**SIMS and FMS Eligibility Checker Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. Why is the Spring Release for SIMS and FMS not available until the 4th April 2022?**  
A. The Spring 2022 release of SIMS and FMS for 2022 has moved to the 4th April to support the release of our Next Generation programme.  The latest information on the release can be found in KB0035066.

**Q. Are there any processes in place which change the way the SIMS and FMS Software behave in relation to a customer who has an active contract in place?**  
A. Yes, there is an Annual Entitlement eligibility check process in place which ensures that only schools who have an active Annual Entitlement access certain parts of the SIMS and FMS functionality.  The eligibility check should be invisible to most customers who have a valid agreement with ESS and will be performed automatically and in the background.  However in some cases users may be prompted to enter a unique eligibility key, which ESS will supply by email to all customers with current agreements in advance of the release.  If for any reason you mislay this eligibility key you can request a replacement eligibility key using a simple form.  Details of how to do this will be displayed by the software in the event that you are required to enter an eligibility key.

**Q. Who will get the email with the Eligibility Key?**  
A. The eligibility Key will be sent to the nominated contact in the Annual Entitlement Agreement process (which was completed either via our online web contracting portal or by paying our annual entitlement service invoice). The eligibility key need only be entered into SIMS and FMS if prompted by the system.

**Q. Will the eligibility check affect the Spring release?**  
A. No. The eligibility check will not affect the release upgrade process itself, whether delivered via SOLUS or ISO, which can be carried out as normal.

**Q. How do I know if I have a valid Eligibility Key?**  
A. An email titled “SIMS FMS Eligibility Key” would have been sent to the nominated contact who completed the Annual Entitlement Agreement process.

**Q. Is any of the Eligibility Check process being automated?**  
A. Yes, we are automating as much of the process as possible. The eligibility check should be invisible to most customers who have a valid agreement with ESS and will be performed automatically and in the background. For the majority of users in schools therefore, if there is an active annual entitlement in place, their SIMS and FMS system will continue to work in the exact same way. In some cases users may be prompted to enter a unique eligibility key, which ESS will supply by email to all customers with current agreements in advance of the release.  If for any reason you mislay this eligibility key you can request a replacement eligibility key using a simple form.  Details of how to do this will be displayed by the software in the event that you are required to enter an eligibility key.

**Q. My school has a poor internet connection or has a firewall in place. How can I help ensure that the daily automated check works?**  
A. To help with whitelisting the automated check where schools have poor connectivity or a firewall that prevents outgoing queries, then the URL is as follows:  
[https://licenses.sims.co.uk](https://licenses.sims.co.uk/)

**Q. Can an Eligibility Key be resent?**  
A. Yes, there will be a link in SIMS and FMS that directs the user to an online form which can be filled in to have the eligibility key resent.

**Q. Who can we contact to obtain our Eligibility Key?**  
A.  Upon upgrade to the Spring release, if an automated check has not been completed, then a message will be displayed in the software.  In this message will be a link to an online form capturing your details to help us process the request.  In addition to this preferred method of using the form, users can use the online chat facility on the renewal portal or gateway.

**Q. Can an SSU distribute Eligibility Keys?**  
A. No, eligibility keys are individually generated for each school who have an annual entitlement agreement in place.

**Q. When will the Eligibility Key be available?**  
A. Eligibility keys will be sent automatically on a regular schedule from ESS once a school has completed the contracting process via our online web contracting portal/gateway or by paying their annual entitlement service invoice. If a school is yet to complete their annual entitlement agreement with ESS, completing the process on our online web contracting portal/gateway will the quickest way to retrieve a valid eligibility Key.

**Q. I want to complete our annual entitlement agreement with ESS on the online web contracting portal, what is the web address for this?**  
A. You will have been contacted by ESS with details on where to complete your online renewal as this address differs depending on your school type.

**Q. Can I obtain an Eligibility Key later in the year if I re-contract with ESS after the Spring release has gone out?**  
A. Yes.

**Q. What areas of SIMS and FMS are controlled by this Eligibility Key?**  
A. For SIMS, functionality for CENSUS and for FMS, the CFR Menu.

**Q. What happens if I do not enter an Eligibility Key?**  
A. For SIMS, access to the CENSUS menu and functionality is disabled.  For FMS, access to the CFR Menu is disabled.  All other areas of SIMS and FMS will continue to work.

**Q. Does each user need to enter an Eligibility Key?**  
A. No, once a valid eligibility key has been entered, no users from that point on will receive the message upon login.

**Q. Does the Eligibility Check pop up message appear for all users?**  
A. If there is not a valid Eligibility Key in place, then the message will appear for all users until a positive Eligibility Key is entered.

**Q. If one user dismisses the Eligibility Key message with the 'Remind Me' option, does this hide the message for all users?**A. No

**Q. When does the message remind users again?**A. The next time the user logs into SIMS or FMS.

**Q. Is the Eligibility Key part of the Spring 2022 upgrade?**A. The actual Eligibility Key is generated by our CRM system and returned to SIMS or FMS, online via our Licence Server.  When SIMS and FMS loads up, it will connect to the licence server and retrieve the Eligibility Key.  If a positive key is returned, then the users will not see any pop up message boxes and continue to use SIMS and FMS as normal.

**Q. What happens to my data in SIMS?**  
A. For CENSUS, schools will have saved their CENSUS reports and XML files in a dedicated directory which is accessed outside of the SIMS application.  All the underlying data is still accessible.

**Q. What happens to my data in FMS?**  
A. All the underlying data is still present in FMS, schools will still be able to process their financial transactions etc, however it will not be possible to run any reports or any functions that reside in the CFR menu.

**Q. What happens if I am a SIMS Hosted or Connected customer?**  
A. The eligibility key will be sent to you and if required you can enter this into SIMS and FMS in the exact same way as other users of the software.  Having your applications hosted make no difference to the process.

**Q. Is there documentation on what I need to do?**  
A. Yes, we have documented the process and have a short video walk through of applying an eligibility key if required, this is available from KB0051049.

**Q. Who do I call if I have any issues with the process?**  
A. We have done as much as we can to automate the eligibility check so customers with a valid annual entitlement agreement in place can continue to use the CENSUS and FMS CFR functionality as normal.  In the scenario where the school is prompted to enter an eligibility key and they cannot locate the previously sent email containing the key, then ESS can be contacted by filling out a response form available as a link in the SIMS (Help | Enter Eligibility Key) and FMS (Help | Enter Eligibility Key) Software or via this link: <http://ess-solus.co.uk/AnnualEntitlement>

**Q. My school has a poor internet connection or has a firewall in place. How can I help ensure that the automated form works to request a key?**  
A. To help with whitelisting the automated form to request a key where schools have poor connectivity or a firewall that prevents outgoing queries, then the URL is as follows:  
<http://ess-solus.co.uk/AnnualEntitlement>

**Q. My DfE number is going to change, what happens to my Eligibility?**  
A. Inform ESS that your DfE number is changing, what it is changing to and when this is going to take place.  We can then update our systems so that when SIMS and FMS check for a valid eligibility key, a new key will be used.  When you change the DfE number in SIMS and FMS, the menus and functionality will be disabled until a valid eligibility key is confirmed automatically, or manually entered.

**Q. I am an Independent or a Free School, my Annual Entitlement renews in October, what will happen to my SIMS and FMS?**  
A. Upon the upgrade to the Spring release of SIMS and FMS, your school will be subject to the same process for entering an Eligibility Key to re-enable the required menu routes.

**Q. I am an International School, my contract renews in October, what will happen to my SIMS and FMS?**  
A. Upon the upgrade to the Spring release of SIMS and FMS, your school will be subject to the same process for entering an Eligibility Key to re-enable the required menu routes.

**Q. What happens to my data if I am hosted by ESS and I am no longer contracting to use SIMS or FMS?**  
A. We have an offboarding process for our SIMS Connected and Hosted SIMS customers.

**Q. What if I am an Academy that is part of a Multi Academy Trust?**  
A. If you are a school that is part of a MAT, each individual academy will receive their own Eligibility Key, this will be sent to the nominated contact completing the annual entitlement agreement process.

**Q. I am a SIMS Support Unit, Local Authority or SIMS Technical Partner and have a SIMS training database, what do I need to do?**  
A. If you are using a SIMS training database or other instance of SIMS that is not a school (NAS) for support purposes or managing assessment resources, or similar, then you will need to contact ESS and we will send a valid Eligibility Key to all eligible users.  Please complete the form at the following link: [**https://ess-gateway.co.uk/SIMSNASKeyRequest**](https://ess-gateway.co.uk/SIMSNASKeyRequest)