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Platform: Windows Server Home Lab Project

Date:17/11/2025

Creating Organizational Units (OU) in Active Directory

1. Introduction

This document explains how to create **Organizational Units (OUs)** in Active Directory on Windows Server 2019. OUs help administrators logically organize users, computers, groups, and other resources for better management, especially when applying Group Policies.

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2. Requirements

- Windows Server 2019 with **Active Directory Domain Services** installed

- Logged in using a **Domain Administrator** account

- Active Directory Users and Computers (ADUC) tool available

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3. What is an Organizational Unit (OU)?

An **Organizational Unit** is a container within Active Directory used to structure and group objects.
OUs allow administrators to:

- Organize users and computers

- Delegate administrative control

- Apply Group Policy Objects (GPOs)

- Maintain structured Active Directory hierarchy

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4. Steps to Create Organizational Units

Step 1: Open Active Directory Users and Computers

1. Click **Start Menu**

2. Open **Windows Administrative Tools**

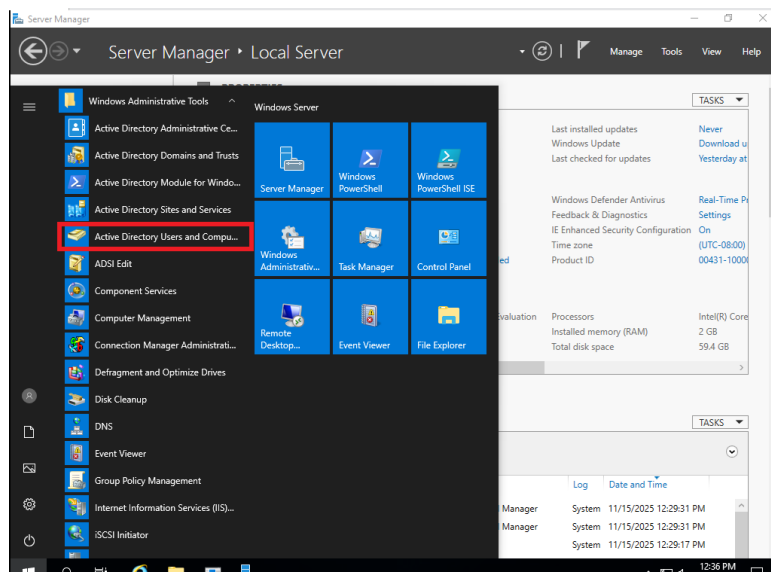3. Select **Active Directory Users and Computers**

Figure 14: Screen showing Active Directory Users and Computers.

4. Ensure the console is connected to your domain (e.g., *mylab.local*)

Step 2: Enable Advanced Features (Recommended)

This reveals additional containers and attributes.

1. In the ADUC console, click **View** (top menu)

2. Select **Advanced Features**

Step 3: Navigate to the Domain Root

1. In the left navigation pane, expand your domain (example: **mylab.local**)

2. This is where you will create your OUs

Step 4: Create a New Organizational Unit

1. Right-click your domain name (e.g., **mylab.local**)
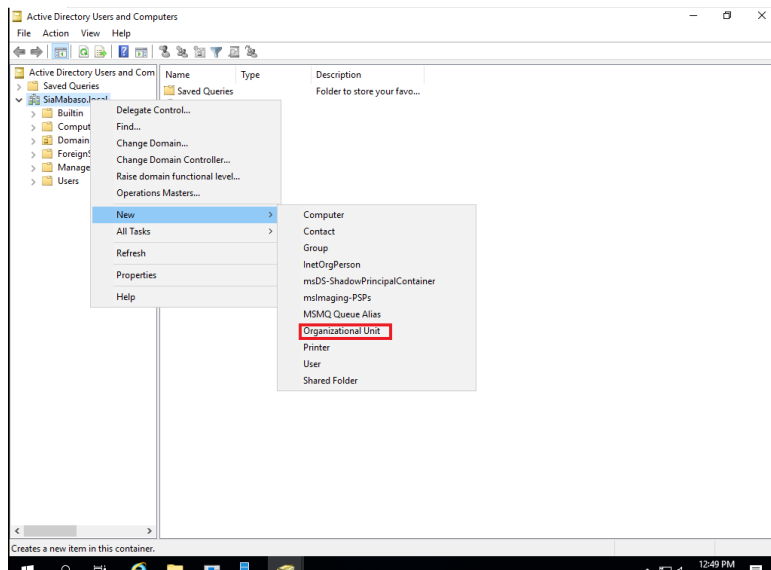
2. Select **New → Organizational Unit**

Figure 15: Screen showing my Domain (SiaMabaso.local) creating a new OU.

3. Enter a name for the OU (examples below)

4. Ensure **Protect container from accidental deletion** is checked

5. Click **OK**

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5. Recommended OU Structure Examples

You can create a clean organizational layout by following structures like:

User OUs:

- **OU=Users**
    - Staff
    - Students
    - Managers
    - IT Department

Computer OUs:

- **OU=Computers**
    - Workstations
    - Laptops
    - Servers

Department-Based OUs:

- **OU=Finance**

- **OU=HR**

- **OU=Sales**

- **OU=Support**

Security/Group OUs

- **OU=Groups**

  - Security Groups

  - Distribution Groups

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6. Example: Creating a Basic OU Structure

1. **Create "SA" OU**

   - Right-click domain → New → Organizational Unit

   - Name: **SA**

   - Click **OK**

2. **Create "USA" OU**

   - Right-click domain → New → Organizational Unit

   - Name: **USA**

   - Click **OK**

3. **Create Sub-OUs Example**
   Inside **SA** OU:

   - Users

   - Computers

   - Servers

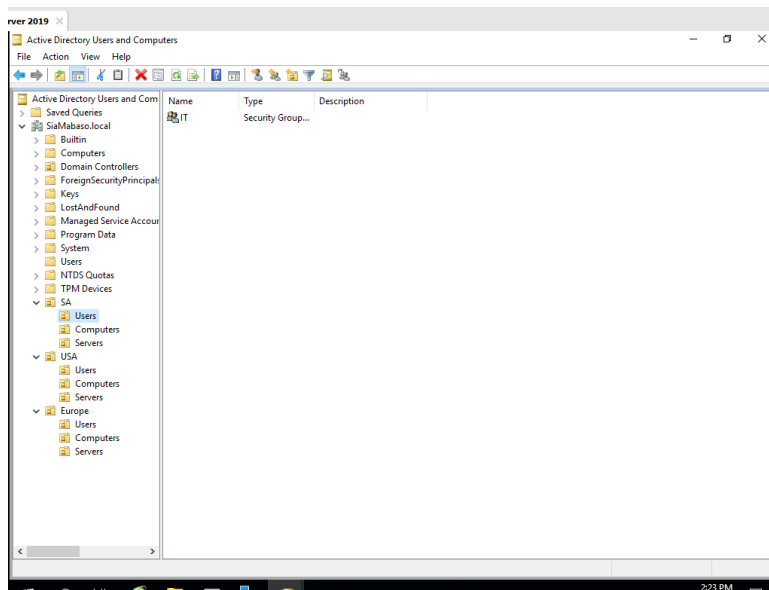   Inside **USA** OU:

   - Users

   - Computers

   - Servers

Figure 16: The OUs (SA, USA and Europe) and Sub-OUs (Users, Computers and Servers) created on Active Directory.

4. **Create a New User**

   Inside Users Sub-OU:

   - Right-click User → New → User

   - Add all the new user's details
   - Click Next

Figure 17: Screen showing new user details.

5. **Create a New Group**

   Inside Users Sub-OU:

   - Right-click User → New → Group
   - Enter Group detail
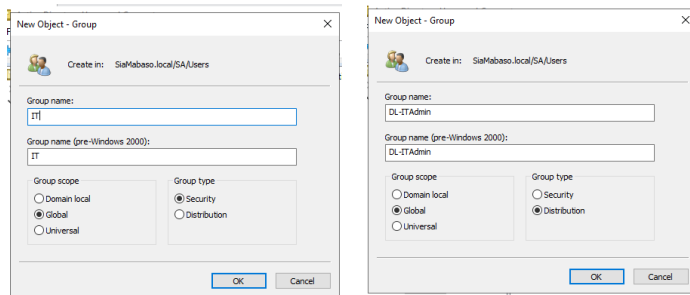   - Check **Security Group** or **Distribution Group**
   - Click **OK**

Figure 18: Two different groups (Security Group and Distribution Group).

IT group is a security group since it can grant permissions to shared folders, control access to printers, assign rights to applications and Apply Group Policy Objects (GPOs). DL-ITAdmins (Distribution List- ITAdmins) is a distribution group since it for sending emails to multiple people at once.

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7. Verifying the OU Creation

After creating OUs:

1. Expand your domain tree

2. Confirm the OUs appear under the correct parent

3. Check properties if advanced options were enabled

4. You can now move:

   o User accounts

   o Computer accounts

   o Security   groups
   into the appropriate OU

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8. When to Use Organizational Units

OUs are useful when:

• Applying **Group Policy Objects (GPOs)**

• Delegating **administrative control**

• Organizing users and computers

• Creating a readable and manageable Active Directory structure

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9. How to Delete an OU That Is Protected from Accidental Deletion

Step 1: Disable the Protection Setting on the OU

1. In ADUC, navigate to the OU you want to delete
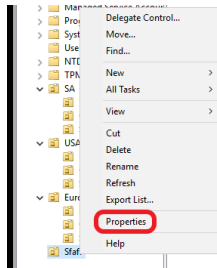
2. Right-click the OU → **Properties**

Figure 19: Property option under **sfaff** OU.

This is the OU that must be deleted since it has the wrong spelling of staff.
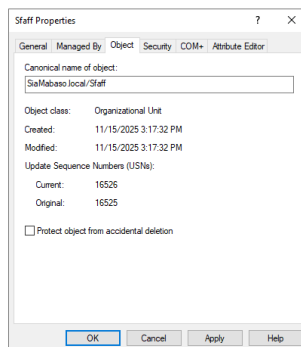
3. Select the **Object** tab

Figure 20: Staff folder properties

4. Uncheck: Protect object from accidental deletion

5. Click Apply → **OK**

Step 4: Try Deleting the OU Again

1. Right-click the OU

2. Select **Delete**

3. Confirm deletion

It should now delete without the error.

10. Conclusion

You have successfully created Organizational Units in Active Directory. OUs are essential for maintaining a clean, manageable, and secure AD environment. With OUs in place, you can now:

- Add users/computers
- Apply Group Policies
- Delegate permissions
- Build a structured enterprise directory