

VILNIUS GEDIMINAS TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

TWO FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Information Technology Security Methods

Prepared by: Simonas Riška,

Checked by: lect.

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TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (2FA)

Two-factor authentication (in short -2FA), also sometimes called as two-step verification or dual-factor authentication, is a security process where users when trying to log in provide two different authentication factors to verify their identity.

When 2FA is implemented, it can give better protection not only to user's credentials but also it can protect resources the user can access so only user who is authorized to access the given resource could have access. This type of authentication is usually used as a part of the effort to prevent data breaches and the potential loss of personal data.

2FA, compared to authentication methods that depend on single-factor authentication, excels in level of security. Using single-factor authentication methods user typically provides a password or passcode – only one authenticating factor, however 2FA methods rely on password as the first factor and a second factor that is different from the first – usually a security token or a biometric factor such as a fingerprint or facial scan. In this work a form of security token known as time-based one-time password (TOTP) was selected as a second factor.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF TOTP

Why Use TOTP?

- Stronger Security: TOTP creates unique codes that refresh every 30 seconds, making it tough for hackers to reuse them.
- Works Offline: Unlike SMS or email codes, TOTP doesn't need an internet connection, which adds convenience and security.
- Better Protection Against Phishing and SIM Swapping: TOTP provides better protection than the SMS code method (which can be easier if someone takes your phone number or tricks you into sharing your code with a fake website).
- Easy To Implement and Use: TOTP is widely supported by many applications, so it's easy to use with multiple services without special setup.
- Low-Cost Solution: There's no extra hardware needed, which makes it affordable and simple to deploy.

Why Not Use TOTP?

- User Experience: Typing in codes within a short time frame can be frustrating, especially if you're in a hurry or distracted.
- Phishing Risk: It's still possible to be tricked by placing code on a fake site, where attackers can immediately exploit it.
- Device Dependency: If you lose your phone, recovering access can be a hassle, especially if you don't have backup codes.
- No Context Awareness: TOTP can't adapt based on location or device integrity, which would add an extra security layer.
- Compliance Limitations: In high-security fields, TOTP may not meet certain phishing-resistant standards.

In short, TOTP is a solid choice for many situations but may not be the best fit if top-notch security or a seamless user experience is a must.

COMMON TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION VULNERABILITIES

There are a few common two-factor authentication vulnerabilities:

- Phishing attacks these attacks are designed in such a way that users are tricked into revealing their 2FA codes to malicious actors. Phishing attack can be orchestrated via spoofed emails, fake websites, voice calls to impersonate legitimate entities and persuade users to click on malicious links which ask for the user 2FA codes. To prevent it, the user should always check the sender, URL and content of communication especially when it asks 2FA codes and use security measures such as trusted browser, antivirus software, avoid opening attachments, downloading files from unknown sources.
- SIM Swapping this attack works as an identity theft when user's phone number is transferred to a new SIM card controlled by attacker who can intercept 2FA codes sent via SMS messages or phone calls to the user's phone number and use obtained code to access the user's resources. This attack can be done by exploiting the weaknesses of mobile network operators via social engineering, poor authentication or insider threats. SMS swapping can be prevented by not using SMS or phone call as 2FA method and use more secure alternatives, like TOTP.

- Man-in-the-Middle Attacks these attacks execute by exploiting the vulnerabilities of the network, device or app that the user is using to access the resources and by capturing the 2FA code to use it. MITM attack can be prevented using a secure and encrypted connection when accessing online services, such as HTTPS, VPN or SSL and also by verifying the identity and the certificate of the server, also by avoiding using public or untrusted networks or devices.
- Malware Infections it can bypass 2FA by capturing the user's keystrokes, taking screenshots, retrieving clipboard data and sending them to a remote server controlled by an attacker who can obtain 2FA codes and use them to access their accounts. Malware can be delivered to user's device through various channels, like phishing emails, infected websites, removable media. Malware infections can be prevented by using reputable and updated antivirus software, by scanning devices regularly, by avoiding clicking on suspicious links, opening unknown attachments or inserting untrusted media into devices.
- Social Engineering this technique can bypass 2FA by persuading users to share their 2FA codes with an attacker, who pretends to be a trusted person in a fake scenario, like emergency, reward or threat that would pressure users to act quickly and irrationally. Social engineering prevention could be verifying the identity and intention of a contact, especially when sensitive data, such as 2FA codes are involved.

TECH STACK FOR FRONT-END AND BACK-END

Front-End

- 1. Framework Used: Angular 18.2
- 2. UI Components: login, register, setup2fa, login2fa, dashboard
- 3. **Authentication/Authorization:** JWT (JSON Web Token) for handling authentication and authorization, session management by storing JWT tokens in secure storage (cookies with HttpOnly and Secure flags) for authenticated sessions.
- 4. **2FA Integration:** Using time-based one-time passwords (TOTP) via Microsoft Authenticator entering to UI to use API.
- 5. **Build Tools:** Angular CLI for development and building.

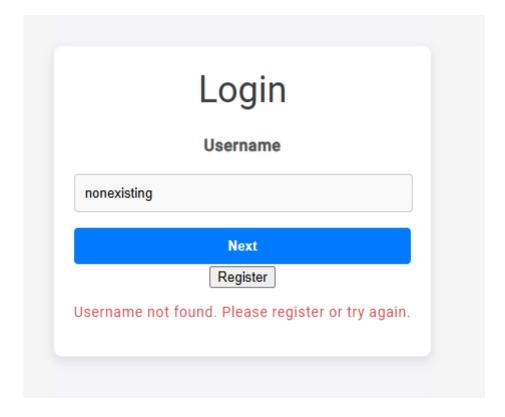
Back-End

- 1. **Programming Language:** C# (ASP.NET Core framework)
- 2. **Database:** MSSQL
- 3. Authentication & Authorization: JWT Bearer with Claims
- 4. **2FA:** ASP.NET Core Identity (Microsoft Authenticator app)
- 5. **APIs:** ASP.NET Core Web Api + Swagger
- 6. Security: Weather controller secured: accessible only with after successful 2fa login

INSTRUCTION

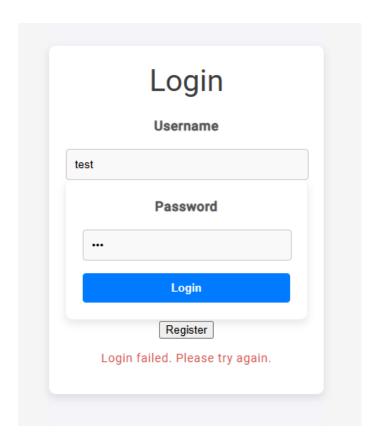
First Login and 2FA Setup Instructions

- 1. User Registration: Ensure you are registered in the system.
- 2. Login Process:
 - o Enter Username: Enter your username and click "Next."
 - If the username doesn't exist, you cannot continue. Only valid usernames will be able to access the password input screen.



1. Pic. Username not found

- o Password Attempt:
 - If the username is right but the password is wrong, the account will be locked after 5 failed login tries.

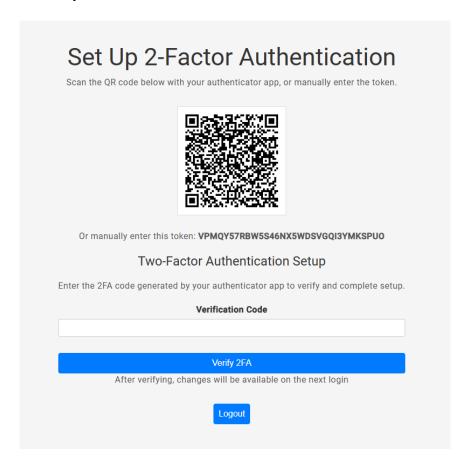


2.Pic. Response after user enters incorrect password

3. Pic. Response after user enters incorrect password 5 or more times

- 3. Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) Setup (for newly registered users):
 - o After logging in with valid credentials, you must set up 2FA.

- O You have two options to set up 2FA using the Microsoft Authenticator app:
 - Scan QR Code: Use the QR Code scanner in the Microsoft Authenticator app to scan the given QR code
 - Enter Token Manually: If you prefer, manually enter the token shown in the system.



4. Pic. Set Up 2-Factor Authentication

 After being added to the authenticator app, a temporary code will show up that only lasts for 30 seconds.



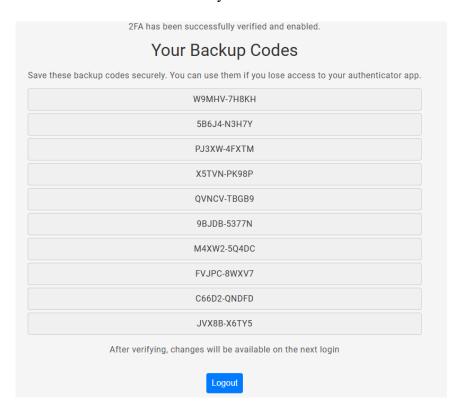
5. Pic. Generated code

6. Enter Temporary Code:

Enter the current code generated by the authenticator app and then click on the
 "Verify 2FA button" to continue.

7. Backup Codes:

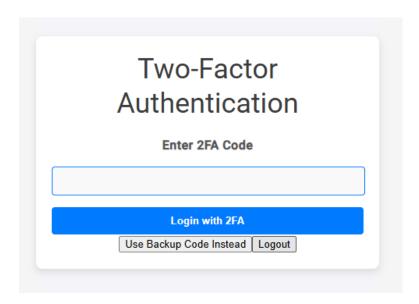
After entering a valid code, backup codes will be generated for emergency access.
 These are available for use in case you are unable to access the authenticator app.



6. Pic. Backup codes

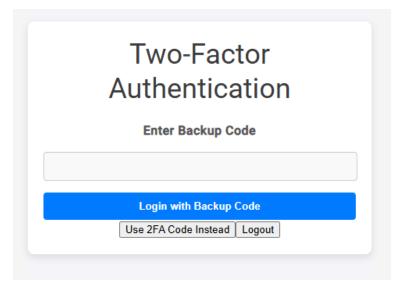
Login after 2FA is set

- 1. Enter Username and Password: Log in by entering your valid username and password.
- 2. Enter 2FA Code or Backup Code:
 - o Enter the code that is generated and is visible in the Microsoft Authenticator app.



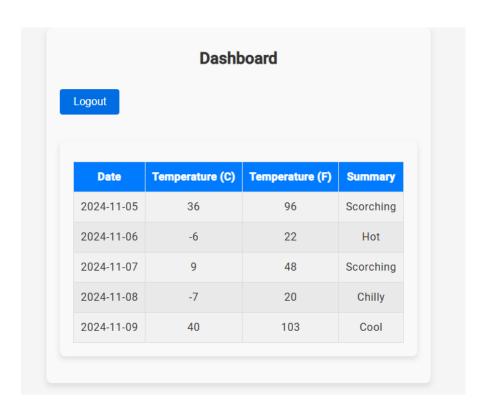
7. Pic. 2FA input

o If user doesn't have access to the app, backup code can be used instead. Be aware that each backup code can only be used once.



8. Pic. Backup code input

3. Access Granted: After entering a valid 2FA code or backup code, you will receive access to the application.



9. Pic. Dashboard after successful login

TESTING

Functional 2FA testing

Test Cases for login functionality

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-001
Test Title	Setup up 2FA
Precondition	User is already registered
Steps	 Using valid credentials fill in "Username" and "Password" inputs Click "Log in" button In "Set up 2FA" window, scan QR code, or enter token manually in auth app Fill in "Verification code" input and click "Verify 2FA"
Expected result	2FA has been successfully verified and enabled.
Actual result	2FA has been successfully verified and enabled.
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-002
Test Title	Login after 2FA is set
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in" button and wait for
	2FA prompt
	3. Enter valid 2FA code and proceed
	with login
Expected result	The user enters the correct 2FA code and logs
	in successfully.
Actual result	After user enters the correct 2FA code logs in
	successful.
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-003
Test Title	Valid username and incorrect password
Steps	1. Fill in "Username" input with valid
	username
	2. Fill in "Password" input with invalid
	password
	3. Click "Log in" button
Expected result	An error about incorrect credentials appears,
	and the user is unable to move on to the 2FA
	step.
Actual result	An error about incorrect credentials appears,
	"Login failed. Please try again."
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-004
Test Title	Expired 2FA Code
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in" button and wait for
	2FA prompt
	3. Wait for token to be expired, then
	enter it
Expected result	After expired token is entered and user clicks
	"Login with 2FA" button, message that
	incorrect token is entered should be displayed
Actual result	Expired 2FA code can be used, weather app is
	opened
Status	Fail

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-005
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Test Title	Invalid 2FA Code
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in" button and wait for
	2FA prompt
	3. Enter invalid 2FA code
Expected result	The login is denied and an error message
	appears.
Actual result	After user enters invalid 2FA code, message
	"Failed to log in with 2FA code" is returned
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-006
Test Title	Used 2FA Code
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in" button and wait for
	2FA prompt
	3. Reuse 2FA code in other session that
	was used and login was successful
Expected result	The login is denied and an error message
	appears, used 2FA token becomes invalidated
	once used
Actual result	2FA code can be reused for other login
	session
Status	Fail

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-007
Test Title	Lockout
Steps	1. Fill in "Username" input with valid
	username
	2. Fill in "Password" input with invalid
	password
	3. Click "Log in" button
	4. Enter invalid "2FA" code
	5. Repeat these steps at least 3 times
Expected result	If a user enters an incorrect 2FA code three
	times or more in a row, the system will
	temporarily lock them out. An account is
	locked because of several unsuccessful 2FA
	login attempts. The message "Please attempt
	again at a later time" should appear. The user
	must not try logging in again until the lockout
	period is over.

Actual result	The system permits multiple attempts with
	wrong 2FA codes without blocking the user,
	even following 3 or more unsuccessful tries.
	There is no lockout message shown, so the
	user can keep trying to log in with incorrect
	codes.
Status	Fail

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-008
Test Title	Login with Empty Username
Steps	1. Open the login window.
	2. Leave the "Username" input empty.
	3. Click on the "Next" button.
Expected result	A message should be displayed stating that
	the username field must not be left blank
	The user should remain on the same login
	page.
Actual result	Request to back-end is sent, and response
	"The username field is required" is returned,
	missing validation from front-end side.
Status	Fail

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-009
Test Title	Login with non-existing username
Steps	1. Open the login window.
	2. Fill in the "Username" input with
	random value
	3. Click "Next" button.
Expected result	Error message is displayed, indicating that
	username not exists, user remains on the same
	page
Actual result	Error message "Error checking username.
	Please try again." Is displayed, users stay on
	same page
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-010
Test Title	Login existing username
Steps	1. Open the login window.
	2. Fill in the "Username" (registered
	username) input
	3. Click "Next" button.
Expected result	After the user enters a valid username, the
	system should:

	 Return a status code of 200 OK. Display the password input field, allowing the user to proceed with the login.
Actual result	User is allowed to proceed with login, but A response with status code 400 Bad Request is returned with the message "Username in use".
Status	Fail

Security Testing for Login and 2FA

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-S-001
Test Title	SQL Injection in Username Field
Steps	1. Fill in the "Username" input field
	with: 'OR '1'='1'
	2. Click the "Next" button.
Expected result	Status Code: 400 Bad Request
	The system should not proceed to the next
	step.
	The status code should be 400 Bad Request or
	another suitable error code indicating that
	invalid input was detected.
Actual result	• Status Code: 200 OK
	 Response: "Username is available."
	Behavior: The system did not proceed
	to the next step but returned an
	incorrect response indicating the
	username is available.
Status	Fail

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-S-002
Test Title	/Auth/login endpoint response for a user who
	has 2FA.
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in"

Result (TC-2FA-S-002):

```
Response
         Raw
                Hex
                                                                                                  In ≡
Pretty
                         Render
  HTTP/2 200 OK
  Content-Type: application/json; charset=utf-8
Date: Thu, 31 Oct 2024 10:17:56 GMT
  Server: Kestrel
  Cache-Control: no-cache, no-store
  Expires: Thu, 01 Jan 1970 00:00:00 GMT Pragma: no-cache
  Set-Cookie: Identity.TwoFactorUserId=
  CfDJ8NMKQuCO9KZGnVaWqCALmao2xOSAOj54D1huZsWcVG4vMEg1FohuoMQmFk8woRCkL02OWHCAmf2rh5IzGwVhgHo
  Zo8PxBwA3EH5THEnkaEDYOR5Ohkj8PYUiQxOz5NvjwPwDwUo3yzcFlbPHZZ998WTG7PMjDLam8iycIjryIySQYm88BE
  mvbZCTV2fnuUtREjjdCVgf4uZHglgr9agWsxgdneoPAp-wwwWKNoFw-fi4acRDNKOvHJmLRNBUEMSXOde omUCjn82x
  zLdKgIgIKym7yaBtM_zXdTnLbd38hkKyuR3ZmbJJAk3fp5hmkyP7PrGNjOT9SDn3wZhQOaaoa5z5VjFrMxAWFadutfd
  R4s5pOucu2DKCXzad1b2noYJVA; path=/; secure; samesite=lax; httponly
  Set-Cookie: AuthToken=
  eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJzdWIiOiIxYTc2YWQxYy1mMzFkLTR1NTMtYTN1YyOzNDU4ZmJiMT
  cOMDEiLCJqdGkiOiI5ODAzMmQOZSOwMDViLTQ2OTgtYTc4NS1jNjQyYmNhNTk2MwQiLCJUd29GYWNDb3JFbmFibGVkI
  joidHJ1ZSIsIklzUGFzc3dvcmRDb3JyZWNOIjoiMSIsImhOdHA65y9zY2hlbWFzLnhtbHNvYXAub3JnL3dzLzIwMDUv
MDUvaWRlbnRpdHkvY2xhaW1zL25hbWVpZGVudGlmaWVyIjoiMWE3NmFkMWMtZjMxZCOOZTUzLWEzZWMtMzQlOGZiYjE
  3NDAxIiwiZXhwIjoxNzMwMzczNDc3LCJpc3MiOiJUYXNrTnIyXzJGQSIsImF1ZCI6IlRhc2tOcjJfMkZBInO.A-5VWf
lPoZEtr5OqWdqu vbSi6XSOOjcrQgayRYy1E8; expires=Thu, 31 Oct 2024 11:17:57 GMT; path=/;
  secure; samesite=strict; httponly
    "success":true.
     "message":"Login requires 2FA",
     "data":{
        id":"1a76ad1c-f31d-4e53-a3ec-3458fbb17401",
       "username": "vaidask",
       "name":"vaidask",
       "email": "vaidask@email.com",
       "phone":null,
       "address":null,
       "twoFactorEnabled":true
     error":null,
   "authenticationStatus": "RequiresTwoFactor"
```

10. Pic. Response after login only with credentials

Exposure to Sensitive Data - Response:

The Set-Cookie header for Identity. Two Factor User Id and Auth Token exposes information, including a JWT token and possibly confidential data. We can implement token masking or minimizing unnecessary data exposure.

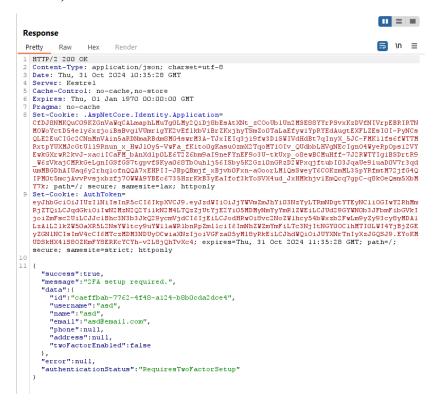
Potential Exposure of Information:

The reply indicates {"success":true,"message":"Login requires 2FA"}, revealing to the attacker that 2FA is turned on for this account. We could use a general error message that would minimize leaking of information.

Detailed user data in the response: The response body contains user-specific information such as id, username, email, etc. Revealing all this data during a login attempt could lead to increased vulnerability. Restrict the data given back, particularly sensitive or identifiable information, until authentication is completely confirmed.

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-S-03
Test Title	/Auth/login endpoint response for a user who
	hasn't set up 2FA.
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in"

Result (TC-2FA-S-003):



11. Pic. Login endpoint response for a user who hasn't set up 2FA.

Detailed 2FA Status Disclosure:

The authenticationStatus field with "RequiresTwoFactorSetup" is an information leak. It reveals that the user has not set up 2FA, which an attacker could potentially exploit. A more generic response (like "Additional authentication required") would avoid leaking setup status.

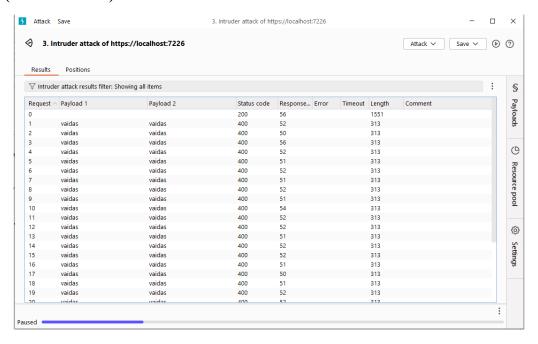
Unnecessary Cookie for Identity.TwoFactorUserId:

Since 2FA is not set up for this user, the server should avoid setting the Identity. TwoFactorUserId cookie altogether, or at least set it to a non-sensitive placeholder value. This reduces the exposure of unnecessary cookies.

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-S-004
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Test Title	/Auth/login brute force attack
Steps	1. Fill out the login form with your test
	credentials, then click "Submit." The
	request will be intercepted by Burp
	Suite. Navigate to the "Intruder" tab
	with this intercepted request.
	2. Select "Cluster bomb attack"
	3. Define the payload positions by
	marking the username and password
	fields.
	4. Load a list of usernames (for this case
	valid username is used) and passwords
	from a wordlist (Sec List is used)
	5. Click "Start attack" button
Expected result	After a certain number of failed
	attempts, the account should lock or
	temporarily restrict login attempts.
Actual result:	Brute force attack can be executed
Status:	Fail

Result (TC-2FA-S-004):

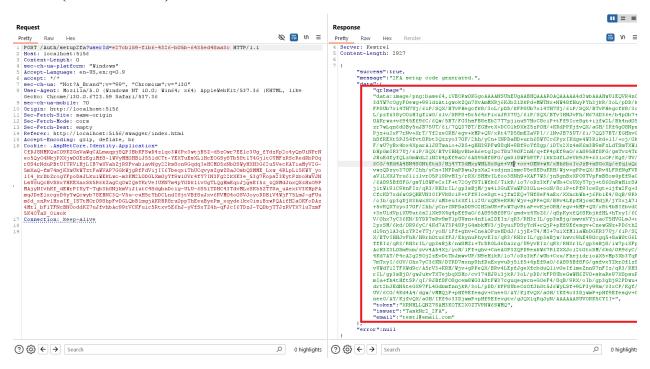


12. Pic. Login brute force attack

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-S-005
Test Title	Verify Secure Transmission of 2FA Token and QR Image -
	/Auth/setup2fa

Steps	 Authenticate as a test user and initiate the 2FA setup process Examine the response payload Check if a secure URL is provided instead of a base64-encoded image string for the QR code.
Expected result	The response payload does not expose the token directly and provides a secure URL to access the QR image, avoiding excessive data transmission.
Actual result	 Sensitive Data Exposure: The response exposes the token, which should not be transmitted openly. Direct QR Image: QR code provided as a base64 string instead of a secure link, increasing response size and risk. Excess Data: Fields like issuer and email are unnecessary, increasing potential data exposure.
Status	Fail

Result (TC-2FA-S-005):

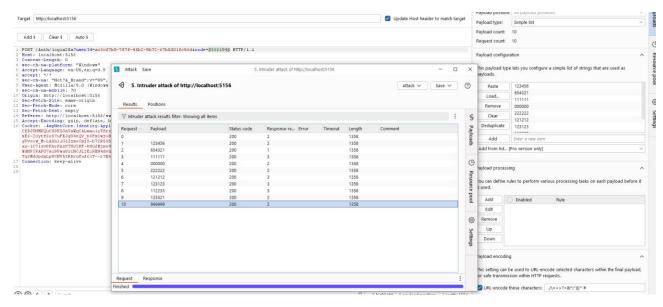


13. Pic. Setup2fa endpoint response for a user who hasn't set up 2FA.

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-S-006
Test Title	/Auth/login2fa brute force attack

Steps	1. Fill out the login form with your test
- Suppose	credentials, approve 2FA." The
	request will be intercepted by Burp
	Suite. Navigate to the "Intruder" tab
	with this intercepted request.
	2. Select "Cluster bomb attack"
	3. Define the payload positions by
	marking code field.
	4. Leave same userId
	5. Click "Start attack" button
Expected result	After a certain number of failed
	attempts, the account should lock or
	temporarily restrict login attempts.
Actual result:	Brute force attack can be executed
Status:	Fail

Result (TC-2FA-S-006):



14. Pic. Login brute force attack

Functional backup code testing

Test Cases for Backup Authentication Solution (One-Time Backup Codes)

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-011
Test Title	Backup Code Generation from App
	Dashboard
Precondition	User is already registered
Steps	1. Using valid credentials fill in
	"Username" and "Password" inputs
	2. Click "Log in" button

	3. In "Set up 2FA" window, scan QR code, or enter token manually in auth app4. Fill in "Verification code" input and click "Verify 2FA"
Expected result	The application needs to create a series of backup codes that can only be used once for logging in if the user is unable to use their Authenticator app. The codes need to be shown once and have a secure download feature available.
Actual result	Backup codes are created, but there is no secure download feature available
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-012
Test Title	Backup Code Validity
Steps	1. Use valid backup code to sign
	2. Try to re-use identical code once
	more.
Expected result	Backup codes can only be used once and
	shouldn't be reusable after use.
Actual result	Backup codes can be used only once
Status	Pass

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-013
Test Title	Use backup code as 2FA code
Steps	1. Enter backup code to 2FA Code input
Expected result	Error message is returned, that code is invalid
Actual result	Error message "Failed to log in with 2FA
	code." Is returned
Status	Pass

Functional forgot password testing

Test Cases for "Forgot Password" with 2FA (Microsoft Authenticator)

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-013
Test Title	Forgot Password - Basic Flow with 2FA
Steps	1. Click the "Forgot Password" button on
	the login page.
	2. Input the email or username connected
	to the account.

	3. Click on the email link to reset the password.4. Finish the 2FA verification using Microsoft Authenticator once you have changed your password.
Expected result	The reset password link has been sent to the email address. The user creates a new password and is asked to confirm with Microsoft Authenticator for 2FA. Accessing the account requires successful
Actual result	verification through 2-factor authentication.
Actual result	-
Status	Not implemented

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-014
Test Title	Email Verification and Expiration of Reset
	Link
Precondition	Password reset initiation is done,
	email with reset link is sent
Steps	1. Try using the reset link after its
	expiration time.
Expected result	The reset link needs to become invalid after a
	set amount of time (e.g., 15-30 minutes).
	After trying to access expired link, error
	message should be displayed related to that,
	example "Password reset link is expired"
Actual result	-
Status	Not implemented

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-015
Test Title	Forgot Password with Microsoft
	Authenticator Unavailable
Precondition	Password reset initiated
Steps	1. Create a new password.
	2. If asked for 2FA, select "I don't have
	my Authenticator" or a similar choice.
Expected result	The system must provide different
	verification choices (backup codes, SMS, or
	email-based 2FA).

	Access will be allowed once alternative 2FA
	verification has been completed.
Actual result	-
Status	Not implemented

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-016
Test Title	Attempting to Use an Old Password After
	Reset
Precondition	Reset the password and log in with the
	new password.
Steps	1. Attempt to log in again using the old
	password
Expected result	The old password should be invalid
	The system must reject login tries with the
	previous password, guaranteeing that only the
	new password will be accepted.
Actual result	-
Status	Not implemented

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-017
Test Title	Multiple "Forgot Password" Requests
Steps	Initiate multiple "Forgot Password"
	requests in a short time frame (5 min)
Expected result	The system must deactivate old reset links
	after a new one is created.
	Only the most recently generated reset link
	should be functional, making older links
	unusable.
Actual result	-
Status	Not implemented

Test Case ID	TC-2FA-F-018
Test Title	Rate-Limiting on "Forgot Password" Requests
Steps	1. Initiate multiple "Forgot Password"
_	requests in a short time frame (5-10
	request per minute)
Expected result	The system should limit the number of
	password reset attempts to prevent abuse.
	After a certain number of attempts

	(approximately 3-5), any additional requests should be temporarily restricted, with the user being notified of rate limits.
Actual result	-
Status	Not implemented

Testing Results	
Total test cases:	23
Pass:	8
Fail:	9
Not started:	6