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# Developer's Guide

## Basic Access Authentication

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# Basic Access Authentication

This page offers guidelines for managing Authentication with the Context Services.

## Contents

- [1 Basic Access Authentication](#)
  - [1.1 About Basic Authentication](#)
  - [1.2 Base64 Encoding](#)
  - [1.3 Request Flow and Returned Errors](#)

### About Basic Authentication

**Wikipedia Basic Access Authentication** states that:

*In the context of an HTTP transaction, the basic access authentication is a method designed to allow a web browser, or other client program, to provide credentials – in the form of a user name and password – when making a request.*

The Context Services provides support for basic access authentication once enabled in the **authentication section** of your configuration.

- If basic access authentication is enabled, the REST requests must contain a valid username and password in the HTTP/HTTPS header. As a result, the Context Services sends descriptive error messages if it receives an incorrect username/password combination.
- If basic authentication is disabled, the Context Services ignores any username or password passed in HTTP/HTTPS header.

If the authentication is enabled and valid information is not provided, the Context Services returns the HTTP response **401 Unauthorized**. In that case, you should resubmit the request with the proper authentication header.

### Base64 Encoding

The authentication string to transmit is the result of the concatenation of the username and password separated by a colon (*username:password*). It must then be encoded with the Base64 algorithm. For example, if the username is 'kent' and the password 'superman', the string to encode is kent:superman and results in the string 'a2VudDpzdXB1cm1hbg=='.

If you are using a framework, it may provide the Base64-encoding transparently. If your framework does not include the Base64-encoding feature then you must encode your string. The following code snippet shows how to proceed with a Restlet application:

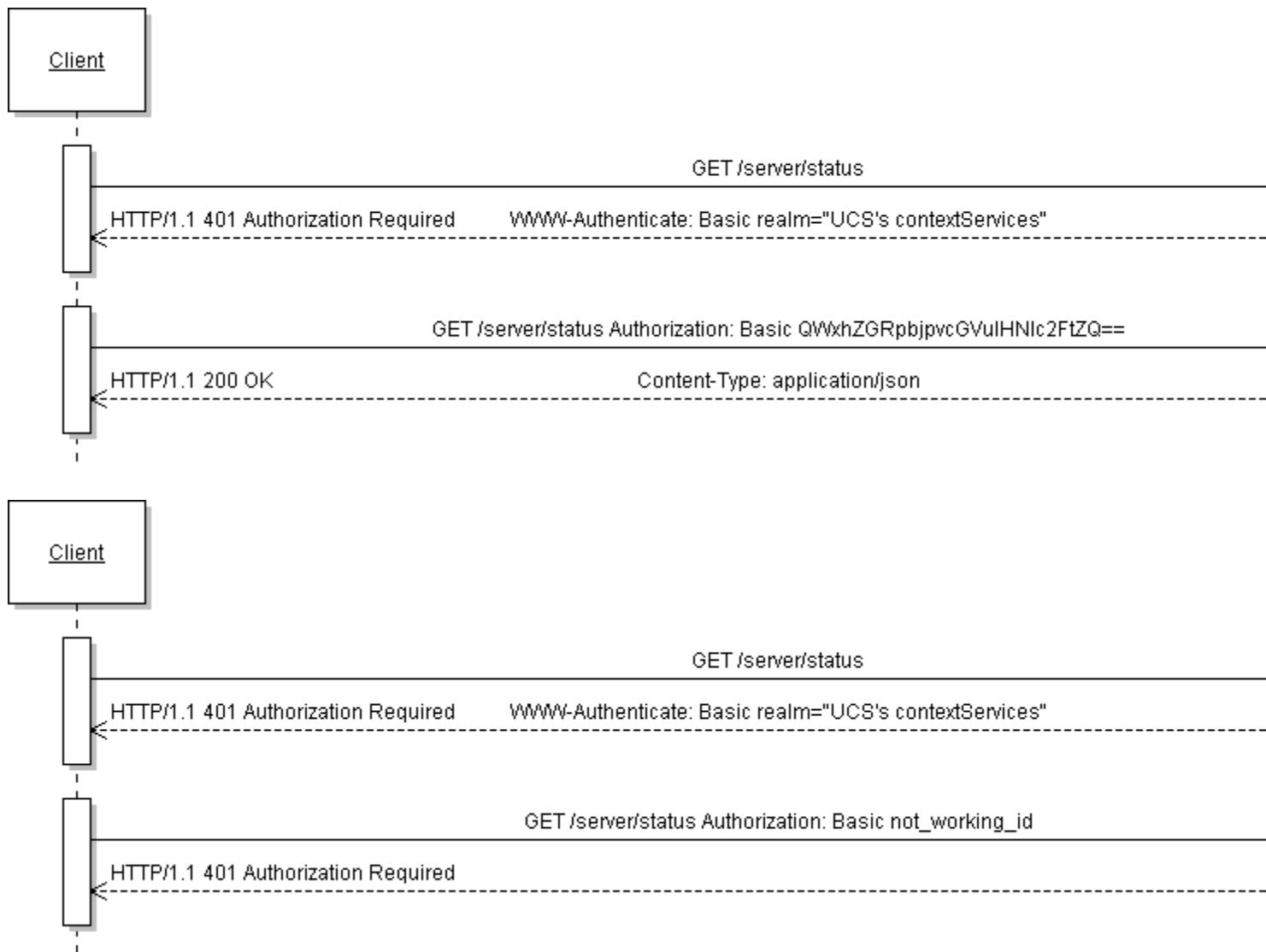
```
final Request request = new Request();
String url = "http://" + host + ":" + port + "/server/status";
request.setResourceRef(url);
request.setMethod(Method.GET);
final Client myClient = new Client(Protocol.HTTP);
ChallengeResponse authentication = new ChallengeResponse(ChallengeScheme.HTTP_BASIC, "kent",
"superman");
request.setChallengeResponse(credential);
Response response = client.handle(request);
```

#### Important

Additional examples of Base64 encoding are available in **Wikipedia Basic Access Authentication**.

## Request Flow and Returned Errors

The following sequence diagrams show the protocol request and answer flow when basic access authentication is enabled.



If the request returns the **401 Unauthorized** error, your application should retry with a correct HTTP header. The Context Services returns **401 Unauthorized** error due to authentication issues in the following scenarios:

- The authentication is enabled and the request is not authorized.
- The request provides the correct header for authentication, but wrong credential information (the username or the password is wrong).