

# D440 – Request for a search for a Divorce Decree Absolute 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)

Contact telephone 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@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Cfc.decreabsolute@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)



## How do I apply to search for a Divorce Decree Absolute?

### How do I apply for a search?

#### **If you know the court where the divorce, dissolution or annulment took place**

You do not need to complete an application form. You can email or post your request to the court asking for a copy of the decree absolute.

For contact details of all our courts, visit **[www.gov.uk/find-court-tribunal](http://www.gov.uk/find-court-tribunal)**

You must give the court your name, address and case number (if you know it). If you do not know the case number, the court will search 5 years of records either side of the date you believe the decree absolute/final order was pronounced. If you **cannot** provide this date, the court will search the last 10 years of records. 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.

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

**If you know the case number**, the fee for this search is **£10**.

**If you do not know the case number**, the fee for this search is **£45 for every 10 years** of records searched. **Even if you know the exact date, the fee still £45.**

Details on how this fee can be paid can be found on page 3.

## 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.

The Central Index is a record of all decrees absolute granted by Courts in England and Wales since 1858. It is kept and controlled by the Central Family Court and anyone is entitled to apply for a search to be carried out, and to receive a certificate of the result and any decree absolute traced. People may wish to apply for a search of the Central Index:

- To obtain a copy of their decree absolute, if they have lost the original and no longer have a record of the case details
- For family tree or historical purposes

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

You will need to complete form **D440** and send it to the Central Family Court by email or post.

Central Family Court  
First Avenue House  
42-49 High Holborn  
London  
WC1V 6NP

**Email:** [Cfc.decreesabsolute@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Cfc.decreesabsolute@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)

## What do I receive?

If everything is in order, you will receive a certificate of the search within 10 working days. If there is anything wrong with your application, it will be returned to you giving the reason for its return, within 10 working days.

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

### **Please Note –**

The Central Family Court does not keep any document in relation to cases issued in another court, it simply holds a record of decrees absolute granted by them.

If you require a copy of a decree absolute and already know the case number and name of the court which granted the decree, you should write direct to that court with the relevant fee for a copy thereof and for any other information you may require.

## **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, this could take up to 10 working days.

You will find a list of court fees in the leaflet *EX50 Civil and family court fees*. Help with Fees and Fee remissions are no longer available for copy or duplicate documents.