

I. E-filing, Scrutiny and Admission

Date	Version	Comments
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	1.0	Signed off by <>

Background

The filing process is riddled with challenges like the complex and non-user centric eFiling module, mandatory physical filing despite e-Filing availability and court visits for payment of court fees & lack of e-payment modules

Similarly, during the registration stage, challenges include a high volume of files, a shortage of court staff, time-consuming manual efforts, and subpar file submissions. The admission process compounds these challenges with mandatory in-person hearings and the requirement of complainant presence.

To tackle this, a reimagined workflow is proposed for a seamless, rule-based online e-filing system. This system will function asynchronously, allowing users to file cases at any time, from any location.

Registration will be assisted to expedite and enhance the accuracy of the process, through a rule-based scrutiny system equipped with a standardized list of defects, flags, and qualifiers. This system will automatically identify potential errors or inconsistencies during filing thereby prompting timely corrections. To facilitate seamless communication and resolution, a dedicated platform will enable the court to directly notify litigants and advocates of any defects, providing them with options to update or correct information within the system itself.

To accelerate case progression and minimize unnecessary hearings, an asynchronous admission system will allow for system-assisted case admissions

basis Judge discretion, eliminating the need for manual reviews and in-person attendance. Further streamlining the process, affidavits/sworn statements can be submitted electronically during the e-filing stage, ensuring a seamless transition from filing to admission without physical court visits.

Pre- requisites for the Module

- User Registration to perform actions in the system

Key Outputs

Key Product Outputs	Possible Kerala implementation Specific changes in addition to product offering
Litigant/Advocate should be successfully able to file a case	Workflow can be customized for iterative admission of the case along with the user filing the case
The litigant/advocate should be able to draft the case while in progress and retrieve it for further editing. All details of the case can be updated until submission	NA
The litigant/advocate should be able to pay the application fee for a case	Enable online payments via Integration with Treasury
The users should be able to view the case in a pdf format in compliance to the civil and criminal code of practice	
Rule-based validations for various fields for e-filing	OCR for Documents uploaded based on keywords to be present based on document types
The FSO should be able to successfully scrutinize the case and either notify errors	The Case number and the Case file number can be customised

to the litigant/advocate or, if there are no errors, complete the registration and list the file before the judge	
Advocate/litigant should be able to respond to the FSO queries and edit the required case details for review by FSO	Output formats / reports / forms can be customised according to state needs
Judge should be able to review the entire case file and admit/reject the case, and schedule an admission hearing if required.	Field level changes can be made in the e-filing screen according to state need
At the end of the flow, a Filing number should be generated and the case should be successfully admitted.	

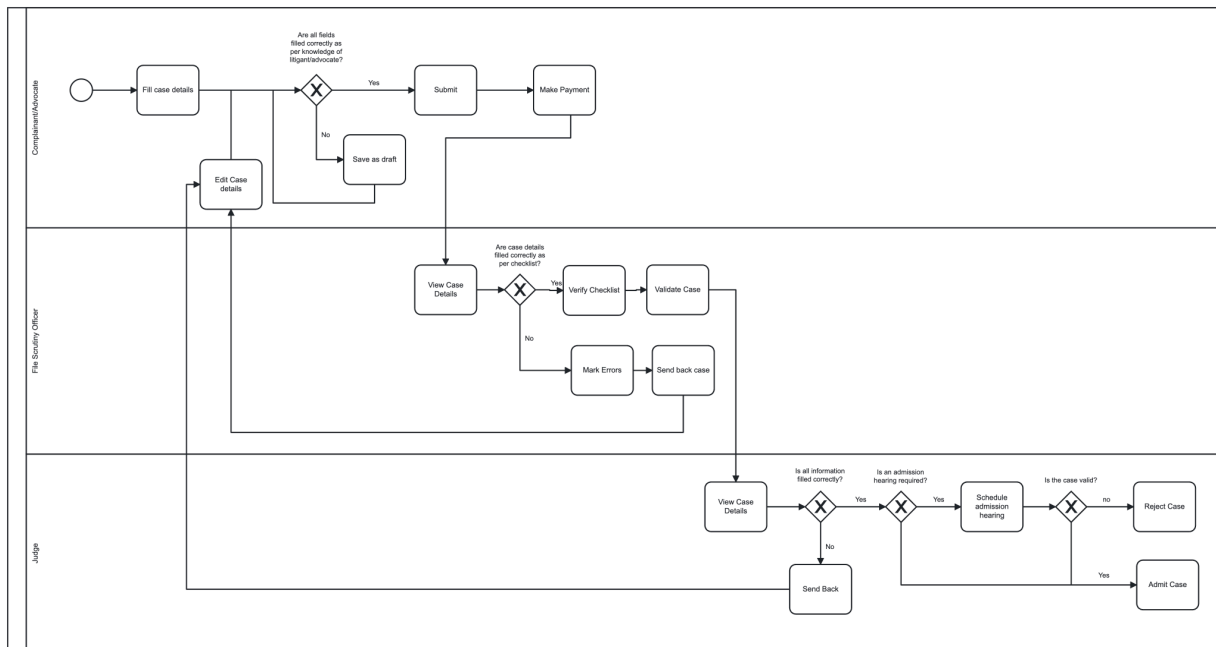
User Action Mapping

	Case	Hearing
Litigant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a case • View a case • Edit a case • Make Payment • Save Drafts • Upload Vakalatnama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Hearing
Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a case • View a case • Edit a case • Make Payment • Save Drafts • Upload Vakalatnama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Hearing • Request Reschedule
File Scrutiny Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View a Case • Reassign Case back • Fill Checklist 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validate Case 	
Judge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View a Case Reassign Case back Admit Case Reject Case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule Hearing Attend Hearing Reschedule Hearing
Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect Filing Fees 	

Solution

Process Flow



[View High Res Image here](#)

Workflow

Status	Roles	Action	Next Status
	Litigant/advocate	Save Draft	Draft in Progress
	Litigant/advocate	Submit Case	Payment Pending
Draft in Progress	Litigant/advocate	Delete Draft	
Draft in Progress	Litigant/advocate	Save Draft	Draft in Progress
Draft in Progress	Litigant/advocate	Submit Case	Payment Pending
Payment Pending	Litigant/advocate	Make Payment	Under Scrutiny
Under Scrutiny	FSO	Validate	Pending Admission
Under Scrutiny	FSO	Send Back	Case Re-assigned
Case Re-assigned	Litigant/advocate	Correct Errors	Under Scrutiny
Pending Admission	Judge	Schedule Admission Hearing	Admission Hearing Scheduled
Pending Admission	Judge	Send Back	Case Re-assigned
Pending Admission	Judge	Admit	Case Admitted
Admission Hearing Scheduled	Judge	Admit	Case Admitted
Admission Hearing Scheduled	Judge	Reject	Case Dismissed

Specifications

1) File a case:

- The following users can file a case
 - Complainant (Litigant)

- Complainant's Advocate
- A case may one or multiple complainants and one or multiple respondents
- The functional specifications of a case will be divided into two parts:
 - Info Box: The user will be provided with an info box containing details on the documents required and the average time taken to file a case. The contents of the info box will be determined based on the case type. The infobox will have the following features:
 - Can be customized based on the case type
 - Will contain information in the following formats:
 - Text
 - Numeric
 - Special Characters
 - Headings and subheadings
 - Bullet points
 - Generic Details: These are details to be filled for all case types, categories and sub-categories
 - Case-Specific Details: These are details that will be specific to the case type, category and sub-category
- As part of case details, users will be expected to enter values and upload documents
- 1 complainant/respondent may be represented by one or multiple advocates
- Multiple complainants/respondents may be represented by the same advocate.
- Each complaint and respondent may choose to appoint an advocate or represent the case party in person. In case the complainant or respondent are opting for the party in person, they should have access to all actions that are to be performed by the advocate

2) Organization Creation:

- a) If the complainant/respondent is an organization, the user can add the name of the organization using an input field
- b) The input field will act as a fuzzy search box and provide a real time view of matching organizations
- c) Users can select on these or write custom org name
- d) If an existing org is selected, corresponding details will be autopopulated,

- 3) **Infobox:** To improve the experience of the users filing the case, an infobox will be provided as part of the 'File a case' workflow.
- a) The infobox will inform the user of the information required and the time taken to file a case
 - b) The content of the infobox will be defined by the case type
 - c) Download as pdf of infobox
- 4) **Case Name Generation:**
- a) The name of the case will be auto generated based on the name of the complainant and respondent
 - b) The case name will follow the following format:
 - i) Primary compliant name vs Primary respondent name
 - ii) Primary complainant can be identified by the first complainant entered in the system
 - iii) Primary respondent can be identified by the first respondent entered in the system
- 5) **Appointment of advocates:**
- a) One or multiple advocates may be appointed by a litigant for representation in a case.
 - b) In case an advocate is selected by the Litigant, search will be done via name and BAR Council ID Only exact matches will be provided by the system
 - c) The advocates are divided into two categories:
 - i) Primary Advocates
 - ii) Other Advocates
 - d) There needs to be a "Vakalathnama" to be uploaded as part of the process to declare the appointment of a "Primary advocate" There will be 1 Vakalathnama between every litigant and an advocate
 - i) For Phase 1, a template of the Vakalathnama will be available for the Advocate to download. He/she will be responsible for signing and uploading of Vakalathnama
 - e) Only Primary advocates can perform actions in a case.
 - f) Other advocates can only view case details

6) **E-signing:** E-signing functionality needs to be provided as part of Case filing. As part of filing, the user filing the case has to e-sign the case. The following methodologies for e-signing a case will be made available:

- Aadhar OTP based verification
 - i) The user may enter his/her registered Aadhar ID and confirm his identity by entering the OTP received by him/her on the registered mobile number

7) Automated Scrutiny:

- To reduce the effort of the Scrutiny officer, validations will be applied on the form to prevent incorrect entry of information as much as possible. The list of validations are available in the functional specifications.
- The validations of the fields may differ by case type. For example in NIA 138 cases, only one complainant is allowed, and hence other complainants cannot be added. However, in other case types, multiple complainants may be added to a case
- The FSO will be able to see errors/alerts based on certain rules for a case type. For example, as per law, a case cannot be filed post 6 months of the cheque bounce. While this will not be a validation to stop filing of a case, the FSO will be alerted on this

8) Save as Draft

- The user should be able to save the case file as a draft. On saving a draft, the status of a case is moved to "Draft In Progress"
- The user will be indicated which cases are in the draft stage
- The values will be stored and will be visible to the user when he/she opens the case again
- The values will be retained even if the user logs out and logs in again
- The value of the remaining fields can be updated. Additionally, values of already entered fields may be edited
- The user may continue to add/edit field values without any restrictions as long as the test is in the Draft stage.
- The user will not be able to submit the Case until all mandatory values are filled
- A temporary case ID is generated for a case initiated and in draft format.

9) **View as PDF (Document Indexing):** Users are currently used to view the Case in PDF format to ensure all details are provided and edit/add details. To ensure the ease of usage of the system, we will provide the ability to view the case file as a document in PDF format alternatively.

- The Case file in pdf format will be generated based on the civil and criminal code
- Once the case is submitted, a PDF of the submission formatted as per court rules and requirements and bearing the appropriate signatures and authentications is created as an official / verifiable record of the filing.

10) **Payments:** As part of the application process for a case, the complainant/advocate is required to pay a standard fee.

- a) The application fee will be a standard fee defined by the court and standard for all court rooms of the court.
- b) Court Fee will be dependent on case type
- c) The litigant/advocate can file the case through the following:
 - i) Pay at counter in Court:
 - (1) To enable this, a screen for recording collection will be made available to the collector where the collector can record the mode of payment.
 - ii) Make an Online Payment (Defined further in the Kerala Specific Implementation Section)

11) **File Scrutiny:** Once the case is submitted by the user, it is forwarded to the file scrutiny officer. The file scrutiny officer can either validate the case or send it back with Feedback

- Providing Feedback: Feedback by the FSO will be provided at a field level and can mark a field as an error and provide comments. The feedback will be shared with the complainant/complainant's advocate for further updates.
- Updating Case Details: Case details may be updated based on the feedback.
Provision of feedback and update of case details can be done an infinite number of times.
Validate Case: Once the FSO is confident, on the details of the case, he/she may choose to move the case forward to the Judge for Admission.

- i) Case type-wise checklist: A case type-wise checklist will be made available to the File Scrutiny officer to confirm whether a case has been scrutinized based on a certain set of rules. Question types to be supported as part of the checklist include
 - (1) Yes/No answers
 - (2) Short answer type
 - (3) Long answer type
 - (4) Multiple answers type
 - (5) Checkbox answer type
 - (6) Date answer type
 - (7) Time answer type
- If there are more than one judges in the court establishment, the FSO will select which judge the file has to be assigned to

12) **Case Admission:** Once the FSO has validated the case, the case is moved to the Judge. The judge has the following options:

- Send back: If the Judge requires additional information, the judge can send the case directly to the litigant requesting for additional information via comments
- Quick Admit a case: The judge can quickly admit a case without requesting additional information.
 - i. An order will be generated for admission of a case and a Case ID will be generated
 - (1) The case ID format is as per the format followed in CIS system as it is the standard format followed across all courts in India currently.
 - ii) A 6 digit unique code will be generated for the case. The code will be validated for users to join a case in the system
- Schedule Admission Hearing: The judge may schedule an admission hearing. This may be schedule the admission hearing only with the complainant or along with the respondent
 - i) In case the admission hearing is scheduled only for the complainant: the scheduler will provide suggested hearing dates based on the court schedule. The judge can select one of the proposed dates or enter a custom date. An order is issued for the admission hearing. (The details of scheduling are provided further in the document)

- ii) In case the admission hearing needs to be scheduled for both the complainant and the respondent(s), the judge can issue a notice via the system for appearance.
 - (1) The notice workflow will be the same as the Summons workflow (explained further in the document)
 - (2) Templates for notices will be made pre available in the system which will be pre populated based on case details and sent out to the court.
- Conduct Admission Hearing:
 - iii) View Scheduled Admission Hearings: The scheduled slot for the admission hearing will be visible to the judge on the Case details as well as in the calendar view.
 - iv) Adding Video Conferencing Link: A manual process for addition of video conference links to the calendar will be made available in V1. A member of the court staff may generate a link outside the system and update the necessary calendar.
 - v) Parties can attend the admission hearing virtually/in person/as per the rule of the court.
 - vi) Post the admission hearing an order will be issued for admission of a case and issuance of summons. (Details of orders and summons are covered in a later section of the PRD)

13) **SMS Notifications:** Parties should be notified via SMS at various points. List of SMS at various points is mentioned [here](#)

14) **Case Withdrawal:** User can withdraw the case at any point of time before admission without Judge approval.

Kerala Specific Implementation

The following enhancements will be made to the E-filing module for the Kerala Pilot Implementation

1) OCR:

- Automated population of Fields (Specific to ID):
 - Based on the Aadhar card uploaded by the user, the following fields for case filing should be auto populated:

- Complainant First Name
 - Complainant Middle Name
 - Complainant Last Name
 - Gender
 - Date of birth (for age)
 - Complainant Address line 1
 - Complainant Address line 2
 - State
 - District
 - City/Town
 - Pincode
- The user should be able to edit fields filled by OCR
- Automated populated of details of Authorized representative of the company based on Power of Attorney/Authorization certificate uploaded
- Scrutiny of Documents: For automated scrutiny of documents, an OCR engine will be used. We may choose to build the OCR engine in-house/use a third-party OCR. The following will be the functionality of the OCR Engine:
 - i) Ability to read printed text with High accuracy in English
 - ii) Document types supported: Word, PDF
 - iii) Keyword-based matching based on document types. The keywords may be predefined or as per fields present in case information.
For example, For Document Type Vakalatnama, the Keywords defined would be "Vakaltnama", value of "Complainant's Name", and Value of "Case Title" etc
 - iv) API integration for third-party application support.
- Configuration to be made available for the following:
 - v) If Document Verification fails, do we still allow for case to be filed

2) Integration with Treasury to enable online payment

3) Localization of language for sms

Functional Specifications

Functional specs are available [here](#)

Key Assumptions

Theme	Assumption
Filing a case	There is no requirement to make changes to the e-file once submitted until sent back for error correction/additional details
	Users will find it easier to file a case using a web interface. Hence, no file a case functionality is made available in the mobile app.
Scrutiny	It is assumed that there will be one FSO in the pilot court. In case of multiple FSOs, the FSOs can decide their cases for scrutiny and do will not be specifically assigned cases
E-sign	E-signing of a case is only done by the person filing the case (complainant/complainant's advocate). If additional complainant's are present in the case, no signing will be required from their end.

Configuration

- 1) Whether mandatory signing is required for case filing
- 2) Workflow for Case filing based on Case Type
- 3) Workflow for Case Filing based on persona filing the case
- 4) Vakalathnama requirement for assignment of advocate
- 5) Notifications on and off is a configuration
- 6) Case type wise configuration of number of complainants/respondents/advocates
- 7) CNR Number and Case filing number are configurable formats
- 8) Configuration of validations by case type

Out of Scope

The following are out of scope for V1.0

- 1) OCR for Documents will only be made available in English. No regional Documents will be supported
- 2) Input in localized language will be supported. No search will be possible on inputs in localized language.
- 3) Refund for case application fee
- 4) Availability of indexed case file in PDF format will not be available in a localized language
- 5) The complainant will not be able to edit a case file while it is under scrutiny/pending admission from judge. Edits will only be allowed when the file is sent back to the user.
- 6) Automated generation of Video Conferencing link for Admission hearing.
- 7) SLA based escalation matrix for scrutiny and admission
- 8) Access of Drafted case filed by any other user other than the one filing the case file
- 9) Mask Fields and Documents: Certain documents are uploaded Litigant/Advocate that are for the judge's eyes only and need to be masked. This is kept out of scope in V1.
- 10) In practice, the same advocate cannot be assigned to a litigant and a respondent. However, in V1, we will depend on this check to be done during appearance
- 11) While the case file is under scrutiny, the FSO marks certain fields as errors. In the clean sheet design, only fields with errors marked can be updated by the advocate. However, for the pilot, all fields will continue to remain editable.
- 12) Case name can be updated during the course of admission by the File scrutiny officer and the judge. Once a case is admitted, it cannot be edited.
- 13) Chat between advocate and file scrutiny officer
- 14) Police filing a charge sheet
- 15) Assignment of cases to FSO
- 16) Police filing a case
- 17) Multiple complainants signing a case. This may be required for other case types
- 18) Restriction on the same advocate representing a complainant and respondent in the same case
- 19) Defining SLA for FSO to complete scrutiny or SLA for advocates/litigants to make corrections
- 20) Assignment of Judge in case multiple judges in courtroom
- 21) Transfer of case across jurisdictions

- 22)Suo Moto Cognizance - Court needs to have the ability to initiate a case against someone on its own accord. Example where this is used - contempt of court.
- 23) Validation of whether the same advocate is representing both the complainant and the Advocate
- 24) Advocate appointed by person and the person later wanting to become party in person. In V1, an application can be filed for this and then change made by the CMO/Court Staff
- 25)E-sign using third party e-signing software (emudhra) for case filing
- 26) Download case file and upload with signature for case filing
- 27) Other litigants / lawyers added to the same case can view / edit drafts. A log of timestamp-user-edit is maintained by the portal for users to see if they want.
- 28)In case multiple complainants are filing the case, signature of only primary complainant will be taken. To accommodate other case types it would be necessary to be able to handle multiple litigant signatures on a single document. e.g. in a case where several applicants are being represented by a common advocate, and they have all not given a POA in favour of a single person, they may all file a single pleading collectively but each person would be signing it individually.

UI/UX Design

List of User Stories

- 1) Home Screen: This is the landing page that the user will land on when
- 2) File a case - Case type wise Infobox content
- 3) File a case - Case Details
- 4) File a case - Vakalatnama
- 5) File a case - save as draft
- 6) File a case - Access drafts
- 7) Scrutiny of Cases
- 8) Error Correction
- 9) Payments
- 10) Quick Admit + Admission Hearing + Notice for Admission
- 11) Order for Admission
- 12)SMS Notifications
- 13) Document Indexing
- 14) Case Name Generated

Pending Information/Tasks:

- 1) Infobox content for Case Filing
- 2) Update order of fields on Flgma
- 3) Correct format of desktop screens
- 4) Design Payment Screen
- 5) Format of Order for Admission Hearing
- 6) Format of Notice
- ~~7) Format of Order for Admission~~
- 8) Format for Document Indexing
- 9) Update SMS details
- 10) Format of Case number
- 11) Attributes of Notice
- 12) Attributes of Order
- 13) Screens/marker for masking evidence and error message when someone tries to access a document masked.
- 14) Assignment of Judge by FSO