



SIMS



**SIMS
Technical
Roadmap**

May 2019

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Minimum Hardware Specification	3
Roadmap Key Code	3
What does the red 'Not supported by Capita' indicator mean?	3
What does the yellow indicator mean?	3
A Typical School	4
Minimum Hardware Specification Guidance	4
SIMS Software Support	6
Microsoft .NET Framework Support	7
Additional Information for the TeacherApp	7
Additional Information for the Document Management Server	7
SIMS Partnership Exchange	7
CAPITA Hosted SIMS Learning Gateway	8
Self-Hosting SIMS Learning Gateway	8
CAPITA Hosted SIMS	8
SIMS Online Solutions Browser Support (not native Apps)	9

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 plan their future support of SIMS effectively.

The headline changes that have been made in this edition of the SIMS Technical Roadmap include:

- Further extended support for Server 2008
- Introduction of support for Server 2019
- Retirement dates for Windows 7 and Windows 8
- Commitment to review SQL 2016 native performance
- Merging of minimum technical requirements
- Inclusion of online applications.

Extended support means that we will use best endeavours to resolve any issues encountered. Issues should be managed through your Local SIMS Support Unit in the usual way.

The information included within this document is subject to change and will be reviewed every six months.




Date	Changes Made	Updated by	Next planned review date
17/04/2019	Updates to all areas and inclusion of minimum hardware details previously held in a separate document.	P Featherstone	September 2019

We have simplified this previously complicated document; many areas were repeated with the same information and some information was judged no longer useful.

Minimum Hardware Specification

Previous versions of this document excluded information regarding the minimum hardware specifications to run the different applications. We hope that combining this information is received well. Any suggestions can be fed back to paul.featherstone@capita.co.uk.

Roadmap Key Code

-  - Not supported by Capita
-  - Will be confirmed in a future release of the Technical Roadmap
-  - Supported by Capita

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

'Not supported by Capita' 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 retirement of a technology. Typically, where a new technology is supported, an older version of the technology is retired so that Capita 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, TeacherApp or SLG 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 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 in Secondary schools). 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	1024x768 or higher monitor/RDP resolution.
Backup of whole system required?	<p>Yes. You are reminded that it is critical that backups are moved to an alternative media daily, i.e. that one is kept in a physically separate place to 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>Capita 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>See the Capita ESS website for more information on Redstor software: https://www.capita-sims.co.uk/products-and-services/redstor-backup-pro</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>

	If using other solutions by other providers, it is essential that you work with those service providers on ensuring the backups are GDPR compliant.
Other information	<p>It is not recommended that servers are 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>Capita 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 requires access to the http protocol on dl.capitasolus.co.uk and solusmanager.sims.co.uk and all sub-folders therein.</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 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	1024x768 (1280x1024 or higher for optimum experience).
Operating system and software	<p>Operating System — 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Microsoft Windows 7 Professional (SP1), Windows 8 Pro and Windows 10 Pro.</p> <p>The PC will require a minimum of Microsoft .NET Framework 4.5.2 to be present.</p> <p>Software — Microsoft Office 2013 (32-bit and 64-bit) and Office 2016. Adobe Reader DC or above.</p>
Other	Internet access is required.

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

System	Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Autumn 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Autumn 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Autumn 2022	Additional Notes
Server Operation System													
Windows Server 2008 SP2													Microsoft Service Pack Support End Date: 14/01/2020
Windows Server 2008 R2 SP1													
Windows Server 2012													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 10/10/2023
Windows Server 2012 R2													
Windows Server 2016													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 12/01/2027
Windows Server 2019													Can be Host for virtual servers of supported OS's now.
SQL Server Details													
SQL Server 2012 SP4													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 12/07/2022
SQL Server 2014 SP3													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 09/07/2024
SQL Server 2016													Microsoft Service Pack Support End Date: 09/01/2018
SQL Server 2016 SP1													Microsoft Service Pack Support End Date: 09/07/2019
SQL Server 2016 SP2													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 14/07/2026
SQL Server 2017													Although available, our focus is to optimise SIMS queries to run in SQL 2016 natively
SQL Server 2019													
Workstation Operation System													
Windows 7 Pro (32 / 64 bit)													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 14/01/2020
Windows 8.1 Pro (32 / 64 bit)													Microsoft Extended Support End Date: 10/01/2021
Windows 10 Pro (32 / 64 bit)													No published end dates from Microsoft
SOLUS3													
SOLUS 3.1201													This version of SOLUS has 614 users
SOLUS 3.1241													This version of SOLUS has 14,000 users
SOLUS 3.1250													
Microsoft Office													
Office 2010													
Office 2013 SP1													
Office 2016													
Office 2019													

Microsoft .NET Framework Support

The version of .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:

System	4.5.2	4.6	4.6.1	4.7.2	Additional Notes
Server Operating Systems					
Windows Server 2008 SP2	Green	Green	Red	Red	
Windows Server 2008 R2 SP1	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Windows Server 2012	Green	Green	Green	Green	4.5.1 is preinstalled but not necessarily enabled
Windows Server 2016	Red	Red	Red	Green	4.6.2 is preinstalled but not necessarily enabled
Windows Server 2019	Red	Red	Red	Green	4.7.2 is preinstalled but not necessarily enabled
Workstation Operating Systems					
Windows 7	Green	Green	Green	Green	No current plans to retire .NET version 4.5.2 from Windows 7 or 8 while the OS is still supported by SIMS.
Windows 8	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Windows 10	Red	Green	Green	Green	

Additional Information for the TeacherApp

A recent update to the TeacherApp will now require SIMS Services Manager to be running on a server with a minimum version of .NET Framework 4.6.1 but advise customers to use 4.7.2.

Additional Information for the Document Management Server

The SIMS Document Management Server Service will require .NET Framework Version 3.5. This is not usually enabled on Server 2012 R2 and newer.

SIMS Partnership Exchange

We have no plans to update either the ZIS server software nor the monitor/agent applications. However, during the Summer of 2019, it is our plan to establish exactly which versions of the server operating system and SQL we can support a PX setup. There is conflicting information within our own documentation and installation notes plus observations from customer's setups. Once we have tested PX to the point where we understand upon which environment it is no longer working, we will update the Technical Roadmap. There is currently a project in place to discuss the long term plans for Partnership Exchange.

CAPITA Hosted SIMS Learning Gateway

It is our intention that from April 2019 we will have started a 9-month plan to migrate CAPITA Hosted SLG customers off this service onto other CAPITA solutions such as Teacher, Parent and Student App. We will shut down Hosted SLG in the Autumn of 2019.

Self-Hosting SIMS Learning Gateway

For customers that self-host SLG or are hosted by a third party, the last supportable release version will be the Spring 2020 release. There will be no active support available for SLG from April 2020.

CAPITA Hosted SIMS

For the best experience of using the CAPITA Hosted SIMS service we recommend that for client access you use:

- Microsoft Remote Desktop App 8.1 or later (Mac, Android)
- Microsoft Remote Desktop client for Windows 8.1 or later
- Internet Explorer (IE11 is recommended)
- Google Chrome (latest version) is supported, but feedback suggests that it does not provide the best user experience with repeated downloads of the RDP clients.

For the 3rd Party VPN Connector we currently use OpenVPN.

System	March 2019	April 2019	Additional Notes
Version 2.3.2	Green	Red	OpenVPN Client version 2.3.2 or earlier versions (i.e. April 2014) will not work once OpenVPN once the server has been upgraded. Version 2.3.3 (April 2014) or higher will work correctly, however to further reduce any ongoing risk of introducing any vulnerabilities with the OpenVPN client, it is advised that customers upgrade their client installation at the school to the latest version (2.4.6 or higher)
Version 2.3.3	Red	Green	
Version 2.4.6 or Higher	Red	Green	

SIMS Online Solutions Browser Support (not native Apps)

System	Chrome	Internet Explorer	Firefox	Safari	Edge	Phone Size Browser	Tablet Size Browser	Additional Notes
SIMS Activities	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	The online services may work against these systems marked as red, but are not tested against them, hence no support.
Options Online	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	
SIMS Pay	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	
SchoolView	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	
SIMS Parent, SIMS Student	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	
SIMS Homework	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	
SIMS Primary	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	
SIMS Finance	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	
SIMS Learning Gateway	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	

SIMS Parent and Student App

We support the latest and previous versions of Android and iOS operating systems upon which our applications are installed. On the server where SIMS Services Manager is installed to exchange data between the solutions, .NET framework 3.5 is required as a minimum, but we currently recommend that .NET framework version 4.6.1 (as a new minimum) or 4.7.2 (as a new preferred) version are installed in the coming 6 months as we foresee that in the future these SSM packages for Parent and Student App will take advantage of updates present in those versions.

SIMS.net (core) Version Statement (extract from the contract)

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

The customer shall:

b) 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. Capita retains the right to refuse to accept a support call where older versions are in use;