

Issues and Challenges

1. Unable to Deploy and Clean First Deployment Attempts

The GitLab pipeline succeeded on the first deployment.

The next pipeline run failed with SSH authentication errors:

“Permission denied (publickey)”

Each VM stopped accepting the same SSH key immediately after the first successful login.

Attempted fixes included adjusting permissions on ~/.ssh and authorized_keys on the second virtual machine.

The issue persisted: first login always worked, and every login after that failed.

2. Debugging With TA Instructions

After receiving troubleshooting guidance from the TAs:

A third VM was created, but the same issue occurred after the first login.

Permissions were validated (~/.ssh = 700, authorized_keys = 600).

SSH keys were also verified using ssh-add on the local machine.

Despite these steps, every VM behaved identically:

SSH access worked once.

SSH access failed permanently after that.

3. Service Verification Despite SSH Issues

Even though SSH consistently failed after the first login, the deployed service continued functioning normally on all VMs.

Verification commands:

```
curl ubuntu@<VM_IP>:8199/status  
curl ubuntu@<VM_IP>:8199/log
```

Sample observed output:

```
2025-11-21T20:39:38Z: uptime 175.17 hours, free disk in root: 72065  
MBytes  
2025-11-17T16:31:00Z: uptime 75.02 hours, free disk in root: 72219  
MBytes
```

These results confirm:

The application deployed correctly.

Docker and Docker Compose ran continuously.

HTTP endpoints were reachable and returned correct output.

All VMs responded properly to curl requests even after SSH access was lost.

4. Key Issues and Challenges Encountered

4.1. SSH Failure After First Login

Each VM accepted SSH only once immediately after creation.

After the first login, every subsequent SSH connection (local or via GitLab CI) failed with:

“Permission denied (publickey)”

4.2. Multiple VM Creations

A total of three CSC virtual machines were created due to recurring SSH lock-out.

GitLab CI could decode and use the SSH key only on the first deploy.

Subsequent runs failed due to the same public-key authentication issue.

Summary:

Despite following documentation, TA instructions, and recreating three separate VMs, the main blocker throughout the assignment was the consistent failure of SSH authentication after the first successful login. This issue affected all subsequent deployment attempts, caused GitLab pipeline failures, and ultimately prevented repeatable deployments as required by the assignment specification.