

This document outlines what qualities a UGTA should have and how UGTAs should handle certain situations.

QUALITIES:

The most important quality that a UGTA should have is patience. Teaching/problem solving can be extremely frustrating at times, because not only do you have to figure out the problem, you have to figure out how to convey the solution to the student without giving them the answer. Therefore, patience is needed if the student needs a little more guidance, or if they need it explained in a different way than you are used to. Adaptability is a quality that goes hand in hand with patience. Technical abilities can be refreshed and can be looked up online as well, so I believe the soft skills are the most important.

Something else to add is that a person applying to be a UGTA should have some experience working in a team environment. Whether it be being in an extracurricular in high school, or being a committee member/officer in an organization on campus, I believe having this experience makes for better UGTAs, as they are used to working with other people and having someone depend on them, so they know about accountability. This also makes it easier for them to work with the student when they need help, because they have indirect experience.

SITUATION HANDLING:

Being a CS 1136 UGTA means learning how to problem solve and figure out the solution. Most of the time, a chunk of the time is spent figuring out the issue, whether it be a missing bracket or semicolon, or the loop is infinite. Learning to be patient is extremely important because it gives you a clear mind to figure out how to help the student. A scary part about the job is not knowing the answer, but that is okay. Tools such as GeeksForGeeks, StackOverflow, or even your fellow UGTAs/GLAs are there to help you. It's not a bad thing to not know all the answers; you just

have to know how to handle that situation properly so the student doesn't get their time wasted with an incorrect answer.

In the small group sessions, it can often be difficult to have the students open up to you about what questions they may have on the code, let alone their life. I found that if you open up first, then they feel more comfortable opening up to you. It may be uncomfortable at first, but it pays off in the long run, because you can create meaningful relationships with the students. Having meaningful relationships with the students will make them excited to come to lab, rather than dreading it and only coming for the attendance grade.

If future UGTAs follow these two pieces of general advice, they will have a much easier time as a UGTA.