



How do I apply to search for a decree absolute or final order?

How to apply for a search

There are two ways to search for a decree absolute or final order. If you know the name of court you can contact the court directly or if you do not know where the divorce took place you can contact the Central Family Court.

If you know the court where the divorce, dissolution, or annulment happened

If you know the court where the divorce, dissolution, or annulment happened, write or email the court with your name, address, and case number (if known) and the date you believe the decree absolute or final order was pronounced (if known).

If you do not know the case number, the court will search records from 5 years before and after the date you believe the decree absolute or final order was made.

If you do not know the date, the court will search the last 10 years of records.

Make sure names are spelled correctly to avoid an unsuccessful search. If a solicitor is applying for you, include their name and address.

For court contact details, visit www.gov.uk/find-court-tribunal.

What will the court send me?

The court will send you a copy of the decree absolute or final order by post.

Fee with case number: £11

Fee without case number: £45 for every 10 years of records searched (even if you know the exact date).

If you do not know the court where the divorce, dissolution or annulment took place

You can ask the Central Family Court to search the Central Index of Decrees Absolute for the decree absolute or final order.

You must complete form **D440**.

You can either fill out the attached form or go online at www.gov.uk/hmcts/request-decree-absolute

Fee to search the Central Index is £65 for each 10-year period that is searched.

What will the Central Family court send me?

You'll get a certificate of the search with a copy of the decree absolute or final order, usually within 45 days after the court gets your payment.

If there is anything wrong with your application, it will be returned to you giving the reason for its return.

If there is no trace of a decree having been granted, you will be issued with a 'no trace' certificate.

How do I pay the fee?

Pay by credit or debit card

If you have asked the court to call you to make payment by credit or debit card, the court will call you to take your payment.

Include your phone number within your request and state that you wish to pay by credit or debit card.

Pay by cheque or postal order

Make the cheque or postal order payable to 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service' and send it with your form. You may not receive a copy of your decree absolute or final order until the cheque has cleared.

D440 – Request for a search for a divorce decree absolute or final order at the Central Family Court

Rule 7.36 Family Procedure Rules 2010

Please take care and ensure that the names of parties are spelt correctly. An incorrect spelling may result in an unsuccessful search. If you have a solicitor applying on your behalf please give your solicitor's name and address.

To help us make the search please answer as many of the questions below as you can.

1. Full name of the applicant (the person who issued the proceedings)

2. Full name of the respondent (the person who replied to the proceedings)

3. Full name of the co-respondent (if any) or any other person named in the divorce

4. Date of marriage

5. Date of separation

6. Date or year the petition was filed

7. The court where it was filed

8. Case No. (if known)

9. The court where it was pronounced

10. Date or year the decree nisi was pronounced

11. Date or year the decree nisi was made absolute

I request a search for the decree absolute made between the years

and

I wish to pay my fee by

Credit/debit card, please call me on phone number to take my payment details

cheque/postal order made payable to 'HM Courts & Tribunals Service', which I enclose with this form

Your name (or company name and reference)

Address (applicant or solicitor applying on behalf applicant)

Postcode

Contact phone number (we may need to clarify details)

Solicitors for (if applicable)

Return this completed form with your fee to:

Post: Central Family Court, Decree Absolute Search Section, First Avenue House, 42 – 49 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6NP

Email: Cfc.decreabsolute@justice.gov.uk