

SIMS 2023 Spring Release Combined Release Notes

This article has combined all the new release features to enhance and improve accessibility. The following features are marked as relevant for each region and school type.

Welcome to the SIMS 2023 Spring Release

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 the 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.)

Copyright Update

The SIMS 7 and FMS 6 copyright year span has been updated 1984-2023. The date span change is the only update that has been made to the Copyright information, this update can be viewed on the [Help > About SIMS.Net pop-up](#).

SIMS Upgrade Support

Important Information – Please read before upgrading

If you are performing a SIMS upgrade spanning more than one release, it is essential that you 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

IMPORTANT: 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 following configurations:

- UPDATES:**
 - Check updates every: 10 minutes
 - Task time out: 30 minutes
 - Rollback on failure:
 - Auto download: Between 13:22 and 15:23
- AGENTS:**
 - Concurrent downloads: 5
 - Auto download: Between 13:22 and 15:23
- AUTO DEPLOYMENTS:**

Products	Between	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 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A green 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the settings area.

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 (<mailto: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 7.210, 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 7.210 SIMS Permissions Spreadsheet (https://customer.support-ess.com/csm?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0036819).

Support for B2B

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

Census Release Notes

Please refer to the Census Returns Manager page for information on the new features, enhancements, and fixes.

Refer to, [School Census Summer 2023 Return and Configuration](#).

FMS Release Notes

The FMS support arrangements depend on the supported versions of SIMS where Personnel Links is being used. Support for FMS is detailed in the following table.

Release	SIMS Version	FMS Version	FMS with Personnel Links/Equipment Register	FMS without Personnel Links/Equipment Register
Spring 2023	7.210	6.210	Supported	Supported
Autumn 2022	7.208	6.208	Supported	Supported
Summer 2022	7.206	6.206	Not Supported	Supported

NOTE: FMS 6.208 has been tested against SQL Server 2012, 2014 and 2016

Information on the new features, enhancements, and fixes for FMS 6.

Consistent Financial Return (CFR) 2022/2023 ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England only

The CFR functionality has been updated for the 2022/2023 Financial Year. This is no structural or significant validation changes. The only modification is that where the Return is edited and the edits across the four tables do not equal and opposite, the user will be asked to enter a reason.

SIMS Personnel National Insurance Table 2023/2024 Update ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland only

The 2023/2024 National insurance rates have been updated with the SIMS7 Spring 2023 release so that FMS6 salary projections are calculated using the new National Insurance bands and rates that have been supplied by HMRC following the Autumn 2022 Budget statement.

Petty Cash Listing Report ^{FIX}

[Reports](#) | [General Ledger](#) | [Petty Cash](#) | [Transaction Listing](#)

This report will correctly display information where no "To" date has been entered.

BACS Remittances ^{FIX}








Users can now email BACS Remittances via Outlook 365.

Discover Release Notes

No new updates

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.

-  Content applicable to English Primary and Northern Ireland Primary schools
-  Content applicable to English Secondary and Northern Ireland Secondary schools
-  Content applicable to Welsh Primary schools
-  Content applicable to Welsh Secondary schools
-  Content applicable to Independent schools
-  Link to the applicable handbook(s)
-  Link to a New Feature video

Admissions

New Features

Pre-admissions Bulk update feature NEW

[Admissions | Applications](#)

The pre-admissions bulk update is available for pre-admissions applications to help ensure the correct information is recorded without having to go through each application one at a time. The following data can be bulk updated:

- Border Status (Registration Details panel)
- EAL (Ethnic / Cultural Details)
- Ethnicity (Ethnic / Cultural Details)
- Ethnicity Data Source (Ethnic / Cultural Details)
- First language (Ethnic / Cultural Details)
- Home Language (Ethnic / Cultural Details)
- Parental Consent (Application-->Parental Consent)
- Pronouns (Basic Details) requirements

Pronouns Flyout Menu description update NEW

[Admissions | Applications](#)

[Student | Student Details](#)

When the mouse cursor is hovering over the Pronouns field the Flyout Menu description has been updated from "Pronoun(s) is optional" to "Pronoun(s) is optional. Recording a Pronoun set will then be picked up by Personal Pronouns tags within Individual / Profile / Mail Merge reports and Attendance Letters by default unless the Pronouns: Only use in School option is selected."

Pronoun History Log NEW

[Admissions | Applications](#)

[Student | Student Details](#)

The History Log records changes that have been made to a person's pronouns. The log records the following:

- Previous Pronoun

- New Pronoun
- When the Pronoun was changed
- Who changed the Pronoun

Pronouns transferable via PX ^{NEW}

[Student | Student Details](#)

Pronouns are now included in Student records and data transferred via PX from one school to another.

NOTE Historical logs for previous pronouns will not be transferred.

AMPARK

EP ES WP WS IN

Enhancements for the SIMS 2023 Spring Release ^{NEW}

[Admissions | Applications](#)

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 2023 Spring Release.

Please refer to [Assessment Manager and Performance Analysis Resource Management Kit Release Notes](#) for more information.

Statutory Assessment

EP ES WP WS

MTC X grade statutory updates ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England only

The MTC X grade definition and report key updates include the policy changes defined by the DfE in 2023.

CTF Import / Export routine statutory updates ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in Wales only

Users can run and export routine for the KS3 NDC file to be updated to reflect the incremental academic year update to meet DEWi standards for further analysis requests for the academic year 2022/23.

Statutory assessment resource updates ^{NEW}

[Focus | Assessment](#)

The statutory assessment resources have been updated to meet the 2023 specifications. These updates have been done to support the following phases:

Applicable to schools in England only

- EYFS
- EYFS Profiles
- KS1
- Phonics
- KS2

Applicable to schools in Wales only

- Foundation Baseline
- Foundation Phase Outcomes
- WNT
- KS2
- KS3

Student Exclusions update ^{NEW}

[Focus](#) | [Student](#) | [Student Details](#)

To meet the DfE's guidance on managing Exclusions the reporting dictionary allows reporting of the withdrawn exclusion without the need for a governor review. There is an exclusion type to indicate that the permanent exclusion/suspension is withdrawn, this withdrawal of the exclusion is not recorded in the school census.

Statutory Assessment reformed profile resources ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England only

[Focus](#) | [Assessment](#)

The statutory assessment reformed Profile resources that have been updated to meet the 2022/23 A_COMP specifications for the EYFS Profiles.

AMPA statutory assessment resource updates ^{NEW}

[Focus](#) | [Assessment](#)

The statutory assessment resources, templates and wizards have been updated to meet the 2023 specifications, including the relevant AMPA files. The updated Assessment resources have been added to the relevant AMPA folders:

Applicable to schools in England only

- **Folders**
 - AMPA/England Primary/Assessment Manager
 - AMPA/England Secondary/Assessment Manager
 - AMPA/England Special/Assessment Manager
- **Templates**
 - EYFS Profile Template 2023
 - Phonics Screening Templates 2023
 - En KS1 Templates 2023
 - En KS2 Templates 2023
- **Wizards**
 - EYFS Profile Wizard 2023
 - Year 1 Phonics Screening Wizard 2023
 - Year 2 Phonics Screening Wizard 2023
 - Key Stage 1 Wizard England 2023
 - Key Stage 2 Wizard England 2023

Applicable to schools in Wales only

- **Folders**
 - AMPA/Wales Primary/Assessment Manager
 - AMPA/Wales Secondary/Assessment Manager
 - AMPA/Wales Special/Assessment Manager
- **Templates**
 - FP Outcomes Template 2023 En
 - FP Outcomes Template 2023 Cy
 - Key Stage 2 Templates 2022 En
 - Key Stage 2 Templates 2022 Cy
 - Key Stage 3 Templates 2023 En
 - Key Stage 3 Templates 2023 Cy
- **Wizards**
 - FP Outcomes Wizard 2022 En
 - FP Outcomes Wizard 2022 Cy
 - Key Stage 2 Wizard Wales 2022 En
 - Key Stage 2 Wizard Wales 2022 Cy

- Key Stage 3 Wizard Wales 2023 En
- Key Stage 3 Wizard wales 2023 Cy

Statutory Assessment Import / Export routines ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in Wales only

[Focus | Assessment](#)

The export and import routine for CTF and KS3 statutory assessments has been updated to reflect the academic year update from 2022 to 2023 to meet DEWi standards for Further Analysis requests.

Fixes

More information pop-ups ^{FIX}

[Focus | Assessment | Marksheet Entry](#)

[Focus | Assessment | My Marksheets](#)

[Focus | Assessment | Template](#)

More information is now visible in the description pop-up when the mouse cursor hovers over the column headings. The more information pop-up feature can also be turned off.

Attendance

EP ES WP WS IN

Attendance Collection configuration ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to schools in Wales only

[Routines | Statutory Returns](#)

Users can create and validate a Primary & Secondary Welsh Attendance collection return using the new Attendance Collection function.

Examinations Organiser

ES WS

The number of EBacc open slots increased ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England only

[Tools | Examinations](#)

To provide insight as to whether each student is using all three available EBacc slots and all three available open/other slots (to maximize the outcome of Progress 8). These changes are applied to All through and Secondary schools.

The data from these slots are now populated into the KS4 PI Summary Report.

- Average Attainment 8 Slots Filled
 - The average number of EBacc slots filled (out of 3) - This contains results in the new row for All students, Males and Females in the selected cohort
 - The average number of Open slots filled (out of 3) - This contains results in the new row for All students, Males and Females in the selected cohort

Record new QANs for Pre-16 qualifications ^{NEW}

[Tools | Examinations | Add Qualification Data](#)

Exams Officers can manually add in new QANs for Pre-16 only qualifications that are not funded for Post-16 study and are not included in the DfE QWS QAN file.

MPI Screen - Qualification Discount Codes ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England only

[Tools](#) | [Examinations](#)

The MPI Screen now displays Discount Codes for any given qualifications, regardless of the type, family, etc. The Discount Code is also an editable field so users can change the discount code in the event it is incorrect, no longer valid, or has changed due to changes in the qualification type or discount family.

Fees Billing

EP **ES** **WP** **WS** **IN**

Concessions Bulk Update feature ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools only

[Routines](#) | [Pupil](#)

A new routine has been added which allows the user to easily add, edit or delete concessions in bulk for a student or applicant. These can be used in Assessment Filters, Performance Analysis, Reporting, and Fees Billing.

Emailing financial documents ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools only

[Routines](#) | [Pupil](#)

When sending financial documents (bills, statements, and receipts) via email, the Subject and Body text can be edited and sent to multiple email addresses.

Bill Audit Report update ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools only

[Routines](#) | [Pupil](#)

The Bill Audit report has been updated to include Bills that have been transferred in the current term.

School Census Summer 2023 Return

EP **ES** **WP** **WS** **IN**

School Census Summer 2023 Key Dates ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England only

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

- Census day 18/05/2023
- Attendance collected from 01/01/2023 to 09/04/2023
- Exclusions collected from 01/08/2022 to 09/04/2023
- Alternative Provision Placements collected from 19/01/2023 to 18/05/2023
- Funding and Monitoring collected from 01/08/2022 to 18/05/2023
- Learner Support collected from 01/08/2022 to 18/05/2023
- Free School Meal Eligibility collected from 20/01/2023 to 18/05/2023.

Attendance Collection 2023 Return Key Dates ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in Wales only

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

Primary schools

Collection Dates:

- Attendance data collection period: 01/09/2022 to 21/07/2023
- Data is only collected for pupils aged five and over at 31/08/2022

Term dates:

- Term 1 Autumn: 01/09/2022 to 23/12/2022
- Term 2 Spring: 09/01/2023 to 31/03/2023
- Term 3 Summer: 17/04/2023 to 24/07/2023

Secondary schools

Collection Dates:

- Attendance data collection period: 01/09/2022 to 19/05/2023
- Data is only collected for students aged 15 or under at 31/08/2022

Term dates:

- Term 1 Autumn: 01/09/2022 to 23/12/2022
- Term 2 Spring: 09/01/2023 to 31/03/2023
- Term 3 Summer: 17/04/2023 to 24/07/2023

Reporting



New Features

Student Bulk Delete Data Audit

[Reports](#) | [Student Analysis Report](#) | [Student totals for year group](#)

The Student Bulk Delete Data Audit has been added to the Student Analysis Reports options to generate an audit log of the bulk deletion process, this provides users with the following data:

- User ID
- Username e.g for Tom Jones it is TJones.
- Date and Time Deleted - (e.g 12/10/2022 12:20:10)
- Data Areas
- Academic Year
- Records Updated / Deleted
- Job Status

Absence Tier Report update

Applicable to schools in Northern Ireland only

[Reports](#) | [Student Analysis Report](#)

The Absence Tier report has been updated to exclude students with a 0% absence record

PDO Report update

Data Out | Person Data Output

The Person Data Output (PDO) report has been updated to include the additional Pronoun data from Student and Staff records.

SEN Details available on reporting dictionary for Application reports

Reports | Student Analysis Report

Reports for student applications now include SEN details making it easy for users to cross-check the data that has been recorded and make provisions for new starters.

New Special Needs category – More Able

Reports | General Student List Report

Reports | Class List Report

Reports | Registration Group List

The **More Able** filter can be used in Student List reports to quickly generate a Yes/No (True/False) list to identify whether a student has been identified as More Able.

Reporting Dictionary Update

Applicable to schools in Northern Ireland and Independent schools only

Reports | Design reports

A new Node (**No. of Days outstanding**) has been added Reporting Dictionary under the Bill payer sub-report in the student focus category to calculate the **No. of Days** outstanding for a Bill.

Absence Tier Reporting update

Applicable to schools in Northern Ireland schools only

Reports | Attendance | Whole Group Attendance Reports | Absence Tier Report

The Absence Tier report has been updated to only show students with more that 0.01% absence.

Student & Applicant welfare reports

Applicable to schools in England schools only

A new section for a Child In Need (CIN) and young Carers has been added to the reporting dictionary, the PDO report and Applicant Report Dictionary.

Student List report update

Reports | General Student List Report

Reports | Class List Report

Reports | Registration Group List

A **Service Children In Education** filter is now available in Student list reports.

Security

EP **ES** **WP** **WS** **IN**

Legacy Application Security Enhancement NEW

The following Software package's user credentials vulnerability has been fixed:

- Examinations
- Nova T6
- System Manager 6
- Options 5
- IEP Writer
- HR Assistant
- Apply Timetable

When launching any of the above users will need to re-enter their Username and Password.

NOTE To access legacy apps visa SIMS7, users must have a SIMS-compliant password i.e. 1 letter, 1 number and 1 of !*@#\$.%

Students

EP **ES** **WP** **WS** **IN**

Student Leaver update NEW

[Student / Leavers](#)

When processing a Student's Leaving details, clicking the Save button will open a pop-up message that will state that 'This will update the entitlement records of the student if exists. Do you want to proceed?'. Users will need to click the OK button to complete the action.

Bulk deletion of linked documents from Student's record NEW

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

To improve the housekeeping tools and meet GDPR policy and data retention requirements users can search for and select a specific Type of document to be deleted in bulk from Student records.