3.4 Authentication Request Protocol

3.4 Authentication Request协议

When a principal (or an agent acting on the principal's behalf) wishes to obtain assertions containing authentication statements to establish a security context at one or more relying parties, it can use the authentication request protocol to send an <AuthnRequest> message element to a SAML authority and request that it return a <Response> message containing one or more such assertions. Such assertions MAY contain additional statements of any type, but at least one assertion MUST contain at least one authentication statement. A SAML authority that supports this protocol is also termed an identity provider.

Apart from this requirement, the specific contents of the returned assertions depend on the profile or

context of use. Also, the exact means by which the principal or agent authenticates to the identity provider

is not specified, though the means of authentication might impact the content of the response. Other

issues related to the validation of authentication credentials by the identity provider or any communication

between the identity provider and any other entities involved in the authentication process are also out of

scope of this protocol.

The descriptions and processing rules in the following sections reference the following actors, many of

whom might be the same entity in a particular profile of use:

Requester

The entity who creates the authentication request and to whom the response is to be returned.

Presenter

The entity who presents the request to the identity provider and either authenticates itself during

the transmission of the message, or relies on an existing security context to establish its identity. If

not the requester, the presenter acts as an intermediary between the requester and the

responding identity provider.

Requested Subject

The entity about whom one or more assertions are being requested.

Attesting Entity

The entity or entities expected to be able to satisfy one of the <SubjectConfirmation>

elements of the resulting assertion(s).

Relying Party

The entity or entities expected to consume the assertion(s) to accomplish a purpose defined by

the profile or context of use, generally to establish a security context.

Identity Provider

The entity to whom the presenter gives the request and from whom the presenter receives the

response.