Participant: Lauren

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?  
  I paid into the Montgomery but I’m probably going to switch over to the post 9-11. I’m currently researching the programs now that things are back to in person learning. I’m going back for my PHD so just trying to see what switches over.
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? When did you start school?
  + 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?  
  I believe I did when I was helping my husband activate his GI Bill, I think we were looking for a comparison between it was better to use Montgomery or 9-11 and what would cover more at the universities we were looking at.
  + If yes, what did you use it for?
* Initial thoughts:  
  *this is clean, easy to look at, its different from what I remember seeing previously. This is a little like… it makes me wonder if all that stuff (previous functionality) has been paired down or if its supposed to be different, and does this do an auto fill?* Starts to search for UMD *okay so is there already a filter in place htat says this is covered by post 9-11 or that kind of thing? If im already here and looking at it… I know what my benefits cover but not everyone does so I would expect there is some guidance as for whet that’s concerned. Id expect that in one of these drop downs (hovers over update tuition and housing and filter your results) Or on that first page. Yeah id expect that in one of these two or maybe a third dropdown in the left hand side htat has all that stuff… so you filter the universities that have your military status, gi bill benefit, if you did your full service… that kind of thing… I know some have pre requisits so id like to select alright, I fit these categories, okay this doesn’t cover enough so…*what do you expect that third drop down to be titled? *um I think filter your results by or…. I guess it could just go under the filter your results and have an option in there.*\* Without clicking can you tell me what you would expect to find in update tuition and housing estimates?   
  *user expected to find selections for classes in person and what programs they would be looking for.*

**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?  
  
*um I guess first step would be searching the school but all these options here are the same so… is there a dilination for these? Okay but if you search any of them it looks like they all come up? Im trying to see if it’s a good fit because the housing benefit in addition to how much tuition is covered being able to see how much the BAH is with your GI Bill is important. I personally, it doesn’t hurt to know the other finianical burdens would be. Having the housing benefit on there is helpful. Maybe maintaining if it’s a yellow ribbon school or not*

*. A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated  
having what programs they cover on there would be helpful.*For more information:  
*okay if im not comparing it to another university I would just click on it* [user clicks and enters profile] *okay this section here, the calculate your benefits. If you could put that in before you enter the school then that stuff could have already been filtered. (on the school profile) um… yeah. I mean this is cool though. These two things are key, the additional benefits and the school calendar and locations. Because then I would need to start looking okay if I want to go in person id need to go here. Okay this is good, I like the cautionary information section, that’s not something I would have thought about but having feedback from other veterans is key. It might be a great university but it might not be a great university for veterans. Okay and I see Notre Dame has no complaints at any of their universities so it might be that this system is not being utilized but I do like having that on there… I like the veteran student group and that the yellow ribbon stuff is on here and how many recipients there are (looking at the programs portion of the profile.   
  
I mean I think a lot of the important information is definitely on here… um I always want to see if a university is accredited and that kind of thing, yeah uh I guess the big thing is figuring out if the yellow ribbon scholarship is limited and if it is then how to access that. And if there are other veteran scholarships available that kind of stuff is helpful. When my husband applied to college he got connected to the veteran group and they connected him with other veteran scholarships… I guess that goes in the veteran programs and support section.*

**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?  
  *um pretty well… I think there is a lot of information and almost all the important stuff is on here… that’s more than enough to start your academic research.*
* 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?  
  *1, very easy.*
* 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?  
  
*um… I mean… if there is a way to see the break down to see how long it takes you to get through the program you are looking at you know if its undergrad, phd…. And then a chart with that information for how much the program covers… uh I mean it could either be its own drop down or um… I guess somewhere with… uh yeah in its own section underneath the veteran programs and support section.   
  
um I mean I would probably make my own spreadsheet and put all the numbers in and compare it but typically I think ive gone on the schools website and then reviewed it with the GI Bill comparison tool to see how all the numbers line up. Im trying to figure out the difference between the housing cost and how much it actually costs to attend the university and getting a ball park for how much books will cost me. And then okay Yellow ribbon will cover XYZ or maybe it doesn’t and I need to apply for an additional fund.   
  
um… what does it say in estimated benefits so its 25k a year and it’s a total 50k a year to go there so that’s a huge chunk of out of pocket tuition and so that would definitely make me click on the scholarships and other va funding to figure out how to activate and use that stuff to cover the additional fees. So I feel like its hard to say unless you know that youre already you know you cant really say youre a yellow ribbon fun recipient unless you already applied and got the scholarship but that’s kind of a strange thing to have in there. But the kicker bonus, that makes sense because oyu already know. But a lot of scholarships and stuff, that’s not stuff you will know until you are already commited to the schools so you would have already commited to the school in order to do a lot of these calculations… if youre getting ready to enroll that section could be kind of confusing. Um I don’t know I would have that scholarship section up there unless youre going to have a note on there. But yeah that scholarship section is probably kinda confusing because youre not going to know that stuff until you are already committed and enrolled.*

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?

**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?  
  *um I mean, its pretty clear under the additional benefits section that they offer it but I think we already talked about it, adding in the programs and limitations.*
* 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?  
  *um I would say 3 because it does say there is yellow ribbon access but it doenst break down everything and then its kinda in two sections because its in additional information and veteran programs and support so… maybe combining those two sections would be helpful.*
* 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**?  
    
  *I mean I see the notation at the top (roman catholic) but I mean, I guess if I want to compare I can click on that and then… oh perfect yeah right there (goes to search and selects religious affiliation from filters) okay so that’s where I would expect it at least for my brain. Um… I would assume that I can just pick a location and then… uh go from there… (updates filters and oaky so there is none to compare this one to. So I would change the location and religious affiliation)*okay if you want to compare a few schools to university of notre dame how would you do that?  
  *yeah so I guess id go back to search… is 3 the magic number for comparison? Is that the limitations for the tool? 3 sounds like you already have it narrowed down but it might not hurt to be able to compare 4 or 5 so you could vompare a few different universities that offer similar programs but overall 3 is not a terrible number but having 1 or 2 more would be nice in the case you are trying to cast a wide net and look at schools.  
    
  On compare page: so I like this… [clicks highlight differences] I definitely think this is any easier way to do an overall assessment than looking at each school individually. Um I don’t know what the 8 keys to veteran success is so explaining htat, it doesn’t nessisiarly have to be on the comparison page but if there is a link to lead you to the right spot so you know if that’s something you need to be looking for. Um I would move the yellow ribbon stuff out of the programs and into the benefits section. I might right now its down with student veteran group, student veteran group makes sense but military tuition assistance and yellow ribbon seem like they belong with the financial stuff.*

**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?  
  *um pretty easy, this is pretty self explainitory and all the financial stuff is in the same spot. Pluss being able to highlighr the difference wouldb e very helpful. To see this is what I want and this is what I don’t want.*
* 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?  
  very easy, 1.

**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)