# 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?
* How many GI Bill students are at their school? We’re a small private institutions. We are a small gifted school, so we don’t actually have veterans. We have their family members, so about 15.
* Possibly: How many people supporting military-connected students at their school? It might be only one. I physically, although not the person responsible for completing the certifications online, I work on the family side…There was a time in my career whre I did everything. I do the front end. This person does the back end.

GENERAL WARM UPS

1. Have you visited the School Administrators pages in the Education & Training section of benefits.va.gov before? I have.
2. How often do you visit these pages? I was probably on it more often when I was first learning the va, which was many years ago. It’s not as often now unless it’s something big creating a problem.
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:

So this is definitely vet-focused as I’m staring at it right now. Not that that’s bad.

T: [explained va.gov homepage to her]

Ok, so instead of having an sco page, they’re going to have it be a part of the vets page?

T: I would say it hasn’t been decided. How it’s going to be accessed is a little bit TBD at the moment.

Ok, good…

T: how do you typically get to the resources page?

I just go to benefits.va.gov, then slash gi bill, then slash school resources.

[T guided her to school resources]

Ok, love that the handbook is right here….so, love that because those are harder to find than you think. Upcoming events, training, policies and procedures, yellow ribbon, va forms. Is there any way to get to how to apply for education benefits? [she clicked on link at bottom]

Only because I think they’re sometimes different, there’s not a lot of information on gifted benefits. Just as a suggestion, it might be nice to have something that consolidated that confusion. Because, just talking to families, we let them know we need a certificate of eligibility, but until we take over, we can’t get to that.

[she cliked through the training accordions]

I think the other part that’s maybe not…[in advanced topics] I will say that there’s not a huge long list of links which is what the current page is. People get frustrated, they stop looking. I like that the handbook is right up front.

Does the processing time change by time of year? Other than because in August, there’s no way that an application gets processed that quickly. Is there a way to get a list of who your state person is?

T: your ELR?

Yeah, because if there’s a problem, you could easily find that. If you’re new.

GI bill program approval process [she wandered down to P&P section]

So is there any sort of information that can be done on ch35, which I realize is not the 9/11 gi bill, but it does require sco certification?

T: what sort of info would you want?  
like a type of link to the ch35, what does it look like, what are the students eligible for, maybe if there’s a comparison between the programs, pre-9/11, post9/11, ch35, because they all require scos.

The same thing with the dates on this one [she wandered to the how to apply for gi bill benefits and saw processing times]

T: show me how you would find the sco handbook

It’s on the right. It’s also down below here.

### 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:

Under the training and guides.

### 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:

It would be under upcoming events, so depending on whether you’re signing up online, you’d have to go to a different one.

### 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:

T: has any one asked you about it?

Nope.

T: have you heard of it?  
Nope. I heard of it by wandering around here.

T: where would you go?

I’d go under this gi bill program.

### 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:

It’s the updates section [which one? She was hovering over informational letters]

### 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:

It’s here. It’s clearly easy to find under other resources. [scholarship and financial aid links]

### 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?
* 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? I think it’s good. The only other thing I would say is that sometimes these are date-stamped changes, to have something at the very top that is like, “current va publications” “updated va release information” so that if I’m using this as a truly experienced person, I can keep up with, maybe the latest months. Oh, maybe these latest announcements here [she clicked into that and went to breaking news]. These are different than the ones that were down below, aren’t they? [informational letters] Those are the kinds of things that I would put all together because it’s all date-specific. This is where I would get updated, then. This is what’s changed since I last looked at it. I would put that on top just because it’s time specific. The rest is going to be more. The rest the order is fine, I think.
* The other one is not old people eye friendly. This is a much better experience. As you get a much older generation, they just don’t sift and wade through all that.
* 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 do you think of essentials vs advanced topics?

The training webinars [22:00] are vital for anyone that’s starting.

C: advanced topics?

The number one problem that people have is that when they get a debt letter, the notice that’s for suzie comes in a separate bill. Anything extra that you can offer for payment and debt information is going to be huge becaue they often trip up people. And va audits. There’s certain information that the schools have to present to the va when they get audited. [she looked up a link “va audits”] I’ve gotten information from my ELR about that.

A:

[28:00] we do not offer night classes. We’re a very traditional campus. We don’t offer online courses. It’s not very conducive to an adult life, but more conducive to what we would consider kids.

A: connect with us

Consider adding some sort of direct link to connect to your ELR. I’m probably not going to go to essentials.

A: did the key resources catch your eye?

It did, and it was the first time I saw the quick reference guide.

### 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!