#### **Veteran Discussion Script**

### Intro.

Thanks for joining us today! My name is [NAME] Have I called at a convenient time?

* As I said, my name is <NAME>, I also have two colleagues on the line, <Name> & <Name>. They’ll be helping to take notes as I ask questions.
* We are part of a team at the VA that works on a website called Vets.gov, and we’re interested in speaking with you today to get your feedback on the process of applying for Unemployability compensation benefits.

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

* **This session should take about 30 minutes.** I want to be respectful of your time, so I may occasionally move us along to the next topic.
* **We are interested in hearing your honest opinions.** We are in no way testing your knowledge or ability. We just want to hear your ideas and be sure the application we are designing will meet Veteran’s needs. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish and we welcome your feedback.
* **If for any reason you wish to end the session at any time, please let me know.** Your participation is completely voluntary.
* 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, before we start the audio, I’m going to start by asking a few warm up questions.
* Do you have any questions before we get started?

### Warm-up Questions (Optional) - 2 minutes

*(You should already have the participant’s background info from the person who did the recruiting, so use this time to ask any other questions that you feel will help with the session. This warm-up is not required.)*

1. Tell me a little about your military service. Specifically, which branch of the military did you serve in and when?
2. Generally, how comfortable would you say you are with technology?

\_\_\_ Novice

\_\_\_ Intermediate

\_\_\_ Savvy

1. Which of the following three age brackets best categorizes your age?

\_\_\_ 18-30

\_\_\_ 31-50

\_\_\_ 51+

1. What state do you live in, if you are comfortable sharing (Optional)?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What VA Benefits have you applied for in the past?

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**Okay, let’s go ahead and start the recording. Once it’s on, I’ll ask you if it’s okay one more time, as** it’s important that we ask your permission. There will be a slight pause, then we’ll hear an announcement that the recording has started.

Start recording.

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

Great, I’d like to ask you some questions about applying for Educational benefits.

**Educational Interests**

1. If you were to apply for educational benefits in the future, what sort of education or training would you be interested in obtaining?
2. Would you like research your own educational opportunities or select from a list that the VA provides?

**Opportunities for Improvement**

[Hand the participant a copy of the 0994 form.]

1. What, if any, questions on the form need more explanation or clarification?
2. What recommendations do you have for improving the application process?
3. Would you assume you could apply while on active duty? How about while in the National Guard or while serving in the Reserves?
4. What would be most helpful regarding telephone number? Might you provide 2 phone numbers? If so, how would you distinguish one from the other?
5. What are your assumptions around why the form asks about active duty?

**Resources Leveraged**

1. Have you been in contact with the Veterans Office associated with any colleges or universities? If so, what information or assistance were you seeking?
2. Have you discussed educational benefits with a VSO? If so, what information or assistance were you seeking?
3. Have you researched educational benefits on Vets.gov?

**For those who have applied in the past**

1. How long ago did you apply for educational benefits?
2. What did you think about the overall process of applying for Educational benefits?
3. What part of the educational benefits application process went smoothly?
4. What challenges did you face as you completed the process?
5. Are you aware of any challenges that your educational institution faced as they worked with the VA? If yes, please describe.
6. As you think about the Educational Benefits application process, how would you describe the thoughts you had or the feelings you experienced in a word or two?

Looks like we have 5-10 minutes left, so I want to pause and give my colleagues on the phone an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

[Additional questions from any observers on the phone]

Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. We very much appreciate your willingness to be part of our process. The insights you shared are very valuable and will help us ensure that the forms we design are easy to use.