

How long does it take to obtain probate?

It's difficult to provide a general time frame as there are many things that can affect the process. On average it takes three to six months to get the necessary paperwork for the Probate Register but it can take longer – more than a year in some cases if the estate is complicated. Below is an outline of the process and, from our experience, how long it typically takes at each step.

Step one	Step two	Step three	Step four	Step five	Step six
Once advisers are appointed, work begins to determine the value of the estate: • Gather information from the Personal Representatives (PRs) (one to two months). • Ascertain liabilities (one to two months). • Obtain valuations (one to two months dependent on the assets and financial institutions involved).	When all of the relevant information is available: • Prepare Inheritance Tax (IHT) Account (two to three weeks after all the information is available). • Prepare tax returns to the date of death (three to four weeks after receipt of all the information). • Prepare the probate application (two to three weeks).	Once the executors have approved the IHT Account and probate papers: • IHT Account with schedules and relevant documentation submitted to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), (within one week of receipt of the approved papers from the PRs). • Payment of IHT to HMRC (if applicable) when the IHT Account is submitted, or by the end of the sixth month after the person died, if earlier.	Probate Application submitted: • After HMRC issues the probate application code (usually within 20 working days after HMRC receives the IHT Account). • Note: The application cannot be submitted until the code has been received from HMRC.	Obtaining the Grant of Representation (GOR): • GOR issued (twelve weeks).	When the GOR is received: • Collect assets (three months to one year). • Settle liabilities (three to four weeks after receipt of all the information). • Prepare accounts (three weeks to one month from when the appropriate information is available). • Register the estate on the Trust Register if appropriate (one to two weeks). • Prepare estate tax return(s), if required (three to four weeks after receipt of all the information). • Assent/transfer of assets to beneficiaries (two to three months to years).

Unless the estate is complex, typically step one and two takes two to three months to complete.

Get in touch

For practical support with obtaining probate or administering an estate, get in touch with our experts to discuss your requirements and how we can help.

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Typically, this step takes between three months to one year to complete when dealing with non-complex estates.