

## Reply – How do I remove this stupid "master password"?

### Message Preview



**vnicolici – Re: How do I remove this stupid "master password"?** on Feb 28, 2021; 1:50am

I've been using, reluctantly, pgAdmin4 for the last couple of years or so. And only because pgAdmin 3 became almost unusable with the recent PostgreSQL versions. But at times, like when needing to view the list of active sessions, pgAdmin 3 still is a better tool, even after all these years (I mean, the new tool doesn't even show you the SQL of each session in the session table, so you can't see at a glance what the DB is doing; You have to manually inspect each session individually. Even using a SQL query on the sessions table is better than using the pgAdmin 4 UI for this purpose).

Anyway, with the release of pgAdmin4 v5 it seems some steps in the right direction, towards making it more like pgAdmin 3, have been made. For example the desktop version finally doesn't need a web browser anymore (btw, how can I change the font size in the v5 desktop version?).

However, going back to the topic, this extremely annoying "master password" feature is still included in v5. And, when I say it's annoying, I'm not talking about the use of the word "master", which some people may find offensive. I'm talking about wasting hours of our lives by having to do useless stuff repeatedly. This feature annoyed me so much, that part of my master password is the F word, obviously referring to the feature.

So, today, after upgrading to v5, I tried to find a way to disable this time waster, which should be opt-in anyway and configurable from the UI. But, for some unfathomable reason, the PGAdmin devs decided to make us jump through hoops again, and not allow us to easily disable the "feature". And the documentation is extremely confusing regarding how to disable it.

To begin, there is a question mark on the master password password dialog, which brings you to the documentation about the feature which says:

"You can disable the master password by setting the configuration parameter MASTER\_PASSWORD\_REQUIRED=False. See Desktop Deployment for more information."

OK, fine, obviously the option to change the configuration parameter should be in the UI, shouldn't it? So I go to File -> Runtime -> Configure. Surprise. It's not there. It's not in the preferences section either. OK, time to read the Desktop Deployment help section. First of all, the Desktop Deployment help section immediately tries to send me somewhere else with:

"See The config.py File for more information on configuration settings."

But I'll ignore that for the time being, and read the rest. Finally, at the bottom of the Desktop Deployment help page, there is this:

"The configuration settings are stored in runtime\_config.json file, which will be available on Unix systems (~/.local/share/pgadmin/), on Mac OS X (~/.Library/Preferences/pgadmin), and on Windows (%APPDATA%/pgadmin)."

OK, so I open a command prompt and do a "cd %APPDATA%/pgadmin" since I'm on Windows. This is what I find there:

```
2021-02-28 00:40 <DIR> .
2021-02-28 00:40 <DIR> ..
```

```

2021-02-28 00:40          323,584 pgadmin4.db
2021-02-26 18:22      6,074,949 pgadmin4.log
2021-02-27 23:38          125 runtime_config.json
2021-02-28 00:40    <DIR>          sessions
2020-12-16 12:33    <DIR>          storage
          3 File(s)      6,398,658 bytes

```

Since runtime\_config.json was mentioned, I list the file in the console:

```

> copy runtime_config.json con
{
  "fixedPort": false,
  "portNo": 5050,
  "connectionTimeout": 90,
  "windowWidth": 1300,
  "windowHeight": 900
}
1 file(s) copied.

```

Hmm. These parameters don't look at all like the one described in the previous documentation page, about the master password. They are camelCase, unlike the MASTER\_PASSWORD\_REQUIRED=False the master password documentation page suggested I add. They are also in JSON format, so probably adding "MASTER\_PASSWORD\_REQUIRED": false, or "MASTER\_PASSWORD\_REQUIRED": "False" to that JSON is a bad idea, most likely the parameter must be set somewhere else.

After a bit of Googling and Binging it seems the file I need to modify is a .py file, not a .json file. However, there are no python files in that directory. So I finally heed the advice on the documentation to "See The config.py File for more information on configuration settings."

Since the documentation page for config.py is very long, I try do to a Control+F on it to find the word "master". Unfortunately, this doesn't work anymore in PgAdmin v5 since it's not a regular browser window. So I need to look online for the same documentation, to be able to search it.

After a bit of Googling/Binging, I find this:

[https://www.enterprisedb.com/edb-docs/d/pgadmin-4/reference/online-documentation/5.0/config\\_py.html](https://www.enterprisedb.com/edb-docs/d/pgadmin-4/reference/online-documentation/5.0/config_py.html)

From it:

```

#####
# Master password is used to encrypt/decrypt saved server passwords
# Applicable for desktop mode only
#####
MASTER_PASSWORD_REQUIRED = True

```

So, indeed, that file seems to be related to this feature. Also, the documentation page describes additional related files:

"There are multiple configuration files that are read at startup by pgAdmin. These are as follows:

config.py: This is the main configuration file, and should not be modified. It can be used as a reference for configuration settings, that may be overridden in one of the following files.

config\_distro.py: This file is read after config.py and is intended for packagers to change any settings that are required for their pgAdmin distribution. This may typically include certain paths and file locations. This file is optional, and may be created by packagers in the same directory as config.py if needed.

config\_local.py: This file is read after config\_distro.py and is intended for end users to change any

default or packaging specific settings that they may wish to adjust to meet local preferences or standards. This file is optional, and may be created by users in the same directory as config.py if needed.

config\_system.py: This file is read after config\_local.py and is intended for system administrators to include settings that are configured system-wide from a secure location that users cannot normally modify and that is outside of the pgAdmin installation. The location for this file varies based on the platform, and only needs to be created if desired:

Linux: /etc/pgadmin/config\_system.py

macOS: /Library/Preferences/pgadmin/config\_system.py

Windows: %CommonProgramFiles%\pgadmin\config\_system.py"

Hmm. So apparently the file I need to modify is config\_local.py. And I need to create it in the same directory as config.py. But obviously the documentation doesn't bother to tell me in which directory config.py is, that would be too simple. Instead it tells me where config\_system.py should be, and that directory doesn't even exist. It probably needs to be created, just as the file:

```
> cd %CommonProgramFiles%\pgadmin
The system cannot find the path specified.
```

So, running out of ideas, I just used a file manager (Total Commander) to try to find the config.py file on my filesystem, since the documentation was useless in this regard. Doing that found 35 config.py files on my main drive, out of which 7 were related to pgAdmin4 v5, another 7 to v4, and the other 21 were unrelated. Those related to v5 were:

```
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\python\Lib\site-packages\ldap3\utils\config.py
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\python\Lib\site-packages\alembic\config.py
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\python\Lib\site-packages\flask_login\config.py
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\python\Lib\site-packages\paramiko\config.py
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\python\Lib\site-packages\flask\config.py
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\python\Lib\site-packages\sqlalchemy\testing\config.py
c:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\web\config.py
```

The most likely one to be relevant seemed to be v5\web\config.py, and after listing the files in that location it looked indeed like the correct location:

```
Directory of C:\Program Files\pgAdmin 4\v5\web

2021-02-22  11:21          26,068 config.py
2021-02-22  11:42           145 config_distro.py
2021-02-22  11:21          8,825 pgAdmin4.py
2021-02-22  11:21       15,447 setup.py
               4 File(s)        50,485 bytes
```

Inspecting the file does indeed seem to show I'm in the correct location, as it contains this:

```
MASTER_PASSWORD_REQUIRED = True
```

So... this means, that to alter the configuration of the application I need to create a config\_local.py file here, with MASTER\_PASSWORD\_REQUIRED = False . Not the greatest idea. Applications should have their user modifiable configuration files in the application data folder. The program files folder is dedicated for application binaries and other related files that shouldn't be modified by the user.

But, at this point, two hours have passed from my Saturday night fighting with pgAdmin 5, so I decide to stop trying to find a more elegant solution to the problem, and just do it. Oh, but the operating system agrees that I, as a user, have no business adding or modifying files directly there, so it denies my access.

Finally, running the file manager as administrator, I'm able to create the file. I close pgAdmin. I reopen it. Finally. The time wasting dialog is gone. It just that I had to waste another two hours to do that. And, hopefully, it won't come back when updating pgAdmin. All this because some devs have to be stubborn and not listen to their users. Sigh.

This message was sent from **vladnc@gmail.com** to the **pgadmin-support@postgresql.org** mailing list.

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