

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

Version 7.216



NOTE Please read these notes carefully before installing or upgrading your software. Do not attempt any installation or upgrade without first making a fully restorable backup of your SIMS system.

Ideas Portal

Our ideas portal is the perfect place to raise any new ideas or enhancements to the existing functionality you may have. Take the opportunity to view, vote and promote ideas that you feel would make the most difference to your experience in SIMS.

You can access the Ideas portal via the [support portal](#).

NOTE You must log in to the support portal to access the ideas portal.

Satisfaction Survey

The SIMS 7 Satisfaction Survey is your direct opportunity to feedback to the product team on your experiences and views of the software itself. The short questionnaire will give you a chance to detail your thoughts on the modules, rate the user experience and evaluate the latest additions. This can be completed anonymously should you wish.

You can access the satisfaction survey:

- SIMS 7: Tools | SIMS Satisfaction Survey
- Online: <https://www.ess-sims.co.uk/user-survey>
- Support Portal (You do not need to log in to the support portal to access the satisfaction survey.)

Capita One B2B – Decommissioning

The patch released to decommission B2B is in preparation for when schools have successfully transitioned to supplying their Local Authority with data via the Wonde Integration service. Capita One and Wonde are undertaking a carefully planned migration process to support schools in transitioning from B2B to Wonde as the method to provide data to their LA.

The patch should not be run until your school has been moved to Wonde and advised that this has been successful.

If you have any questions on this matter, you should contact your Local Authority team who will be able to advise you on the process and the timings for the transition to Wonde.



SIMS Upgrade Support

Important Information – Please read before upgrading

If you are performing an upgrade spanning more than one release, you must read the release note associated with each version.

IMPORTANT For more support on performing the SIMS Upgrades please refer to the SIMS Upgrade support article.

Upgrading using SOLUS

The SIMS Online Update Service (SOLUS) enables you to download and run SIMS releases and patches via the Internet. This is achieved using SOLUS3.

For instructions on carrying out an upgrade with SOLUS3, please refer to the SOLUS3 for Schools or the SOLUS3 for Local Authorities handbook.

Support for SQL Server

SIMS, FMS, Discover, Partnership Xchange, SOLUS, and InTouch run on SQL Server 2012, SQL Server 2014 and SQL Server 2016 SP3.

SQL2019 Update

The SQL Migration tool has been updated to upgrade SIMS, FMS, Discover, Partnership Xchange, SOLUS, and InTouch run to SQL 2019 and Windows Server 2019.

For more information on support for SQL Server and Windows environments, please refer to the [SIMS Minimum Hardware and Technical Roadmap](#) on the support portal.

B2B

If you use B2B, and you want the SQL Server service to be configured to run as a Domain account instead of the built-in LocalSystem account on Windows 2008 R2 or Windows 2012 Server, a separate patch can be run to enable this functionality. This patch is available from your Local Support Unit (Patch 20419) and it must be applied to your SIMS database by a user with System Administrator permissions.

General

If your school uses both Fees Billing and FMS, then SIMS and FMS must be upgraded at the same time.



Backing up SIMS and FMS

Where SIMS Personnel is used to generate Salary Projections in FMS, SIMS and FMS backups should be carried out at the same time. If one of the databases needs to be restored, the other database must be restored to the same point, i.e. if you restore the SIMS database, you must restore the FMS database to the same point and vice versa.

IMPORTANT Backups are no longer zipped, because of the number of issues caused by zipping backup files. Recent operating systems now allow the use of compressed folders, which are recommended for automatically compressing backups. Please refer to your operating system documentation for instructions on applying compression to a folder.

Important Information Regarding the Upgrade of SIMS and Discover

You must upgrade to the SIMS 2022 Autumn Release before upgrading Discover. If you upgrade Discover before upgrading SIMS, data will not be transferred between the SIMS and Discover databases until SIMS has been upgraded.

Auto-Deployment of SIMS and Discover

If SOLUS3 auto-deployment is enabled for Discover, we recommend that Discover auto-deployment settings start later than the SIMS auto-deployment start time plus the timeout.

The screenshot shows the SOLUS3 Settings page with the 'Updates' tab selected. The 'UPDATES' section includes: 'Check updates every' set to 10 minutes, 'Task time out' set to 30 minutes, 'Rollback on failure' checked, and 'Auto download' checked between 13:22 and 15:23. The 'AGENTS' section shows 'Concurrent downloads' set to 5 and 'Auto download' checked between 13:22 and 15:23. The 'AUTO DEPLOYMENTS' section is a table with columns for Products, time ranges, and days of the week (Mon-Sun).

Products	Between	and	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FMS	Between	11:00	and	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMS	Between	11:00	and	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMS Discover	Between	13:00	and	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOLUS	Between	11:00	and	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the times are not set like this, and the Discover deployment starts before the SIMS deployment, then the data transfer between SIMS and Discover will not work until the SIMS upgrade is completed.



Where to Find More Information?

Via SIMS...

For the software handbooks, navigate to the SIMS Home Page, then click the Documentation button to display the SIMS Documentation Centre.

Via the Support Portal...

User documentation is also available from the support portal (<https://customer.support-ess.com/csm>).

If you are unable to obtain the required handbook using any of these methods, please email us (publications@parentpay.com) and we will be pleased to send a copy to you.

Permissions

The permissions spreadsheet, which lists all permissions relating to SIMS 7.216, is available from the Documentation Centre. To access the SIMS Documentation Centre, click the Documentation button on the SIMS Home Page.

In the support portal, open the [SIMS Permissions Spreadsheet](#).

Support for B2B

Personnel ended with the release of One version 3.74 (Spring 2021). The B2B: Personnel table previously present in this release notes have been removed.



SIMS 7 Release Notes

Each functional area displays a set of icons indicating the school type(s) to which the content relates. Icons that indicate a link to the applicable handbook(s) and New Feature videos are also displayed.

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- EP** Content applicable to English Primary and Northern Ireland Primary schools
 - ES** Content applicable to English Secondary and Northern Ireland Secondary schools
 - WP** Content applicable to Welsh Primary schools
 - WS** Content applicable to Welsh Secondary schools
 - IN** Content applicable to independent schools
 -  Hyperlink to Support Article / Handbook
-

Assessments **EP ES WP WS IN**

Uploading PDF Documents to DMS ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

[Tools](#) | [Performance](#) | [Assessment](#) | [Individual Report Details](#)

The Upload to Linked Documents function has been updated so learner individual reports can be uploaded as PDFs if chosen and have the same default Document Type settings as the Word upload button making it possible for SIMS to overwrite the date/user automatically.

Add Student's Middle Name to Individual Report ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

[Individual Report](#) | [Word template](#) | [Add Ins](#) | [Student Details](#)

The Individual Report Word templates have been updated to include the student's middle names in the list of Student Details when generating an Individual Report.

AMPARK **EP ES WP WS IN**

Enhancements for the SIMS 2024 Spring Release ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to all Schools

The Assessment Manager and Performance Analysis Resource Kit (AMPARK) provides a set of resources for use with SIMS Assessment. This kit has been updated for the SIMS 2024 Spring Release.



New SSM available for download ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to all schools

The new version of SIMS Service Manager (1.4.8.0) will be released with SIMS 7.216.

Housekeeping **EP ES WP WS IN**

Document Management ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

[Tools](#) | [Housekeeping](#) | [Document Management Server](#) | [Maintain Bulk Documents](#)

A new sub-section titled **Group Type Selection** has been added for the selected Documents field. This includes a Group Type list with the following options:

- Year Group
- Registration Group
- House
- School Tier
- User Defined Group

Office / O365 ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to all schools

Following a change to the Microsoft collaboration settings in Office365 we have made changes to the stored location of users 'tempSimsRpt' folder to resolve issues in reporting where the Office365 applications are installed locally.

Statutory Returns

School Census Summer Returns **EP ES**

Key Dates ^{NEW}

Census Date 16/05/2024

Attendance collected from 01/01/2024 to 31/03/2024

Exclusions collected from 01/08/2023 to 31/03/2024

Alternative Provision Placements collected from 18/01/2024 to 16/05/2024

Funding and Monitoring collected from 01/08/2023 to 16/05/2024

Learner Support collected from 01/08/2023 to 16/05/2024



Free School Meals collected from 19/01/2024 to 16/05/2024

Early Years – Eligibility Code ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to Early years only

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns Tools](#) | [Update Early Years](#)

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | [School Census](#)

The **30-Hour Code** which is issued to parents when they have successfully applied for the [Early Years funding](#) has been changed to **Eligibility Code**. This Eligibility code is now also applicable for 2 year-olds who have applied for Expanded Hours.

Early Years – Expanded Funded hours ^{NEW}

Applicable to Early years only

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns Tools](#) | [Update Early Years](#)

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | [School Census](#)

From April 2024, working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week (over 38 weeks a year) from the term after their child's birthday. A new column has been added to the Census Returns for pupils aged 2 at 31/03/2024 and if they have an eligibility code. Expanded Funded Hours do not apply to 3 or 4-year-olds.

2 year old basis for funding ^{NEW}

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | [School Census](#)

2 year old basis for funding information can now be recorded for the Summer School Census.

Exclusions Enhancement ^{UPDATE}

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | [Attendance Collection](#)

3 reasons can be recorded for an exclusion or suspension, and they cannot be saved unless they are all different reasons. For example, Reason 2 cannot be left blank if Reason 3 is recorded.

Attendance Collection 2024 Return ^{WP WS}

Key Dates ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to schools in Wales

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | [Attendance Collection](#)

Primary Schools

- Collection Dates
 - Annual Attendance data collection period: 01/09/2023 to 22/07/2024
 - Data is only collected for pupils aged five and over at 31/08/2023
- Term Dates
 - Term 1 Autumn: 01/09/2023 to 22/12/2023
 - Term 2 Spring: 08/01/2024 to 22/03/2024



- Term 3 Summer: 08/04/2024 to 22/07/2024

Secondary Schools

- Collection Dates
 - Annual Attendance data collection period: 01/09/2023 to 24/05/2024
 - Data is only collected for students aged 15 or under at 31/08/2023
- Term Dates
 - Term 1 Autumn: 01/09/2023 to 22/12/2023
 - Term 2 Spring: 08/01/2024 to 22/03/2024
 - Term 3 Summer: 08/04/2024 to 24/05/2024

Attendance Detail Reports ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to schools in Wales

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | [Attendance Collection](#)

The 'Gender' column now displays 'Sex' in the Report column header.

Reporting **EP ES WP WS IN**

SEN Summary reports ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

[Reports](#) | [School Report](#)

A report option to generate a SEN Status Summary and SEN Needs Summary has been added to generate a report that will display the total SEN Status values for a selected reference date, this includes an option to include Leaver data in the report. These results are divided into Male and Female data which are displayed as a percentage.

Reporting Dictionary Permission Groups ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

[Reports](#) | [Design Report](#) | [Permission Groups](#)

To assist with the NextGen onboarding from SIMS7 we have added new data items for the Permission Groups. These new data items are as follows:

- Group Type
- Group Status
- Templates (this is a sub-report to accommodate multiple templates)



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