# 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? Not quite a year.
* How many GI Bill students are at their school? About 400
* Possibly: How many people supporting military-connected students at their school? Only my supervisor. Otherwise, it’s just me.

GENERAL WARM UPS

1. Have you visited the School Administrators pages in the Education & Training section of benefits.va.gov before?
2. How often do you visit these pages?
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:

I would go to Education and Training, and then for School Administrators.

T: good, and now you’re on our new page.

And I think I would go down to for school officials.

T: can you find a brand new version of the sco handbook on this page?

I can [she located the promo] If I can locate this here, I’m a happy camper. I may not always want to download it…If I could click one button and there it is, I probably wouldn’t download it anymore. It’s right there. I don’t even need my readers to see it.

### 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:

Again, I think it was under the resources for schools, and I think it was under the page for school certifying officials. Right here, I can see that it might be in training and guides. [she clicked T&G jumplink]

Ok, so right here, the very top link says what I need to do for 2019. Very nice.

T: thoughts on the process?

Very simple, so that’s going to motivate me to get it done right away, which I’m probably going to get it done in the next couple of weeks. Not having to search for it and being able to find it right away is very nice. [3:10] I’ve actually even done some webpage design in a previous job, and I didn’t like it, and that was something we were taught, if we have to click something more than 3 times, we’re going to lose the interest.

### 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:

I would just click on upcoming events or the training.

T: which would you choose?

I think I would choose upcoming events probably to see what’s upcoming. [she clicked UE jumplink]

Did you say the December one? Ok, yeah, there it is. I like that they’re in the date order, as well. If I’m looking for something in December, I’m going to shoot for December.

### 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:

I had one student, he downloaded an email and brought me a copy of that. So yeah, I’ve had one student express interest in that.

T: let’s go back up to the page and see if we can find any information about the stem scholarship.

I would think it would be under policies and procedures since it’s a stem scholarship, but I’m not seeing it there [she used jump link to get to p&p]

T: what do you think you would find?

Of course, information about yellow ribbon. If I wanted information about stem, I would click on the va forms and factsheets link. Oh, and look, there it is [she located stem infographic on forms page]

T: thoughts on process?

Well, it was easy, but after you look at the choices, I can figure it out. But I can see myself having to click many links and having to hunt for it. For me, I can see it require a little more searching. That’s not a bad thing, but if I have a student in my office, that’s not ideal. If I’m just by myself, that would be fine. Suppose it would depend on the situation.

T: thoughts on how we could make it an easier process? How would you get back to the previous page?

I would just hit the back button.

I guess I would just have to stop and think…policies and procedures. I would have to stop and think a moment to see what I’m thinking of. Principles of excellence, I’m not sure what that would be. The va forms and factsheets would seem like the logical thing to look for.

### 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:

So, I could scroll down? I would want to see a link that said something about the changes in the housing. I suppose that could still fall under the policies and procedures, and it could still fall under the va forms and factsheets. [she went to va forms link] I guess I would see something under the forms and factsheets. I guess that would fall under changes, gi bill changes. I would actually look under forever gi bill changes and post-9/11 gi bill benefits.

### 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:

Also, questions related to UW, university of Wyoming, as well [ what she helps students with beyond certification].

I would want to see something about scholarships. [navigated to scholarshps link at bottom] Seeing scholarships and financial aid, that’s where I would direct them to the va site, so that lines up really well.

### 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? I like that it looks so clean and organized. I would not have used green for the SCO handbook, but that’s because I don’t like green. I like the frequently asked questions on the right side. I like the connet with us, I like the phone numbers. I have been on the other website, and it’s hard to find the phone numbers. I like that. I like that the numbers are listed right there. Now, most of the numbers are listed on my bulletin board, but it’s nice to have that. The education call center phone number I give out to students on occasion. I like the email updates, that’s nice. One thing people complain about is being out of the loop, so it’s nice to have that link. I like that very top link under support your students. That’s great. I may start directing more students to the scholarships and financial aid. I like those first two links. Most don’t ask about employment, but if they do, I know where to send them.
* 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: let’s look at P&P section. Curious to get your thoughts on the two gray boxes.

I would the the gi bill program approval would be for applying for approval benefits, maybe how to certify. I can see that as being helpful information for me to serve the students better.

T: and the second one?

Same thing. I can see it as being able to get more information on the prgrams and policies and stuff.

T: thoughts on yellow ribbon and principles of excellence being above that?

I don’t get a lot of questions about yellow ribbon. We are yellow ribbon. We can accommodate up to 30 students. We have 10. For me, yellow ribbon may not be as important. We’re not a big university. We’re the biggest in Wyoming state, but we’re still a small university…Wyoming, we’re a little school, so the way you have it set up may not be the best for us, but we’ll do with it. The other two links I can see being very helpful. If I had to rearrange them, I would flip the top and the bottom ones [va forms at top]

T: let’s go open up the second one there.

Let’s see what’s behind door number one. Ok, yea, the state approving agency. I do know that. I think that’s great because it does give us the step by step of how we’d get some of our stuff approved for our students [didn’t sound so sure]

T: ok. Let’s take a look at the second one

Oh, hey this is great. I get asked a lot of questions about the benefits, an d sometimes it’s like, ok, that hasn’t been in my training, so now I know where to get the answers. And I see there’s questions about the stem scholarship, and the gi bill. And I see the housing, too. I wouldn’t change anything about this. This is great. This could become my favorite link.

T: if you heard about a webinar that you were interested in attending, where would you go to find that?

In the past, there was a link and I was able to get past information. So I would be looking for something about past webinars. That’s what I would look for.

T: ok, keep looking for that.

Oh, latest announcements from va, and past updates, so I would click on that. [went to breaking news page]

T: let’s go back to the previous page and see any other place we’d find that. Do you ever go to regional conferences?

I’d start at the top typically. Oh, upcoming events. [clicked on jumplink]

T: when you see the link for training webinars, do you see that having past or upcoming or both?

I can see it having both. [cliked on link]

Ok, breaking news, and it looks like it comes into the past. When I clicked on that, I would want it to have

C: hi dorie, this is cindy. thank you so much for joining us today. I’d like for you to take a look

Sco certifying guide

Maybe other documents that would help me with my certifying, so I guess anything that would have to do with certifications and guides.

[she opened the accordion] Yep, these are great links. I’d probably use them all and would continue to use them. I like the fact that the handbook and the quick reference guide are the first two guides.

T: advanced topics?

Maybe changes coming down the pike, upcoming changes to give us a heads-up. And I like that there’s a va once section because va-once drives me up the wall.

T: you can open up any one of these.

Oh, look. There’s the quick reference guide, the mou, and I love the recordings! These would be helpful! We’re a traditional schooo, so the non-traditional ones wouldn’t help me.

[opened advanced topics]

Oh, look, check your status as a covered institution. I like that, very helpful. That’s stuff I wouldn’t have even thought of.

T: where woud you put information on reporting?

I think that would be in advanced topics. Most of my students graduate in may, but most graduate in December. I think that’s something I would look for under advanced topics.

A; what would you call this group of advance topics?

When I first saw it, I was thinking things that are coming down the pike. Miscellaneous topics just doesn’t sound right either. What would be another good way of wording that? So maybe “other related topics”? This is a real mixed bag of topics, too.

A: a hodge-podge.

Well, there you go. I wonder how hodge-podge would work. Advanced topics, that’s not really…

T: another way to ask the question is, what topics are advanced?

Let’s see, you have covered institutions. You have a couple of links on payment and debt and overpayment, so maybe something to do with payments and the money aspect of it…I can’t think of anything else.

A: if you could send them to Cindy, that would be helpful.

At 2am, I’ll probably think of something… I would still click on advanced topics. It’s just not what I would be expecting.

### 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!