

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

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.

IMPORTANT: If you have downloaded the PDF copy of the Release Notes, these notes are only correct as of 27/09/2023. Please refer to the online [Release Notes](#) for the latest updates.

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.)

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

SIMS Upgrade Support

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.

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

Upgrading SIMS and Discover

IMPORTANT: You must upgrade to the SIMS 2023 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		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"/>

Save

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.

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

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 7.214, 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 7.214 SIMS Permissions Spreadsheet (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.

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

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.

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

Admissions

EP

ES

WP

WS

IN

Bulk Delete of Application Data ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Tools > Housekeeping > Delete Admission Applications

Schools can now perform a bulk deletion of application records. All data (except where Fees, Deposits or Dinner Money exist) will be available for deletion.

Bulk update for Dietary Needs and Paramedical Support ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Routines | Admissions | Bulk Update

The Dietary needs and Paramedical support data can be updated in bulk by admission officers.

Exams

EP

ES

Manually added QN - validation on QN plus discount code ^{NEW}

Applicable to English schools

Tools | Examinations | Add Qualification Data

Tools | Academic Management | Course Manager | Maintain Course

DfE provide QWS QAN files but will no longer add Key Stage 4 Qualifications which are not funded for Post-16 students. New functionality has been provided in SIMS7 for schools to add these QANs if they need to.

New Certification Broadsheet Sort orders ^{NEW}

Applicable to English Secondary schools

We have introduced further sort and display orders within the Certification Broadsheet report to allow for more flexibility over the names that are used when outputting the report.

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

Fees Billing

IN

Generate Letters ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to Independent schools only

Routines | Fees Manager | Generate Letters

UDFs are now available when designing templates, this includes an option to update the Communications Log when sending letters by print or email.

NOTE: The Changes Log will include a log of UDF Generated Letters.

Performance Improvement: During testing, performed on various workstations and emailing more than 100 letters, we have seen a performance improvement of between 30% and 50%. Please note that the improvement you experience will vary.

Reporting

EP

ES

WP

WS

IN

Application Bulk Delete Audit Report ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Reports | Admissions | Application Bulk Delete Data Audit

The Application Bulk Delete Data Audit option is now available to all schools so that they can generate a Bulk Application Delete Report. This report can be found below the Projected Student Numbers report or use the shortcut key 'A'.

Absence Tier Report date selection ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to schools in Northern Ireland

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

The absence tier report can be run over a user-defined date range for students' absences within the academic year selected.

School Census Spring Returns (Statutory Returns)

EP

ES

Key Dates for the Census Spring 2024 Return ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England

Census Date: 18/01/2024

Attendance Collection from 01/08/2023 to 31/12/2023

Exclusions collected from 10/04/2023 to 31/12/2023

Alternative Provision Placements collected from 05/10/2023 to 18/01/2024

Funding and Monitoring collected from 01/08/2023 to 18/01/2024

Learner Support collected from 01/08/2023 to 18/01/2024

Free School Meals collected from 06/10/2023 to 18/01/2024

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

Census Return Term update ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

The **Spring 2024** term on the Census Return screen will now be the new default as School Census Spring 2024. This will also be updated in the following Return Tools:

- Update Class Type
- Update Early Years
- Update Students with Top-up Funding
- Update Students Post Looked After Arrangements

Permanent Exclusions ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in England

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

Permanent Exclusions that start in the exclusions collection period for the Spring 2024 School Census will be collected if they have a final review date which falls in the exclusions collection period plus up until the day before census day.

School Level Annual School Census (SLASC)

IN

Key Dates for the Census Spring 2024 Return ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools in England

Census Date: 18/01/2024

Age at Date: 31/08/2023

SLASC Return update to include Young Carer ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools in England

Routines | Statutory Returns | SLASC return

To meet the new DfE requirements for **Young Carer data** to be broken down by Boys and Girls in the SLASC report, two new data items have been added in the SLASC Summary report to record the Young Carer data when identified by Parent, Guardian, or School (including pupil self-declaration).

School Workforce Annual Census for Wales (SWAC) - Statutory Returns

WP

WS

Key Dates for the Census Return ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in Wales

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Workforce Annual Census

Census Date: 07/11/2023

Vacancies that opened or closed from 1 September to 31 August of the academic year before the census date*, including vacancies that were not filled.

School teachers who left the profession or took retirement (early or at normal age) from 1 September to 31 August of the academic year before the census date*.

Supply Staff - Aggregated level data for the period 1 September to 31 August of the academic year prior to the census date*.

*Which is the previous 2022/23 academic year

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

Supply Staff Panel ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to schools in Wales

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Workforce Annual Census

The Supply Staff panel has been updated so the code LSWK, which was previously used to map the supply category **Learning Support Worker** now maps the new value **Teaching Assistant** for the same supply category.

School language category ^{NEW}

Applicable to schools in Wales

Focus | School | School Details

The **School Language Category** has been added to the SWAC report so that schools can record the school language category(s) for the SWAC return.

Independent Schools Council (ISC) Return*

IN

ISC Return Key Dates ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools in England and Wales

Routines | Statutory Returns | ISC

Census Date: 16/01/2024

Age at Date: 31/0/2023

Useful links Dashboard ^{NEW}

Applicable to Independent schools

The useful links dashboard has been added to the SLASC and ISC to provide easy access to help when completing the SLASC return.

SIMS Connected

EP

ES

WP

WS

IN

Emergency Alert ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to all schools

The Emergency alert sound feature in SIMS7 has been made available to the SIMS Connected platform to help draw users' attention to an emergency.

Students

EP

ES

WP

WS

IN

Bulk update for Paramedical Support ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Routines | Students | Bulk Update

The Paramedical support data item can be updated in bulk within the Bulk Update Students functionality.

Modes of Travel update ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Routines | Student | Student Details

The modes of travel options in the Additional Information section can now be updated via Tools | Lookups | Maintain Lookup. Users can add, edit, and remove options so these are relevant to the school's needs.

SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

2023 Autumn release (version 7.214)

Import User Defined Field Data via a Spreadsheet ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Focus | Student | Student Details

The Student Data Import from Spreadsheet function has been updated to facilitate **User Defined Field (UDF)** data imports.

Take Register



NextGen Take Register Quick Launch in SIMS ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to all schools

Focus | Attendance / Lesson Monitor | Take Register

We have introduced a quick link within the Take Register screen in SIMS7 to launch the SIMS NextGen Take Register functionality in the default web browser for schools that have been onboarded to SIMS NextGen.

Supply Teacher permission group ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to all schools

Focus | System Manager

The Supply Teacher template permission group in System Manager has been updated so that a supply teacher can take and record the register for the class they are covering.

Icon added to take Register for NextGen users ^{NEW}

Applicable to all schools

Focus | Attendance | Take Register

Focus | Lesson Monitor | Take Register

To improve the user experience for schools onboarded to SIMS Next Gen, we have added a new icon within the SIMS7 Take Register functionality to directly launch the Next Gen alternative experience.