

Confidential Clients

Overview

Mobile applications can utilize the MobileFirst client SDKs to request access to protected resources. Other entities which are not mobile applications can do so as well. Such entities are considered as **Confidential Clients**.

Confidential clients are clients that are capable of maintaining the confidentiality of their authentication credentials. You can use the MobileFirst authorization server to grant confidential clients access to protected resources, in accordance with the OAuth specification. This feature allows you to grant access to your resources to non-mobile clients, such as performance-testing applications, and any other kind of back-end that might need to request a protected resource, or use one of the MobileFirst Foundation **REST APIs**, such as the REST API for **push notifications**.

You begin by registering a confidential client with MobileFirst Server. As part of the registration, you provide the credentials of the confidential client, which consist of an ID and a secret. In addition, you set the client's allowed scope, which determines the scopes that can be granted to this client. When a registered confidential client requests an access token from the authorization server, the server authenticates the client by using the registered credentials, and verifies that the requested scope matches the client's allowed scope.

Registered confidential clients can obtain a token to be used in all requests to the MobileFirst Server. This flow is based on the client credentials flow (<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc6749#section-1.3.4>) of the OAuth specification. Note that an access token for a confidential client is valid for one hour. If you're using a confidential client for a task that lasts more than an hour, renew the token every hour by sending a new token request.

Registering the confidential client

In the navigation sidebar of the MobileFirst Operations Console, click **Runtime Settings → Confidential Clients**. Click **New** to add a new entry.

You must provide the following information:

- **Display Name:** an optional display name that is used to refer to the confidential client. The default display name is the value of the ID parameter. For example: **Back-end Node server**.
- **ID:** A unique identifier for the confidential client (can be considered as a "user name"). The ID can contain only ASCII characters.
- **Secret:** A private passphrase to authorize access from the confidential client (can be considered as an API key). The secret can contain only ASCII characters.
- **Allowed Scope:** A confidential client that uses such ID and Secret combination is automatically granted the scope that is defined here. Learn more about **Scopes** in the Authorization Concepts ([../#scope](#)) tutorial.
 - An element of an allowed scope can also include the special asterisk wildcard character (*), which signifies any sequence of zero or more characters. For example, if the scope element is `send*`, the confidential client can be granted access to scopes that contain any scope element that starts with "send", such as "sendMessage". The asterisk wildcard can be placed at any position within the scope element, and can also appear more than once.
 - An allowed-scope parameter that consists of a single asterisk character (*) indicates that the

confidential client can be granted a token for any scope.

Examples of scopes:

- Protecting external resources (../protecting-external-resources) uses the scope `authorization.introspect`.
- Sending a Push Notification (../notifications/sending-notifications) via the REST API uses the space-separated scope elements `messages.write` and `push.application.<applicationId>`.
- Adapters can be protected by a custom scope element, such as `accessRestricted`.
- The scope `*` is a catch-all scope, granting access to any requested scope.

The screenshot shows the 'MobileFirst Operations Console' interface. The main content area is titled 'Runtime Settings' and 'Confidential Clients'. A notification at the top says 'The confidential client was saved successfully.' Below this, there's a table of 'Confidential Clients' with columns: Client ID, Display Name, Client Secret, Allowed Scope, and Actions. The table lists three clients: 'test' (Test Client, secret masked, scope '*'), 'admin' (admin, secret masked, scope 'push.* mfp.admin.plugins'), and 'Push' (Push, secret masked, scope 'push.application.com.sample.PushNotificationsSwift messages.write'). The left sidebar contains navigation links: Dashboard, mfp runtime, Applications (1), PushNotificationsCordova, Adapters (0), Runtime Settings, Error Log, Devices, and Download Center. The top bar shows 'Analytics Console', 'Hello, admin', and a help icon.

Predefined confidential clients

The MobileFirst Platform Server comes with some predefined confidential clients:

test

The `test` client is available only in development mode. It allows you to test your resources easily.

- **ID:** `test`
- **Secret:** `test`
- **Allowed Scope:** `*` (any scope)

admin

The `admin` client is used internally by the MobileFirst Foundation administration service.

push

The `push` client is used internally by the MobileFirst Foundation push service.

Obtaining an access token

A token can be obtained from the MobileFirst Server **token endpoint**.

In a real situation, implement Postman in your back-end logic, with the technology of your choice.

- If you don't use a scope to protect your resource, use an empty string.

POST

http://localhost:9080/mfp/api/az/v1/token

Params

Send

Save

Authorization

Headers (1)

Body

Pre-request Script

Tests

Generate Code

☐ form-data

☒ x-www-form-urlencoded

☐ raw

☐ binary

☒ grant_type

client_credentials

☐

☒ scope

messages.write push.application.com.sample.PushNotificationsAndroid

☐

key

value

Bulk Edit

- POST

http://localhost:9080/mfp/api/az/v1/token

Params

Send

Save

Authorization

Headers (1)

Body

Pre-request Script

Tests

Generate Code

Type

Basic Auth

Clear

Update Request

Username

test

Password

...

Show Password

The authorization header will be generated and added as a custom header

☒ Save helper data to request

Outside of Postman, if you use the **test** confidential client, set the **HTTP header** to `Authorization: Basic dGVzdDp0ZXN0` (test:test encoded using **base64**).

The response for this request will contain a `JSON` object, including the **access token** and its expiration time (1 hour).

```
{  
  "access_token": "eyJhbGciOiJSUzI1NiIsImtp ...",  
  "token_type": "Bearer",  
  "expires_in": 3599,  
  "scope": "sendMessage accessRestricted"  
}
```



Using the access token

From here on, you can make requests to the desired resources by adding the **HTTP header**:

`Authorization: Bearer eyJhbGciOiJSUzI1NiIsImp3ayI6eyJlIjo...`, replacing the access token by the one you extracted from the previous JSON object.

Possible responses

In addition to the normal responses that your resource may generate, look out for a few responses that are generated by MobileFirst Server.

Bearer

An HTTP **401** response status with the HTTP header `WWW-Authenticate : Bearer` means that no token was found on the `Authorization` header of the original request.

invalid_token

An HTTP **401** response status with the HTTP header `WWW-Authenticate: Bearer error="invalid_token"` means that the token that was sent is **invalid** or **expired**.

insufficient_scope

An HTTP **403** response status with the HTTP header `WWW-Authenticate : Bearer error="insufficient_scope", scope="scopeA scopeB"` means that the token found in the original request did not match the **scope required by this resource**. The header also includes the scope it expected.

When making a request, if you do not know which scope is required by the resource, `insufficient_scope` is the way to determine the answer.

For example, request a token with an empty string ("") as the scope value and make a request to the resource. Then, you can extract the required scope from the 403 response and request a new token for this scope.

