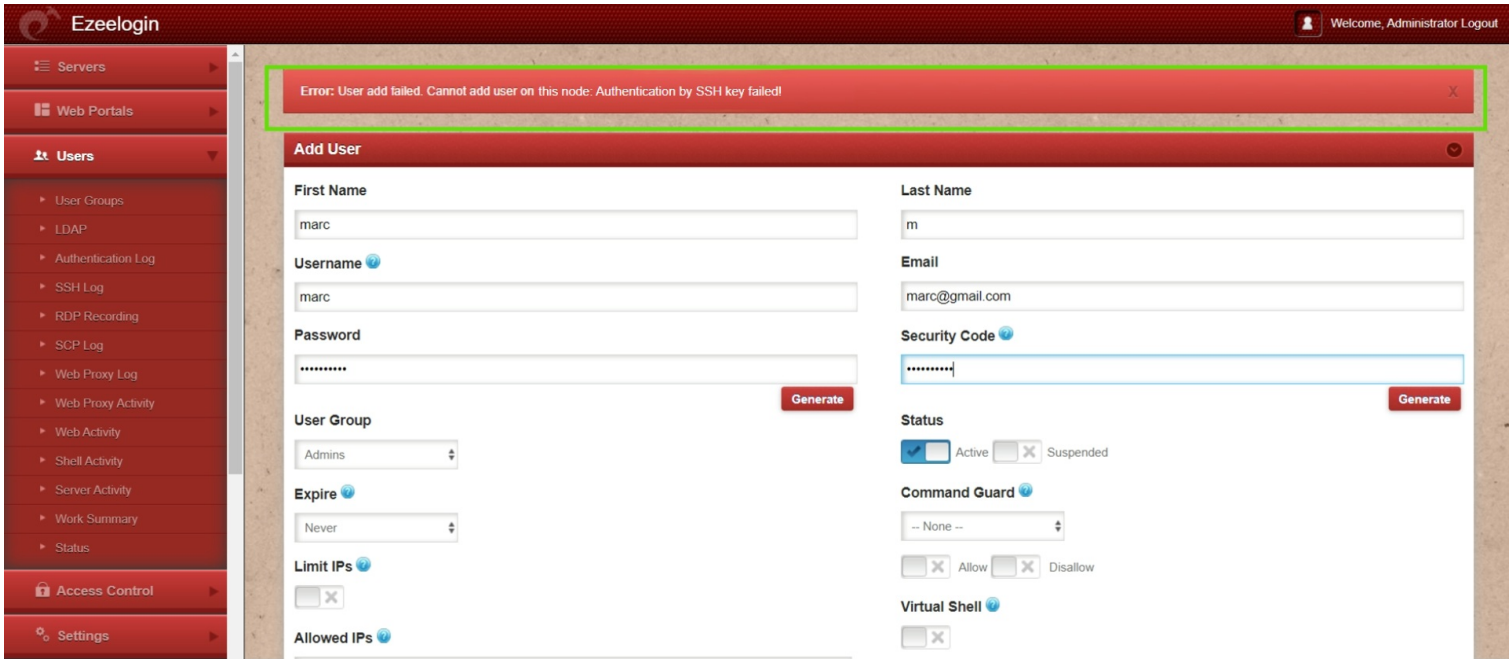
Error: User add failed. Cannot add user on this node: Authentication by SSH key failed

827 Jisna Joseph October 21, 2026 Common Errors & Troubleshooting 209

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

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



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@master:~# 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@master:~# 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@master:~# sshd -T | grep -i
'AllowTcpForwarding\|PermitRootLogin\|PubkeyAuthentication\|PasswordAuthentication\|pubkeyacceptedalgorithms\|Port'

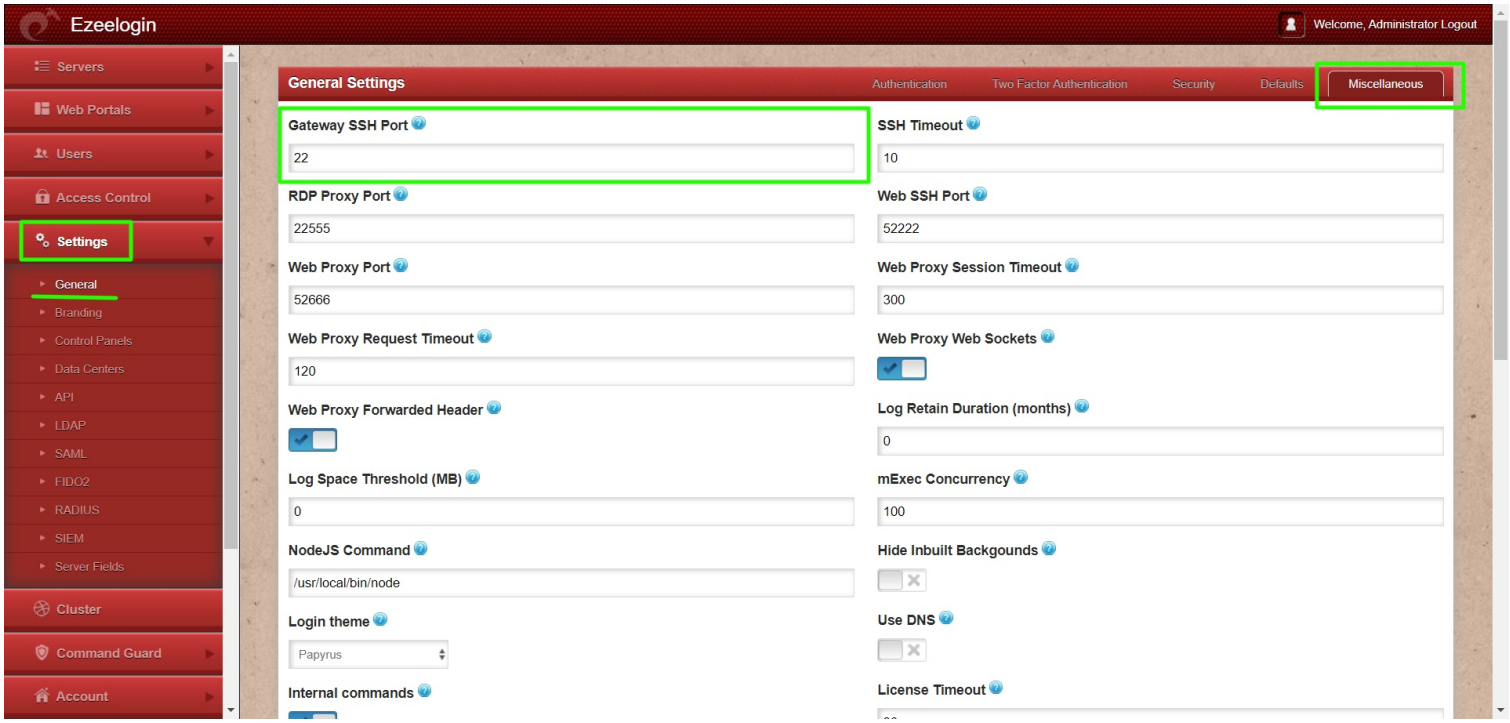
port 22
permitrootlogin yes
pubkeyauthentication yes
passwordauthentication yes
gatewayports no
allowtcpforwarding no
pubkeyacceptedalgorithms ssh-ed25519-cert-v01@openssh.com,ecdsa-sha2-nistp256-cert-v01@openssh.com,ecdsa-sha2-
nistp384-cert-v01@openssh.com,ecdsa-sha2-nistp521-cert-v01@openssh.com,sk-ssh-ed25519-cert-v01@openssh.com,sk-
```

```
ecdsa-sha2-nistp256-cert-v01@openssh.com,rsa-sha2-512-cert-v01@openssh.com,rsa-sha2-256-cert-v01@openssh.com,ssh-ed25519,ecdsa-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@master:~# 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@master:~# vi /etc/ssh/sshd_config

#set PubkeyAuthentication to yes

PubkeyAuthentication yes
```

Stepp 4(A): After making changes restart SSHD

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

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

```
root@master:~# 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@master:~# 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@master:~# 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@master:~# chmod o+r /usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_clkey
root@master:~# chmod o+r /usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_clkey.pub
                or
root@master:~# 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@master:~# ssh-keygen -l -f /usr/local/etc/ezlogin/id_key.pub

4096 SHA256:n4lmX53/gwkKB4+nSQ30hZXxXK+DRG1LPc7N1KN/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@master:~# vi /etc/ssh/sshd_config

PubkeyAcceptedKeyTypes +ssh-rsa

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

If you are running **Ezeelogin version 7.37.8** or above and using **ssh-rsa** or **ssh-dss** keys, it is recommended to change them to **ed25519** for better security and performance.

How to reset cluster keys in ezeelogin Master-slave Configuration ?

Step 7(B): Check for the SSHD error logs of the gateway server.

For CentOS

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

For Ubuntu

```
root@master:~# /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
>
> signature algorithm ssh-dss not in PubkeyAcceptedAlgorithms

Step 8: 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-add-failed-cannot-add-user-on-this-node-authentication-by-ssh-key-failed-827.html