

cloudwithshad

BOOTCAMP · MAY 2026 COHORT



Pre-Bootcamp Setup Guide

INSTALL · CONFIGURE · VERIFY

Your developer toolkit, ready before Day 1

Python · Visual Studio Code · Git Bash

Estimated time to complete: 30-45 minutes

Shadrack Darku · 6x AWS Certified · GenAI Developer

WELCOME

Get your toolkit ready.

Three tools. Forty-five minutes. Zero stress on Day 1.

Before the cohort begins on Friday, 23 May 2026, you'll install three tools that every modern developer uses every day: **Python**, **Visual Studio Code**, and **Git Bash** (or Terminal on Mac). They're all free, all well-documented, and once installed they stay on your computer for years.

We install them *before* the bootcamp starts so that on Day 1 we build real AWS infrastructure together — not troubleshoot installations. Take your time today. Go slowly. The cohort WhatsApp group is open if you get stuck.

"The boring part of any bootcamp is the setup. Let's get it out of the way quietly, so next week we can move fast and focus on the cloud."

WHAT YOU'LL INSTALL

Three tools, one toolkit

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	TIME
Python 3	The programming language we use for scripts, automation, and Lambda functions.	10 min
Visual Studio Code	Our code editor. Where you write, edit, and run all your project files.	10 min
Git Bash / Terminal	The command line - how you talk to AWS, push code, and do other things.	10 min

NOTE A note on operating systems

Screenshots and exact menus differ slightly between Windows, macOS, and Linux. The commands themselves are 95% identical. Where it matters, we call out the difference clearly.

TOOL A

Install Python

The language of automation, AI, and 90% of cloud scripting

A

STEP-BY-STEP

Install Python in 4 steps

1 Visit the official Python download page

Open your browser and go to: python.org/downloads
Click the big yellow 'Download Python 3.x' button.
The site detects your operating system automatically.

2 Run the installer

Open the downloaded file. On Windows, the installer opens.
On Mac, double-click the .pkg file to begin.
Use the default options unless noted below.

WARNING Critical for Windows users

On the first installer screen, you **MUST** tick the box that says "Add Python to PATH" before clicking Install. If you miss this, Python will not work from the command line and you'll need to uninstall and reinstall to fix it.

3 Open your terminal and verify

Windows: open Command Prompt or PowerShell (search in Start menu).
Mac: open Terminal (Cmd+Space, type 'Terminal', press Enter).
Type the command below to confirm Python installed correctly.

```
Terminal
$ python --version
Python 3.12.0
> On macOS you may need to type 'python3 --version' instead
```

4 Verify pip (Python's package installer)

Pip is what we use to install Python libraries. Run:

```
Terminal
$ pip --version
pip 23.x.x from /path/to/python/site-packages/pip
```

SUCCESS If both commands show version numbers

Python is installed correctly. Move on to the next tool.

TOOL B

Visual Studio Code

The free, fast, friendly code editor used by millions

B

STEP-BY-STEP

Install VS Code in 4 steps

1 Download VS Code

Open your browser and visit: code.visualstudio.com
Click the big blue 'Download' button.
It auto-detects your OS (Windows, Mac, or Linux).

2 Run the installer

Windows: accept the license, click Next through defaults.
On 'Additional Tasks', tick: "Add to PATH" and "Open with Code".
Mac: drag VS Code into your Applications folder.

3 Install the Python extension

Open VS Code.
On the left sidebar, click the Extensions icon (four small squares).
Search for "Python" (by Microsoft) and click Install.
This adds Python superpowers: autocomplete, debugging, run buttons.

4 Confirm VS Code can find your Python

Press Ctrl+Shift+P (Cmd+Shift+P on Mac) to open the command palette.
Type: "Python: Select Interpreter" and press Enter.
Pick Python 3.x from the list.

TIP If Python doesn't appear in the list

Close VS Code and reopen it - it sometimes needs a restart to pick up newly installed Python versions. If still missing, your Python install didn't add itself to PATH (see the warning on the Python page).

TOOL C

Git Bash & Terminal

The command line - how real engineers talk to computers

C

FOR WINDOWS USERS

Install Git Bash (includes Git)

1 Download Git for Windows

Visit: git-scm.com/download/win

The download starts automatically when the page loads.

Run the installer once the download is complete.

2 Install with these specific options

Click Next through most screens. Watch for two key screens:

Default editor: choose "Use Visual Studio Code as Git's default"

PATH environment: choose "Git from the command line and 3rd-party software"

Everything else: defaults are fine.

3 Open Git Bash and verify

From your Start Menu, search for and open "Git Bash".

In the black window that appears, type the command below.

```
$ git --version
git version 2.45.x.windows.1
```

Terminal

FOR MAC USERS

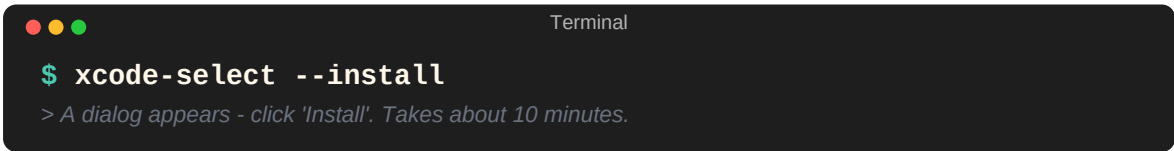
Use Terminal (already installed)

1 Open Terminal

Press Cmd+Space, type "Terminal", press Enter.
On Mac you don't need Git Bash - Terminal does the same job.

2 Install Git via Xcode Command Line Tools

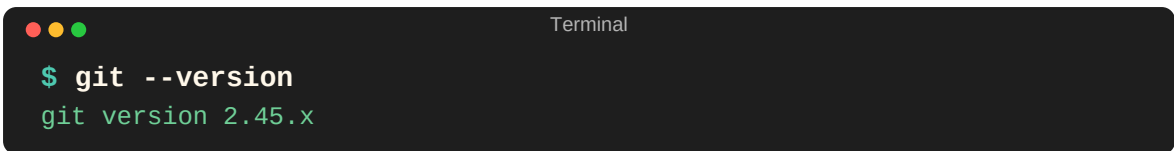
If Git isn't already installed, this command installs it:



```
Terminal
$ xcode-select --install
> A dialog appears - click 'Install'. Takes about 10 minutes.
```

3 Verify Git is installed

Once the installation completes, run:



```
Terminal
$ git --version
git version 2.45.x
```

CONFIGURE GIT · WINDOWS & MAC

Tell Git who you are

Git needs to know your name and email so it can attach them to your commits. This is a one-time setup. Run these two commands one after the other, replacing the placeholder values with your real name and email.

```
Terminal
$ git config --global user.name "Your Full Name"
> Use your real name - this appears in your code commits
```

```
Terminal
$ git config --global user.email "you@example.com"
> Use the same email as your GitHub account if you have one
```

NOTE No output means it worked

Git config commands run silently when successful. To check that they saved, run 'git config --global --list' - you'll see your name and email in the output.

BONUS: AWS ACCOUNT SETUP

If your AWS signup gets stuck...

AWS account creation is normally smooth, but a few specific things go wrong for students in West Africa more than anywhere else. If you hit any of these, don't give up - there are well-known fixes below.

The most common blocker is the phone verification step. AWS sends an SMS or voice call with a 6-digit code. Sometimes the SMS never arrives, the voice call doesn't go through, or the system says "max attempts exceeded." Here's exactly what to do.

TIP Fix #1 - Try a different network

If MTN doesn't work, switch to Telecel (or vice versa). Some students report MTN blocking AWS verification SMS while Telecel goes through fine. Vodafone/Telecel and AirtelTigo also often work. Use a number you have direct access to in real time.

TIP Fix #2 - Switch SMS to voice call

On the verification screen, AWS gives you a choice between SMS code and voice call. If the SMS isn't arriving, click "call me instead" - a robot will phone your number and read out the code. Have a pen ready.

TIP Fix #3 - Wait 6-12 hours and retry

If AWS says "max attempts exceeded", do NOT keep trying. The system locks you out further. Wait at least 6-12 hours, then try again. Many students report success on the second day.

STILL STUCK?

Contact AWS Customer Support directly

If you've tried the fixes above and verification still won't go through, the next step is to **open a support case with AWS directly**. They have a dedicated team for account verification issues, and they resolve most cases within 24 hours.

How to reach AWS Support:

1 Open the AWS Support page

Visit: aws.amazon.com/contact-us/
Select "Account and billing support" then "Account".
Click "Get started today" to open a case.

2 Choose a contact method

AWS offers Email, Phone, and Live Chat (recommended).
Live chat is the fastest - usually a real human within 5 minutes.
If chat is busy, choose Email - reply usually comes within 24 hours.

3 Explain your issue clearly

Tell them: "I'm signing up for a new AWS account and the phone verification step is failing. I've tried [SMS / voice call] on [network] and the code never arrives."
Include your email address used during signup.

NOTE The honest truth about AWS Support

When you submit a case, the FIRST response is often automated (an AI agent). Don't stop there. Reply asking for a human agent or live chat, and you'll get one. Many students give up at the AI response, but the human team behind it is genuinely helpful and resolves cases quickly.

SUCCESS When all else fails

Drop a screenshot of your AWS error in the cohort WhatsApp group. Someone in the community has almost certainly hit the same problem and knows the fix. The instructor will help personally if no one else does.

CONFIRMATION

The 60-second smoke test

Before you close this guide, run these three commands one after another. If all three return version numbers (not "command not found"), you're 100% ready for Day 1 of the bootcamp.

```
Terminal
$ python --version
Python 3.12.0
```

```
Terminal
$ code --version
1.85.x
```

```
Terminal
$ git --version
git version 2.45.x
```

SUCCESS All three returned version numbers?

You're ready. Welcome to the cohort. Drop a quick "setup complete" in the WhatsApp group so we know you're in.

WARNING Something didn't work?

Don't sweat it - happens to almost everyone the first time. Take a screenshot of the error and drop it in the cohort WhatsApp group. Someone in the community will spot the fix within minutes.

A NOTE FROM YOUR INSTRUCTOR

See you on the other side.

Setup days feel boring. They feel like "not the real work". But they're the foundation everything else rests on. Spending an hour today getting your environment right means we can spend the next four weeks building real things - without ever stopping to fix installations.

If anything in this guide didn't go smoothly, that's normal. Every developer in the world has been stuck on installation at some point. Don't push through alone - drop a message in the WhatsApp group and let the community help. That's what it's there for.

"The path isn't always clear — but it clears as you walk. Start walking today."

Shadrack Darku

Founder & Lead Instructor, cloudwithshad

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