

Test and Production Federation Usage Policy

Australian Access Federation

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Abstract

The Australian Access Federation (AAF) provides two complementary technical Federations, a Test Federation and a Production Federation.



Revision History

Revision Date	Summary of changes	Reviewer
01/06/2016	V1.1 document created	AAF Support Team
30/07/2025	V1.2 new document template	AAF Marketing and Communications Team

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1. Test and Production Federation

The Australian Access Federation (AAF) provides two complementary technical Federations, a Test Federation and a Production Federation.

The AAF Production Federation provides a high level of trust, high availability and is only for the registration of production services. The AAF Test Federation is provided to enable organisations to assess the technologies of the AAF and for software development and testing.

It is AAF policy that:

- To access the Production Federation, an organisation must be an AAF Subscriber, see aaf.edu.au. Use of the Production Federation is governed by the AAF Federation Rules, see aaf.edu.au/support/resources/.
- The use of the Test Federation has a number of limitations, and access to this environment is subject to the AAF Test Federation Terms of Use, see aaf.edu.au/support/resources/.
- Only Production Release and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) services can be registered in the Production Federation. All other non-production services must be registered in the AAF Test Federation.
- A Subscriber may be notified that a service is registered in the incorrect Federation. The Subscriber must register the service in the correct Federation if instructed to do so by the AAF.
- Subscribers must adhere to the correct naming convention (see Table 1) for each service registered and must correct the naming convention if instructed to do so by the AAF.
- An instance of each production service should register first a test deployment (in the Test Federation) for initial testing, ongoing support and for the application of future enhancements and upgrades.
- All Identity Providers should operate a test version of their IdP in the AAF Test Federation that is separate from their production deployment. This ensures production IdPs are not impacted by changes that occur in the Test Federation.

Table 1 outlines the name convention required for each service registered in the Test and Production Federations

TABLE 1: FEDERATION NAMING CONVENTION

Stage in software life cycle	Naming convention
AAF Test Federation	
Pre-Alpha and Alpha	alpha <service name>
Beta	beta <service name>
Release candidate	rc <service name>
AAF Production Federation	
User Acceptance Testing	Uat <service name>
Production Release	No tag required

2. Appendix A

2.1 Federation usage and the Software Lifecycle

The decision of whether to use the Test or Production Federation is determined by the software lifecycle stage of your service. This section describes the circumstances in which each Federation should be used.

2.2 The Test Federation

The following stages of the software life cycle (where applicable) must be performed in the AAF Test Federation. If multiple deployments exist they should be identified clearly by name as to their function and stage within the software lifecycle as per the naming convention in Table 1.

Note: For data protection and security reasons it is recommended that real user data is not used in the AAF Test Federation.

2.2.1 Pre-alpha

Pre-alpha refers to all activities performed during the software project prior to testing. These activities can include requirements analysis, software design, software development and unit testing.

2.2.2 Alpha

The alpha phase of the software life cycle is the first phase to begin software testing. Alpha software can be unstable and could cause crashes or data loss. The alpha phase usually ends with a feature freeze, indicating that no more features will be added to the software. At this time, the software is said to be feature complete.

2.2.3 Beta

Beta is the software development phase following alpha. It generally begins when the software is feature complete. The focus of beta testing is reducing impacts to users, often incorporating usability testing. The software is available to a wider audience outside the organization that developed it.

Beta version software is often useful for demonstrations and previews within an organisation and to prospective customers. Some developers refer to this stage as a preview, prototype, technical preview (TP), or early access.

2.2.4 Release candidate

The term release candidate (RC) refers to a version with potential to be a final product, ready to release unless fatal bugs emerge. In this stage of product stabilization, all product features have been designed, coded and tested through one or more beta cycles with no known showstopper-class bug.

A release is called code complete when the development team agrees that no entirely new source code will be added to this release. There may still be source code changes to fix defects. There may still be changes to documentation and data files, and to the code for test cases or utilities. New code may be added in a future release.

2.3 The Production Federation

The following stages of the software life cycle should be performed in the AAF Production Federation. If multiple deployments exist they should be identified clearly by name as to their function and stage within the software lifecycle as per the naming convention at the end of this guide.

2.3.1 UAT

User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is typically the final phase in a software development process. The software is given to the intended audience to be tested for functionality. UAT is generally performed in the production environment as software is made available to real users in the community enabling them to access the software using their federation accounts. UAT is done in order to get feedback from users to make any final adjustments to the programming before releasing the product to the general public. For new services being introduced to the federation, attribute release testing should occur at this time.

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UAT also is called end-user testing, application testing or the staging environment.

2.3.2 Production

Production Release, General Availability or General Acceptance (GA) is the point where all necessary commercialization activities have been completed and the software has been made available to the federation.

At this stage the software is considered to have "gone live". The production, live version is the final version of a particular product. A live release is considered to be very stable and relatively bug-free with a quality suitable for wide uptake by end users. The expression that a software product "has gone live" means that the code has been completed and is ready for real usage.

2.4 Support

2.4.1 Service Release

During its supported lifetime, software is sometimes subjected to service releases, service packs, or upgrades, etc. Such service releases contain a collection of updates, fixes and/or enhancements. They may also contain entirely new features.

The introduction of a service release should proceed through the recognized software development phases resulting in the release of new production versions over the life of a service.

2.4.2 End-of-life

When a federation service is no longer supported or is no longer required, the service is said to have reached end-of-life. Such services should be removed from the federation in a timely manner.