Jan8. Participant 4

STEM Wizard Update Discovery Research Discussion Guide

Andrew. Army. Tech degree. Working on Masters in Cyber.

**Top Findings**

Doesn’t understand why someone would want or need to “update their benefits”.

Not familiar with STEM Scholarship.

On question phrasing: thinks all Veterans would be interested in “extending” their benefits.

Quote: *I’m not a fan of applying for things I’m not eligible for.*

Mentions that scholarships can work against your VA benefits. Thinks it would be good to reassure people that they won’t lose their benefits if they apply for this scholarship

Familiar with acronym: STEM

When looking at scholarship question in 22-995, says info about STEM scholarship should appear “earlier in the process” *so you don’t waste your time applying if it’s not relevant.*

In STEM Scholarship description, concerned about the words “may qualify” … thinks you either qualify or you don’t.

**How did you go about applying for educational benefits?** (paper form, online, worked with SCO, etc) [A bit beyond our scope, however it may help us understand their comfort level with online forms]

*Very fortunate that at American they were good and walked through it. American has a lot of time to help people. Title of one person was VA Coordinator.*

*There’s a big push at Brown to get more Veterans in their programs.*

What type of degree are you pursuing?

*Using them now. Getting Masters in Cyber from Brown University.*

How far through the program are you?

Approximately how many months or years of educational benefit do you have remaining?

*Has about a year and a half of benefits left.*

[If STEM] Do you have any interest in obtaining a teaching certification after you graduate?

**Questions**

What would you expect to happen when you click the green "Find your education benefits form" button?

*Wonders if you had to be signed in to access this page.*

*Would make sure he was signed-in first.*

Feel free to click the button. What are your thoughts on this question?

*Would want to know what he’s eligible for… Montgomery GI Bill…*

What would you expect to happen if you clicked each of the 3 radio buttons?

a. Let's explore the radio button options… Could you talk me through what you think “Apply for new benefit” means?

If I was new to it, I’d click this to apply for the program.

b. What about “Update my current benefits”?

*Not sure how this is relevant.*

*Either you’re eligible for this or you’re not.*

*Curious about this… when you come here you want to apply for a benefit. Why would you want to “update” the benefit?*

*[after it’s explained] Interesting…*

*My last 2 experiences with VA offices at schools (at American University and Brown) have been incredibly good.*

c. What does “Applying to extend my benefit using the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship” mean to you?

*Nope, have not heard about this.*

*Extending… there’s recent legislation passed to extend GI Bill benefits past the original amount.*

*Thinks all Veterans might be interested in knowing how their benefits will be extended.*

What, if anything, have you heard about the STEM Scholarship?

*Nope.*

*I’d copy it and put it in another window and search it.*

*I’d like it to be a hyperlink. Would like to stay within the current site and then be brought back to where you were before (like a back button).*

*Might be nice to have a mouseover that explains eligibility, so you don’t waste your time applying.*

QUESTION IN THE APPLICATION

*Seems like this description should be further back [in the process… at the application level].*

*I’m not a fan of applying for things I’m not eligible for.*

***I’d even call somebody and ask if I’m eligible***

*Reassure people that they won’t lose benefits if they use this scholarship.*

ONE THING WE’VE BEEN LOOKING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT IS HOW FAMILIAR WITH THE acronym “STEM”

Have a school-aged daughter so very familiar with it.

b. [If they haven’t heard of the STEM Scholarship] What do you think the STEM scholarship might be?

Where do you go to learn about EDU benefits?

* *Google searches on Veterans Benefits... pieces it together.*
* *Has visited va.gov to learn about benefits.*
* *Might be good to have an email blast with info in it.*