# SCO Migration: School Resources Discussion Script

October 10, 2019

### Welcome and Opening Remarks (5 minutes)

[When the participant is ready, the moderator will begin the session with the following introduction.]

Thanks for joining us today! My name is [Theresa], and I also have two colleagues on the line, Amy and Cindy. We work with the Education & Training group at the Veterans Administration and we're in the midst of redesigning the School Resources section of the VA website. As we update pages on the site, we to share the designs with people in sessions like this to be sure the contain all of the necessary information and are easy to use.

We’re looking for your impressions on what aspects of the website work well and where we might make improvements to make things even easier for school certifying officials & administrators.

Before we start, I’d like to mention a few logistical details:

* The most important thing for you to know for today is that we’re not testing your knowlege or ability, we’re interested in understanding how well the pages meet the needs of school administrators.  
  As our focus is on the design of the webpage, there are no wrong answers. The more you say about what you see and whether it works for you, the better info we have to work with as we wrap up the design process.
* Our goal is to be sure this content meets the needs of school officials and administrators, so we are interested in hearing your honest opinions. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas and welcome your feedback.
* If for any reason you want to pause or stop the session at any time, just let me know. I'll be happy to do so.
* By testing the site thoroughly, we hope to ensure that it’s written in a thoughtful way and gives school officials quick access to information they need to help their military-connected students.
* Do you have any questions so far?
* Lastly, we generally record sessions, in case we need to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately.

Are you comfortable if I record the audio as we talk today?

Great! I'm going to turn on screen and audio recording now. Once it's on, I'll ask again, as we like to have your verbal consent

[The meeting host will begin audio and screen recording.]

Have you participated in usability testing before? [Respond… Y: How’d that go? N: No problem. ]

### Warm-up Questions (5 minutes)

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Be sure we have this info…

* How long have they been SCO? 6 years. There is one SCO at our branch campus and only in NY.
* How many GI Bill students are at their school?
* Possibly: How many people supporting military-connected students at their school?

GENERAL WARM UPS

1. Have you visited the School Administrators pages in the Education & Training section of benefits.va.gov before? Yes, I have. I use it frequently to look for training and the SCO handbook.
2. How often do you visit these pages? I would say at least 3-4 times a week. It could vary depending on my workload. It’s generally more often in the beginning of the semesters rather than in the middle.
3. What type of info are you looking for when you go there?
4. Is there any content you wish were available on the site?

Okay, let's go ahead and walk through a few scenarios.

#### Think Aloud

While you are going through the site, we ask that you please think aloud and vocalize your thoughts and decisions. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn. We are interested in your first reaction, as well as what you are thinking as you engage with the content. Sharing your thoughts aloud may seem strange at first, but it helps us understand what you are thinking and give us valuable information.

#### Prototype

Today we’ll be working with a prototype, not a real website. We create mock-ups like these to be sure we have everything right before we code the actual website. You may notice only certain links have been activated. If you get to one of those links, no worries. We’ll just mention it’s not active yet and may ask what you thought would happen when you clicked it.

[ Start participants on VA.gov homepage.]

### Scenario #1 (5 minutes) FINDING SCO HANDBOOK

Let’s start off with one of the most important tasks. Could you use this prototype to show me how you’d go about getting to the SCO Handbook on the VA website?

As you go about finding it, please talk aloud and let us know what you are thinking.

Observe…

* How do they attempt to find the school Resources page?
* How do they get to SCO Page?
* Can they quickly find SCO Handbook?

After the participant has found the required training or given up on the task.

Notes:

It’s right there, it was very easy to find.

It seems very clear cut and more user-friendly than the current user page. Sometimes you hae to dig around. I like it. It’s good!

T: how easy was it to find the SCO handbook?

It was very easy. I like that there are two options in the key resources as well as in the right box.

### Follow up questions

* How easy or difficult would you say that was?
* What are your impressions of that process?
* How do you typically get to that site?
* What’s it like for you to get the info you need from that website?

Notes:

### Scenario #2 (10 minutes) FINDING REQUIRED TRAINING

As part of the Colmery Act, we understand that SCOs at schools with 20 or more GI Bill students will need to complete additional training this year.

Let’s say you'd like to complete your training for the year. Using the site, please walk us through how you’d go about finding the training that’s required for SCOs this year.

Please talk aloud and let us know what you are thinking.

Observe…

* How do they get to required training once they’re on the page? (Jump links vs. Scroll)

Notes:

It looks like I would just click on the training and guides from here. [cicked on essentials] then I would just click on the boxes themselves. I don’t see an actual link for the training itself. Am I missing it? [looked around some more on the page, went back to key resources] yeah, I don’t see where I would find it.

T: your initial instinct was to look in the training and guides?

Yeah.

T: let’s go back there for a moment.

I see training webinars, but I don’t know if that would have it.

T: how would you return to the previous page?

Normally I would just hit the back button.

T: what were your thoughts when you saw the title for essentials?

I would expect to have a link to the actual training we have to do. I see a link for training webinars. Would it be listed there?

T: it’s just a little higher than the area we opened.

Oh, ok. I see. It would be helpful to have it in both places because I automatically didn’t see it. My eyes went right to the boxes.

T: anything else about the way that it’s written?

That part looks good.

### Follow up questions

* How did you think that process went?
* How easy or difficult was it to find the training you needed?

Notes:

### Scenario #3 (5 minutes) FINDING INFO ON AN UPCOMING WEBINARS

Let’s say your colleague has signed up for an online session offered by the VA's Education Services group. You are are interested in staying up to date regarding recent changes, as well. Using the site, how would you go about signing up to attend the same session in December?

Observe…

* How do they return to the School Resources page when they’re done with the task?
* What’s their reaction to SCO sub-content?
* How would you return to the page we were on previously

Notes:

You mean a training webinar? For that, I’m assuming you’d click on the training webinars for school certifying officials. I usually get training notifications through email. I usually don’t sign up through the va website. [change label to training webinars archive]

T: is there another place where you’d look?

I don’t think so, other than the essentials for SCOs.

### Follow up questions

* How did you think that went?
* How would you typically learn about a new VA programs?

Notes:

### Scenario #4 (5 minutes) FINDING INFO ON THE STEM PROGRAM

Have any of the students at your school asked about the new STEM scholarship? [respond to their input]

Let’s say one of your students is nearing the end of his GI Bill entitlement and is interested in applying for the STEM Scholarship. Using the site, How would you find information on who is eligible to participate in the STEM program?

Observe…

* How do they get back to the School Resources page when they’re done with the task?

Notes:

That is actually a very good question because I don’t normally do that. I would honestly have to say I don’t know where to go.

T: that’s ok. Let’s explore the page.

[she opened advanced topics]

T: what are you thinkin there?

I was thinking under advanced topics. It’s clearly not listed there. I honestly don’t even know where I would find it here.

T: you can keep exploring further.

[she glossed over upcoming events, scrolled down to other resources]

I see scholarships and financial aid. I would probably click there.

T: is there another place where it might be?

I honestly don’t know.

### Follow up questions

* How did you think that went?
* How would you typically learn about a new VA program like the Nourse STEM Scholarship?

Notes:

### Scenario #5 (5 minutes) HOUSING CALCULATION CHANGES

Usind the site, Where would you look to learn more about recent changes to the housing calculation?

Observe…

* Are there multiple sections that might contain this information?

Notes:

Possibly under advanced topics. That seems more SCO-related.

T: so you’re thinking housing calculation is something a student would be doing?

Yeah, housing calculations aren’t something I do and I refer students to the VA. It can be complicated, and it’s something I can do, but I’d rather refer them.

I do see a payment and debt information resources. That does look like something that would give me the information I was looking for.

T: what are your thoughts on the meaning of Colmery section updates?

As far as the required extension codes when I’m certifying students that has to do with housing payments as well.

### Follow up questions

* How did you think that went?

Notes:

### Scenario #6 (10 minutes) FINDING RESOURCES FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

We’ve frequently heard that SCOs help military-connected students in many ways beyond certifying their enrollment. Does that ring true for you? [respond to their input… ]

Let’s say a student asks what scholarships they may be able to obtain to help with educational expenses. Where would you go to find information that might help them?

NOTE: this task will take them off the prototype to a page like [*https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/non\_va\_resources.asp#financial\_aid*](https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/non_va_resources.asp#financial_aid) When they’ve gotten there OR you’ve confirmed they are where they think they should be:

That was great info. Now, could you show me how you would locate Employment Assistance information?

Observe…

* What’s their reaction to being directed to content on a different page / in a different template?
* How do they try to get back to the School Resources page?

Notes:

I would check in the resources at the bottom of the page. That would be the best option [other resources…]

T: what are your thoughts on finding this sort of information?

It seems pretty easy to find once [10:17]

C: as a community college, do you work with military students to transfer them to 4 year institutions? Are there any resources that you use for that?

### Follow up questions

* What are your thoughts on finding information for military-connected students within this school officials-oriented section?
* What were your thoughts about ending up on a “different site” (or whatever term they use if they comment on it) when you clicked on the Scholarships & Financial Aid link?

Notes:

### Post-Task Interview (10 minutes)

Thank you! That’s it for the tasks. How’d you think that went?

* What are your thoughts on whether you’d be able to find information you need on a site like this? It seems to be pretty straightforward. I do like the submit a question, and…[10:18] The annoucnements are nice. I know there are announcemnts in va-once, but it’s nice to have them here as well. Everything looks good to me. I like the blocks where you can minimize and maximize. I like the events so you don’t have to dig for them. And the ---- is nice to have on the page.
* What are your thoughts on the order of the sections (Key Resources, Announcements, Training, Upcoming Events, Policies and Procedures, Resources for students)? Which sections would you access most frequently?
* How could this page be more beneficial to SCOs or school administrators?
* How likely or unlikely would you be to refer other school officials to content like this?
* IF they have experience with or recall working with the current School Resources pages, ask how they think the version they just tried out compares to the current one.

ASK FOR QUESTIONS FROM TEAM.

* Do you have any other thoughts or comments you'd like to share?

Notes:

T: what would you expect to find under the essentials?

The sco handbook, and the va-once guide would be the two key things. Weams is a good thing there. It took me a while to find it in the traditional site, and the benefits A-Z is good to have as a quick reference.

C: what would you expect to find under advanced topics?

Advanced topics could be any examples of any odd certification scenarios, especially with any campuses coming. Basic housing information, half the national average, it took me a while to figure out that information, so it would be nice to have it front and center…a link to their area on their webpage, if possible. If there was one “locate your va counselor” I genrally deal with two individuals specifically. I’m sure there are tons of counselors out there. The counselor is someone different for ch31 than the elr.

T: it’s a student counselor?

Yeah. It is an individual we need to contact every once in a while, and once you have your contact information, you’re good to go.

T: advanced topics?

Reporting, school approval [education program approval]

T: we didn’t click on this area [P&P] what would you expect to see here?

I like that the education forms and brochures are listed right on top because I usually have to dig for the education forms, so it’s nice to have right there. I like the updates under the Forever GI Bill, and we can go to the page and know where the process is in the lifetime. And just having the forever gi bill there, the entire bill, is nice. Some people like to read the entire bill.

### Thank-You and Closing

Thank you for spending time with us today and sharing your thoughts. That was such great information. This will help us make an even better site for school officials. We really appreciate your help!