



A CLOUD GURU



Case Study Miami Dade College

Upskilling students to meet cloud talent needs

About Miami Dade College

Opened in 1960 as Dade County Junior College, Miami Dade College (MDC) is the nation's most diverse institution with 89% of students identifying as Hispanic or Black.

Miami Dade College is committed to staying on the forefront of technology and innovation, and to fulfill that commitment, the college partners with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and A Cloud Guru (ACG).




Antonio Delgado
Dean of Engineering, Technology and Design




Diego Tibaquira
Associate Professor, Senior



 **Miami, Florida**

 **Type**
Public College

 **Founded**
1960

 **Credit Enrollment**
90,000

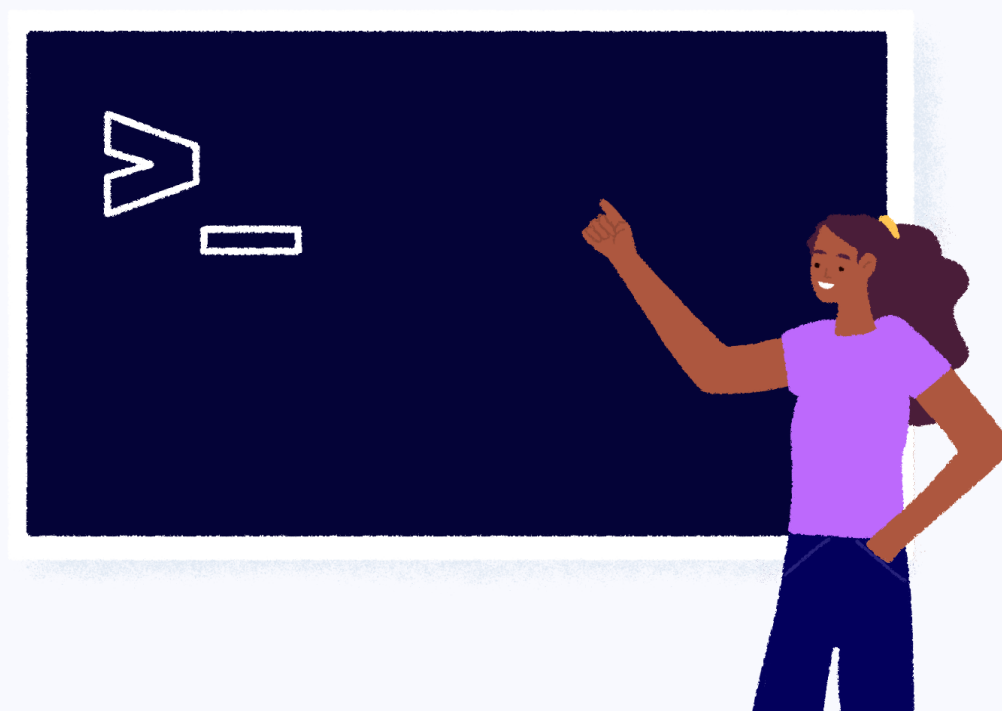
 **Client Since**
2017

Cloud in the classroom

MDC is one of the largest and most diverse institutions of higher education in the United States with eight campuses across South Florida.

Antonio Delgado, Dean of Engineering, Technology, and Design, says the college is focused on creating emerging technology education based on demands in the job market and input from area businesses. With cloud computing being the most in-demand hard skill according to LinkedIn for five of the last six years, adding cloud to the curriculum only made sense.

"We're always looking for ways to create new programs that help our students gain skills that make them more marketable in the modern workforce," Dean Delgado says.



A new school of thought

As Miami Dade College began to develop cloud computing degree programs and its Cloud Computing Center, the college began looking for a way to accelerate learning for students and faculty in AWS and other modern tech skills. The college needed a way to go beyond theory to actually preparing students for careers in cloud — giving them real-world experience and earning certifications. That's when they turned to A Cloud Guru.

"We set out to do something new," Dean Delgado says. "For the first time, we're seeing a new wave of students coming out of college or university with skills in cloud computing. If we don't help them get a certification, they're not competitive enough."

About the Cloud Computing Center

This Center serves as a cloud computing hub where technology leaders, industry experts, and students can engage and collaborate. It will house the only College Credit Certificate and Associate of Science degrees in Enterprise Cloud Computing in the state of Florida. It will expose students and existing IT professionals to industry-leading cloud platforms and industry certifications needed to fill increasing demand for IT cloud jobs. The Center also hosts cloud computing accelerated training programs, summer camps, forums, speakers, and events, as Miami Dade College continues to serve the community.

Those who can and teach

The first step was getting college faculty up to speed. Cloud and Cybersecurity faculty member Dr. Diego Tibaquirá used A Cloud Guru on his own to get certified before he began advocating for the college to partner with ACG.

"ACG is just the best," Dr. Tibaquirá says. "I said, 'We've got to bring A Cloud Guru to the classroom. If I'm teaching this class, this is what I want as one of my tools.'"

Dean Delgado agreed. Working with A Cloud Guru, Miami Dade College now has eight certified Solutions Architects on faculty.

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Faculty really benefit from getting this type of training to teach the students the skills they need to have for the workplace, Dean Delgado says. Our students learn from faculty who really know the content.

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A cloud syllabus

Dr. Tibaquirá requires students to complete A Cloud Guru courses as a percentage of their grade to increase their chances of getting certified. His classes include a combination of lectures in the classroom and hands-on training as homework, and the final exam is the related certification.

"We want the students to get the grade, pass the class, get a degree, and have the certifications because that's going to make them that much more employable when they get out into the real world," Dr. Tibaquirá says. "It ensures that this isn't just another class; it's something they can put on their résumé."



No more pencils, no more books

Traditionally, the education sector can move at a glacial pace out of step with the ever-changing world of cloud. But Miami Dade College is always looking for ways to stay ahead of the curve and ensure students aren't being left behind.

By partnering with A Cloud Guru, instructors and students get access to constantly updated content and no longer have to worry about outdated textbooks or lessons. In addition, faculty and students can further develop skills or get a refresher with on-demand, interactive learning, including more than 1,500 Hands-On Labs designed for teaching a new concept in as little as 15 minutes.

To the cloud and beyond

As employers are typically looking for candidates with at least 2–4 years of experience, Dean Delgado says getting on-the-job experience in cloud can be a catch-22 for newcomers.

“My job has been to educate local companies that are looking for cloud talent that they need to create entry-level positions, so we can match our students with someone who can give them that experience,” he says.

What started with a discussion with all area employers with at least five open cloud positions has resulted in an internship program to develop talent locally with South Florida AWS partners. The plan includes grant money to pay 50% of interns’ salaries, making it even more attractive to area employers.

This pipeline of skilled cloud workers is mutually beneficial to the school’s burgeoning cloud talent and employers. Interns gain valuable on-the-job experience and get a potential “in” for landing a full-time job. And employers are able to build rather than buy talent, a task that can range from prohibitively expensive to basically impossible given the high demand for cloud skills.

Why build talent rather than buy it?

The demand for cloud talent outpaces the supply. It can cost more than **\$30,000 USD** to recruit and hire a mid-career cloud engineer, and **63% of IT leaders** say it’s harder to find a qualified engineer than it is to find Bigfoot.

The student becomes the master

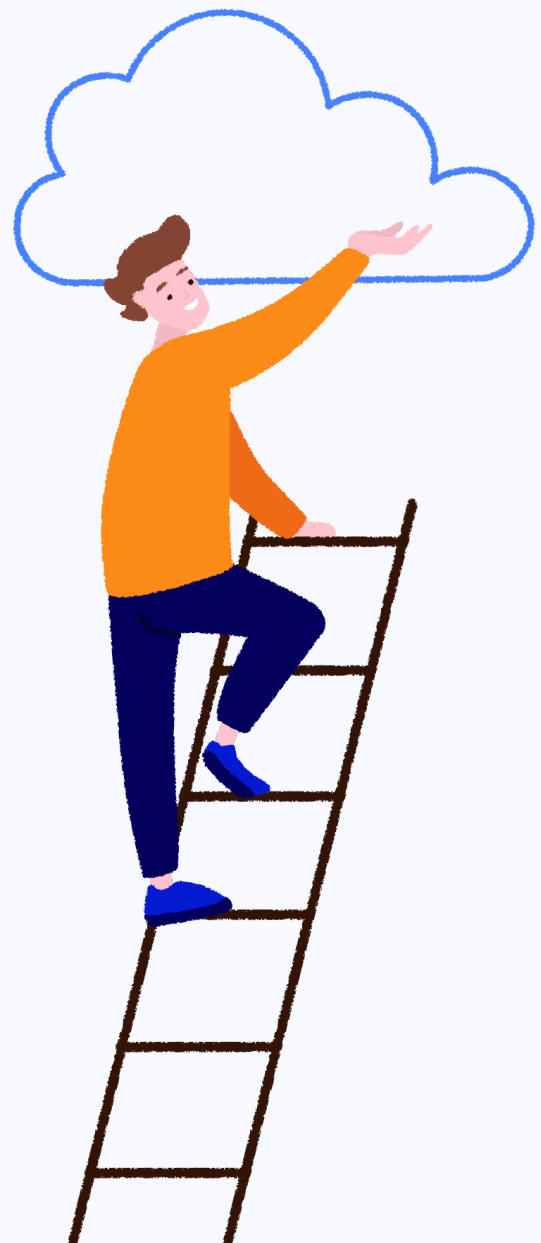
Students like Elias Marcet have benefited from learning with A Cloud Guru and are already entering the workforce with cloud skills.

Marcet started on an IT career path a year ago, and is now the president of his campus's Cybersecurity Club and is an AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner and Certified Solutions Architect - Associate. He's also made big leaps in his career in a short amount of time by upskilling. Marcet was previously working in operations for the City of Miami Parking Department, but using his newly acquired cloud skills, he was able to move to a new role in the IT department.

"It was incredible," Dr. Tibaquirá says. "He wasn't deep in technology at first, but he showed his employer he's a valuable asset."

Marcet says A Cloud Guru's instructors make complicated topics easy to follow and the learning platform has helped him develop new skills through a learn-by-doing approach.

"One of the key things that I found with A Cloud Guru was that it wasn't just for passing the exam. It gives you hands-on experience as well, which is something that other platforms try to do. But they're not as in-depth or easy to follow," Marcet says. "That hands-on experience — the fact that you can actually do it — helps you when you're looking for a job."





“

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Elias Marcet, Student at Miami Dade College



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Progress report

Today, Miami Dade College has three cloud-focused courses offered across multiple campuses. And after 18 months, more than 100 students have been AWS certified.

“That for me is the biggest accomplishment, and pretty much all of those students have been using A Cloud Guru,” Dean Delgado says. “A Cloud Guru really helps our college students. They’re more marketable now for those full-time jobs that we want them to have.”

The reception from students has been overwhelmingly positive.

“It’s a great platform. My students probably like A Cloud Guru more than they like me,” Dr. Tibaquirá joked.

While the program is still young, Dr. Tibaquirá says it’s been a success — he is especially proud that one student has received a job offer from AWS. And he’s excited to see how the courses continue to develop as the college looks to expand offerings to focus on Linux, security, data analytics, DevOps, and other highly sought-after skills.

Dr. Tibaquirá says he hopes other schools take note of Miami Dade College’s approach. “You want to do cloud? We’ve got a solution that will help you get your curriculum to the next level and help your students get better prepared for certifications and jobs.”

Get schooled on hands-on learning

Even if you're not an institution of higher learning, there's plenty to be learned from Miami Dade College's success. Getting hands on with cloud is hands down the only way to master new cloud skills.

That's why A Cloud Guru's in-depth technical content is seamlessly paired with hands-on learning. This approach helps people pick up real skills in real (and safe) environments — all without real risks, like surprise bills or security concerns.

85%
of ACG learners say they
retain more by doing

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