

Single Sign-On (SSO) for Authenticating Alchemer Users

ATTENTION!

SAML SSO is available as an add-on.
If you are interested in SSO, please [contact us](#) for additional information.

Are you already using an Identity Provider (IdP) to manage logins and access to the various systems your users need to access? If so, you can now include Alchemer as a Service Provider (SP) as part of this single sign-on (SSO).

We support any IdP that uses the SAML 2.0 protocol. At this time, we have tested SSO from Active Directory Federated Services (AD FS), Azure (AD FS), and Okta, Auth0, OneLogin, and Ping Identity.

SSO Options in Alchemer

Within Alchemer you can use SSO to...

1. authenticate users into the Alchemer application to build and administer surveys. This tutorial will cover this option.

and/or

2. authenticate respondents into surveys. This option is covered in our [SSO Authentication for Survey Respondents Tutorial](#).

In both cases SSO acts as an added security layer. When using SSO for authenticating survey respondents there is also the added benefit of pre-population; any data present for each user in the IdP can be automatically passed into the survey, which can then be used within the survey itself or in reporting.

Why SAML SSO?

When security is of paramount importance, organizations will set up an Identity Provider (IdP) to manage all logins for all users. This allows IT professionals at the organization to control the number of logins out there in the wild. Identity providers also allow IT professionals to set up password reset rules to increase security.

If you are not already using an IdP you probably won't start just for Alchemer.

How Does It Work?

Single sign-on allows organizations to set up a trust relationship with a service provider (Alchemer in this case) that allows the IdP to send encrypted login credentials to the service provider thus preventing the user from having to log in more than once, hence single sign-on.

What You Will Need Before You Get Started

If you're not an IT professional at your organization, go get one; you'll need his or her assistance to set this up.

First, you'll need the below ingredients from your IdP; your IT professional can help you with this.

Entity ID - This is the globally-unique URL/string of your IdP entity. It's like a mailing address that we, the service provider, use to contact your IdP. Not sure where to find this? [Learn more](#).

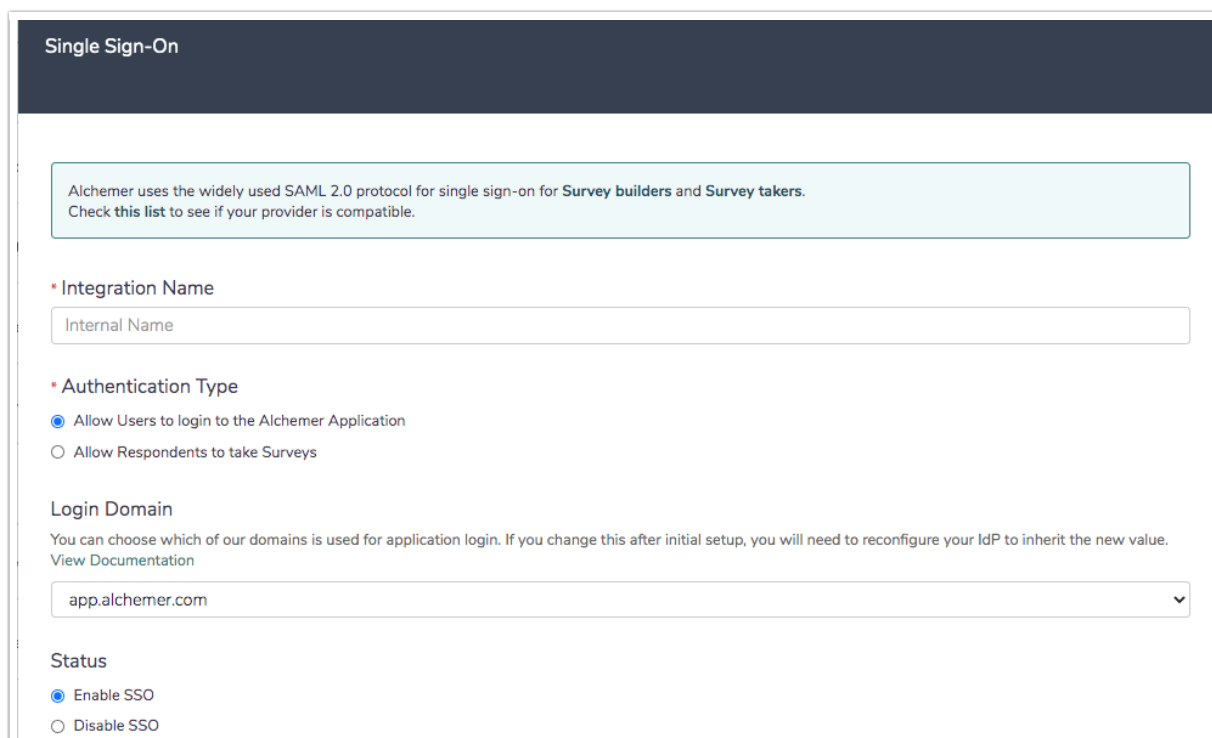
Login URL - This is the URL for logging in to your IdP. The Login URL is often very similar to the Entity ID URL. This is where we will send the SAML request.

SSL/Signing Certificate - We'll use your SSL/Signing certificate to encrypt the data being sent back and forth via SAML. You will need to upload your SSL Certificate from your IdP. Not sure where to find this? Learn more in our [glossary of SSO terms](#).

Alchemer-Side Setup

You must be an administrative user in Alchemer in order to access these settings.

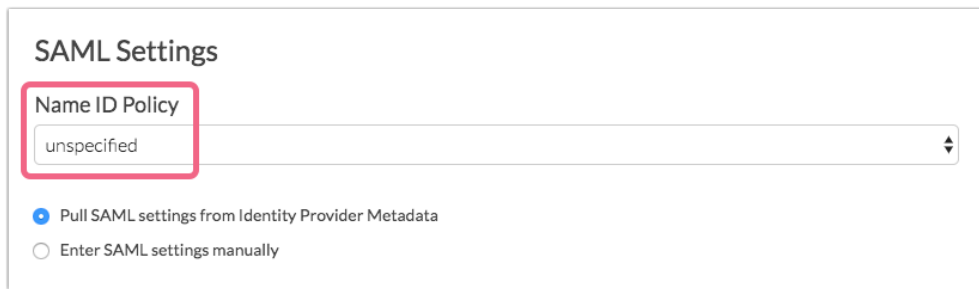
1. Go to **Integrations > Data Connectors** and click the **Configure** next to the **SSO Users** option.
2. Give your SSO Integration an **Internal Name**. This is particularly important if you plan to use SSO both for authenticating users and for authenticating survey respondents as this name will display when setting up SSO authentication within surveys.
3. Choose the **Authentication type > Allow Users to log in to the Alchemer Application** .



The screenshot shows the 'Single Sign-On' configuration interface. At the top, a dark header contains the text 'Single Sign-On'. Below this is a light blue informational box stating: 'Alchemer uses the widely used SAML 2.0 protocol for single sign-on for Survey builders and Survey takers. Check this list to see if your provider is compatible.' The main configuration area includes several sections: 'Integration Name' with a text input field containing 'Internal Name'; 'Authentication Type' with two radio button options, 'Allow Users to login to the Alchemer Application' (which is selected) and 'Allow Respondents to take Surveys'; 'Login Domain' with a dropdown menu showing 'app.alchemer.com' and a small downward arrow; and 'Status' with two radio button options, 'Enable SSO' (which is selected) and 'Disable SSO'.

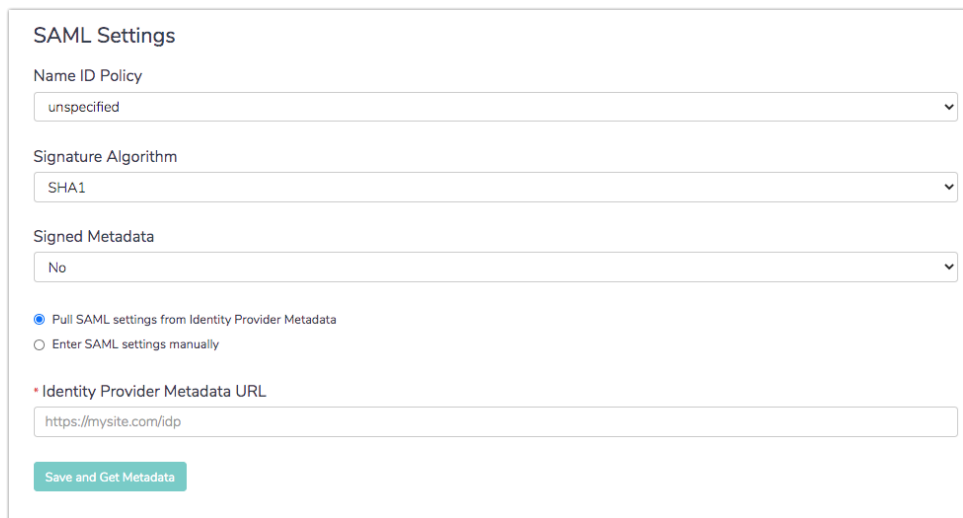
4. Under **SAML Settings**, choose the **Name ID Policy** format that your IdP will provide to Alchemer in the SAML assertion. Your options are **unspecified** and **email**. Certain IdPs do not allow email

addresses to be passed via the *unspecified* format.



The screenshot shows a 'SAML Settings' form. The 'Name ID Policy' dropdown menu is highlighted with a red box and is set to 'unspecified'. Below it, there are two radio button options: 'Pull SAML settings from Identity Provider Metadata' (which is selected) and 'Enter SAML settings manually'.

5. Next, choose whether you wish to **Pull SAML settings from Identity Provider Metadata** or **Enter SAML settings manually**.
 - a. In order to use the option to **Pull SAML settings from Identity Provider Metadata** your metadata will need to be hosted somewhere so that you can provide a URL for our system to access and parse it.
 - i. Enter the URL to your hosted metadata xml file in the **Identity Provider Metadata URL** field



The screenshot shows the 'SAML Settings' form with several fields filled out. The 'Name ID Policy' is 'unspecified', 'Signature Algorithm' is 'SHA1', and 'Signed Metadata' is 'No'. The 'Pull SAML settings from Identity Provider Metadata' radio button is selected. The 'Identity Provider Metadata URL' field contains 'https://mysite.com/idp'. A 'Save and Get Metadata' button is visible at the bottom.

- b. If you prefer to enter your SAML settings manually, populate the **Entity ID**, **Login URL**, and **SSL/Signing Certificate** from your IdP. These fields are required.

SAML Settings

Name ID Policy

Signature Algorithm

Signed Metadata

Pull SAML settings from Identity Provider Metadata
 Enter SAML settings manually

▪ Entity ID

▪ Login URL

Upload SSL/Signing Certificate
 No file chosen
 SSL Fingerprint: ce6b1295416572cb787d0c494c267a2d73f92af3

Manual Setup Tips:

This is your **certificate file (.crt)** for your IdP which can be downloaded from your SSL Issuer.

- Files must include the the begin and end tags. The result should look like this:


```
-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE-----
(Your Primary SSL certificate: your_domain_name.crt)
-----END CERTIFICATE-----
```
- Files must be Base64 encoded.
- Use this [SSL Checker](#) to validate your file.
- If the file you have also has the 'intermediate' or 'root' certificate chains in them, that's fine, as long as it has the main certificate for the domain included.

6. When you are finished with the SAML Settings click **Save and Get Metadata**. The following **Service Provider Metadata XML** will be provided to you for you to use in the [IdP Setup](#).

Service Provider Metadata

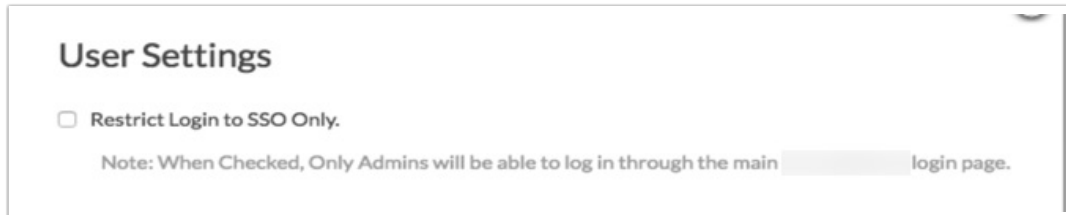
Service Provider Metadata URL

The current service provider certificate will expire on **2022-09-10**. If possible, utilize the Service Provider Metadata URL above to automatically update this configuration, to avoid interruptions in service after this date.

Integration Not Successful?

If the option to pull from metadata does not work we recommend trying the manual setup option. If you've tried both and neither were successful check out our [troubleshooting tips](#) for common causes of failure.

7. **(Optional) Restrict Login to SSO Only** - If you wish to *only allow users to access Alchemer via your IdP*, check this box. If you wish to *allow users to login via either way, IdP or Alchemer*, leave this unchecked.



The screenshot shows a 'User Settings' panel with a single checkbox labeled 'Restrict Login to SSO Only'. Below the checkbox is a note: 'Note: When Checked, Only Admins will be able to log in through the main [redacted] login page.'

The Restrict Login to SSO Only Setting will affect both who can access Alchemer and how they will access Alchemer.

- If the Restrict Login to SSO box is *unchecked* all users will be able to log in via both the IdP and Alchemer, with the exception of users created via SSO.
- If the Restrict Login to SSO box is *checked*, any users that attempt to login directly via Alchemer will not be able to and will see the following message:

This account is restricted to Single Sign-On only. Please contact your account admin for assistance.

- Administrative users that were created in Alchemer will always be able to log in via both the IdP and Alchemer regardless of the status of the Restrict Login to SSO option.
- Users created via SSO will only be able to login via the IdP.

8. Next, there are two options that control how user seats in Alchemer are handled:

Users must be set up in Alchemer - This means that administrative Alchemer users will need to log in to Alchemer via the Alchemer log in page and add users as described in our [Add Users Tutorial](#). Once a user is set up then the SSO via the IdP will work.

OR

Automatically create new users if they don't exist in Alchemer - This option will create Alchemer users when users click the link/button to log in to Alchemer if a user with those credentials doesn't already exist in Alchemer.

- If you choose to automatically create new users, you'll need to specify a Default Role, Team, and License for these newly created users.
- You will need to have enough licenses available in order to create the user. If there are no available licenses of the type you selected in the Default License field, the user will be created but disabled.
- Check out our [Teams and User Permissions Tutorial](#) to learn more about Teams and Roles! Check out our [User License Tutorial](#) to learn about licenses.
- As an alternative to selecting a default role and team, you can select the option to set up all SSO created users as Standalone Users. Standalone users will only be able to see the surveys that they create, regardless of team or role. Standalone users will have full access (meaning they will be Editors) to their own surveys (provided that their user license supports survey editing).
- Finally, if you are automatically creating new users, it is a good idea to add an email address in the **New User Notification Email** field for the Alchemer to send notification of user creation errors.

9. When you are finished with all of your User Settings the **Login Link** at the bottom of the page can be used to create a button within your IdP to log users into Alchemer. This link will not work until you complete the IdP Setup below.

IdP-Side Setup

Regardless of your specific IdP vendor, the setup on the IdP side requires:

- A claim rule with user's email address in Alchemer passed as the as the Name ID.

- (Optional) additional data from attributes can be sent to populate User Data Fields. Learn more about [populating User Data Fields](#).
- ⊕ See a step-by-step example of the IdP-side setup with Azure Active Directory
- ⊕ See a step-by-step example of the IdP-side setup with Active Directory (AD FS)

Important Note Regarding Maintenance of Your SSO Integration

As we need to periodically update the cert used to create an SSL connection for SSO, we recommend putting a check in place so that your SSO integration is seamless. Once your integration is successfully set up, a simple script that checks for differences between the metadata in your integration setup and our SP metadata URL and accordingly handles updates to your integration ensures that there is no interruption in service.

- ⊕ See a step-by-step example of the IdP-side setup with Okta
- ⊕ See a step-by-step example of the IdP-side setup of Auth0 Alchemer SSO Integration
- ⊕ See a step-by-step example of the IdP-side setup of OneLogin Alchemer SSO Integration
- ⊕ See a step-by-step example of the IdP-side setup of the Ping Identity Alchemer SSO Integration

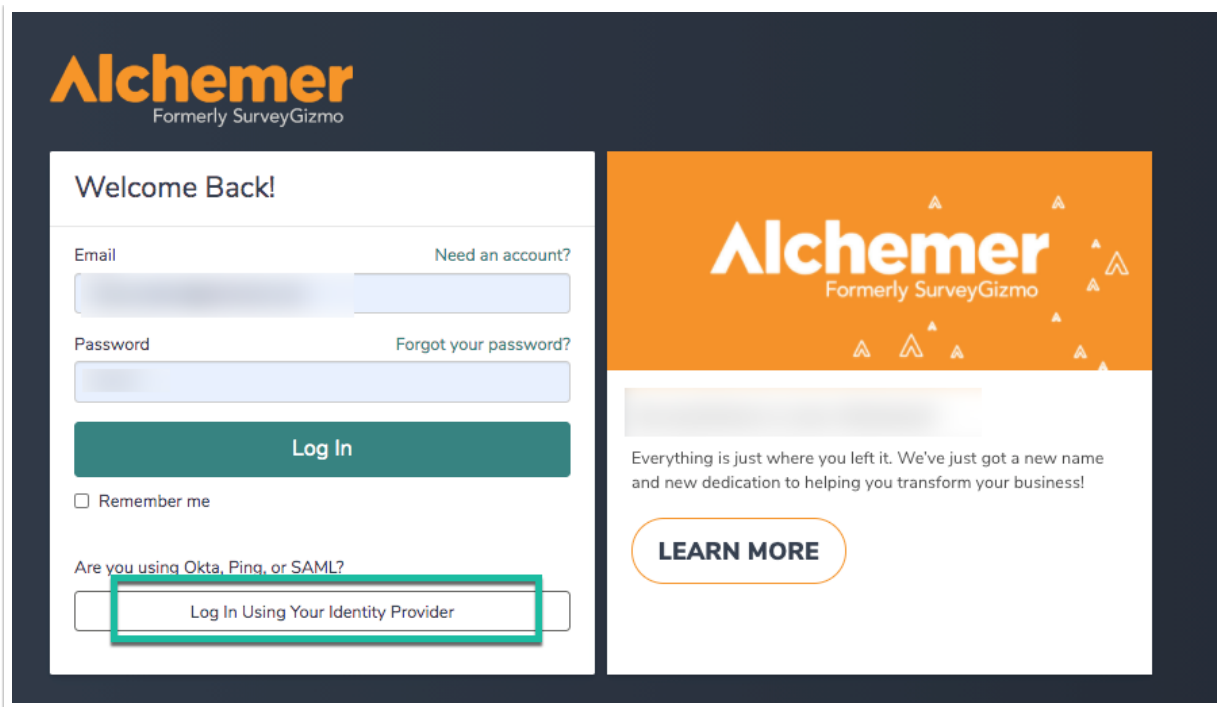
When logging into Alchemer via the standard Alchemer Login page (<https://app.alchemer.com/login/>) use the **default Email and Password** used when creating an account in Alchemer.

Account Alias

An Account Alias is set up during or after a IDP integration has been created successfully via the application of choice (Okta, Ping, etc.).

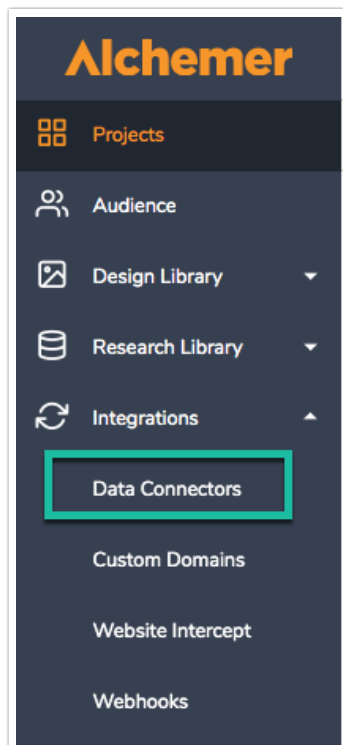
An Account Alias is utilized to identify a unique SSO connection within an application. Aliases allow a user who is set up with Single Sign-on in Alchemer to login from Alchemer through the identity provider that is being use. Simply, an Alias easily connects Alchemer to an identity provider for a simpler login.

An Alias is set up within the **integration** for Single Sign-On for the Alchemer account and is used on the Alchemer Login page by selecting **Log In Using Your Identity Provider** at the bottom of the login window:

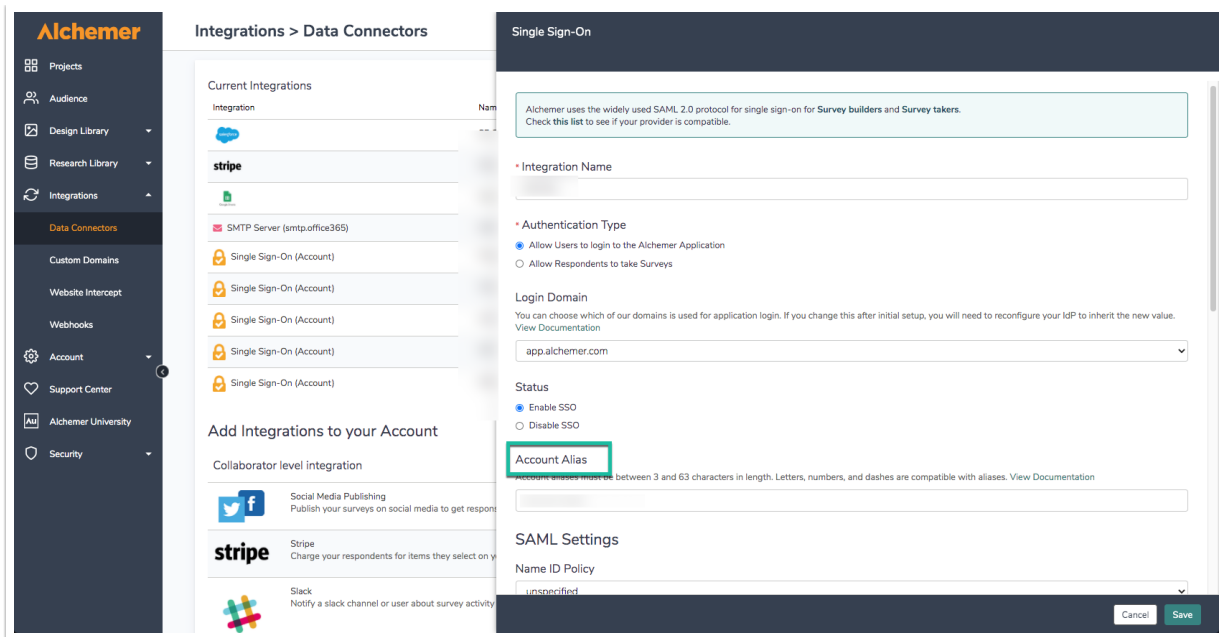


Setup

Navigate to **Integrations > Data Connectors** to access the integrations using SSO:



On the **Integrations >Data Connectors** page, select **Edit** on the Single Sign-On integration to create an *Account Alias*:



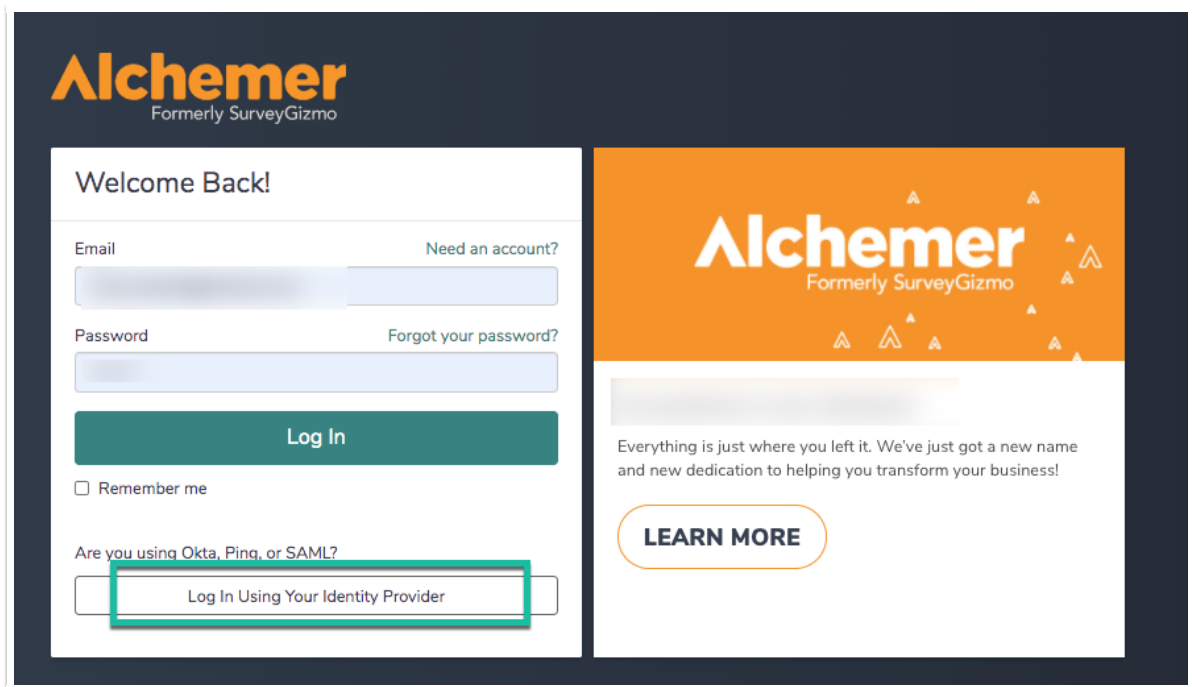
Provide a unique Alias. An Alias must be **between 3 and 63 characters** long and only include **letters, numbers, and dashes**. All other special characters are not compatible with Aliases in Alchemer.

Special considerations:

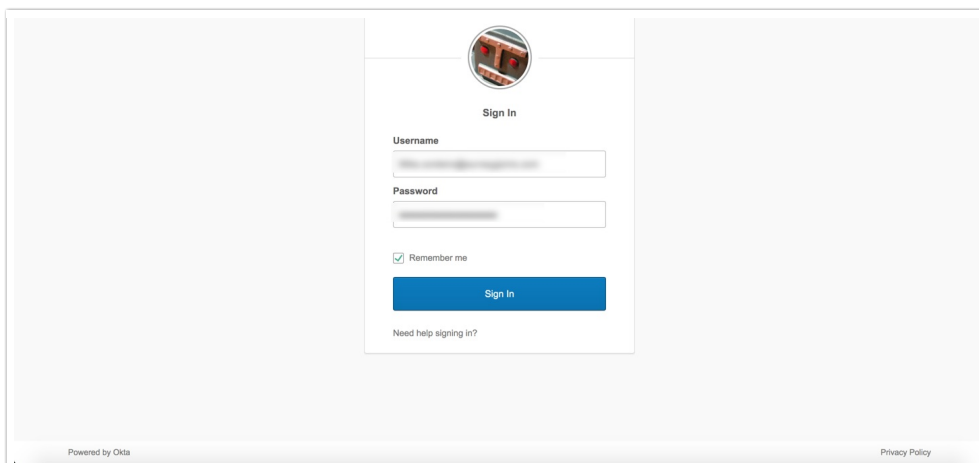
- An Alias **cannot** start with a dash.
- An Alias **cannot** end with dash.
- An Alias **cannot** have multiple dashes in a row (--).
- An Alias must be unique (no duplicate Aliases).
- An Alias is not compatible across Data Centers (US, EU, CA).

Log In Using an Account Alias

Once an Account Alias is created on the dedicated IDP integration, navigate back to the login page. Select the **Login Using an Identity Provider** button, and provide the Alias that was created in the previous steps:



Click **Continue to your Identity Provider**. This redirects the user to the Identity Providers login page for authentication via the **Login Link** that exists in the integrations setup page:



Users provide the login credentials associated with their identity provider via the unique link one is redirected to, and authenticated via the Identity provider before being redirected back Alchemer. A cookie is stored in the browser for quicker login after the credentials for the IDP have been provided. Users see the Identity Providers login page load briefly before being brought to Alchemer dashboard.

Creating New Users

Accounts utilizing the setting of **Restrict Login to SSO Only** forces users to access the account via the Identity Provider in use. When a new user is created in Alchemer via Single Sign-On using the setting of **Automatically create new users if they don't exist in Alchemer**, an email is triggered to

the New User Notification Email providing login credentials:

Single Sign-On

User Settings

Restrict Login to SSO Only.
Note: When Checked, Only Admins will be able to log in through the main [redacted] login page.

Users must be set up in [redacted]

Automatically create new users if they don't exist in [redacted]

Default Role
Editor

Default Team
Team 1

Default License
-- Select License --

Standalone User. [Learn more here.](#)

New User Notification Email
admin@yourcompany.com

Never Mind Save

The email displays as seen below with the login link to access Alchemer directly through the Identity provider as well as the Account Alias which is used on the main login page using the Login using your Identity Provider button:

Access [redacted] with the link below

Hello,

You have been added to your organization's [redacted] account. Click the link below and sign in using your IdP credentials.

[\[redacted\]](#)

Account alias: [redacted]

FAQ

- + How do I integrate with a sandbox environment?
- + What do I need to know to log existing Alchemer users into that user via SSO?
- + Okta is rejecting the Login link
- + Will users still be able to log in with their login and password?
- + Will my IdP login credentials work to log me into the Alchemer login page?
- + What happens if users try to log into the Alchemer login page with IdP credentials?
- + What happens if the IdP is unavailable? Typically you'll receive a browser message that the page cannot load.
- + What happens when a Alchemer session expires?
- + Can I populate User Data Fields with SSO attributes?
- + Can Alchemer supply a SAML Service Provider metadata file?
- + How do I deeplink to a specific page in Alchemer?
- + Can Alchemer's SAML consume the SAML IdP metadata file?
- + What attributes does Alchemer require within the SAML assertion?
- + Does Alchemer have a platform for testing identity federation?
- + Does your SP support SAML Single Logoff?
- + Does your SP support a logoff redirect following termination of the user session?>
- + Does your SP sign the authentication (authn) requests that it sends to the SAML IDP?
- + Does your SP require a signature and/or encryption of the assertions issued by the SAML IDP?
- + Explain the user authorization mechanism employed by your SAAS application.
- + Can your SAAS application accept authorization (role membership) data from the SAML assertion?
- + What happened to Automatic User Disabling?

Troubleshooting

- + I entered by entity ID and Login URL, and uploaded my certificate and my integration was not set up. What am I doing wrong?
- + If your Entity ID or Login URL are incorrect you will receive an error.

Glossary of SSO Terms

- + Active Directory Federated Services (AD FS)
- + Entity ID
- + Identity Provider (IdP)
- + Login URL
- + Name ID
- + Service Provider (SP)
- + Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML)
- + Single Sign-On (SSO)
- + SSL Certificate
- + User Principal Name (UPN)

Related Articles