**What is SIF?**

*Imagine software that works together as well as they do...*

**SIF® is READY – are you?**

SIF (Systems Interoperability Framework®) is a set of industry developed and supported technical blueprints that enable educational software to work seamlessly together as a single, efficient system. The open standard framework - SIF Implementation Specification – makes it possible for disparate applications to interact and share data, now and in the future. The SIF Association, the non-profit organisation dedicated to interoperability between educational applications, and has been working toward this goal since 1997.

The SIF Specification, developed by SIF Association members, identifies a set of common definitions for educational information (data objects) and a set of rules for data transfer (infrastructure). By creating these interoperable standards, SIF ensures that all suppliers can use SIF Specifications and that all educational systems will be able to implement them regardless of the technology. Guaranteeing that SIF is an open, supplier-neutral and platform independent standard is the important guiding principle of the SIF Association.

The SIF Specification allows for systems to be developed so data can be more effectively maintained at all levels of the learner’s lifespan, from early childhood through the workplace.

Software purchasers are increasingly asking for SIF Certified products that allow them to leverage their local resources more effectively without surrendering control over access to their sensitive data.

SIF is designed specifically for technology providers and educators. It is not a product, but a ‘data transfer’ standard for software that:

- enables your current applications to share data seamlessly in real time
- manages your current educational data
- works cross-platform
- allows automated reporting

**Implementation Benefits** *(Educational Organisations)*

- Write once, use many times
- Improves data management
- Increases learner achievement
- Improves interoperability between applications
- Enhances data reliability and consistency
- Simplifies reporting capability

**Development Benefits** *(Suppliers)*

- Offers significant competitive advantage
- Defines an open specification that includes a data model and infrastructure
- Reduces long term application integration costs
- Provides companies with the opportunity to be part of fully interoperable solutions
How does SIF Work?

**SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS** are selected by educational organisations to manage information, administer school systems, and deliver teaching and learning.

**SIF AGENTS** are the liaison between an application and the ZIS. The SIF Agent recognises the application’s business logic and data structure, allowing data sharing between applications; receiving and translating SIF messages and submitting data changes to the ZIS.

**SIF DATA OBJECTS** are a set of common data definitions shared by applications detailed in the data model of the SIF Specification.

**ZONE INTEGRATION SERVERS** serve as the central communication point in a SIF Zone. The ZIS tracks all SIF Agents in the Zone, distributes all SIF messages, implements security rules, and enforces what a SIF Agent can and cannot do within the Zone.

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**SIF Certification Program**

The SIF Certification Program is a program undertaken by the SIF Association to confirm that an application SIF Agent or ZIS adheres to the SIF Specification. The program includes a series of tests that validate whether the application SIF agent or ZIS conforms to the rules and definitions of a particular SIF Implementation Specification release. Successful completion of the program warrants the ability to display the ‘SIF Certified’ logo of that release. SIF Certification guarantees that a product can successfully communicate and share information with other SIF Certified applications.

To learn more, please visit our website: [www.sifassociation.org](http://www.sifassociation.org)

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The SIF Association is a unique, non-profit collaboration composed of over 3,200 schools, districts, local authorities, states, US and International Ministries of Education, software suppliers and consultants who collectively work to define the rules and regulations for educational software data interoperability.

For the supplier, the SIF standard facilitates seamless data sharing and reporting between conformant educational applications without incurring expensive customer-specific development costs. For the end user, the application conformity it provides, allows educational establishments to purchase and deploy best-of-breed solutions easily and seamlessly.

The SIF Association has united these education technology end users and providers in an unprecedented effort to give teachers more time to do what they do best: teach.