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eduGAIN Policy Framework

Constitution

Document Revision History

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This document is the constitution of the eduGAIN service, defining how the service is governed and what procedural and technical requirements are mandatory for Member Federations. This document, the Technology Profiles supplementing it and the eduGAIN Policy Declaration, which must be signed by Member Federations, form the Policy Framework of the eduGAIN service. Member Federations commit to the Policy Framework when they sign the Policy Declaration to join eduGAIN. These documents are supported by the eduGAIN Operational Practice Statement, which describes the integrity and availability of tools centrally operated by eduGAIN to support Technology Profiles. The full set of eduGAIN document is available on the eduGAIN website [eduGAIN-DOC].

The eduGAIN service enables Federations to interfederate. The Member Federations primarily serve the authentication and authorisation interests of research and education sectors.

eduGAIN provides an infrastructure for establishing trusted communications between Entities, such as Identity and Service Providers, in different Federations. End users authenticate at Identity Providers and get access to Service Providers.

An Entity is always registered by a Participant Federation which uses an appropriate mechanism to exchange the metadata of Entities via eduGAIN as described in the Technology Profiles.

1.2 Goal

The goal of eduGAIN is to support Identity Federations primarily engaged in research and education by providing a service which enables them to interfederate.

1.3 Terms

AAI	Authentication and authorisation infrastructure.
eduGAIN	eduGAIN enables the trustworthy exchange of information related to identity, authentication and authorisation (AAI) via its Member Federations by offering a policy framework, consolidated metadata and shared governance for the eduGAIN service.
eduGAIN Policy Declaration	The agreement signed by Federations on joining eduGAIN.
eduGAIN Operational Practice Statement	A document which covers any issues relevant to ensure the integrity and availability of tools centrally operated by eduGAIN to support Technology Profiles.
eEC – eduGAIN Executive Committee	eduGAIN Executive Committee is a body nominated by the sponsors of the eduGAIN service and is responsible for ratifying certain decisions of the eSG, as defined in section 2.1.
eSG - eduGAIN Steering Group	eduGAIN Steering Group is a body that consists of Member Federations' representatives and has an oversight role in the eduGAIN service, as defined in section 2.2.
Entity	Entity means an AAI endpoint. For example, an Entity can be an Identity Provider, a Service Provider or an Attribute Provider. In this document, an Entity refers to an entity's metadata that a Participant Federation has exchanged through eduGAIN.
Federation	Identity federation. An association of organisations that come together to exchange information as appropriate about their users and resources to enable collaborations and transactions. Federations are typically represented in eduGAIN by a Federation Operator.
Federation Operator	Organisation providing or commissioning the infrastructure for Authentication and Authorisation to the members of its Federation.
Federation Policy	The set of rules, guidelines or processes governing member behaviour within any given Federation.
GÉANT	GÉANT is a membership organisation acting with and for its members to further research and education networking in Europe and globally.

Home Organisation	The organisation with which the end users are affiliated. It is responsible for managing end users' identity data (attributes) and authenticating them. The Home Organisation is responsible for setting up and operating one or more Identity Providers, either by itself or via an outsourced service. In this document, a Home Organisation refers to a home organisation who is a member of a Federation.
Identity Provider	A server acting in an Identity Provider role. The system that issues assertions on behalf of end users of a Home Organisation who use them to access services of Service Providers.
Interfederation	Sharing of federation metadata to allow a user from one federation to access a service which is registered in another federation.
Member Federation	A Federation which has met the joining requirements for eduGAIN as defined in section 3.2.
OT	eduGAIN Operational Team, as defined in section 2.3.
Participant Federation	A Member Federation that is actively participating in eduGAIN having met the requirements defined in section 3.3.
Policy Framework	eduGAIN Policy Framework. This document, Technology Profiles supplementing it and the eduGAIN Policy Declaration signed by Member Federations.
Service Provider	An organisation that is responsible for offering the end user the service s/he is going to use via a federated login.
Technology Profile	Technology Profiles describe how given technologies are implemented within the eduGAIN framework. Each Technology Profile is made up of one or more documents which describe and define rules for specific trust brokers, including metadata production and aggregation and use of protocols. Each Technology Profile is associated with an operational team responsible for the management of core trust broker infrastructure.

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC 2119.

2 Governance and Governing Bodies

2.1 eduGAIN Executive Committee (eEC)

The eduGAIN Executive Committee comprises representatives from organisations that fund eduGAIN operations. The current process for appointing the Executive Committee and Executive members is documented on the eduGAIN website [eduGAIN-GOV].

The eEC is responsible for ratifying the following decisions made by the eduGAIN Steering Group (eSG):

1. Changes to this constitution.
2. Changes and new proposals for Technology Profiles and other documents in the Policy Framework that contain mandatory elements for Member Federations.

If the eEC decides not to ratify a decision made by the eSG, the issue is returned to the eSG.

2.2 eduGAIN Steering Group (eSG)

The eduGAIN Steering Group is a body that consists of Member Federations' representatives and has an oversight role in the eduGAIN service. Each Member Federation SHOULD appoint a delegate and deputy to the eduGAIN Steering Group (eSG). Each Member Federation should ensure that delegates and deputies can represent all Technology Profiles used by the federation. The eduGAIN Steering Group may also invite non-voting observers to its meetings and mailing list.

The term of the eSG Chair and non-voting invited observers is two calendar years. The eSG is responsible for:

1. Approving changes to the profiles and documents in the eduGAIN Policy Framework, such as introducing updating or removing profiles or documents.
2. Decisions on metadata peering relationships, e.g. exchanging metadata with other trust infrastructures.
3. Reviewing and approving the membership of new Federations.
4. Approving the disqualification or temporary suspension for Member Federations as described in section 3.6.
5. Appointing the Chair and non-voting invited observers to the eSG.
6. Other tasks delegated to the eSG in supplementing Technology Profiles.



Decisions of the eSG are determined by a simple majority of Member Federations from the active list at the time of the call to vote, apart from constitutional changes (see 4.4). Member Federations may vote on all constitutional changes and new Technology Profiles but may only vote on changes to Technical Profiles in active use within their federations. Each Member Federation's vote is equal, and each Member Federation is initially regarded as active. A Member Federation which is absent from two consecutive votes will be removed from the active list for the purpose of subsequent votes. Participating in a vote returns the federation to the active list.

Voting takes place over two weeks, but a decision may be reached early if the required majority is achieved before that time.

2.3 Operational Team (OT)

The Operational Team (OT) is responsible for:

- Daily technical issues in central eduGAIN operations (e.g. website, central member database).
- Collaboration with the operators of each Technology Profile.
- Receiving enquiries about eduGAIN and forwarding them to the appropriate body.
- Receiving, reviewing and processing applications to join eduGAIN against basic eligibility criteria as set out in the eduGAIN Policy Declaration.
- Preparing and publishing an eduGAIN Operational Practice Statement [eduGAIN-OP] for the eduGAIN interfederation service, covering central operations and relationship with each technology profile.
- Preparing an audit plan for the eduGAIN operational practices on the request of the eSG.

3 eduGAIN Membership

eduGAIN recognises two categories of federation within its operations:

- Member Federations that have met the joining requirements of eduGAIN but are not actively using a Technology Profile;
- Participant Federations that are actively participating in eduGAIN via the use of a Technology Profile.

3.1 Requirements for eduGAIN Membership

Member Federations MUST:

- Primarily serve the interests of the education and research sector.
- Provide a point of contact for their federation members for dealing with technical issues.
- Provide processes for handling complaints and incidents involving their federation members.
- Meet the requirements of the eduGAIN Policy Declaration.
- Have an agreement defining federation membership between the Federation and its members (typically known as a Federation Policy).

3.2 Joining Process

The process to join eduGAIN as a Member Federation is as follows:

1. A representative of the applicant Federation signs the eduGAIN Policy Declaration and presents it to the OT.
2. The OT confirms that the applicant Federation fulfils the requirements in section 3.1.
3. The OT prepares and presents a membership proposal to the eSG for comment and review.
4. The eSG approves or rejects the application via a vote.
5. When an applicant is approved, the OT takes the necessary steps to register the Federation to eduGAIN.

3.3 Participation Process

The process to become a Participant Federation in a Technology Profile is as follows:

1. The Federation publishes appropriate documents as defined in relevant Technology Profiles.
2. The eSG are invited to review the documents presented.
3. The OT confirms adherence to the selected Technology Profile and publishes adherence for that Federation on the eduGAIN website.

3.4 No Express Right of Communication

Publication of an Entity by an eduGAIN Participant Federation does not imply any right of communication with any other Entity exchanged through eduGAIN.

Any Participant Federation or Home Organisation MAY decide not to communicate with a Service Provider exchanged through eduGAIN. An individual Participant Federation or Service Provider MAY decide not to communicate with an Identity Provider exchanged through eduGAIN.

3.5 Leaving eduGAIN

When a Federation leaves eduGAIN or ceases to use a Technology Profile within eduGAIN it MUST give one month's written notice to the OT, which forwards the notice to the other Federations.

3.6 Reasons for Suspension or Disqualification

A Participant Federation MAY be suspended from eduGAIN for the following reasons:

- Breaching REQUIRED elements of Technical Profiles.
- Breaching its Federation Policy.
- Breaching the eduGAIN Policy Declaration.
- A vote of no confidence by the eduGAIN SG.

When a breach or issue occurs, the OT reacts in one or more of the following ways, depending on the level and duration of violation:

- Issue a notice to the Participant Federation.
- Issue a notice to the eSG.
- Propose to the eSG a temporary period of suspension.
- Propose to the eSG a disqualification of the participant federation from eduGAIN.
- Automatically suspend Participant Federations in appropriate circumstances.

Following a decision by the eSG to suspend or disqualify, the OT:

- Announces suspension or disqualification of eduGAIN membership to all Federations and,
- Makes technical changes necessary to implement the decision.

Following satisfactory rectification of the breach or issue the OT:

- Issues a notice to the eSG.
- Resumes publication of the Participant Federation's metadata to eduGAIN.

4 General

4.1 Trademarks

eduGAIN® is a trademark of GÉANT and may be used under license by the Participant Federations in conjunction with the eduGAIN service. GÉANT is responsible for managing and protecting the trademark.

4.2 Dispute Resolution

Resolution of disputes between the Participant Federations is defined in the eduGAIN Policy Declaration.

For dispute resolution between a Member Federation and the eduGAIN service, the OT is the first point of contact. If the Member Federation is not satisfied with the OT and its resolution, a Member Federation should bring the issue to the attention of the eduGAIN Executive Committee.

4.3 Documents Supplementing the Constitution

The eSG approves and the OT publishes Technology Profiles and other documents supplementing the Constitution. These supplementary documents are referenced in the eduGAIN Operational Practice Statement.

4.4 Updating this Constitution

For the eSG to agree to a revision of this Constitution requires an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of Federations from the active voting list. When the eduGAIN Executive Committee ratifies a change to this Constitution, a written notice must be sent to all Member Federations. The change becomes effective three months after sending the notice. The OT ensures that up-to-date Policy Framework documents are published and available to the Member Federations.

5 References

- [eduGAIN-DOC] eduGAIN Policy and Technical Documents: <http://edugain.org/policy>.
- [eduGAIN-GOV] eduGAIN governance structure: <http://edugain.org/governance>.
- [eduGAIN-OP] eduGAIN Operational Practice Statement: <https://technical.edugain.org/documents>.
- [RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", BCP 14, RFC 2119, March 1997.