



G Suite for Education: Domain best practices



This guide provides an overview on the different ways to set up a domain for your G Suite for Education account and focuses on:

1. **Setup recommendations**

A brief overview of how we recommend that you set up a domain with your G Suite for Education account.

2. **Domain setup options**

There are 3 ways you can set up your domain, and the one you select depends on your environment.

3. **Organizational unit structure**

Organizational units help you control which applications, services, settings, and device policies are available to users. With good design, you can simply and efficiently set up different services and policies for different groups of users.

4. **Provisioning users and groups**

Highlights how to create users and groups, and how one of our partners can help.

5. **Online resources**


Links to online resources and tools to give you more information.


Note: Additional technical resources on deploying G Suite for Education and Chromebooks as well as networking best practices can be found in our [deployment guides for G Suite for Education administrators](#).


If you're also interested in piloting devices in your organization, details can be found in the [Google for Education Pilot Guide](#).


Use this guide to **get started** with G Suite for Education and **learn best practices**.


1. Setup recommendations


-  **Review G Suite for Education Privacy Notice**


We recommend you review the G Suite for Education Privacy Notice for information on how Google collects and uses information from G Suite for Education accounts specifically. You can also visit the [Google for Education Trust site](#) for answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
-  **Work with a partner**

Partners make life easier. They have experience and expertise and can significantly reduce the time to deploy G Suite for Education. We strongly recommend working with one of our [partners](#).
-  **Use a single G Suite for Education account**

If possible, **we recommend using a single G Suite for Education account with only one domain.** However, if you have separate domains, we recommend managing them in a single G Suite for Education account so you can use one account in the Google Admin console. We call this [multiple domain](#) management. We don't recommend creating separate G Suite for Education accounts for each domain as this limits sharing capabilities. It's also a *manual, time-consuming, and unsupported* process if you need to merge G Suite for Education accounts in the future. There are some [limitations](#) to managing multiple domains for one account, which you should keep in mind if you have multiple domains.
-  **Organizational structure importance**

You'll control all of your domain's services via organizational units. A simple way is by school (if you're a district) and by grade level. You should decide on a structure that is scalable and relevant for you.
-  **Share using Google Groups**

It's important that you create a logical organizational unit structure, but are also able to share resources using [Google Groups](#). For example, if you're going to be sharing within classes, you can create groups that contain class members. An administrator can be in charge of creating groups or you can enable users to create groups as well through [Google Groups for Business](#).
-  **Synchronize your LDAP structure to G Suite for Education**

If you have an LDAP server, it may be useful to map the existing organizational unit structure to G Suite for Education using [G Suite for Education Directory Sync \(GADS\)](#). This simplifies the management of both environments and gives you more time to focus on other things.
-  **Integrate your information system with one of our partners**

When provisioning G Suite for Education accounts, it can be time-consuming to export users from a legacy environment and then import them to G Suite for Education. There are [partners](#) who can collect all the information, put it in the cloud, and keep it up to date for your users.

2. Domain setup options

There are 3 ways you can set up domains with G Suite for Education, and the one you select depends on how you want to configure your users' G Suite for Education accounts with a domain.

Primary domain option

This option is used for a single G Suite for Education account with one domain name. You can use domain aliases to give users the ability to send and receive mail from different email addresses (also called "nicknames").

This is the simplest and easiest way to administer your domain and is best suited for G Suite for Education customers.

Example: Single school or university, such as university.edu

Multiple domains option

This configuration still applies to a single G Suite for Education account per user, but the account is set up with multiple domains or subdomains, allowing for different user names.

This is the most common design for institutions that manage more than one domain and require user names for each domain.

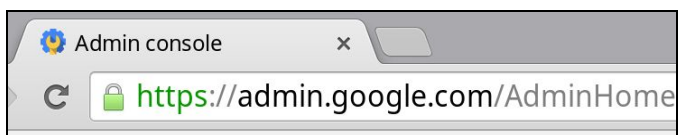
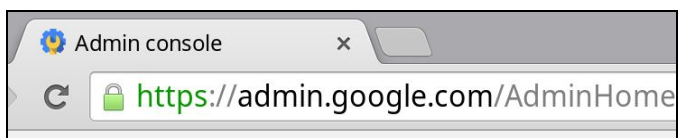
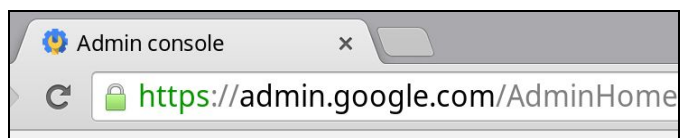
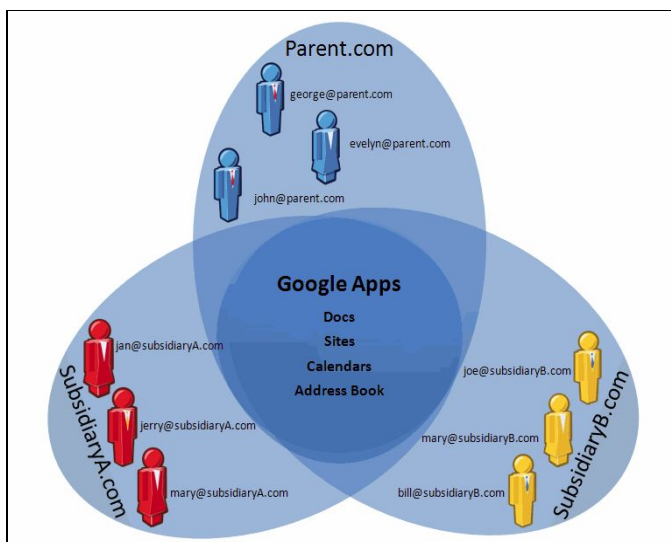
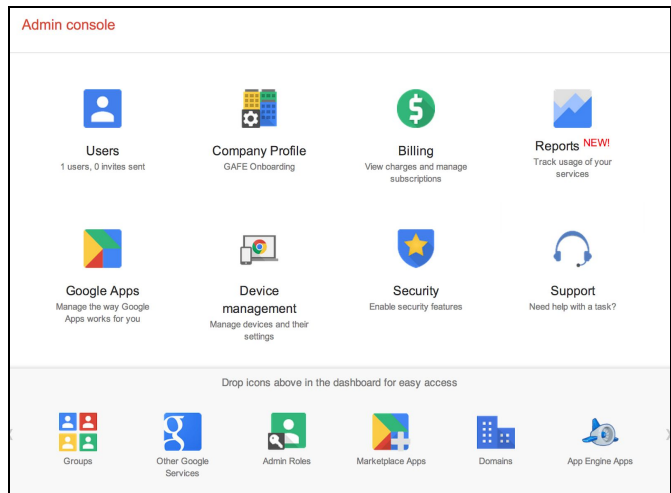
Example: School, university, or district with multiple related domains, such as law.university.edu, eng.university.edu, or district.edu.

Separate G Suite for Education accounts option

This option allows you to completely separate domains into individual G Suite for Education accounts, but requires multiple Admin console accounts.

This setup is used by partners who manage separate customers, but it's not recommended for schools.

Example: Partner managing multiple customers,



such as *customer1.edu*, *customer2.edu* and *customer3.edu*.

G Suite for Education domain design comparison

Following is an overview of the capabilities of each domain design option as well as the advantages and disadvantages to help you decide what's best for your environment. Make sure you also review [limitations for multiple domains](#) and the [FAQ on additional domains](#). For details on managing domains, see [Managing Multiple Domains with G Suite for Education](#).

Feature	Primary domain	Multiple domains	Separate accounts
Single unified administration management experience (1 Admin console account and support PIN for all licences)	Yes	Yes	No
Collaboration functionality for Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and so on	Best	OK	Limited
Single G Suite for Education directory (list of users) for all users and shared contacts	Yes	Yes	No
Single booking system for shared calendar resources	Yes	Yes	No
Email delegation available between any users	Yes	Yes <small>(with workaround)</small>	No
Number of sync tools, such as GADS or G Suite for Education Password Sync (GAPS) , required	One	One	Multiple
Ability to create individual users, such as <i>user@edu.com</i> and <i>user@school.com</i> , in any domains added to your G Suite for Education account	No	Yes	Yes
Ability to transfer a user between domains	---	Easy	Difficult <small>(Manual migration)</small>

	Primary domain	Multiple domains	Separate accounts
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy management of policies and configuration settings • Complete view and management of entire organization and all users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy reporting per domain • Easy to restrict delivery setting per domain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy reporting per domain • Easy to restrict delivery setting per domain • Completely independent management per Admin console account
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting per organization is not difficult (but possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Limitations with multiple domains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only partial view and management of entire organization

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chrome management licenses applied to organization as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different provision processes (users, mail flow, data, and so on) per Admin console account • Complex sharing settings • Contact sharing limitations • Unable to use Android setup across n-n • Unable to use full Google Play for Education functionality
Typical use case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only if there's a need to have different domains that can't be solved with a domain alias or restrict delivery setting request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only if the organizations in the different Admin console accounts work completely independently

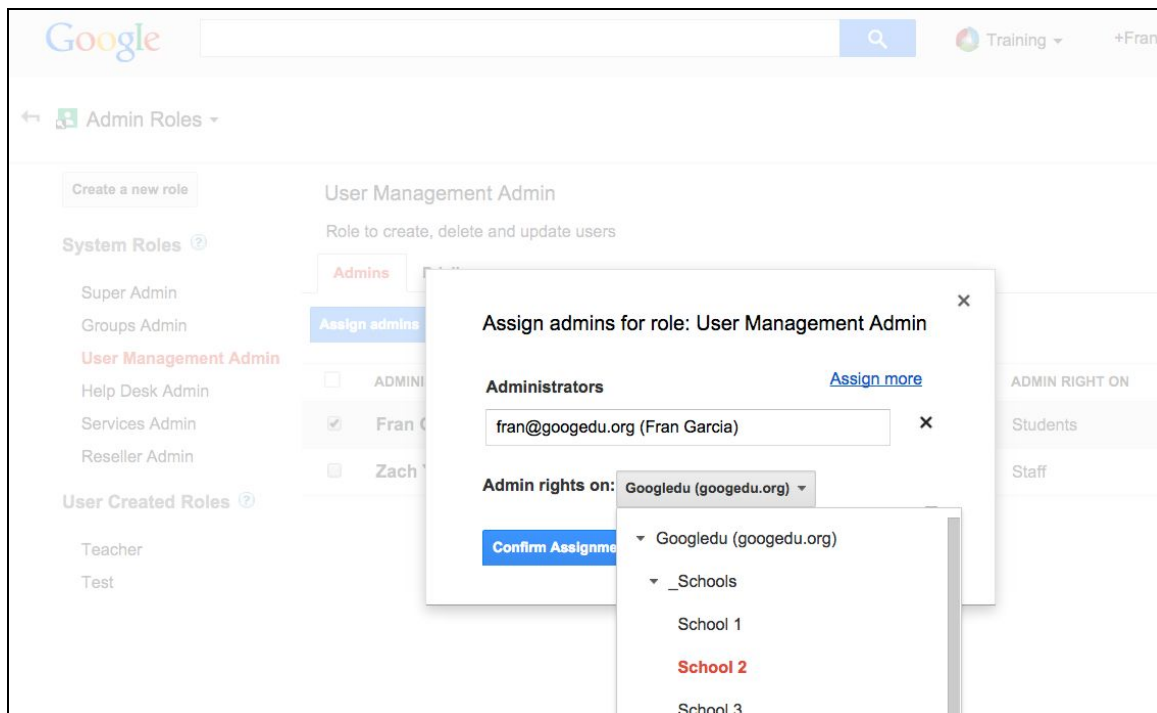
Note: You can't restrict sharing to the users in a single domain. [Sharing options](#) are based on the organization as a whole, not individual domains. This is why we recommend a single G Suite for Education account for each student and faculty member.



Be aware that merging G Suite for Education accounts after you create separate ones is a [manual](#) and time-consuming process. Contact one of our [partners](#) if you need third-party assistance.

Delegated administration

For complex structures, delegated administration might be necessary so that different administrators can manage different sub-organizations. Depending on the structure, one or more super administrators manage the complete organization. You can [assign user management roles](#) to delegated administrators.



3. Organizational unit structure

You create organizational units and structure them to control which settings and device policies are available to users. A well-designed structure is critical to effectively and flexibly manage your G Suite for Education account. The one you decide to use depends on the size of your deployment and organizational needs.

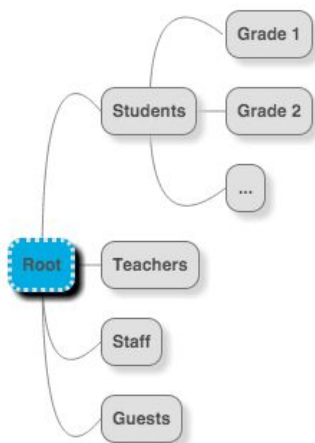
Large deployments

There are 2 options for structuring larger deployments, which usually spread farther than a single school and include other organizations or schools across a district, state, or region:

- Role-oriented structure
- Organization-oriented structure

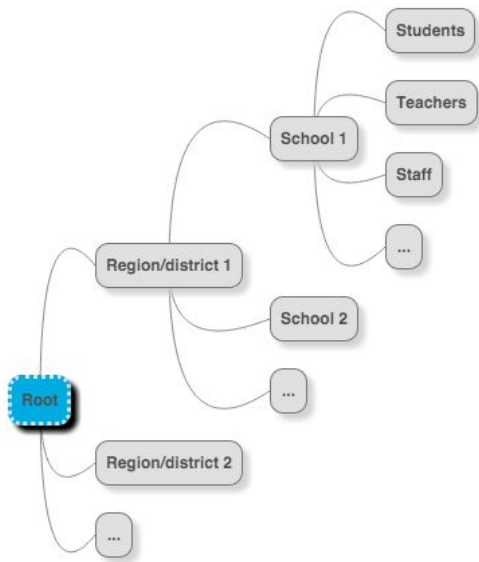
1. Role-oriented structure

In a role-oriented structure, first-level organizational units are organized by role, such as students and teachers. This structure works well if you need to define policies and settings independently of a district or school, and if simple maintenance is a priority.



2. Organization-oriented structure

An organization-oriented structure works well when organization and control is a priority. The first-level organizational units are organized by region, district, or school, with policies and settings defined by this structure. Although you have more control, you need a delegated administrator per first-level organizational unit.



Small and medium deployments

Small and medium deployments include single schools and universities, or one G Suite for Education account with multiple domains.

1. Single school or university

If your deployment involves a single school or university, you can simply create organizational units for the major groups of users and categorize them by the specific services or settings they have enabled. From there, you can create sub-organizational units, such as subject or grade. We also recommend that you create a [Google group](#) for each sub-organizational unit so that you can share Google Docs and other items via the group.

2. School, university, or district with multiple related domains

If you need to manage multiple domains within a single G Suite for Education account, you can create a separate organizational unit for each school, such as School1.com and School2.com. Utilizing sub-organizational units allows you to further organize and manage the separate domains.

Which G Suite for Education services for users?

For the best user experience, we recommend enabling all G Suite for Education services by default. In addition to the [core](#) services, you also have access to other [Google services](#), each with their own Terms of Service.

Note: You can't share an individual item, such as a Google Sheets file, with an organizational unit, but you can use [Google Groups](#) to organize users and share files.

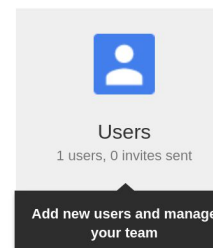
4. Provisioning users and groups

Creating users and groups is one of the first things you'll do after setting up your domain.

There are [multiple ways](#) to create users and groups in G Suite for Education:

[Admin console](#)

- Manually add [users](#) and [groups](#) individually in the Admin console.
- Add [multiple users](#) at once by uploading a .csv file in the Admin console.
- [Synchronize](#) and create users and groups automatically from your LDAP directory server in G Suite for Education (recommended if you use an LDAP server).
- Provision users and groups with partners who can place your student information system (SIS) in the cloud to create users in G Suite for Education (recommended).
- Create your own provisioning application using the G Suite for Education [Directory API](#).



Provisioning method	Benefit	Cost	Notes
Manual provisioning (Admin console)	Easy to do and quickest way to get set up if you don't have many users	If you have a lot of users, this manual process could take a long time	Manual process and not scalable
CSV upload (Admin console)	Easy to do and quick for creating many users at once	Requires you to create a list of users	Manual process
G Suite for Education Directory Sync (GADS) or G Suite for Education School Directory Sync	Automated method to create and continually synchronize all your users and groups	Requires time to configure the tool, but it's a one-off setup	GADS is recommended you have an LDAP directory server as it not only provisions users, but continually synchronizes new ones
Directory API (Custom development)	Integrates with your specific environment and useful for complex directories	Requires coding experience	Applicable for highly complex environments
Provisioning partners (Who use Directory API)	Automated method	Legal considerations for placing SIS in the cloud	Quickest and easiest way to get your G Suite for Education account up and running

Note: We recommend that you enter the Admin or Help desk contact information for end user password recovery, so users can contact the right team in case of any login issues, it only takes 1 minute! See [this article](#) for the specific steps.

5. Online resources

Below is a list of the links used in each section of this document as well as additional resources.

Best practices for domain design, organizational structure, and Single Sign-On

- [Limitations with multiple domains](#)
- [G Suite for Education Directory Sync](#)
- [G Suite for Education Password Sync](#)
- [G Suite for Education School Directory Sync](#)
- [Find a partner](#)

Domain setup options

- [What is a domain?](#)
- [Managing multiple domains](#)
- [Add domains and domain aliases](#)

Provisioning users

- [Options for adding users](#)
- [Upload many users at once](#)
- [Admin SDK](#)
- [Creating Groups](#)
- [Directory API \(new\)](#)

Organizational unit structure

- [Controlling which applications and services are available to users](#)
- [Configuring available services differently for different sets of users](#)
- [Configuring different Chrome device settings for different sets of devices](#)
- [Google Groups](#) and [Google Groups for Business](#)
- [Sharing with a group](#)

Single Sign-On

- [SAML Single Sign-On \(SSO\) Service for G Suite for Education](#)
- [Setting up Single Sign-On for G Suite for Education](#)
- [Open ID](#): Using G Suite for Education as the Identity Provider (IdP)

Additional references

- [G Suite for Education Technical Transition Guide](#)
- [Chrome Devices for Education Technical Planning Guide](#)
- [Going Google guide](#)
- [G Suite for Education Learning Center](#)
- [Administrator guide to accessibility](#)
- [Google for Education Trust Website](#)
- [G Suite for Education Privacy Notice](#)