

SIMS7 Technical Roadmap

Spring 2025



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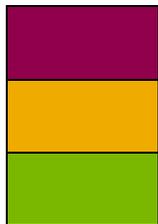


Introduction

Thank you for viewing this updated SIMS Technical Roadmap. The Spring 2025 version of the document has updates covering the following topics as outlined in the table below:

Date	Changes Made	Updated by	Next planned review date
19/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated release date for SOLUS 3.12.86 	T Jones	
15/12/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard updates to SQL and SQL Server Support 	T Jones	
24/06/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim update to extend support for SOLUS version 3.12.72 	T Jones	Autumn 2024
10/10/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of support for Windows Server 2022 Inclusion of support for SQL Server 2022 Inclusion of support for MS Office 2021 LTSC / O365 	T Jones	
19/12/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of support for SQL2019 Recommendations around SQLExpress 	T Jones	Summer 2023
13/06/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous Technical Updates 	P Featherstone	-
15/11/2021	Clarification on SQL Versions	P Featherstone	Spring 2022
01/11/2021	Simplifying .NET Framework, Office, and SQL versions. Addition of SIMS Connected details.	P Featherstone	Spring 2022

Roadmap Key Code



Not supported by ESS

Support is provided only where the additional conditions are met

Supported by ESS

What does the red 'Not supported by ESS' indicator mean?

'Not supported by ESS' means that we are either no longer testing our software on the stated platform or we have not finished testing our software on the stated platform. This does not necessarily mean that our software will not work on the stated platform but it does mean that we will be unable to support any issue raised by customers. For the most robust SIMS experience, we advise all customers to keep to a supported platform.

What does the yellow indicator mean?

Technologies marked as yellow are either considerations for future support or considerations for the retirement of a technology. Typically, where a new technology is supported, an older version of the technology is retired so that ESS is testing the same number of overall technologies and platform scenarios.



A Typical School

The following information is provided to run SIMS and FMS in most typical schools. These components on the server would include: SQL, Document Management Server, SIMS Services Manager (SSM), InTouch, and SOLUS3. Separate sections for other products such as Partnership Exchange or TeacherApp are covered later in this document. If you are unsure about any of these specifications, then please contact your SIMS Service Desk.

Minimum Hardware Specification Guidance

Component	Requirement
SIMS Server	
Computer and Processor	Quad Core processor or higher is recommended for optimum performance. A minimum of four v-cores should be assigned to virtual servers.
Memory (minimum recommended)	8GB or higher (16GB+ recommended for optimum performance). If a virtual server is in use, this should be statically assigned memory, <u>not</u> dynamically.
Disk space guidance #	<p>We appreciate that each school will have different server configurations and setups, so we feel it's best to advise on the disk requirements for each separate element that is needed to run our software. It will then be for the server administrator to decide on what requirements are needed for their setup given the following advice:</p> <p>SQL Server Requirement We estimate as a minimum that you should allow 150Gb for all SQL databases required for your setup.</p> <p>File Share Requirement Please allow 10–20GB for the SIMS Applications and Setups folder.</p> <p>SOLUS3 Repository There is an ability to clear down the SOLUS3 repository so sizes in use in schools will vary, we advise customers should allow for 10Gb of storage space</p> <p>Docstorage Requirement For the Docstorage drive, this will vary so greatly by customer, we therefore advise schools should consider 50Gb as minimum.</p> <p>General Guidance If a virtual server is in use, then the virtual hard drive files should be statically sized.</p>
Drive	We no longer send software out on physical media, however, ISO mounting software if not supported by server OS is required for software installation.
Display	1280x720 or higher monitor resolution.



Backup of whole system required?	<p>Yes. You are reminded that it is critical that backups are moved to an alternative media on a daily basis, i.e. that one is kept in a physically separate place from the server that is backed up. Customers need to ensure that they have a disaster recovery plan (DRP). This includes where they will source a replacement server and what they will do whilst the system is down. The DRP is only worthwhile if, on a termly basis, the backups are restored to another machine and proven to work. SIMS data backups stored offsite must be stored in an encrypted format.</p> <p>ESS recommends Redstor Backup Professional software for the backup of SIMS. SIMS and Backup Professional are fully integrated to provide seamless, offsite backup for SIMS data.</p> <p>If using Redstor Backup Professional to backup and protect SIMS, you will need to ensure that you have enough disk space available on the server or workstation. The free space available on the device needs to be 150% of the amount of SIMS data (i.e. if you have 1GB of SIMS data, you will need 1.5GB of free disk space).</p> <p>If using other solutions by other providers, it is essential that you work with those service providers to ensure the backups are GDPR compliant.</p>
Other information	<p>It is not recommended that servers be used normally as workstations except in small schools. Non-dedicated servers are unlikely to be suitable with more than five concurrent users of SIMS.</p> <p>ESS recommends the purchase of a dedicated database server (not used for other domain roles in the school) where there are 20 or more concurrent users, or where the network server is of a low specification. A whole school network will almost certainly require a dedicated database server. The use of Lesson Monitor and/or Assessment Manager in each classroom usually means that a dedicated database server running a Full SQL Server edition of Standard or higher is required.</p> <p>Internet access is required. SOLUS details can be found in KB0023674 – SOLUS3 – What ports or URLs does SOLUS3 use?</p>



SIMS Workstation	
Computer and processor	Quad Core 2.4GHz processor or higher recommended for optimum performance.
Memory (minimum recommended)	8Gb or higher for main SIMS machines. 4GB is acceptable for a casual SIMS use machine.
Disk space guidance #	Workstations will need 1.5GB free including 500MB on system partition for third-party components in the Windows directory. Workstations using FMS should allow for an additional 150MB.
Display	1280x720 (1280x1024 or higher for optimum experience).
Operating system and software	<p>Operating System – 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows 10 Pro.</p> <p>The PC will require a minimum of Microsoft .NET Framework 4.7.2 to be present. From the Autumn 2022 release of SIMS7, if the minimum .NET Framework of 4.7.2 is not met, SIMS will not load and the user will be prompted to install it as required.</p> <p>Software – Microsoft Office 2016 or later. Adobe Acrobat Standard and Adobe Acrobat Pro, At present we do not support Adobe Document Cloud.</p>
Other	Internet access is required. For information surrounding Font sizing and Display resolution please see KB0023886 – Font sizes in SIMS are too small / Recommend display scaling settings

Disk space guidance does not include the generic 15-25% hard drive space to be free for the general and smooth running of servers/workstations.



SIMS Software Support

System	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Additional Notes
Server Operation System							
Windows Server 2012	■	■	■	■	■	■	Microsoft Security Support End Date: 10/10/2023. ESS will only support Windows Server where the Desktop Experience (GUI) is installed. We do not support servers where only the Core installation has been carried out.
Windows Server 2012 R2	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Windows Server 2016	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Windows Server 2019	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Windows Server 2022	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Workstation Operation System							
Windows 10 Pro (32 / 64 bit)	■	■	■	■	■	■	Supported as long as the instance is still supported by Microsoft and is not obsolete.
Windows 11	■	■	■	■	■	■	Only with compatible SQL versions, please see Microsoft for full details.
SOLUS3							
SOLUS 3.12.72	■	■	■	■	■	■	Support extended to include Summer 25 release
SOLUS 3.12.86	■	■	■	■	■	■	Planned Release 4 th April
Microsoft Office							
Office 2016	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Office 2019	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Office 2021 LTSC	■	■	■	■	■	■	Office 2021 LTSC supported from Spring 2024 where the application is locally installed.
Office 365	■	■	■	■	■	■	ESS recognises that a local installation of Office applications under the O365 license takes place in schools. While our testing does not cover this scenario specifically, we continue to monitor any difficulties schools may raise via the Service Desk. Integration with O365 is supported provided the applications are locally installed.

Say goodbye to server renewals: Move SIMS to the cloud with SIMS Connected today!

Reduce the cost of managing your on-site IT systems. Give users the freedom of anytime, anywhere access to the entire SIMS Suite. Get complete peace of mind with enhanced data security. **More information on page 9.**



SIMS SQL Support

System	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Additional Notes
SQL Server Details							
SQL Server 2012 (SP4) (KB4018073) – 11.0.7001.0							SP4 Extended Security Update End Date 08/07/2025 (not applicable to Express Versions)
SQL Server 2014 (SP3) (KB4583462) – 12.0.6433.1							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 09/07/2024 – As indicated previously, support for SQL Server 2014 will cease as per the Summer 2025 release.
SQL Server 2016 (SP3) (KB5003279) – 13.0.6300.2							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 14/07/2026 Customers are recommended to set the SIMS database to use compatibility mode 110 for maximum performance
SQL Server 2017							Although available, schools are recommended to install SQL2016 and set the SIMS database to compatibility level 110 for SQL2012
SQL Server 2019 (RTM-CU16) – 15.0.4223.1							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 8/1/2030 Customers are recommended to set the SIMS database to use compatibility mode 110 for maximum performance Includes support for enabling enforced encryption for SQL Connections
SQL Server 2022							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 11/01/2033 Customers are recommended to set the SIMS database to use compatibility mode 110 for maximum performance

Additional notes on Microsoft Extended Support arrangements

These versions of SQL are considered outside of the Microsoft mainstream support however we will endeavour to support on the grounds that schools have an extended support agreement with Microsoft.

What about SQL Express Editions

SQL Express is a license-free version of SQL. Express editions are supported except where the instance of SQL is in extended support as indicated in the above table. Please refer to Microsoft's guidance for full details.



SQL Express Edition

SQLExpress cannot be used as a database server if the database size exceeds 10Gb, and is **not** recommended if any of the following are true:

- Number of users is greater than twenty
- School intends to make extensive use of InTouch
- The customer wishes to take advantage of database servers that have more than one CPU or more than four cores

SQL Compatibility Mode

We are aware that some customers experience issues with performance when running SQL2016 in its native mode. Following on guidance and direction from the EPG group, if you are experiencing this, we recommend changing the compatibility level to 110 within SQL Server Management Studio. We have made [KB0036825](#) available for more information.

Azure SQL

We are aware that some schools and support units have subscriptions in Azure, we do not support SIMS in an Azure SQL Managed Instance or as an Azure SQL Database.

Microsoft .NET Framework Support

The version of the .NET Framework supported by each server or workstation operating system will vary and it is best that the most recent guidance and advice is retrieved from the following page on the Microsoft Website: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/framework/get-started/system-requirements>. Headline versions that will impact SIMS users can be outlined as follows:

- Windows 10 requires .Net 4.7.2 or later
- Windows 11 requires .Net 4.8.1 or later

If the minimum .NET Framework of 4.7.2 is not met, SIMS7 will not load and the user may be prompted to install it as required.

LDAP Signing and Channel Binding requirements

Microsoft is not enforcing LDAP Signing and Channel Binding Changes as outlined in this Microsoft KB: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/4520412/2020-ldap-channel-binding-and-ldap-signing-requirements-for-windows>

TLS requirements

Our suite of products supports TLS 1.2.



SIMS Connected vs SIMS Next Gen

SIMS Connected and SIMS Next Gen are both cloud solutions. But each are very different.

SIMS Connected

[SIMS Connected](#) brings SIMS on-premises into the cloud today. It frees schools of the expense and effort of running their SIMS servers on-site and of managing their own backups and upgrades. It allows teaching and non-teaching staff to **access the complete suite of SIMS products**, at any time and on any device. [Read more](#)

For more information on SIMS Connected see: [Welcome to SIMS Connected - Adopting a cloud-based solution](#)

For SIMS Connected Onboarding information visit: [SIMS Connected Support Hub - Onboarding](#)

For the full SIMS Connected Technical requirements please visit the **SIMS Connected Hub - Getting Started - Technical Requirements** on [KB0053761](#)

"We've saved £4.5K on IT upkeep, repairs and updates plus many thousands of pounds we were paying each year for external IT support. "

Keith Robertson, School Business Manager, Conway Primary School

"Choosing SIMS Connected was a really easy decision. We needed a cloud-based MIS that could be tailored to the complexity of a Trust like ours, which is exactly what SIMS Connected is. The needs of a growing trust are met through the flexibility and dynamic approach offered by SIMS Connected."

Margaret Chapman, CEO, Atlas Multi-Academy Trust





Census is moving to SIMS Next Gen.

Get ready now

SIMS Next Gen

[SIMS Next Gen](#) is a continuous, multi-year programme of best-in-class cloud innovation, available to SIMS customers at no additional cost. We are releasing brand-new modules every term. With SIMS Connected, you gain automatic access to the latest SIMS Next Gen functionality, as soon as it's released.

Census is moving to SIMS Next Gen. Enable your school now and equip your team for the future with SIMS Next Gen.

SIMS Next Gen sets a new standard for simplicity, speed and productivity. This Summer will be the last term you'll do your Summer Census in SIMS7. It's important that you get ahead now and ensure your school is ready to access the benefits of SIMS Next Gen.

Future-proof your MIS and join the **94% of schools finding it 'easy' or 'super easy'** to use. Plus 'it streamlines daily tasks' and allows for 'quicker and easier software upgrades' – Mark Simpson, ICT Network Manager, at Newport CE Primary School.

To get your school up and running in five simple steps, head over to our [blog article](#) and check out our latest [toolkit](#).



SIMS Online Solutions Browser Support (not native Apps)

System	Chrome	Internet Explorer*	Firefox	Safari	Edge	Phone Size Browser	Tablet Size Browser	Additional Notes
Options Online	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	
SchoolView	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	
SIMS Parent, SIMS Student	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	
SIMS Finance	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	
FMS Hub	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	To ensure secure access, HMRC Fraud Prevention Headers works best with Edge, ESS does not support Internet Explorer.
Hosted Discover via .xbap application	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	Please see the additional information below
SIMS Services Manager (SSM)	Supported	Not Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported	Not Supported	Not Supported	

Discover and SQL Compact Edition

When installing Discover, some elements of SQL Compact Edition (SQLCE) 3.5 were originally installed and used. This version of SQLCE is no longer supported by Microsoft. For the SIMS Summer 2022 installation files of Discover, we have removed the use of the legacy SQLCE 3.5 files. This therefore means that customers can re-install Discover without SQLCE 3.5 files. Please ensure you understand the following three scenarios:

If you are using SQL 2012 Express

Your SIMS, FMS, and Discover installation is not supported if you are using SQL 2012 Express

If you are using SQL 2012 Licenced with ESU in place

If you choose to re-install Discover on your SQL 2012 instance, SIMS and Discover will not successfully transfer data between the systems. If you wish to continue to use Discover you can:

- Remain on SQL 2012 and your current Discover installation and accept the risk of SQLCE 3.5 files being used. ESS **cannot** be responsible for any data issues or breaches, this risk has to be accepted by the school
- Consider updating your SQL version that is running SIMS and Discover to SQL 2014 or later and re-install Discover

If you are using SQL 2014 or later

Reinstalling Discover to have an installation without the SQLCE 3.5 files present works on SQL2014 (Licensed and Express) and later



SIMS Parent and Student App

We support the following versions of Android and iOS operating systems upon which our applications are installed. For Android, we support OS version 7 – 14 only. All previous versions are no longer supported, and any device operating on the older versions will not receive further updates. For Apple, we support version iOS version 11 onwards. On the server where SIMS Services Manager is installed to exchange data between the solutions, .NET Framework 4.7.2 is required as a minimum.

Teacher App Compatibility

iPad – Requires iPadOS 9.0 or later.

Mac – Requires macOS 11.0 or later and a Mac with Apple M1 chip or later.

SIMS Partnership Exchange

SIF Agent – Server 2019 and SQL2016. If SIMS is working on the server, then the agent will work.

Zone Integration Server (ZIS) – The operating system must have IIS version 8 installed with IIS6 compatibility mode enabled. Part of the ZIS is a SQL database, ESS now supports up to SQL2016 on our roadmap.

Monitor – Server 2019 and SQL2016. If SIMS is working on the server, then the agent will work. The monitor setup is a read-only version of SIMS.



SIMS.net Version Statement

In line with the terms and conditions that govern the customer's SIMS agreement and Contract we will support the current and previous version of SIMS.

Where applicable the below terms will apply:

- 4.7.1 Ensure that Main Releases, Software Updates, and corrections are installed by the Locations as soon as practical and always within a timescale that will ensure that only the most recent version or the immediately preceding version are in use at any time. ESS retains the right to refuse to accept a support call where older versions are in use;

The Support Services do not include:

- 6.8.1 Diagnosis or rectification of problems associated with the other systems, software, or equipment of the Customer or any third party;
- 6.8.2 Rectification of any defects or errors resulting from modifications to the Software and/or Hosted Services by any person other than ESS;
- 6.8.3 Remedial action required to any version of the Software other than the most recent Main Release patched to include all subsequent Updates or all but the most recent Update;
- 6.8.4 Fixes required to any version of the Software other than the most recent Main Release patched to include all subsequent Updates including the most recent Update;





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