasted Costs" Orders:

To address the 6.52% of adjournments due to absent defense counsel, the court can exercise its power to order attorneys to pay costs for adjournments caused by their lack of readiness or unauthorized absence.

Promote Plea Bargaining and ADR:

To handle the volume of cases that "cannot be tried out of," the prosecution and defense should be encouraged to use plea bargaining more effectively. This directly addresses the 9.68% of adjournments currently used for "discussions" by formalizing those negotiations earlier in the process.

Given that there are a number of factors which impact on the efficient progression of cases through the Home Circuit Court, it is vital to examine the hearing date certainty rate at various key stages of the case flow continuum (that is, for various types of hearings). These are detailed in the table below.

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Table 31.0: Hearing date certainty summary for the year ended December 31, 2025

Type of hearings	Hearing date certainty rate (%)
Mention and/Plea and Case Management Hearing	83
Bail Applications	68
Sentencing hearings	71
Trial hearings	54.50
Total/Overall Average	69.13

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 Home Circuit Court recorded an overall hearing date certainty rate of 69.13% in 2025, approximately the same as the previous year. This is another way of saying that for every 100 criminal matters scheduled for court, roughly 69 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. When trial matters are isolated, the trial certainty rate revealed is 54.50%, a fractional decline of 0.5 percentage points compared to the previous year, while Plea and Case Management Conferences had a hearing date certainty rate of 83%, an increase of 2 percentage points compared to the previous year.

The three years of successive decline in both trial date certainty rate and overall hearing date certainty rate is a combined result of third party issues outlined earlier and potentially deficits in internal case management, signaling a potential need for further training interventions. There is also the need to revisit the manner in which cases are scheduled as overbooking of courtrooms continues to be a problem. Enhancing the use of the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) and the development and application of Differentiated Case Management (DCM) tracks for criminal cases in the high court are possible paths that can be pursued in optimizing improving hearing and trial date certainty going forward.

As indicated earlier, a total of 138 cases were disposed in the Home Circuit Court in 2025. Among the most common methods of disposition for the year are disposals by way of no evidence offered, persons found guilty, persons found not guilty and guilty pleas. The estimated conviction rate for 2025 is 18.32%, which suggests that there is a roughly 18% probability that a matter could end in a guilty outcome, using 2025 as a proxy year. This represents an increase of 0.92 percentage points when compared to the previous year. Specifically, the estimated conviction rate for charges of sexual intercourse with a person under 16 is 32.15%, a marginal increase of 1.65 percentage points compared to the previous year while murder matters recorded an estimated case conviction rate of 19.50%, an improvement of 3.50 percentage points when compared to the previous year. Rape matters recorded an estimated case clearance rate of 11.15% for 2025, an increase of roughly 1.40 percentage points when compared to the previous year.

Overall, it took an estimated average of 41 months or 3.42 years for criminal cases resolved in 2025 in the Home Circuit Court to be disposed. This represents a two month increase compared to the previous year. An estimated 11% of the of cases resolved in the Home Circuit Court in 2025 were completed within 1 year, while roughly 35% took two years or less to be disposed. An estimated 32.48% of the cases resolved took four years or more to be disposed.

Table 32.0: Case clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate (%)
260	138	53.08%

The case clearance rate of 53.08% shown above is an indication that more cases entered than those that were disposed in the Home Circuit Court in 2025. The result suggests a ratio of roughly 53 cases disposed for every 100 new ones brought, a decline of approximately 3 percentage points when compared to the previous year. This is the fourth time that the annual case clearance rate for the Home Circuit Court has been below 70% over the past six years. The Honourable Chief Justice Mr. Bryan Sykes has set a target of improving the trial and hearing date certainty rate to 95% for the divisions of the Supreme Court. The attainment of this target is an important cornerstone for higher disposal and clearance rates and a more efficient judicial system.

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 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

Table 33.0: Selected performances metrics for the Home Circuit Court in 2025

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Disposition days	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
169	1211	0.14	2607	35	65

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.14, which is an indication that for every 100 criminal cases, which were ‘heard’ or handled in 2025 and still active at the end of

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the year, another 14 was 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 year will on average take 2607 or roughly 7 more years to be disposed, barring special interventions or other peculiar circumstances. These results are similar to those of the previous year.

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 2025 is approximately 35.00%, which reflects the proportion of cases resolved in 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the proxy case backlog rate is approximately 64%, an indication that an estimated proportion of 64% 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 1189 cases, which had some court activity in 2024 and were still active at the end of the year, roughly 761 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

CHAPTER 5.0: HIGH COURT DIVISION OF THE GUN COURT

The ensuing analyses provide an overview of case activity in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in the year ended December 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.

As with previous years, the leading charges filed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025 were possession of prohibited weapon, unauthorized possession of ammunition, shooting with intent, assault at common law and robbery with aggravation.

The number of new cases filed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025 was 389, an increase of 7.16% compared to the previous year, representing the second consecutive year of increase. 244 cases were resolved during the year, which produced a case clearance rate of 62.72%.

A total of 800 cases were heard in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025, the largest proportion of which were trials and matters and matters new before the court with an estimated 23% and 23.50% respectively, followed by mentions and case management conferences with 20% and 18% respectively. Cases with sentencing hearings accounted for 9% of hearings while cases with part heard hearings accounted for 8.50% of hearings throughout the year. The progression of matters through the court towards disposition is affected by a number of delay factors. The leading delay factors in 2025 are summarized in the below list of reasons for adjournment.

Table 34.0: Most frequently occurring reasons for adjournment for the year ended December 31, 2025

Reason for adjournment	Percentage (%)
For file to be completed	16.25
Ballistic Certificate Outstanding	8.95
For disclosure	6.10
Statement Outstanding	5.85
Scene of Crime CD Outstanding	4.95
Scene of Crime (SOC) Statement Outstanding	4.10
Defence Counsel Absent	3.95
Matter Not Reached	3.15
Crown Not Ready	3.05
Medical Certificate Outstanding	2.85

Number of hearings sampled = 3825

The above table outlines the top reasons for adjournment in the Gun Court for 2025, derived using a sample of 3954 hearings conducted during the year. As with the Home Circuit Court, the list affirms a major role of third party entities in delayed case progression in the High Court Division of the Gun Court. It is seen for example that outstanding ballistic certificates for which combined responsibility lies with the police and state lab services accounts for one of the highest shares of adjournment incidences, accounting for 7.21% of the sample. Outstanding medical reports, defence counsel absent, Scene of Crime CD and statement outstanding are all examples of other prominent reasons for adjournment which contribute in a profound way to delays in the High Court Division of the Gun Court. However, it is interesting that for the third consecutive year, the leading reason for adjournment during the year were adjournments for files to be completed, accounting for roughly 16.25% of the sample. This is an example of

shared internal and external responsibility as a prominent reason for adjournment. It is again clear from this list that the Gun Court, which is currently one of the top performing entities in the Jamaican court system, can be more efficient with greater enforcement and compliance with the required standards from external stakeholders and stronger internal case progression management in order to curtail this relatively high incidence of adjournments.

Table 35.0: Proxy trial date certainty summary for the year ended December 31, 2025

Type of hearing dates	Estimated number of hearing days set across trial courts	Number of hearings days adjourned across trial courts	Trial date certainty rate (%)
Trial	996	321	67.77

The Gun Court utilizes three dedicated courtrooms for trial. In 2025, these three rooms tallied a staggering 996 days' worth of trial dates set which is an average of 332 days per court. This is an implausible outcome since there were only approximately 220 days available for court activity in the year. This suggests that courtrooms were often overbooked for trial which invariably also contributes to the relatively high incidence of adjournments observed. Not surprisingly therefore 301 of the trial days' set were adjourned but this would have also included a number of adjournments which are due to external factors discussed earlier in the analysis of reasons for adjournment. The resulting trial date certainty rate for the Gun Court in 2025 was therefore 68%, suggesting that roughly 7 in every 10 trial dates set were able to proceed on schedule without being postponed. This result of 68% is a decline of 6 percentage points compared to the previous year. **The overall hearing date certainty in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in**

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2025 was also roughly 71%, 3 percentage points below the previous year.

As indicated earlier, a total of 244 cases were resolved in the High Court Division of the Gun Court. The most common methods of disposition recorded for these cases were the methods of no evidence offered and no further evidence offered as well as guilty verdicts and not guilty verdicts. The below table summarizes the conviction rate for charges resolved in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025.

Table 36.0: Estimated Conviction rate in the Gun Court for the year ended December 31, 2025

Number of charges disposed	Number of Guilty outcomes (i.e., guilty verdicts and guilty Pleas)	Conviction rate (%)
756	152	20.11

The overall conviction rate in the Gun Court is summarized in the above table. It is seen that of the sample of 756 disposed charges in 2025, an estimated 152 were a result of either a guilty plea or a guilty verdict. This produces an overall conviction rate of 20.11, a decline of 5.16 percentage points compared to the previous year – representing the third consecutive year of decline in this metric. The estimated conviction rates for the leading charges heard during the year, namely illegal possession of firearm and illegal possession of ammunition were 21.25% and 38.35% respectively, while shooting with intent recorded a conviction rate of 10.15%. The below tables provide a summary the time taken to dispose the cases which were resolved in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025.

The data indicates a concerning trend for the Gun Court system. A conviction rate of 20.11%—coupled with a three-year downward trajectory—suggests systemic friction in the transition from

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charge to sentencing. When one out of every five charges result in a conviction, the "deterrent effect" of the court is significantly weakened. A conviction rate suggests that defendants may feel they have an 80% chance of walking free if they go to trial. This further disincentivizes guilty pleas. Additionally, the drop in convictions may stems from the quality of evidence presented at the preliminary stages. Many "disposed charges" are being dismissed before trial suggesting that weaknesses may exist at the point of arrest or filing.

The following tables summarize the times to disposition for cases resolved in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025.

Table 37.0: Time to disposition (from case file date) for cases disposed of in the year ended December 31, 2025

Descriptive Statistics

Number of observations	756
Mean	16.57
Median	12.05
Mode	9.50
Std. Deviation	15.610
Skewness	3.190
Minimum	1
Maximum	135.00

The above table summarizes the time taken to dispose of cases in the Gun Court in 2024 counting from the date cases were filed. It is seen that the estimated average time to disposition from the date of case is approximately 16.57 months, approximately the same as the previous year. The dataset exhibits a positive skewness, indicating that there was a significantly greater proportion of times to disposition fell below the overall series mean. The estimated maximum time to disposition for the data set is approximately 135 months or 11.25 years. The estimated minimum

time to disposition from the date of filing was roughly a month. The modal and median times to disposition were approximately 12 and 9.50 months respectively, which are promising signs for the ability of the Gun Court to dispose a significant proportion of its cases before they fall into a state of backlog.

Table 38.0: Breakdown of times to disposition (from case file date) for the charges disposed in the year ended December 31, 2025

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 – 12	416	55.03
13 – 24	221	29.23
25 – 36	66	8.73
37 – 47	10	1.32
48 & over	43	5.69
Total	100	100.00

The above table provides a further breakdown of the estimated time to disposition for the charges disposed in 2025, counting from the case file date. The positive skewness displayed in the previous table is confirmed, as the scores here are mostly concentrated towards the lower intervals in the distribution. The data shows that the largest proportion of the disposals using this method took a year or less. This interval accounted for 416 or 55.03% of the disposals and was followed by charges taking between 13 and 24 months to be disposed with 221 charges or 29.23%. A further 8.73% of the matters were disposed within 25-36 months, 5.69% took four or more years to be disposed and the remaining 1.32% took between 37 and 47 months. A proportion of 84.26% of the cases disposed took two years or less from the case file date, an improvement of 4.86 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Table 39.0: Case clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
389	244	62.72%

**48 or 19.67% of the 244 disposed cases originated in 2025. This percentage represents the disposal rate.*

Three hundred and sixty-three new cases were filed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in 2025 while 244 were also disposed or inactivated (including many which originated before the Term) leading to a clearance rate of 62.72% for the year, a notable decline of 19.10 percentage points, representing the first time in eight years that the case clearance rate for the Gun Court has fallen below the 70% mark. It is clear from these figures that the Gun Court could now be facing a bottleneck in the near future. A clearance rate of 62.72% essentially means that for every 10 cases entering the system, only about six are leaving it. This leads to an immediate buildup of the backlog and which as mentioned breaks a solid eight-year streak of higher performance. Dropping below the 70% mark for the first time in nearly a decade suggests that the current operational model is no longer scaling with the volume of firearm-related litigation. The Gun Court could potentially deepen the employment of Differentiated Case Management (DCM), review judicial allocation, seek to redress long standing roadblocks to case progression, such as those outlined earlier in the reasons for adjournment and review the pre-trial disclosure process in order to streamline the process for forensic evidence—specifically ballistic reports—to ensure that cases reaching the High Court are "trial-ready" much faster.

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 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

Table 40.0: Selected performances metrics for the Gun Court in 2025

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate	Estimated disposition days for unresolved cases	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy case backlog rate (%)
244	556	0.44	830	84.26	15.74

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.44 which is an indication that for every 100 cases which were 'heard' in 2025 and still active, 44 pre-existing cases were disposed.

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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 a year to be disposed, barring special interventions or other unanticipated circumstances.

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 2025 is approximately 84.26%, which reflects the proportion of Gun Court cases in 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is 15.74%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of about 16% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This is an improvement of roughly 4.52 percentage points compared to the previous year and suggests that of the 556 cases, which had some court activity in 2025 and were still active at the end of the year, roughly 88 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

CHAPTER 6.0: COMMERCIAL DIVISION

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

Table 41.0: Cases filed in the Commercial Division in 2025

Division	Number of new cases filed
Commercial	420

2017 and 2018 were record years for the Commercial Division in terms of the number of new cases filed with 667 and 675 respectively. 2019 and 2020 saw successive years of decline however 2021 saw an increase of 8.90% in the number of new cases filed when compared to 2020. In 2022, 609 new cases were filed in the Commercial Division, an increase of 5.36% over 2021 and in 2023 610 new commercial cases were filed, an increase of 0.16%.

2024 experienced a decline in the number of new cases filed with 471 new cases registered, a decline of 22.79% when compared to the previous year.

In 2025, 420 new cases were filed in the Commercial Division, a decline of 10.83% compared to the previous year.

Admiralty and Insolvency cases also fall under the Commercial Division. In 2025, there were X new admiralty cases filed, while Y cases were also disposed, leading to a case clearance rate of S%. Additionally, P new Insolvency cases were filed in 2025 while Q cases were disposed, leading to a case clearance rate of approximately V%.

The productivity of the Commercial Division is important in sending signals to economic agents in a country and thus forms an essential pillar in economic growth and development.

Table 42.0: Sampling distribution of the leading reasons in the Commercial Division for adjournment of commercial cases for the year ended December 31, 2025

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant's documents short served	74	17.87
Defendant to file documents	46	11.11
Parties having discussion	41	9.90
Defendant to file documents	24	5.80
Pending settlement	21	5.07
Defendant's documents not served or short served	18	4.35
Sub-Total	224	54.11

Number of observations (N) = 498

The above table provides a sampling distribution of the top six reasons for adjournment in the Commercial Division for 2025. A total of 498 such incidences sampled reveal that claimant's documents not served or short served with 74 or 17.87%, defendant to file documents with 46 or 11.11% and parties having discussions with a view to settlement with 41 or 9.90% accounted for the top three reasons for adjournment in the Commercial Division in 2025. The listed reasons for adjournment documented from the sample accounts for 54.11% of the total.

Table 43.0: Sampling distribution of cases with chamber hearings for the year ended December 31, 2025

Hearings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Applications (Various)	753	61.98
Case Management Conferences	300	24.69
Pre-Trial Review	135	11.11
Judgment summons hearing	27	2.22
Total	1215	100.00

The above table summarizes a sample of 1215 cases which had chamber hearings in the Commercial Division during 2025. As with the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, the hearing of various applications for relief sought dominates the list with roughly 61.98% of the matters with chamber hearings. Case Management Conferences with 300 or 24.69% rank next and Pre- Trial Reviews with an incidence of 135 or 11.11% rounds off the top three chamber hearings in the Commercial Division for 2025.

Table 44.0a: Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty in the Commercial Division for the year ended December 31, 2025

Type of hearings	Estimated Hearing date certainty rate (%)
Case Management Conferences	86.25
Trial	70.20
All hearings combined	84.87

The above table breaks down the hearing date certainty rates for two significant types of hearings and also gives the overall rate for 2025. It is shown that Case Management Conferences had an estimated hearing date certainty rate of 86.25%, an increase of 1.1 percentage points when compared to the previous year, while the combined weighted hearing date certainty rate for trials is estimated to be 70.20%, an improvement of 5.05 percentage points when compared to the previous year. The overall hearing date certainty rate when all types of hearings are considered is approximately 84.87%, an increase of 3.62 percentage points when compared to the previous year. This is second consecutive year of decisive improvements in these metrics for the Commercial Division. The improvements noted are indicative of growing efficiency in the

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commercial division which augurs well for the productivity of the Supreme Court and signals for business confidence in the economy.

The productivity of a Supreme Court's Commercial Division serves as a critical engine for national economic stability and growth by directly influencing the risk profile of the business environment. When the judiciary operates efficiently—measured by high clearance rates and reduced disposition times—it transforms the legal system from a potential bottleneck into a facilitator of trade. By ensuring the swift and predictable enforcement of contracts, the court lowers transaction costs for firms, who no longer need to price in the "judicial risk" of multi-year delays or inconsistent rulings. This environment of legal certainty is a prerequisite for attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as international investors prioritize jurisdictions where capital is not "paralyzed" in long-standing litigation and where property rights are robustly defended.

Furthermore, high productivity in the Commercial Division has a profound impact on the credit market and the health of the financial sector. A rapid resolution of insolvency and debt recovery cases allows banks to reclaim and reallocate capital more effectively, which in turn lowers interest rates and increases the overall availability of credit for productive enterprises. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), who often lack the cash reserves to withstand protracted legal battles, an efficient commercial court is a lifeline that preserves their solvency and encourages entrepreneurship. Ultimately, a productive high court signals to the global market that the country respects the rule of law, creating a virtuous cycle where increased business confidence leads to higher employment, technological innovation, and sustained GDP growth.

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Table 45.0: Requisitions summary for the year ended December 31, 2025

Requisitions Issued	Requisition Reponses	Requisitions clearance Rate	Requisitions issued per 100 case files
287	177*	61.67%	21

*This figure includes requisitions filed on matters originating prior to 20254

The above table provides a summary of the response rate for requisitions issued in the Commercial Division in 2025. It is shown that 287 requisitions were issued in the year, which represents an increase of 48.70% when compared to the previous year, while there were 177 responses filed, thus producing a requisitions clearance rate of 61.67%, a decline of 8.80 percentage points when compared to the previous year. This requisition clearance rate suggests that during the year, for every 10 requisitions issued, roughly 6 were filed. Additionally, there was an average incidence of 21 requisitions per 100 case files in the Commercial Division for the year, an increase of 5 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Table 46: Methods of disposition for the year ended December 31, 2025

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Agreed to pay by installment	5	0.90
Application Granted	7	1.25
Claim form expire	1	0.18
Consent Judgment	8	1.43
Consent Order	3	0.54
Dismissed for Want of Prosecution	35	6.27
Judgment	14	2.51
Judgment Delivered	1	0.18
Judgment in Default of Ack of Service	63	11.29
Judgment in Default of Defence	6	1.08
Judgment on Admission	13	2.33
Matter Discontinued	329	58.96
Matter Withdrawn	2	0.36
Settled	13	2.33
Settlement Order	1	0.18
Struck Out	39	6.99
Transferred	5	0.90
Written Judgment Delivered	13	2.33
Total	558	100

The data suggests that 558 cases in the Commercial Division were disposed in 2025, an increase of 25.39% when compared to the previous year – the second consecutive year of double digit improvements in this metric. Disposals by way of notices of discontinuances with 329 or 58.96% and judgments in default of acknowledgment of service with 63 or 11.20% were the leading methods of disposition during the year, while matters struck out with 6.99% and matters dismissed for want of prosecution with 6.27% rank next.

Table 47.0: Time to disposition for Commercial cases disposed in the year ended December 31, 2025

Descriptive Statistics (months)

Number of observations	558
Mean	22.5245
Median	19.0000
Mode	17.00
Std. Deviation	20.567
Skewness	0.5141
Range	115.00
Minimum	5.00
Maximum	120.00

The above table shows that the estimated average time to disposition for the 445 commercial cases disposed in 2025 is approximately 22.50 or 1.88 years, 2.6 years, an improvement of roughly 8 months compared to the previous year. The maximum time to disposition observed from these cases is approximately 10 years old while the lowest is roughly 5 months. It is of note that the median time to disposition for 2025 is 19 months while significantly the modal value is 17 months. 52 or 9.32% of the commercial cases disposed in 2025 originated in said year, a decline of 28.77% when compared to the previous year.

Table 48.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for Commercial cases in 2025

Descriptive Statistics (months)

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	91	16.31
13 - 24	246	44.09
25 - 36	68	12.19
37 - 47	74	13.26
48 and over	79	14.16
Total	558	100

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The above table provides a breakdown of the times to disposition for the cases disposed in the Commercial Division in 2025. It is seen that the largest proportion of these cases were disposed of within 13 – 24 months, accounting for 44.09% of the disposals. This is immediately followed by the 91 or 16.31% which took 0 – 12 months to be disposed and 79 or 14.16%, which were disposed of in 48 or more months. Taken together, the data suggest that 60.4% of the cases disposed, were resolved within two years.

Table 51.0: Case clearance rate for the Commercial Division for the year ended December 31, 2025

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
420	558*	132.86%

**This figure includes cases filed before 2025. 52 or 9.32% of the cases filed in 2025 were disposed.*

Four hundred and twenty new cases were filed in the Commercial Division in 2025, while 558 cases were disposed, yielding an impressive case clearance rate of 132.86, an increase of 38.38 percentage points compared to the previous year. This result suggests that for every 100 new cases filed in the year, roughly 133 were disposed – the second consecutive year in which the Commercial Division of the Supreme Court has seen double digit improvements in their case clearance rate. Again, the cases disposed were not necessarily from those filed, as the clearance rate is simply a productivity ratio. This is the highest annual case clearance rate on record for the Commercial Division, representing a reversal of trends over the past four years and defying the mathematical forecasts.

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 2025. These measures are summarized in the table below:

Table 52.0: Selected performances metrics for the Commercial Division for 2025

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Disposition days	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	Crude On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
558	821	0.68	537 days	337	558	60.40	39.60

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.68, which is an indication that for every 100 cases which were 'heard' in 2025 and still active, 68 were disposed, an improvement of 11 percentage points when compared to the previous year. 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 an estimated 17.90 months to be disposed, barring special interventions and other outcomes.

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 crude proxy on time case-processing rate for the Commercial cases in 2025 is 60.40%, which reflects the proportion of Commercial cases in 2025, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate stands at 39.60% of active cases, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 39.60% 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 821 cases which had some court activity in 2025 and were still active at the end of the year, 325 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

CHAPTER 7.0: Aggregate Case Activity, Outstanding Judgments and Courtroom Utilization

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 2025.

Table 53.0: Gross case clearance rate for the year ended December 31, 2025

Total cases filed	Total cases disposed	Gross Case clearance rate (%)
12,891	11,145	85.86

The above table provides an aggregate summary of the clearance rates in the Divisions of the Supreme Court in 2025. The data suggests that 12,891 new cases were filed/entered across the Divisions reviewed in 2025, a decline of 6.47% compared to the previous year. These results yield a gross clearance rate of roughly 85.86, representing an increase of 2.86 percentage points when compared to the previous year and suggesting that that for every 100 cases filed/entered during the year, roughly, 86 were also disposed.

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Aggregate Case Activity for the past two calendar years

Table 54.0: Summary of new cases filed and cases disposed in the Supreme Court (2024 – 2025) [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 2025	Aggregate number of cases disposed in 2025	Case Clearance Rate (%) - 2025
High Court Civil (HCV)	4934	3135	63.54	4651	3453	74.24
Family	4252	4651	109.3	3749	4124	110.00
Estate	3540	2809	79.35	3218	2935	91.21
Commercial	471	445	94.48	420	558	132
Home Circuit Court	301	169	56.15	260	138	53.08
Gun Court	363	297	81.82	389	244	62.72
Revenue Court	3	1	80.00	2	3	150.00
Total	13864	11507	83.00	12,689	11,455	90.28

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

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Case Activity Summary for 2025

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

Table 55.0: Aggregate case activity in 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)	4934	3135	74.24	46.50	80.75
Family	3749	4124	110	44.24	78.44
Estate	3218	2935	91.21	19.36	80.04
Commercial	420	558	132.86	22.52	84.87
Home Circuit Court	260	138	53.08	41	69.13
Gun Court	389	244	62.72	16.57	71
Revenue Court	2	3	150%	-	-
Insolvency	7	4	57.14	11.54	-
Admiralty	2	4	200%	13.75	
Gross/Weighted Average	12,981	11,145	85.86	26.94	77.37

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The above table provides an important summary of case activity in the Supreme Court in 2025. It is shown that 12,981 new cases were filed/entered across the divisions of the Supreme Court during the year, one of the highest outcomes in at least the last decade. The High Court Civil Division accounted for the highest number of new cases filed with 4,934, representing 38% of new cases filed during the year. The Family Division accounted for the next highest share of new cases filed with 3,749 or 28.88% of the new cases.

The High Court Civil and Family Divisions had the highest share of cases disposed in the Supreme Court in 2025 with roughly 37% and 28.13% respectively of the total, followed by the Estate Division with 26.33% of the disposals. The Commercial Division continues its impressive recent performances with a leading case clearance rate among the major divisions of 132.86%, followed by the Family Division with 110.00%. The High Court Civil (HCV) Division accounted for the longest average time to disposition with cases taking an average of approximately 46.50 months to be disposed. The Family Division was next with an average time to disposition of approximately 44.24 months while among the major areas of operation, the Gun Court and Estate Division with estimated average times to disposition of 16.57 months 19.36 months respectively took the shortest time on average to dispose of the cases resolved. The overall weighted average time taken to dispose of the cases resolved in 2025 is approximately 27 months, 6.50 percentage points better than the previous year. As with the previous year, none of the Divisions of the Supreme Court met the international standard on hearing date certainty in 2024. The overall weighted average hearing date certainty rate was 77.37%, roughly the same as the previous year. The Commercial Division with a hearing date certainty rate of 84.87% and the High Court Civil

Division with 80.75% accounted for the highest outputs on this metric in 2025.

Judgments Reserved and Judgments Delivered

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

Table 56.0: Summary of Judgments Reserved and Delivered in 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 (%)
298	327	109.73	259	268	103.47

A total of 298 judgements were reserved in 2025, an increase of 1.36% when compared to the previous year, while 327 judgments were delivered, a decline of 1.51% when compared to the previous year. This output led to a clearance rate of roughly 109.73%, a decline 3.17 percentage points when compared to the previous year. This result means that for every 10 judgments which were reserved in 2025, 11 judgments were delivered, similar to that of the previous year and reflective of the persistent high productivity of the Supreme Court with judgments delivered over the past six years. The average age of cases on which judgments were delivered in 2025 was roughly 2.25 years and the overwhelming majority delivered were reserved prior to said year. The Chief Justice has set a standard for all judgments reserved in the Supreme Court to be delivered within three months of reservation, except for complex cases which should take a maximum time of six months after reservation to be delivered.

Various applications are made during the life of a civil case on which judgments may be reserved.

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The analysis of the clearance rate on judgments on applications is an important supplement to the analysis of judgments and the overall outcome of a case as timely rulings on applications have a direct correlation with the timely delivery of judgments on substantive cases. The data suggests that there were 259 judgments reserved on applications in 2025 while 268 were delivered. This produced a clearance rate for judgments on applications of 103.47%, fractional increase of 0.82 percentage points compared to the previous year.

Estimated Courtroom/Hearing Utilization Rate in 2025

Using a sample of cases heard in open court in 2025, the courtroom utilization rate for the Supreme Court was estimated to be 64%, a slight increase of 3 percentage points compared to the previous year; suggesting that just about 3 of every 5 available hours for hearings were utilized in 2025. 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, Estate and Family Divisions in 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, the story of which in 2025 is summarized below.

Table 57.0: Sampling distribution of the modes of hearing for civil matters in the Supreme Court in 2025

Mode of Hearing	Percentage Distribution
Hybrid	1.0
In person	6.10
Teleconference	.5
Virtual	92.40
Total	100.0

It is seen in the above sample summary that the overwhelming majority of hearings conducted in the combined High Court Civil, Commercial, Matrimonial and Probate Divisions of the Supreme Court were done by video conference, accounting for an estimated 92.40% of hearings conducted, while in-person hearings with 6.10% ranked next. The general improvement in hearing date certainty rate in the High Court Civil Division over the past three years is partly a result the mass movement of cases online. 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 has demonstrated a trajectory of consistent improvement in operational efficiency and case management. The following conclusion synthesizes the key performance metrics and divisional trends observed throughout the year.

Overall Performance and Efficiency Metrics: The Supreme Court achieved a case clearance rate of 85.86% in 2025, a notable increase from 83.00% in 2024 and 76.56% in 2023. This upward trend indicates that the court is increasingly successful in disposing of cases relative to the number of new filings.

Disposition Time: The average time to disposition for cases across all divisions was 26.94 months (approximately 2.25 years), which is roughly 6.54 months better than that of the previous year.

Hearing Date Certainty: The court maintained a stable hearing date certainty rate of 77.37%, showing that the majority of scheduled hearings proceeded as planned, which is critical for the reliability of the case scheduling process.

Judgments: The clearance rate on outstanding judgments remained exceptionally high at 109.73%, suggesting that the court is successfully reducing the backlog of reserved judgments from previous year.

Divisional Highlights and Variances: The report reveals variations in performance across different court divisions, reflecting the unique complexities of their caseloads. Among the larger divisions, the Commercial Division was the leader, with a robust case clearance rate of 132.86% and a relatively low average disposition time of 22.52 months. The Family Division also demonstrated high efficiency with a 110% clearance rate and a commendable on-time case processing rate of

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72.04%. Challenges persist in Criminal and Civil Litigation in the Supreme Court, with the Home Circuit Court facing the greatest challenges, registering a clearance rate of only 53.08% and a 64% crude proxy case backlog rate, the highest in the Supreme Court. While the High Court Civil Division handled the largest volume of cases (4,934 new filings), it struggled with a 64.34% backlog rate and the longest average disposition time at 46.50 months. The weighted average on-time case processing rate for the Supreme Court stood at 61.48%, while the crude proxy case backlog rate was 38.52%. The Gun Court stood out for its efficiency in this area, with an 84.26% on-time processing rate and a low backlog rate of 15.74%. Conversely, the High Court Civil and Home Circuit Courts remain the primary areas of concern for backlog management, both exceeding a 64% backlog rate.

The report utilizes exponential smoothing to forecast continued positive momentum into 2026. The Supreme Court is expected to sustain its progress in clearing outstanding judgments and further improving case file integrity, which reached 97.82% in 2025. In summary, while the Supreme Court has made substantial strides in its overall clearance rates and judgment delivery, the data suggests that continued targeted interventions are required especially in the High Court Civil and Home Circuit Court divisions to address higher-than-average disposition times and persistent backlogs. The high hearing date certainty and improved case turnover rates across most other divisions, however, provide a solid foundation for continued judicial reform and efficiency.

The following extensive recommendations are proposed to accelerate the Supreme Court's transition to a high-performance judiciary.

Strategic Introduction to Judicial Reform

The 2025 report highlights a judiciary that is successfully "bending the curve" of efficiency, yet remains bifurcated by divisional performance. While specialized courts like the Commercial and Revenue divisions operate at surplus capacity (clearance rates over 100%), the High Court Civil and Home Circuit divisions function as systemic bottlenecks. Global court literature suggests that high clearance rates alone do not guarantee justice; rather, the goal is "justice-on-time," which balances case volume with the quality and predictability of proceedings. To bridge the gap between current improvements and international excellence, the Supreme Court must continue the current shift from reactive backlog management to proactive, data-driven caseflow management.

1. Implementing Differentiated Case Management (DCM)

The report identifies a significant disparity in disposition times, particularly the 46.50-month average in Civil Litigation. Global best practices suggest that treating all cases with the same procedural rigor is inefficient. The Court should persist with the adoption of a Differentiated Case Management model where cases could be triaged at the point of filing into "Streamlined," "Standard," or "Complex" tracks.

2. Enhancing Hearing Date Certainty through Strict Continuance Policies

While the hearing date certainty rate is stable at 77.37%, nearly a quarter of scheduled events still fail to proceed. International standards for high-performance courts aim for a certainty rate exceeding 90%. Among the primary driver of uncertainty, according to the report, is avoidable

adjournments due to missing files or attorney absenteeism.

The "Firm Trial Date" Rule: The Court could consider implementing a strict "No-Adjournment" policy for trial dates except under extraordinary, documented circumstances.

Sanctioning Administrative Failure: Case file integrity (currently 97.82%) is high, but the remaining 2% represents hundreds of lost opportunities. Implementing a digital "lock-step" system where a hearing cannot be scheduled unless all mandatory digital tags are present would eliminate "missing file" adjournments.

3. Leveraging Hyper-Automation and Predictive Analytics

Global trends in 2026 are moving toward AI-supported infrastructure. Instead of manual coding, AI can be used to extract key data from new filings to suggest the appropriate DCM track and flag missing compliance documents instantly. The Court should persist with the digital transition towards the use of real-time dashboards that alert registrars when a case approaches the 24-month "crude proxy" threshold before it officially becomes part of the backlog.

4. Addressing the Criminal Justice Bottleneck

The Home Circuit Court's 53.08% clearance rate is the most critical vulnerability identified in the data. To address this, the Court should consider:

Pre-Trial Early Resolution Events: Mirroring models used in Commonwealth jurisdictions, the court could hold "Settlement Weeks" or intensive pre-trial conferences specifically for older criminal

matters to facilitate plea bargaining or evidence narrowing.

5. Expanding Digital Self-Service and Transparency

With 92.40% of civil hearings already virtual, the next step is moving beyond video calls to a fully integrated Digital Public Portal. Providing a plain-language status dashboard for litigants—not just attorneys—can reduce the administrative burden on court staff who currently field manual inquiries about case status.

Overall, the Supreme Court of Jamaica is well-positioned to reach international benchmarks if it can successfully apply the efficiency lessons of its Commercial and Gun Court divisions to the broader Civil and Criminal dockets through specialized tracking, stricter scheduling discipline, and advanced automation.

Glossary of Statistical Terms

Core Performance Metrics

- **Case Clearance Rate:** A measure of the court's efficiency in disposing of cases relative to the number of new filings. It is calculated by dividing the number of disposed cases by the number of new cases filed during the same period.
- **Hearing Date Certainty Rate:** This metric tracks the extent to which dates scheduled for hearings (such as trials or case management conferences) are actually adhered to. It serves as a primary indicator of the reliability of the court's case scheduling process.
- **On-Time Case Processing Rate:** The proportion of cases that are disposed of within a predefined time standard. For example, in the Commercial Division, this measures the percentage of cases resolved within two years.
- **Crude Proxy Case Backlog Rate:** An estimated measurement of the proportion of cases that remain unresolved for more than two years as of the end of the reporting period.
- **Average Time to Disposition:** The average duration, typically measured in months or years, from the initiation of a case to its final resolution or disposal.
- **Case File Integrity Rate:** A metric used to assess the reliability of the court's administrative record-keeping and the availability of physical or electronic files for scheduled matters.

- **Case Turnover Rate:** A measure of the rate at which cases are processed through a specific division or stage of the legal system.

Statistical & Methodological Terms

- **Exponential Smoothing:** A forecasting method that assigns exponentially decreasing weights to observations over time. Newer data is given more "weight" or priority as it is seen as more relevant to future trends.
- **Smoothing Constant:** A value used in exponential smoothing (often >0.50 in this report) to determine the level of priority given to the most recent data points in a forecast.
- **Weighted Average:** A calculation that takes into account the varying importance or volume of different data sets (such as different court divisions) to provide a more accurate overall performance figure.

Operational Terms

- **Adjournment:** A delay in a hearing where a future date is set due to avoidable reasons, such as missing files, attorney absenteeism, or incomplete medical reports. These have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty.
- **Continuance:** A situation where a future hearing date is set due to strictly procedural reasons, such as moving from a plea to a trial hearing. Unlike adjournments, continuances do not negatively impact hearing date certainty.

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 of a metric's numerical value.