

In confidence

SIMS Technical Roadmap

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide customers with a detailed overview of any software and hardware infrastructure they might need to run the SIMS Product suite. It has been developed in line with customer feedback to enable Local Authorities, Support Teams, Schools and Academies to effectively plan their future support of SIMS.

This document is based on information provided by ESS in their Annual SIMS Technical Roadmap and has been reviewed by them in October 2025. It provides schools with an overview of what changes we expect in 2025 and upcoming months.

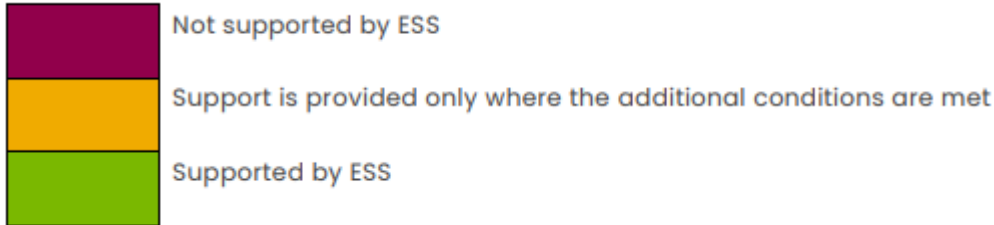
Please Note: LCC Education Digital Services is not responsible for the SIMS Technical Roadmap, and this could be subject to change at any time by ESS however, we hope that this document helps you understand and prepare for up-and-coming changes.

If you have any questions or need support from your LCC Education Digital Services SIMS support team, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Date	Changes Made	Updated by	Next planned review date
16/10/2025	- Inclusion of support for Office 2024 - Plans for support for Windows Server 2025	T Jones	Spring 2026
19/03/2025	Updated release date for SOLUS 3.12.86	T Jones	
15/12/2024	Standard updates to SQL and SQL Server Support	T Jones	
24/06/2024	Interim update to extend support for SOLUS version 3.12.72	T Jones	Autumn 2024
10/10/2023	- 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	- Inclusion of support for SQL2019 - Recommendations around SQLExpress	T Jones	Summer 2023
13/06/2022	Previous Technical Updates	P Featherstone	-
15/11/2021	Clarification on SQL Versions	P Featherstone	Spring 2022

2 What support is ending in the next 12 months?

2.1 Roadmap Key Code



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

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

LCC Education Digital Services will only support schools that are on supported software.

2.3 What does the yellow indicator mean?

Technologies marked as yellow are either considerations for future support or considerations for 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.

3 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 TeacherApp are covered later in this document. If you are unsure about any of these specifications, then please contact the Education Digital Services Service Desk.

3.1 Minimum Hardware Specification Guidance

Component	Requirement
SIMS Server	
Computer and Processor	Quad Core processor or higher is recommended for optimum performance (for Intel processors, we recommend at least 4 Performance cores). A minimum of four v-cores should be assigned to virtual servers.
Memory (minimum recommended)	16GB or higher. If a virtual server is in use, this should be statically assigned memory, <u>not</u> dynamically.
Disk space guidance #	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: SQL Server Requirement We estimate as a minimum that you should allow 150Gb for all SQL databases required for your setup. File Share Requirement Please allow 10-20GB for the SIMS Applications and Setups folder. 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 Docstorage Requirement For the Docstorage drive, this will vary so greatly by customer, we therefore advise schools should consider 50Gb as minimum. General Guidance If a virtual server is in use, then the virtual hard drive files should be statically sized.
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?	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. 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. 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). If using other solutions by other providers, it is essential that you work with those service providers to ensure the backups are GDPR compliant.
Other information	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. 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. Internet access is required. SOLUS details can be found in KB0023674 - SOLUS3 - What ports or URLs does SOLUS3 use?



SIMS Workstation	
Computer and processor	Quad Core 2.4GHz processor or higher recommended for optimum performance (for Intel processors, we recommend at least 4 Performance cores).
Memory (minimum recommended)	8Gb or higher for main SIMS machines.
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	Operating System — 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows 10 Pro or Windows 11. 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. Software — Microsoft Office 2016 or later. Adobe Acrobat Standard and Adobe Acrobat Pro, At present we do not support Adobe Document Cloud.
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.



4 Detailed Roadmap

4.1 SIMS Software Support

IMPORTANT NOTE: Windows 10 is no longer supported. Please ensure any machine's using SIMS has an updated version of Windows applied.

System	Summer 2025	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Autumn 2026	Spring 2027	Additional Notes
Server Operation System							
Windows Server 2016							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 12/01/2027.
Windows Server 2019							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 09/01/2029.
Windows Server 2022							Microsoft Security Support End Date: 14/10/2031
Windows Server 2025							Full Migration Support Offered from Summer 2026
Workstation Operation System							
Windows 10 Pro (32 / 64 bit)							Microsoft support end 14/10/2025.
Windows 11							Only with compatible SQL versions, please see Microsoft for full details.
SOLUS3							
SOLUS 3.12.86							
Microsoft Office							
Office 2016							Microsoft Support Ends 14/10/2025
Office 2019							Microsoft Support Ends 14/10/2025
Office 2021 LTSC							Office 2021 LTSC is supported from Spring 2024 where the application is locally installed. Microsoft Support Ends 13/10/2026
Office 2024 LTSC							Microsoft Support 09/10/2029
Office 365							ESS recognises that a local installation of Office applications under the 0365 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 0365 is supported provided the applications are locally installed.

4.2 SIMS SQL Support

System	Autumn 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Autumn 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Additional Notes
Not supported by ESS Support provided only where the additional conditions are met Supported by ESS							
SQL Server Details							
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-CUI6) - 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

4.3 Additional notes on Microsoft Extended Support arrangement

*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.

4.4 What about SQL Express Editions

SQL Express is a license-free version of SQL. Express additions 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.

4.5 SQL Express Edition

SQL Express cannot be used as a database server if the databases 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

4.6 SQL Compatibility Mode

We are aware that some customers experience issues with performance when running SQL2016 in its native mode. Following 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.

[KB0036825](#) is available for more information.

4.7 Azure SQL

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

4.8 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 a minimum .NET Framework of 4.7.2 is not met, SIMS 7 will not load and the user may be prompted to install it as required.

4.9 TLS requirements

Our suite of products supports TLS 1.2.

4.10 SIMS Connected vs SIMS Next Gen

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

5 SIMS Connected

[SIMS Connected](#) brings SIMS on-premises into the cloud today. It frees schools of the expense and effort of running their SIMS server 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. To find out more, click [here](#).

5.1 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								
SchoolView								
SIMS Parent, SIMS Student								
SIMS Finance								
FMS Hub								To ensure secure access, HMRC Fraud Prevention Headers works best with Edge, ESS does not support Internet Explorer.
Hosted Discover via .xbap application								Please see the additional information below
SIMS Services Manager (SSM)								

6 SIMS Parent and Student App

We support the following versions of Android and iOS operating systems upon which our applications are installed.

Android:

OS version 7 – 14 only. All previous versions are no longer supported, and any device operating system on the older versions will not receive further updates.

Apple:

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.

7 TeacherApp Compatibility

TeacherApp require SIMS Services Manager to be running on a server with a minimum version of .NET Framework 4.7.2.

iPad – Requires iPadOS 9.0 or later

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

8 SIMS Parent and Student App

ESS support the following versions of operating systems;

- Android 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, ESS support version iOS 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.



9 SIMS.net Version Statement

In line with the terms and conditions of the SIMS Annual Maintenance and Contract ESS will support the current and previous version of SIMS.

Where applicable the terms below will apply:

8.1 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:

9.1.1 Diagnosis or rectification of problems associated with the other systems, software, or equipment of the Customer or any third party.

9.1.2 Rectification of any defects or errors resulting from modifications to the Software and / or Hosted Services by any person other than ESS.

9.1.3 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.

9.1.4 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.