Participant: *Cheryl*

Date: 00/00/2021 @ 10:15 am **Conversation Guide for GIBCT Profile Page Testing**

**Moderator logistics**

*Use*[*#feedback-backchannel*](https://dsva.slack.com/messages/C40B45NJK/details/)*in Slack for real-time feedback from observers.*

*Mute your Slack notifications*

*Before the session, send out the*[*observer instructions*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/during-research/howto-observer-instructions.md)*to your observers (Slackbot will do this for you if you type "observer instructions" into*[*#feedback-backchannel*](https://dsva.slack.com/channels/feedback-backchannel)*).*

*In the Attendees section, make sure everyone except the participant is on mute.*

*In the Audio section, click the drop-down arrow and make sure "Play Entry/Exit Chimes" is unchecked*

*Check your [screensharing setup] and share permissions for participants.*

*When the participant is ready, begin the session with the following intro*

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Jen and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to talk about discovering information about schools on the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

Before we start, a few things I want to mention:

* **This entire session should take about 45 minutes.** I want to be sure not to keep you much longer, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* **In this session, we want to hear your honest opinions.** We are not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I will not be offended by any opinions you express, and I welcome your feedback.
* **If for any reason and at any time you want to stop the session, please let me know.**
* **Are you comfortable if I record my screen and audio as we talk today?** We use the recordings to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately. The recordings are destroyed after we complete analysis, and none of your comments will be attributed to you directly.
  + If yes: **Once I start recording, I am going to confirm that you are ok with me recording this session once more.**

*Start recording.*

* **I have started recording**. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen and the audio as we talk today?

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

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

* What is your military status (e.g. Veteran, child, spouse)?
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? When did you start school?  
    *post 911… I’m going for a BFA in fine arts for printmaking and sculpture.*
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future? - Which benefit? Where are you in the school selection process?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

*Wow that’s awesome… searches for ASU… says my school isn’t rated yet which is interesting… BOY this is really cool, I wish I had known about this! Looks up Northern Virginia community college… No questions about the tool, it seems extremely straightforward!*

**First Task: Notre Dame - 15 minutes**

You've been interested in going back to school to study **Statistics**. A friend of yours recommended **University of Notre Dame** in **Notre Dame, Indiana** to you. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine if **University of Notre Dame** would be a good fit for you?  
  
*Okay, (starts searching the name) not only would I look up Notre Dame but Id also try to look up a couple other schools that are worthy of comparison so id look up a couple of different schools, that’s the beauty of comparison… When I look at this I would probably use this in concert with a regular google search. From what I can tell this tells me specifically about a schools GI bill friendliness but I’m looking, does it tell you anywhere that the school is a yellow ribbon school? OH okay that’s cool too a cautionary warning… (clicks on a school profile and scrools) I kinda thought id see it on the first little thing when you call the school up (search card) IF not that, then definitely on the second page and of course yellow ribbon is a nice addition to the program.   
  
Looking at the estimated benefits: Okay here on… wow out of pocket tuition at Notre Dame is 25,000 okay but the GI Bill doesn’t pay private so id expect somewhere in there to say yellow ribbon school or not yellow ribbon school, that would cover my additional out of pocket tuition…   
  
Okay I guess I would have to go somewhere else… (scrolls a little further down) OH I see it! Put it in yellow or something… so it is there… I had to look around for it a little but that’s cool.  
  
Here’s a question, is there a way to search for graduate or undergraduate programs or its just colleges? Like if I’m looking for grad vs undergrad all those other things… this is a great tool, its not a stand-alone tool but its got all the stuff for GI Bill. If you had all the other stuff it would probably make it too much, unwieldly… Does it have foreign schools or just US schools? (goes to search by location) searches London England… none but that’s okay… (tries Tahoe California) … okay… well that’s interesting because I know there is something in Tahoe but it doesn’t seem to be coming up… there we go sierra Nevada collage… that’s one I looked at for a master’s program briefly. 32 students, out of pocket tuition, and yellow ribbon, Yes! That’s very cool.   
  
how much do you think the yellow ribbon would cover?  
I would expect it to cover out of pocket tuition. .. (ends up on the find a yellow ribbon school search.)  
  
you found it!  
Yeah it wasn’t that hard either, just had to read the whole page.  
  
IF I was going back for a graduate program I don’t think there is much on this site that would be different but I would probably go to an alternative website to know is my undergraduate degree going to qualify me to apply there which don’t seem to be parts of this website and shouldn’t be. The only this is I cant think of anything where a college would limit its GI Bill to an undergraduate program so…   
  
(on profile page now) can you talk to me about the information you are seeing on this page?  
Im seeing a summary of that college (sierra Nevada) the real basics, how many gi bill students which is pretty interesting, and the basics of that school, its in a town, its small, its private, … and then I can calculate my benefits… oh scholarships and other va funding.. eligible for a kicker bonus? I don’t even know what that is (clicks learn more) ah okay I think that’s after my time… hmm well I like that… my estimated benefits that’s helpful.. wow that’s a lot of housing allowance… protection against late payments… that’s really nice… and cautionary, zero student complaints, wow! This is a good summary… this is one of the better websites I’ve seen from the VA.   
  
Single point of contact for veterans, no… okay for most schools do you offer the veterans office? That would be really helpful, I found doing my own research not knowing about this website that I would have to dig through the college website and find the veteran assistance office and THOSE are the absolutely invaluable people who can talk me through how you sign up, how they assist you, and that actually has consequences In enrolling in a program. You know I already have 2 masters but I was looking for a 4 year program or a really good high class degree but I ended up going for a 2 year degree at another college because the veteran office was so helpful that I enrolled in the college on the spot.   
  
In terms of finding stuff on the website how do you think that went?  
I think this is great! I mean I know how to apply for it and I think this is really well designed with the information you need but its not overkill! And I like that oyu have cautionary information, that Is really really cool. I’ve read about colleges that have taken advantage of veterans if you will… locations, academics, education, I think you’ve got good information um… without trying to do too much.   
  
Id say for its purposes it’s a 2. The only uh eh I don’t know if it matters but foreign schools. Im thinking of doing a grad program in England somewhere but maybe that’s too much for the program.*

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the jumplinks?
* Does the user click the jumplinks?
* Does the user notice the Compare functionality?
* Does the user notice the religious affiliation in the heading?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of finding more information about University of Notre Dame?
* What types of information would be important to you in looking for a school?

**Second Task: Covering Expenses - 10 minutes**

You've noticed that the GI Bill won't fully cover the tuition at **University of Notre Dame**. You've heard that some schools offer the Yellow Ribbon program, which offers additional financial assistance to GI Bill beneficiaries. How would you use the Comparison Tool to see if **University of Notre Dame** offers the Yellow Ribbon program?

Follow-up: Do you think you would be eligible for the program? If so, how much of the remaining expenses do you think would be covered?  
  
*UH I have no idea I guess you would search by location so south bend Indiana… I happen to know where notre dame is because im going there for a convention this weekend. Okay so 14 search results for south bend but it only gives me one… scrolls, oh! Opens filters and … religious affiliation, there we go! Okay… seems like an od thing, how come it isn’t showing notre dame? It says theres only one, but notre dame is in south bend and its roman catholic but I guess its considered to be in notre dame not south bend that’s a little weird.   
  
IF you wanted to compare a couple schools that are religiously affiliated how would you go about that?  
  
Uh I have no idea because its search by name or location but theres no search by keyword so I cant put in ‘religious affiliation’ or ‘masters program’ okay… lets try search by location and go to phoenix Arizona, 25 miles… search, filter your results… I don’t care about that (unchecks vet tec and OJT) selects religious affiliation… okay it says two results (clicks pin on map) okay lets get rid of the offers yellow ribbon program in filters… okay it says I get 4 results but its only showing me 1.   
  
Im not sure what religious affiliation means…  
  
The only way I can search by location is by search by location or by filter which is kinda difficult… I guess I could do by state, Arizona, yellow ribbon, is accredited… im not sure what that honestly does for me… cause if I want to compare schools see how do I … See if I want to compare schools I want to compare a specific number of schools that I already know have the training program I want and this does not necessarily give me that option because its only… I would probably already know those schools and then I would want to compare them by gi bill beneifts. Your filter… school mission… I guess, I don’t know why? I mean are those popular searches? Because there are so many other things you could search for… those 3 don’t have a lot to do with the GI bill but yet you put them in there… location, phoenix okay… okay so really the only way would be…. Selects ASU and compare check box…. Goes to search by name and selects another school… okay so I have two selected to compare, but when I clicked next I just got another school…. Okay I want to compare so (opens drawer and clicks compare) okay so that wasn’t as easy. Scrolls down.*

*Type of school – school, that doesn’t tell me anything!   
  
Some schools offer instate tuition automatically so that might be something to add but other than that this seems to be fairly comprehensive.   
  
The bottom line is its nice but tutiton and fees, doesn’t really matter… what really matters to me is do I have to pay out of pocket or not. The housing allowance is more in phoenix than it is in tussan but that’s because rent is higher in phoenix than tusson, I like the accademics, complaints I think is great. Principles of excellence, I don’t know what that is. I never even realized htat some schools had priorty enrollment I would probably be seriousoly looking for that… some information I wouldn’t care about but other people probably woud...  
  
Id rate that a 2.5 maybe 3.   
  
Upon finding out CT has international schools “oh that’s awesome!! Oh that is so cool, thanks!”  
  
Thank you for working so hard in making this so helpful Id say the VA website has made lightyear strides in the past few years and its nice to see people are making this more user friendly for us! Thanks!*

**Things to watch for:**

* Where does the user look to find the Yellow Ribbon program?
* Does the user see the Yellow Ribbon program listed under EYB?
* Does the user find the Yellow Ribbon calculation in EYB?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of discovering what financial assistance is offered by University of Notre Dame?
* If you finished researching University of Notre Dame and thought the school was the right fit for you, what would be your next step?

**Third Task: Compare Religious Schools - 10 minutes**

* You're interested in taking a few classes on religion and you're curious what schools in the **Notre Dame** area might have a religious affiliation. You know that **University of Notre Dame** is a Roman Catholic institution. How would you use the Comparison Tool to find schools in **Notre Dame, IN** that have a religious affiliation and see how they compare against **University of Notre Dame**?

**Things to watch for:**

* Where on the tool does the user go to find religious schools?
* Does the user see/say anything about the religious affilation in the header?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of comparing schools with religious affiliations?

**Thank-You and Closing - X minutes**

Well we really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on the site and make sure it really works for Veterans.

Thanks! Lastly, do you know any other Veterans, caregivers, or service members who might be willing to participate in a future user research session? If Yes: Thank you! I'll have our team send you an email with a little blurb that you can pass along.

Great, well thank you so much again, and enjoy the rest of your day!

**Sample Conversation Guides *(note: these links point to resources in the va.gov-team GitHub repo)***

* [Scheduling Accessibility and Usability Study: Complex Recruit, Highly Variable based on User Profile](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/health-care/appointments/research/2017-studies/access-usability/access-usability-conversation-guide.md)
* [Veteran ID Card Discovery Interview](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/veteran-id-cards/research/discovery/discovery-conversation-guide.md)