

Error: User modify failed. Cannot modify user on this node: Authentication by SSH key failed!

24 admin May 9, 2025 [Common Errors & Troubleshooting](#) 10604

How to solve Error: User modify failed. Cannot modify user on this node: Authentication by SSH key failed!?

Overview: This article provides step-by-step instructions for troubleshooting the error "Error: User modify failed. Cannot modify user on this node: Authentication by SSH key failed!" encountered when modifying the gateway user.

The screenshot shows the Ezeelogin web interface. At the top, a red error banner reads: "Error: User modify failed. Cannot modify user on this node: Authentication by SSH key failed!". Below this, the "Change password and/or security code - John" form is visible. It includes fields for "New Password", "Confirm Password", "New Security Code", "Confirm Security Code", and "Authorization Password". There are also checkboxes for "Clear Two-Factor Authentication Secret" and "Force Password Change", each with a "Generate" button. At the bottom, a "Users" table lists two users: "John" (Active, Dummy group) and "admin" (Active, Admins group). The table has columns for Username, First Name, Last Name, Email, Status, Expiry, User Group, and Actions.

Step 1: Check if the Gateway server (Ezeelogin installed server) is missing its public key from `/root/.ssh/authorized_keys` file. If the key is missing, run the following command to add it:

```
root@gateway:~# cat /usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_clkey.pub >> /root/.ssh/authorized_keys
```

Step 1(A): Run the below command to check if the key is back in the file.

```
root@gateway:~# cat /root/.ssh/authorized_keys
```

Step 2: Run the following command to verify if the recommended SSHD settings are enabled in the `/etc/ssh/sshd_config` file.

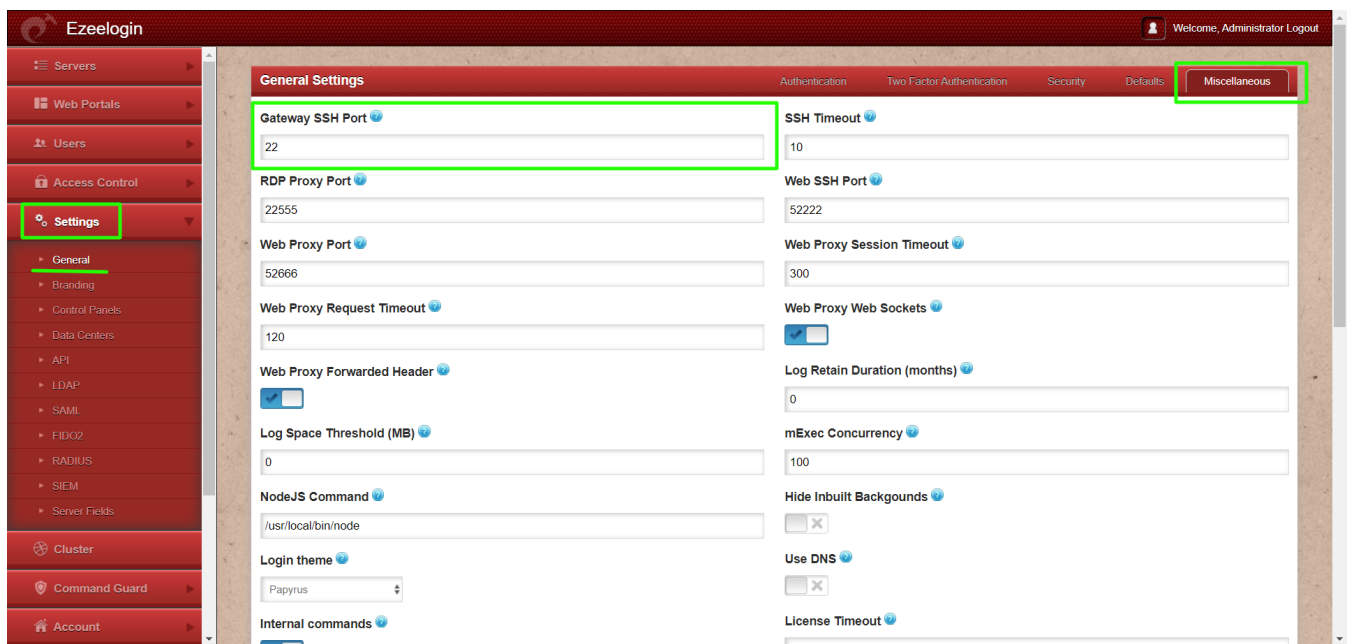
```
root@gateway:~# sshd -T | grep -i 'AllowTcpForwarding|PermitRootLogin
|PubkeyAuthentication|PasswordAuthentication|pubkeyacceptedalgorithms
|Port'

port 22
permitrootlogin yes
pubkeyauthentication yes
passwordauthentication yes
gatewayports no
allowtcpforwarding no
pubkeyacceptedalgorithms ssh-ed25519-cert-v01@openssh.com,ecdsa-sha2-
nistp256-cert-v01@openssh.com,ecdsa-sha2-nistp384-cert-v01@openssh.co
m,ecdsa-sha2-nistp521-cert-v01@openssh.com,sk-ssh-ed25519-cert-v01@op
enssh.com,sk-ecdsa-sha2-nistp256-cert-v01@openssh.com,rsa-sha2-512-ce
rt-v01@openssh.com,rsa-sha2-256-cert-v01@openssh.com,ssh-ed25519,ecds
a-sha2-nistp256,ecdsa-sha2-nistp384,ecdsa-sha2-nistp521,sk-ssh-
ed25519@openssh.com,sk-ecdsa-
sha2-nistp256@openssh.com,rsa-sha2-512,rsa-sha2-256,ssh-rsa
```

Step 3: Verify the SSH port used on the gateway server with the following command.

```
root@gateway:~# cat /etc/ssh/sshd_config | grep Port
Port 22
#Gateway Ports no
```

Step 3(A): If a [custom SSHD port](#) is being used on the gateway server, ensure it is updated under **Settings -> General -> Miscellaneous -> Gateway SSH Port** to match the current SSHD listening port on the SSH gateway server.



Step 4: Make sure **PubkeyAuthentication** is set to 'YES' in the **SSHD** configuration file.

```
root@gateway:~# vi /etc/ssh/sshd_config

#set PubkeyAuthentication to yes

PubkeyAuthentication yes
```

Stepp 4(A): After making changes restart SSHD

```
root@gateway:~# systemctl restart sshd
```

Step 5: Ensure that **root login** is permitted on the gateway server. You can check this by running the command:

```
root@gateway:~# ssh root@localhost
```

Step 5(A): If it does not log you in, edit **/etc/ssh/sshd_config** and set **PermitRootLogin** to **yes** and restart SSHD.

```
root@gateway:~# vi /etc/ssh/sshd_config
```

#Add the following lines to the end of /etc/ssh/sshd_config to allow root login from localhost only

```
Match Address 127.0.0.1
```

```
PermitRootLogin yes
```

```
root@gateway:~# service sshd restart
```

Step 5(B): After making the changes, ensure that you can log in as root by using the following command and entering the password:

```
ssh root@localhost:~#
```

Step 6: Ensure that the **web user** (such as Apache or nobody) that the web server (Apache/Nginx) runs has **read** access to the keys in the directory **/usr/local/etc/ezlogin** by granting **read privileges** with the following command:

```
root@gateway:~# chmod o+r /usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_clkey
root@gateway:~# chmod o+r /usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_clkey.pub
or
root@gateway:~# usermod -G <current_groupname_of_id_clkey_files>
<webserver_user>
```

Step 7: Find out which key type is used by the gateway server by running the below command.

```
root@gateway:~# ssh-keygen -l -f
/usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_key.pub
```

```
4096 SHA256:n4lmX53/gwkKB4+nSQ30hZXxXK+DRG1LPc7NlKN/1Ag ezlogin (RSA)
```

Step 7(A): Open `/etc/ssh/sshd_config` file and append the below line to **enable RSA** key type and restart SSHD.

```
root@gateway:~# vi /etc/ssh/sshd_config
```

```
PubkeyAcceptedKeyTypes +ssh-rsa
```

```
root@gateway:~# systemctl restart sshd
```

Step 8: Check for the SSHD error logs of the gateway server.

For CentOS

```
root@gateway:~# /var/log/secure
```

For Ubuntu

```
root@gateway:~# /var/log/auth.log
```

Refer to the below article if you get "**userauth_pubkey: signature algorithm ssh-rsa not in PubkeyAcceptedAlgorithms**"

[userauth_pubkey: signature algorithm ssh-rsa not in PubkeyAcceptedAlgorithms](#)

Step 9: Check if the **LoginGraceTime** parameter is enabled and set to a safe value.

```
root@server:~# vim /etc/ssh/sshd_config
```

```
LoginGraceTime 30
```

Related Articles:

[Error: User modify failed. Cannot modify user on other node: Authentication by SSH key failed!](#)

[Error: User modify failed Cannot modify user on this node: OS=FreeBSD: Command not found. OS: Undefined](#)

[Reset Ezeelogin keys used for privilege escalation.](#)

Online URL:

<https://www.ezeelogin.com/kb/article/error-user-modify-failed-cannot-modify-user-on-this-node-authentication-by-ssh-key-failed-24.html>