

# Approval Framework for Access Management

Taher Alwusaibie

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7009165>

Published Date: 19-August-2022

---

**Abstract:** Ensuring the right people have the right access to the right resources at the right time is an Identity and Access Management requirement. Injecting strong and comprehensive approval process is needed to ensure that only the right people have the right access. Companies must involve the right people to approve access requests for users in the organization to prevent disclosure of sensitive data and excessive access to systems. This paper discusses an approach to approval for access requests that serves as framework for organizations to manage the approval process properly.

**Keywords:** Right people, Access Management, Companies, Approval process properly.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are different parties that are typically involved in access requests submitted by users in any company. Organizations that don't mandate correct approval scenarios could have delegated individuals granting access manually without ensuring appropriate management approval. A clear framework and process must be present to have proper approval process for any access request for data or systems.

## 2. REQUESTER MANAGEMENT APPROVAL

There are typically 2 parties involved in each access request. First is the management of the requester who submitted the request. For example, if an employee submits a request to be time keeper, then his/her management must approve the request. Typically, organization are in hierarchal structure and roles will require approval level that is appropriate to the role being requested. If a role gives basic access such as an email account in the organization, then direct team lead approval is enough. However, some roles, especially the ones linked to critical and sensitive business data or operations like access to financial data, will require higher approval level such as a department head or director approval. The approval described usually is determines by a hierarchal level that the organization may define.

To additionally enhance this concept, the organization may link this to the data classification defined within the organization. For example, assume a simple data classification guideline within the organization defines three levels of data classifications as Public, Confidential and Secret. The approval for each level would have an impact to the level of approval required. The below example could be used to describe this approach:

Classification	Approval Requirement
Public	No Approval Required
Confidential	Manager Approval
Secret	Director Approval

As organizations could struggle to define guidelines for mandating approval level, linking the approval level to data or systems classification can enhance the process to quickly identify the requester management approval requirements.

## 3. OWNER APPROVAL

On the other hand, every system, process or data have specific owner that may authorize the access. For example, access to company financial data may only be authorized by the owner of the data which could be department head of Finance. Also, access to data centers and computing information may only be authorized by the owner of this data which in this case could be the computing department manager.

Therefore, the approval process must cover 2 levels of approval which are the requester's management approval and the data or system owner approval.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It's worth nothing that as companies grow, it becomes harder for access to be delegated to individuals to grant manually which could lead to excessive access granted to users without proper reference and approval. The levels of requester management and owner approval together can provide the necessary approval level scheme for any type of access request. Using data classification guideline as a reference for defining customer approval requirement can help organizations to understand the approval needed for each type of access.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] What Is Identity and Access Management? Guide to IAM. (2022). Retrieved 18 August 2022, from <https://www.techtarget.com/searchsecurity/definition/identity-access-management-IAM-system>
- [2] Osterhues, T., & Osterhues, T. (2022). The importance of standardized identity and access management workflows in projects. Retrieved 18 August 2022, from <http://blog.betasystems-iam.com/identity-and-access-management-workflows/>