This chapter contains the following sections:

- Overview, on page 1
- RADIUS, on page 1
- TACACS+ Authentication, on page 2
- User IDs in the APIC Bash Shell, on page 2
- Login Domains, on page 3
- LDAP/Active Directory Authentication, on page 3
- RSA Secure ID Authentication, on page 4
- Configuring APIC for RSA Access Using the GUI, on page 4
- Configuring a Remote User, on page 5
- About SAML, on page 16

**Overview**

This article provides step by step instructions on how to enable RADIUS, TACACS+, and LDAP users to access the APIC. It assumes the reader is thoroughly familiar with the *Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure Fundamentals* manual, especially the User Access, Authentication, and Accounting chapter.

---

**Note**

In the case of a disaster scenario such as the loss of all but one APIC in the cluster, APIC disables remote authentication. In this scenario, only a local administrator account can log into the fabric devices.

---

**Note**

Remote users for AAA Authentication with shell:domains=all/read-all/ will not be able to access Leaf switches and Spine switches in the fabric for security purposes. This pertains to all version up to 4.0(1h).

**RADIUS**

To configure users on RADIUS servers, the APIC administrator must configure the required attributes *(shell:domains)* using the *cisco-av-pair* attribute. The default user role is network-operator.
The SNMPv3 authentication protocol options are SHA and MD5. The privacy protocol options are AES-128 and DES. If these options are not specified in the `cisco-av-pair` attribute, MD5 and DES are the default authentication protocols.

For example, SNMPv3 authentication and privacy protocol attributes can be specified as follows:

```
snmpv3:auth=SHA priv=AES-128
```

Similarly, the list of domains would be as follows:

```
shell:domains="domainA domainB ...
```

## TACACS+ Authentication

Terminal Access Controller Access Control device Plus (TACACS+) is another remote AAA protocol that is supported by Cisco devices. TACACS+ has the following advantages over RADIUS authentication:

- Provides independent AAA facilities. For example, the APIC can authorize access without authenticating.
- Uses TCP to send data between the AAA client and server, enabling reliable transfers with a connection-oriented protocol.
- Encrypts the entire protocol payload between the switch and the AAA server to ensure higher data confidentiality. RADIUS encrypts passwords only.
- Uses the av-pairs that are syntactically and configurationally different than RADIUS but the APIC supports `shell:domains`.

---

**Note**

The TACACS server and TACACs ports must be reachable by ping.

---

The XML example below configures the ACI fabric to work with a TACACS+ provider at IP address 10.193.208.9.

```
<aaaTacacsPlusProvider name="10.193.208.9"
key="test123"
authProtocol="pap"/>
```

---

**Note**

While the examples provided here use IPv4 addresses, IPv6 addresses could also be used.

---

### User IDs in the APIC Bash Shell

User IDs on the APIC for the Linux shell are generated within the APIC for local users. Users whose authentication credential is managed on external servers, the user ID for the Linux shell can be specified in the `cisco-av-pair`. Omitting the (16001) in the above `cisco-av-pair` is legal, in which case the remote user gets a default Linux user ID of 23999. Linux User IDs are used during bash sessions, allowing standard Linux permissions enforcement. Also, all managed objects created by a user are marked as created-by that user’s Linux user ID.

The following is an example of a user ID as seen in the APIC Bash shell:
admin@ifav17-ifc1:~> touch myfile
admin@ifav17-ifc1:~> ls -l myfile
-rw-rw-r-- 1 admin admin 0 Apr 13 21:43 myfile
admin@ifav17-ifc1:~> ls -ln myfile
-rw-rw-r-- 1 15374 15374 0 Apr 13 21:43 myfile
admin@ifav17-ifc1:~> id
uid=15374(admin) gid=15374(admin) groups=15374(admin)

Login Domains

A login domain defines the authentication domain for a user. Login domains can be set to the Local, LDAP, RADIUS, or TACACS+ authentication mechanisms. When accessing the system from REST, the CLI, or the GUI, the APIC enables the user to select the correct authentication domain.

For example, in the REST scenario, the username is prefixed with a string so that the full login username looks as follows:

```
api:<domain><username>
```

If accessing the system from the GUI, the APIC offers a drop-down list of domains for the user to select. If no `api: domain` is specified, the default authentication domain servers are used to look up the username.

Starting in ACI version 1.0(2x), the login domain fallback of the APIC defaults local. If the default authentication is set to a non-local method and the console authentication method is also set to a non-local method and both non-local methods do not automatically fall back to local authentication, the APIC can still be accessed via local authentication.

To access the APIC fallback local authentication, use the following strings:

- From the GUI, use `api:fallback\username`.
- From the REST API, use `api#fallback\username`.

**Note**
Do not change the fallback login domain. Doing so could result in being locked out of the system.

LDAP/Active Directory Authentication

Similar to RADIUS and TACACS+, LDAP allows a network element to retrieve AAA credentials that can be used to authenticate and then authorize the user to perform certain actions. An added certificate authority configuration can be performed by an administrator to enable LDAPS (LDAP over SSL) trust and prevent man-in-the-middle attacks.

The XML example below configures the ACI fabric to work with an LDAP provider at IP address 10.30.12.128.

```
<aaaLdapProvider name="10.30.12.128"
    rootdn="CN=Manager,DC=ifc,DC=com"
    basedn="DC=ifc,DC=com"
    SSLValidationLevel="strict"
```

**Note**
While the examples provided here use IPv4 addresses, IPv6 addresses could also be used.
For LDAP configurations, best practice is to use **CiscoAVPair** as the attribute string. If customer faces the issue using Object ID 1.3.6.1.4.1.9.22.1, an additional Object ID 1.3.6.1.4.1.9.2742.1-5 can also be used in the LDAP server.

Instead of configuring the Cisco AVPair, you have the option to create LDAP group maps in the APIC.

### RSA Secure ID Authentication

RSA Authentication provides a token which can be used in combination with a fixed key in many different ways to create the password. It supports both hardware and software tokens.

### Configuring APIC for RSA Access Using the GUI

**Before you begin**

- The ACI fabric is installed, Application Policy Infrastructure Controllers (APICs) are online, and the APIC cluster is formed and healthy.
- The RSA server host name or IP address, port, authorization protocol, and key are available.
- The APIC management endpoint group is available.

**Procedure**

**Step 1**

In the APIC, create the RSA provider.

a) On the menu bar, choose **Admin > AAA**.
b) In the **Navigation** pane, choose **RSA Management > RSA Providers**.
c) In the **Work** pane, choose **Actions > Create RSA Provider**.
d) Specify the RSA host name (or IP address), port, protocol, and management endpoint group.

**Step 2**

Create the login domain for RSA.

a) In the **Navigation** pane, choose **AAA Authentication > Login Domains**.
b) In the **Work** pane, choose **Actions > Create Login Domain**.
c) Specify the login domain name, description, realm, and provider group as appropriate.

**What to do next**

This completes the APIC RSA configuration steps. Next, configure the RSA server.
Configuring a Remote User

Instead of configuring local users, you can point the APIC at the centralized enterprise credential datacenter. The APIC supports Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP), active directory, RADIUS, and TACACS+.

Note

When an APIC is in minority (disconnected from the cluster), remote logins can fail because the ACI is a distributed system and the user information is distributed across APICS. Local logins, however, continue to work because they are local to the APIC.

Starting with the 3.1(1) release, **Server Monitoring** can be configured through RADIUS, TACACS+, LDAP, and RSA to determine whether the respective AAA servers are alive or not. Server monitoring feature uses the respective protocol login to check for server aliveness. For example, a LDAP server will use ldap login and a Radius server will use radius login with server monitoring to determine server aliveness.

To configure a remote user authenticated through an external authentication provider, you must meet the following prerequisites:

- The DNS configuration should have already been resolved with the hostname of the RADIUS server.
- You must configure the management subnet.

AV Pair on the External Authentication Server

The Cisco APIC requires that an administrator configure a Cisco AV Pair on an external authentication server. The Cisco AV pair specifies the APIC required RBAC roles and privileges for the user. The Cisco AV Pair format is the same for RADIUS, LDAP, or TACACS+.

To configure a Cisco AV Pair on an external authentication server, an administrator adds a Cisco AV pair to the existing user record. The Cisco AV pair format is as follows:

```
shell:domains =
domainA/writeRole1|writeRole2|writeRole3/readRole1|readRole2,
domainB/writeRole1|writeRole2|writeRole3/readRole1|readRole2
```

Starting with Cisco APIC release 2.1, if no UNIX ID is provided in AV Pair, the APIC allocates the unique UNIX user ID internally.

Note

The APIC Cisco AV-pair format is compatible and can co-exist with other Cisco AV-pair formats. APIC will pick up the first matching AV-pair from all the AV-pairs.

Starting with release 3.1(x), the AV Pair shell:domains=all//admin allows you to assign Read-only privileges to users and provide them access to the switches and run commands.

The APIC supports the following regexes:

```
shell:domains\s*\[=:\]\s*((\S+?/\S*?/\S*?)(,\S+?/\S*?/\S*?){0,31})(\(\d+\))$
```

```
shell:domains\s*\[=:\]\s*((\S+?/\S*?/\S*?)(,\S+?/\S*?/\S*?){0,31})$
```
Examples:

- Example 1: A Cisco AV Pair that contains a single Login domain with only writeRoles:

  \[\text{shell:domains=domainA/writeRole1|writeRole2/}\]

- Example 2: A Cisco AV Pair that contains a single Login domain with only readRoles:

  \[\text{shell:domains=domainA//readRole1|readRole2}\]

Note

The "/" character is a separator between writeRoles and readRoles per Login domain and is required even if only one type of role is to be used.

The Cisco AV pair string is case sensitive. Although a fault may not be seen, using mismatching cases for the domain name or roles could lead to unexpected privileges being given.

An example configuration for an open RADIUS server (/etc/raddb/users) is as follows:

```bash
aaa-network-admin Cleartext-Password := "<password>"
Cisco-avpair = "shell:domains = all/aaa/read-all(16001)"
```

Best Practice for Assigning AV Pairs

As best practice, Cisco recommends that you assign unique UNIX user ids in the range of 16000 to 23999 for the AV Pairs that are assigned to users when in bash shell (using SSH, Telnet or Serial/KVM consoles). If a situation arises when the Cisco AV Pair does not provide a UNIX user id, the user is assigned a user id of 23999 or similar number from the range that also enables the user's home directories, files, and processes accessible to remote users with a UNIX ID of 23999.

To ensure that your remote authentication server does NOT explicitly assign a UNIX ID in its cisco-av-pair response, open an SSH session to the APIC and login as an administrator (using a remote user account). Once logged in, run the following commands (replace “userid” with the username you logged in with):

```bash
admin@apic1:remoteuser-userid> cd /mit/uni/userext/remoteuser-userid
admin@apic1:remoteuser-userid> cat summary
```

The Cisco AV pair string is case sensitive. Although a fault may not be seen, using mismatching cases for the domain name or roles could lead to unexpected privileges being given.

Configuring an AV Pair on the External Authentication Server

The numerical value within the parentheses in the attribute/value (AV) pair string is used as the UNIX user ID of the user who is logged in using Secure Shell (SSH) or Telnet.
Configure an AV pair on the external authentication server.
The Cisco AV pair definition is as follows (Cisco supports AV pairs with and without UNIX user IDs specified):

Example:
```bash
* shell:domains =
domainA/writeRole1|writeRole2|writeRole3/readRole1|readRole2, domainB/writeRole1|writeRole2|writeRole3/readRole1|readRole2
domainA/writeRole1|writeRole2|writeRole3/readRole1|readRole2(8101)
```

These are the boost regexes supported by APIC:
```bash
uid_regex("shell:domains\s\[=:\]\s*((\S+?/\S*?/\S*?)(,\S+?/\S*?/\S*?){0,31})(\(\d+\))$";
regex("shell:domains\s\[=:\]\s*((\S+?/\S*?/\S*?)(,\S+?/\S*?/\S*?){0,31})$";
```

The following is an example:
```bash
shell:domains = coke/tenant-admin/read-all,pepsi//read-all(16001)
```

---

**Configuring APIC for TACACS+ Access**

**Before you begin**

- The Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI) fabric is installed, Application Policy Infrastructure Controllers (APICs) are online, and the APIC cluster is formed and healthy.
- The TACACS+ server host name or IP address, port, and key are available.
- The APIC management endpoint group is available.

**Procedure**

**Step 1**

In the APIC, create the **TACACS+ Provider**.

a) On the menu bar, choose **Admin > AAA**.
b) In the **Navigation** pane, choose **TACACS+ Management > TACACS+ Providers**.
c) In the **Work** pane, choose **Actions > Create TACACS+ Provider**.
d) Specify the TACACS+ host name (or IP address), port, authorization protocol, key, and management endpoint group.
If the APIC is configured for in-band management connectivity, out-of-band management does not work for authentication. With the APIC release 2.1(1x), you can set a global toggle between in-band and out-of-band as the default management connectivity between the APIC server and other external management devices.

For toggling in-band or out-of-band management in the APIC GUI:

- Prior to Release 2.2(1x): In the Navigation pane, choose Fabric > Fabric Policies > Global Policies > Connectivity Preferences. In the Work Pane select either inband or ooband.
- For Release 2.2(x) and 2.3(x): In the Navigation pane, choose Fabric > Fabric Policies > Global Policies > APIC Connectivity Preferences. In the Work Pane select either inband or ooband.
- For Release 3.0(1x) or later: In the Navigation pane, choose System > System Settings > APIC Connectivity Preferences. In the Work Pane select either inband or ooband.

**Step 2** Create the Login Domain for TACACS+.

a) In the Navigation pane, choose AAA Authentication > Login Domains.
b) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create Login Domain.
c) Specify the login domain name, description, realm, and provider group as appropriate.

**What to do next**

This completes the APIC TACACS+ configuration steps. Next, if a RADIUS server will also be used, configure the APIC for RADIUS. If only a TACACS+ server will be used, go to the ACS server configuration topic below.

**Configuring APIC for RADIUS Access**

**Before you begin**

- The ACI fabric is installed, Application Policy Infrastructure Controllers (APICs) are online, and the APIC cluster is formed and healthy.
- The RADIUS server host name or IP address, port, authorization protocol, and key are available.
- The APIC management endpoint group is available.

**Procedure**

**Step 1** In the APIC, create the RADIUS provider.

a) On the menu bar, choose Admin > AAA.
b) In the Navigation pane, click on Authentication and then click on the RADIUS tab.
c) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create RADIUS Provider.
d) Specify the RADIUS host name (or IP address), port, protocol, and management endpoint group.
If the APIC is configured for in-band management connectivity, out-of-band management does not work for authentication. With the APIC release 2.1(1x), you can set a global toggle between In-band and out-of-band as the default management connectivity between the APIC server and other external management devices.

For toggling in-band or out-of-band management in the APIC GUI:

- Prior to Release 2.2(1x): In the Navigation pane, choose Fabric > Fabric Policies > Global Policies > Connectivity Preferences. In the Work Pane select either inband or ooband.
- For Release 2.2(x) and 2.3(x): In the Navigation pane, choose Fabric > Fabric Policies > Global Policies > APIC Connectivity Preferences. In the Work Pane select either inband or ooband.
- For Release 3.0(1x) or later: In the Navigation pane, choose System > System Settings > APIC Connectivity Preferences. In the Work Pane select either inband or ooband.

**Step 2** Create the login domain for RADIUS.

a) In the Navigation pane, choose AAA Authentication > Login Domains.

b) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create Login Domain.

c) Specify the login domain name, description, realm, and provider group as appropriate.

---

**What to do next**

This completes the APIC RADIUS configuration steps. Next, configure the RADIUS server.

---

**Configuring a Cisco Secure Access Control Server for RADIUS and TACACS+ Access to the APIC**

**Before you begin**

- The Cisco Secure Access Control Server (ACS) version 5.5 is installed and online.

---

**Note** ACS v5.5 was used to document these steps. Other versions of ACS might support this task but the GUI procedures might vary accordingly.

- The Cisco Application Policy Infrastructure Controller (Cisco APIC) RADIUS or TACACS+ keys are available (or keys for both if both will be configured).
- The APICs are installed and online; the APIC cluster is formed and healthy.
- The RADIUS or TACACS+ port, authorization protocol, and key are available.
**Procedure**

**Step 1** Log in to the ACS server to configure the APIC as a client.
   a) Navigate to **Network Resources > Network Devices Groups > Network Devices and AAA Clients**.
   b) Specify the client name, the APIC in-band IP address, select the TACACS+ or RADIUS (or both) authentication options.
      
      **Note** If the only RADIUS or TACACS+ authentication is needed, select only the needed option.
   c) Specify the authentication details such as Shared Secret (key), and port as appropriate for the authentication option(s).
      
      **Note** The Shared Secret(s) must match the APIC Provider key(s).

**Step 2** Create the Identity Group.
   a) Navigate to **Users and Identity Stores > Internal Groups** option.
   b) Specify the Name, and Parent Group as appropriate.

**Step 3** Map users to the Identity Group.
   a) In the Navigation pane, click the **Users and Identity Stores > Internal Identity Stores > Users** option.
   b) Specify the user Name, and Identity Group as appropriate.

**Step 4** Create the Policy Element.
   a) Navigate to the **Policy Elements** option.
   b) For RADIUS, specify the Authorization and Permissions > Network Access > Authorization Profiles Name. For TACACS+, specify the Authorization and Permissions > Device Administration > Shell Profile Name as appropriate.
   c) For RADIUS, specify the Attribute as cisco-av-pair, Type as string, and the Value as
   \[shell:domains = <domain>/<role>/<domain> role\] as appropriate. For TACACS+, specify the Attribute as cisco-av-pair, Requirement as Mandatory, and the Value as
   \[shell:domains = <domain>/<role>/<domain> role\] as appropriate.

   The syntax of the Value field determines whether write privileges are granted:
   - For read/write privileges, the syntax is \[shell:domains = <domain>/<role>\].
   - For read-only privileges, the syntax is \[shell:domains = <domain>/<role>\].

   For example, if the cisco-av-pair has a value of \[shell:domains = solar/admin/,common// read-all,\] then solar is the security domain, admin is the role that gives write privileges to this user in the security domain called solar, common is the tenant common, and read-all is the role with read privileges that gives this user read privileges to all of the tenant common.

**Step 5** Create a service selection rule.
   a) For RADIUS, create a service selection rule to associate the Identity Group with the Policy Element by navigating to **Access Policies > Default Device Network Access Identity > Authorization** and specifying the rule Name, Status, and Conditions as appropriate, and Add the Internal Users:UserIdentityGroup in ALL Groups:<identity group name>.
b) For TACACS+, create a service selection rule to associate the Identity Group with the Shell Profile by navigating to Access Policies > Default Device Admin Identity > Authorization. Specify the rule Name, Conditions, and Select the Shell Profile as appropriate.

What to do next

Use the newly created RADIUS and TACACS+ users to log in to the APIC. Verify that the users have access to the correct APIC security domain according to the assigned RBAC roles and privileges. The users should not have access to items that have not been explicitly permitted. Read and write access rights should match those configured for that user.

Configuring LDAP

There are two options for LDAP configurations: you can configure a Cisco AVPair or configure LDAP group maps in the APIC. This section contains instructions for both configuration options.

Configuring Windows Server 2008 LDAP for APIC Access with Cisco AVPair

Before you begin

- First, configure the LDAP server, then configure the Cisco Application Policy Infrastructure Controller (Cisco APIC) for LDAP access.
- The Microsoft Windows Server 2008 is installed and online.
- The Microsoft Windows Server 2008 Server Manager ADSI Edit tool is installed. To install ADSI Edit, follow the instructions in the Windows Server 2008 Server Manager help.
- CiscoAVPair attribute specifications: Common Name = CiscoAVPair, LDAP Display Name = CiscoAVPair, Unique X500 Object ID = 1.3.6.1.4.1.9.22.1, Description = CiscoAVPair, Syntax = Case Sensitive String.

Note

For LDAP configurations, best practice is to use CiscoAVPair as the attribute string. If customer faces the issue using Object ID 1.3.6.1.4.1.9.22.1, an additional Object ID 1.3.6.1.4.1.9.2742.1-5 can also be used in the LDAP server.

- A Microsoft Windows Server 2008 user account is available that will enable the following:
  - Running ADSI Edit to add the CiscoAVPair attribute to the Active Directory (AD) Schema.
  - Configuring an Active Directory LDAP user to have CiscoAVPair attribute permissions.
  - Port 636 is required for configuring LDAP integration with SSL/TLS.

Procedure

Step 1 Log in to an Active Directory (AD) server as a domain administrator.
Step 2  Add the CiscoAVPair attribute to the AD schema.
   a) Navigate to Start > Run, type mmc and press Enter.
      The Microsoft Management Console (MMC) opens.
   b) Navigate to File > Add/Remove Snap-in > Add.
   c) In the Add Standalone Snap-in dialog box, select the Active Directory Schema and click Add.
      The MMC Console opens.
   d) Right-click the Attributes folder, select the Create Attribute option.
      The Create New Attribute dialog box opens.
   e) Enter CiscoAVPair for the Common Name, CiscoAVPair for the LDAP Display Name,
      1.3.6.1.4.1.9.22.1 for the Unique X500 Object ID, and select Case Sensitive String for the Syntax.
   f) Click OK to save the attribute.

Step 3  Update the User Properties class to include the CiscoAVPair attribute.
   a) In the MMC Console, expand the Classes folder, right-click the user class, and choose Properties.
      The user Properties dialog box opens.
   b) Click the Attributes tab, and click Add to open the Select Schema Object window.
   c) In the Select a schema object: list, choose CiscoAVPair, and click Apply.
   d) In the MMC Console, right-click the Active Directory Schema, and select Reload the Schema.

Step 4  Configure the CiscoAVPair attribute permissions.

Now that the LDAP includes the CiscoAVPair attributes, LDAP users need to be granted Cisco APIC permission by assigning them Cisco APIC RBAC roles.
   a) In the ADSI Edit dialog box, locate a user who needs access to the Cisco APIC.
   b) Right-click on the user name, and choose Properties.
      The <user> Properties dialog box opens.
   c) Click the Attribute Editor tab, select the CiscoAVPair attribute, and enter the Value as
      shell:domains = <domain>/<role>/<domain>/,<domain>:// role.

      For example, if the CiscoAVPair has a value of shell:domains = solar/admin/,common//
      read-all(16001), then solar is the security domain, admin is the role for this user that gives write
      privileges to this user in the security domain called solar, common is the Cisco Application Centric
      Infrastructure (Cisco ACI) tenant common, and read-all(16001) is the role with read privileges that
      gives this user read privileges to all of the Cisco ACI tenant common.
   d) Click OK to save the changes and close the <user> Properties dialog box.

The LDAP server is configured to access the Cisco APIC.

What to do next
Configure the Cisco APIC for LDAP access.

Configuring APIC for LDAP Access

Before you begin
- The Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI) fabric is installed, Application Policy Infrastructure
  Controllers (APICs) are online, and the APIC cluster is formed and healthy.
• The LDAP server host name or IP address, port, bind DN, Base DN, and password are available.
• The APIC management endpoint group is available.

Procedure

Step 1
In the APIC, configure the LDAP Provider.

a) On the menu bar, choose Admin > AAA.
b) In the Navigation pane, choose Authentication and in the Work pane click on the LDAP tab.
c) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create LDAP Provider.
d) Specify the LDAP host name (or IP address), port, bind DN, base DN, password, attribute, and management endpoint group.

Note
• The bind DN is the string that the APIC uses to log in to the LDAP server. The APIC uses this account to validate the remote user attempting to log in. The base DN is the container name and path in the LDAP server where the APIC searches for the remote user account. This is where the password is validated. Filter is used to locate the attribute that the APIC requests to use for the cisco-av-pair. This contains the user authorization and assigned RBAC roles for use on the APIC. The APIC requests the attribute from the LDAP server.
• Attribute field—Enter one of the following:
  • For LDAP server configurations with a Cisco AVPair, enter CiscoAVPair.
  • For LDAP server configurations with an LDAP group map, enter memberOf.
• If the APIC is configured for in-band management connectivity, choosing an out-of-band management endpoint group for LDAP access does not take effect. Alternatively, an out-of-band over an in-band management endpoint group can connect a LDAP server, but requires configuring a static route for the LDAP server. The sample configuration procedures in this document use an APIC in-band management endpoint group.

Step 2
On the APIC, configure the login domain for LDAP.

a) In the Navigation pane, choose Authentication > Login Domains.
b) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create Login Domain.
c) Specify the login domain name, description, realm, and provider group as appropriate.

What to do next
This completes the APIC LDAP configuration steps. Next, test the APIC LDAP login access.

Configuring LDAP Group Map Rules on the Cisco APIC

Configuring an LDAP group map on the Cisco APIC requires first creating LDAP group map rules. This section explains how to create LDAP group map rules.
Before you begin

An LDAP server is running with a configured group mapping.

Procedure

Step 1
On the menu bar of the Cisco APIC GUI, choose Admin > AAA.

Step 2
In the Navigation pane, expand LDAP Management, right-click LDAP Group Map Rules, and click Create LDAP Group Map Rule. The Create LDAP Group Map Rule: Security dialog appears.

Step 3
Specify the map rule name, description (optional), group DN, and security domain in the appropriate fields then click Next. The Create LDAP Group Map Rule: Roles dialog appears with security domain options.

Step 4
Click the + to access the Role Name and Role Privilege Type fields.

Step 5
Click the Role Name drop-down arrow to choose a role name.

Step 6
Click the Role Privilege Type drop-down arrow to choose a role privilege type (Read or Write).

Repeat Step 4 to 6 to add additional roles to the LDAP group map rule.

Step 7
When finished, click Finished.

What to do next

After specifying the LDAP group map rules, create an LDAP group map.

Configuring an LDAP Group Map on the Cisco APIC

Configuring an LDAP group map on the Cisco APIC requires first creating LDAP group map rules. This section explains how to create an LDAP group map.

Before you begin

• A running LDAP server is configured with group mapping.
• LDAP group map rules have been configured.

Procedure

Step 1
On the menu bar of the Cisco APIC GUI, choose Admin > AAA.

Step 2
In the Navigation pane, expand LDAP Management, right-click LDAP Group Maps, and click Create LDAP Group Map. The Create LDAP Group Map dialog appears.

Step 3
Specify the map name and description (optional).

Step 4
From the Rules field, click the + then click the Name drop-down arrow to choose a specified LDAP group map rule then click Update.

Repeat Step 4 to add additional rules to the LDAP group map.

Step 5
When finished, click Submit.
Configuring a Remote User Using the NX-OS Style CLI

Instead of configuring local users, you can point the APIC at the centralized enterprise credential datacenter. The APIC supports Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP), active directory, RADIUS, and TACACS+.

To configure a remote user authenticated through an external authentication provider, you must meet the following prerequisites:

- The DNS configuration should have already been resolved with the hostname of the RADIUS server.
- You must configure the management subnet.

Changing the Default Behavior for Remote Users with Missing or Bad Cisco AV Pairs

Procedure

Step 1
On the menu bar, click **ADMIN** > **AAA**.

Step 2
In the **Navigation** pane, click **Users**.

Step 3
In the **Work** pane, in the **Remote Users** area, from the **Remote user login policy** drop-down list, choose **Assign Default Role**.

The default value is **No Login**. The **Assign Default Role** option assigns the minimal read-only privileges to users that have missing or bad Cisco AV Pairs. Bad AV Pairs are those AV Pairs that fail the parsing rules.

Changing Default Behavior for Remote Users with Missing or Bad Cisco AV Pairs Using the NX-OS Style CLI

The Cisco APIC requires that an administrator configure a Cisco AV Pair on an external authentication server. To do so, an administrator adds a Cisco AV pair to the existing user record. The Cisco AV pair specifies the APIC required RBAC roles and privileges for the user. The Cisco AV Pair format is the same for RADIUS, LDAP, or TACACS+. One AV pair format contains a Cisco UNIX user ID and one does not. Both are correct if all remote users have the same role and mutual file access is acceptable. If the UNIX user ID is not specified, ID 23999 is applied by the APIC system, and more than one role/read privilege is specified to any AV Pair user. This can cause users to have higher or lower permissions than configured through the group settings. This topic explains how to change the behavior if that is not acceptable.

To change the default behavior for remote users with missing or bad Cisco AV pairs using the NX-OS CLI:

Procedure

Step 1
In the NX-OS CLI, start in Configuration mode.

Example:
Step 2  Configure the aaa user default role.

**Example:**

```
apic1(config)# aaa user default-role
    assign-default-role assign-default-role
    no-login no-login
```

Step 3  Configure the aaa authentication login methods.

**Example:**

```
apic1(config)# aaa authentication
    login  Configure methods for login

apic1(config)# aaa authentication login
    console  Configure console methods
    default  Configure default methods
    domain  Configure domain methods

apic1(config)# aaa authentication login console
    <CR>

apic1(config)# aaa authentication login domain
    WORD  Login domain name
    fallback
```

---

### About SAML

SAML is an XML-based open standard data format that enables administrators to access a defined set of Cisco collaboration applications seamlessly after signing into one of those applications. SAML describes the exchange of security related information between trusted business partners. It is an authentication protocol used by service providers to authenticate a user. SAML enables exchange of security authentication information between an Identity Provider (IdP) and a service provider.

SAML SSO uses the SAML 2.0 protocol to offer cross-domain and cross-product single sign-on for Cisco collaboration solutions. SAML 2.0 enables SSO across Cisco applications and enables federation between Cisco applications and an IdP. SAML 2.0 allows Cisco administrative users to access secure web domains to exchange user authentication and authorization data, between an IdP and a Service Provider while maintaining high security levels. The feature provides secure mechanisms to use common credentials and relevant information across various applications.

The authorization for SAML SSO Admin access is based on Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) configured locally on Cisco collaboration applications.

SAML SSO establishes a Circle of Trust (CoT) by exchanging metadata and certificates as part of the provisioning process between the IdP and the Service Provider. The Service Provider trusts the IdP’s user information to provide access to the various services or applications.
Service providers are no longer involved in authentication. SAML 2.0 delegates authentication away from the service providers and to the IdPs.

The client authenticates against the IdP, and the IdP grants an Assertion to the client. The client presents the Assertion to the Service Provider. Since there is a CoT established, the Service Provider trusts the Assertion and grants access to the client.

Enabling SAML SSO results in several advantages:

- It reduces password fatigue by removing the need for entering different user name and password combinations.
- It transfers the authentication from your system that hosts the applications to a third party system. Using SAML SSO, you can create a circle of trust between an IdP and a service provider. The service provider trusts and relies on the IdP to authenticate the users.
- It protects and secures authentication information. It provides encryption functions to protect authentication information passed between the IdP, service provider, and user. SAML SSO can also hide authentication messages passed between the IdP and the service provider from any external user.
- It improves productivity because you spend less time re-entering credentials for the same identity.
- It reduces costs as fewer help desk calls are made for password reset, thereby leading to more savings.

### Basic Elements of SAML

- **Client (the user’s client):** This is a browser-based client or a client that can leverage a browser instance for authentication. For example, a system administrator’s browser.
- **Service provider:** This is the application or service that the client is trying to access.
- **An Identity Provider (IdP) server:** This is the entity that authenticates user credentials and issues SAML Assertions.
- **Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) users:** These users are integrated with an LDAP directory, for example Microsoft Active Directory or OpenLDAP. Non-LDAP users reside locally on the Unified Communications server.
- **SAML Assertion:** It consists of pieces of security information that are transferred from IdPs to the service provider for user authentication. An assertion is an XML document that contains trusted statements about a subject including, for example, a username and privileges. SAML assertions are usually digitally signed to ensure their authenticity.
- **SAML Request:** This is an authentication request that is generated by a Unified Communications application. To authenticate the LDAP user, Unified Communications application delegates an authentication request to the IdP.
- **Circle of Trust (CoT):** It consists of the various service providers that share and authenticate against one IdP in common.
- **Metadata:** This is an XML file generated by an ACI application as well as an IdP. The exchange of SAML metadata builds a trust relationship between the IdP and the service provider.
• Assertion Consumer Service (ACS) URL: This URL instructs the IdPs where to post assertions. The ACS URL tells the IdP to post the final SAML response to a particular URL.

---

**Note**

All in-scope services requiring authentication use SAML 2.0 as the SSO mechanism.

## Supported IdPs and SAML Components

### Supported IdPs

Identity Provider (IdP) is an authentication module that creates, maintains, and manages identity information for users, systems, or services and also provides authentication to other applications and service providers within a distributed network.

With SAML SSO, IdPs provide authentication options based on the user role or login options for each of the Cisco collaboration applications. The IdPs store and validate the user credentials and generate a SAML response that allows the user to access the service provider protected resources.

---

**Note**

You must be familiar with your IdP service, and ensure that it is currently installed and operational.

The APIC SAML SSO feature has been tested with following IdPs:


### SAML Components

A SAML SSO solution is based on a particular combination of assertions, protocols, bindings, and profiles. The various assertions are exchanged among applications and sites using the protocols and bindings, and those assertions authenticate the users among sites. The SAML components are as follows:

- SAML Assertion: It defines the structure and content of the information that is transferred from IdPs to service providers. It consists of packets of security information and contains statements that service providers use for various levels of access-control decisions. SAML SSO provides the following types of statements:
  - Authentication statements- These statements assert to the service provider about the method of authentication that occurs between the IdP and the browser at a particular time.
  - Attribute statements- These statements assert about certain attributes (name-value pairs) that are associated with the user. The attribute assertions contain specific information about the user. The service providers use attributes to make access-control decisions.
• SAML protocol: A SAML protocol defines how the SAML requests for and gets assertions. This protocol is responsible for the SAML request and response elements that consist of certain SAML elements or assertions. The SAML 2.0 contains the following protocols:
  • Assertion Query and Request Protocol
  • Authentication Request Protocol

• SAML binding: A SAML binding specifies the mapping of SAML assertion and/or protocol message exchanges with standard messaging formats or communication protocols like SOAP exchanges. ACI supports the following SAML 2.0 bindings:
  • HTTP Redirect (GET) Binding
  • HTTP POST Binding

• SAML profile: A SAML profile provides a detailed description of the combination of SAML assertions, protocols, and bindings to support well-defined use cases.

**NTP Setup**

In SAML SSO, Network Time Protocol (NTP) enables clock synchronization between the APIC and IdP. SAML is a time sensitive protocol and the IdP determines the time-based validity of a SAML assertion. If the IdP and the APIC clocks are not synchronized, the assertion becomes invalid and stops the SAML SSO feature. The maximum allowed time difference between the IdP and the APIC is 3 seconds.

For SAML SSO to work, you must install the correct NTP setup and make sure that the time difference between the IdP and the APIC does not exceed 3 seconds. If IdP and APIC clocks are not synchronized, the user will be redirected back to the APIC’s login page even after successful authentication on IdP.

**DNS Setup**

Domain Name System (DNS) enables the mapping of host names and network services to IP addresses within a network or networks. DNS server(s) deployed within a network provide a database that maps network services to hostnames and, in turn, hostnames to IP addresses. Devices on the network can query the DNS server and receive IP addresses for other devices in the network, thereby facilitating communication between network devices.

In summary, APIC and Idp should be able to resolve each other’s fully qualified domain names to IP addresses and should be resolvable by the client.

**Certificate Authority**

Cisco recommends using server certificates that are signed by one of the following types of Certificate Authority (CA):

• **Public CA**—A third-party company verifies the server identity and issues a trusted certificate.

• **Private CA**—You create and manage a local CA and issue trusted certificates.
The signing process varies for each product and can vary between server versions. It is beyond the scope of this document to provide detailed steps for every version of each server. Refer the appropriate server documentation for detailed instructions on how to get certificates signed by a CA.

If you get server certificates signed by a public CA, the public CA should already have a root certificate present in the trust store on the client computer. In this case, you do not need to import root certificates on the client computers. You should import root certificates if the certificates are signed by a CA that does not already exist in the trust store, such as a private CA. In SAML SSO, the IdP and service providers must have CA signed certificates with the correct domains in the CN or SAN. If the correct CA certificates are not validated, the browser issues a pop up warning.

If the APIC’s trust store does not include the root certificate of the IdP, a new certificate authority should be created. This Certificate Authority should be used later while configuring the SAML Provider on APIC.

Configuring APIC for SAML Access

Note

SAML based Authentication is only for APIC GUI and not for CLI/REST. Also, not applicable for LEAF Switches and SPINEs. SAML configuration cannot be done via APIC CLI.

Before you begin

- The Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI) fabric is installed, Application Policy Infrastructure Controllers (APICs) are online, and the APIC cluster is formed and healthy.
- The SAML server hostname or IP address, and the IdP’s metadata URL are available.
- The APIC management endpoint group is available.
- Set up the following:
  - Configuring a DNS Service Policy to Connect with DNS Providers Using the Advanced GUI: https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/td/docs/switches/datacenter/aci/apic/sw/3-x/basic_config/b_APIC_Basic_Config_Guide_3_x/b_APIC_Basic_Config_Guide_3_x_chapter_011.html#task_750E077676704BFBB5B0FE74628D821E.
  - Configuring a Custom Certificate for Cisco ACI HTTPS Access Using the GUI: https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/td/docs/switches/datacenter/aci/apic/sw/3-x/basic_config/b_APIC_Basic_Config_Guide_3_x/b_APIC_Basic_Config_Guide_3_x_chapter_011.html#task_F037F1B75FF74ED1BCA4F3C75A16C0FA.

Procedure

Step 1

In the APIC, create the **SAML Provider**.

a) On the menu bar, choose **Admin** > **AAA**.

b) In the **Navigation** pane, choose **SAML Management** > **SAML Providers**.
c) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create SAML Provider.
d) Specify the SAML host name (or IP address), and IdP metadata URL.
   • In case of ADFS, IdP Metadata URL is of the format "https://<FQDN of ADFS>/FederationMetadata/2007-06/FederationMetadata.xml".
   • In case of Okta, to get the IdP Metadata URL, copy the link for Identity Provider Metadata in the Sign On section of the corresponding SAML Application from the Okta server.
e) Specify the Entity ID for the SAML-based service.
f) Configure the HTTPS Proxy if it is needed to access the IdP metadata URL.
g) Select the Certificate Authority if IdP is signed by a Private CA.
h) Select the signature algorithm authentication type for the user requests from the drop-down.

Step 2
Create the Login Domain for SAML.
a) In the Navigation pane, choose AAA Authentication > Login Domains.
b) In the Work pane, choose Actions > Create Login Domain.
c) Specify the login domain name, description, realm, and provider group as appropriate.

Setting Up a SAML Application in Okta

To configure SAML in Okta, log in to your Okta organization as a user with administrative privileges.

Note
If you don’t have an Okta organization, you can create a free Okta at:
https://www.okta.com/start-with-okta/

Procedure

Step 1
In Okta, click on the blue Admin button.

Step 2
Click on the Add Applications shortcut.

Step 3
Click on the green Create New App button, and perform the following actions:
a) In the Create New App dialog box, select the SAML 2.0 option, then click the green Create button.
b) In the General Settings box, enter Example SAML Application in the App name field, then click the green Next button.
c) In the Configure SAML section A SAML Settings field, paste your SAML URL into the Single sign on URL, Recipient URL, and Audience Restriction fields.

The fields should be of the below format:
• https://<APIC_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json?name=<Login_domain_name>
• Use Requestable SSO URLs to configure cluster of APICs:
  • https://<APIC1_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json?name=<Login_domain_name>
  • https://<APIC2_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json?name=<Login_domain_name>
Setting Up a Relying Party Trust in AD FS

Add relying party trust in AD FS Management Console:

Procedure

Step 1
Add relying party trust:

a) Login to AD FS Management Console on your AD FS server, Navigate to ADFS > Trust Relationships > Relying Party Trusts and right-click on Add Relying Party Trust and click Start.

b) Choose Enter data about the relying party manually or Import data about relying party from a file (skip the steps d, e, f and g) by importing the metadata file generated using the Download SAML Metadata option available on the corresponding login domain setup in APIC.

c) Enter your preferred Display Name for the relying party trust and click Next.

d) Choose AD FS Profile and click Next.

e) Click Next again.
f) Select Enable support for the SAML 2.0 Web SSO Protocol and enter Relying party SAML 2.0 SSO service UR as https://<APIC_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json?name=<Login_domain_name> and click Next.

g) Enter the Relying party trust identifier – https://<APIC_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json

h) Choose I do not want to configure multi-factor authentication settings for this relying party trust at this time and click Next.

i) Choose Permit all users to access this relying party and click Next.

j) Select Open the Edit Claim rules dialog for this relying party trust when the wizard closes and click Close.

**Step 2**
Add the following Claim rules:

a) Send LDAP Attributes as claims:
   - In the Edit Claim Rules window, click Add Rule.
   - Select the Claim Rule Template as Send LDAP attributes as Claims and click Next.
   - Enter a Rule_Name and select Active Directory as the Attribute Store.
   - Select the reserved User Attribute for storing CiscoAvpair (For Ex: Department) as LDAP attribute type and map it to Outgoing Claim Manually Type as CiscoAvpair.
   - Select E-Mail-Addresses on LDAP Attribute and map it to the Outgoing Claim Type E-mail Address and click Finish.

b) Transform an Incoming Claim:
   - Click Add Rule again in the Edit Claim Rules window, and select Transform an Incoming Claim as Claim Rule Template and click Next.
   - Select E-Mail Address as the Incoming claim type.
   - Select Name ID as Outgoing claim type.
   - Select Transient Identifier as Outgoing name ID format.

**Step 3**
To add a cluster of APICs, one can either setup multiple Relying Party Trusts or setup single Relying Party Trust and add multiple Relying Party Identifiers and SAML Assertion Consumer Endpoints to it.

a) Adding other APICs in a cluster with same relying party trusts created above.


   2. Click on Identifiers tab and add other APICs in cluster as:
      https://<APIC2_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json, https://<APIC3_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json

   3. Click on Endpoints tab and Other two APICs by clicking on Add SAML. Add SAML Post Binding, Index as 1 and Enter trusted URL as:
      https://<APIC2_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json?name=<Login_domain_name>, and Add SAML Post Binding as: https://<APIC3_hostname>/api/aaaLoginSSO.json?name=<Login_domain_name>.

**Step 4**
Message and Assertion need to be signed in ADFS from powershell in ADFS server. For Signing Message and Assertion in ADFS Server:

a) Open Windows Powershell (should be run as Administrator) and execute the below command:
b) `Set-AdfsRelyingPartyTrust -TargetName RelyingpartytrustnameOfCiscoAPIC -SamlResponseSignature MessageAndAssertion`.