**Sec 103 Usability Testing Discussion Guide**

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Amy and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to take a look at the GI Bill Comparison Tool. Specifically, we're looking at how schools within the Comparison Tool comply with a particular law.

Before we get started, a few things I want to mention:

* This entire session should take about 45 minutes. I don't want to keep you much longer than that, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* During this session, we want to hear your honest opinions. We're not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I won't be offended by any opinions you express and 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 the screen and audio as we talk today? We use the recordings to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately. The recordings are deleted after we finish analysis, and none of your comments will be attributed to you directly.

* If yes: Great - thank you. Once I start recording, I'll ask again so we have your audible confirmation.
* If no: Ok. My team will just observe and take notes as we go.

Start recording.

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

**Setting up Screen reader & Sharing**

For our next step, I'd like you to share your screen and screen reader audio with me.

In Zoom, can you select the Share button?

On this next screen, let's go with the default selection.

Also, there is a checkbox in the Share Screen option that says "Share computer sound." This will let us hear your screen reader. Can you make sure that it's checked and select "Share"?

\*Confirm that the screen reader is audible. \*Confirm that screensharing works. If it doesn't work immediately, suggest they restart the screen reader (order of operations isn't typically isn't critical)

**Checklist for Screen Reader Participants**

* Are you using a computer or mobile phone during our session today? Mac or Windows? iOS or Android?
* What browser are you using today?
* Are you using a screen magnifier today?
* Do you have the latest version of Zoom (4.3.1) installed? Check under Zoom > About.
* Which screen reader are you using today?
* Are you wearing headphones today? If so, would it be possible for you to take them off and use your computer or mobile audio? I'm asking so that I can hear your screen reader during the session.
* Would you mind setting your screen reader to its default speed? We want to accurately hear and record what you’re experiencing on VA.gov.
* Do you know your screen reader's verbosity setting? High, medium, low? Is that your standard setting (or do you tend to change it depending on what you're working with)?

**Warm-up Questions (Optional) - 10 minutes**

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

1. Are you currently using or have you ever used your GI Bill education benefits?

P: I’m currently using my gi bill

1. What has been your experience with VA payments to your school?
2. Were you attending classes and receiving education benefits in the Fall of 2018?

P: Yes

* If yes, do you recall if you had any issues with VA late payments to your school?

P: Yes, I did.

* If yes, can you tell me a little about what happened?

P: Nothing happened for me specifically. The school knew it was coming, that they wouldn’t get paid. I didn’t get my BAH money until November, but that was it.

AK: Did that impact you at all?

P: Money was definitely tighter, but I also work full time so I didn’t have to move or go in debt.

1. Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? Yes

* If yes, fantastic!
  + When do you think the last time you used it was?
  + What were you looking for?
  + Do you recall how you first learned about it?

**For Screen Reader Participants**

Okay. Now I'd like you to open a new browser window or tab.

I have a website I want you to visit - I can send you the link via chat in Zoom or I can spell out the Url - which would you prefer?

<https://bit.ly/2XFnKix>

**For non-Screen Reader Participants**

For our session today, I'm going to give you a couple tasks to do online. While you're going through them, it would be really helpful if you'd think aloud - kind of like you'd do if you were talking to yourself. We are interested in your first reactions, what you're thinking & wondering as you go through the process. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn.

When you think aloud, it helps us understand what works well and where we might want to make improvements to make things even easier. If you have questions, it’s likely that many other Veterans will, as well, so feel free to ask them along the way.

I'm going to give you control of my screen & mouse. I'll pass control to you and you should receive a message that prompts you to control the screen.

**First Task: Find Section 103 - 15 minutes**

You have a friend who had to take a loan back in 2018 due to late VA payments to their school. You know that the VA has taken steps to keep this from happening again, but that schools may require certain documentation from you to attend classes if the payments are late. You’re interested in attending **Midland University in Fremont Nebraska**, how would you use the Comparison Tool to find what information Midland University requires?

P: Well I’m a veteran, post 9/11 with 100% school. [searched for midland U].

[On srp] Wow, it’s cheap to live there. Not as cheap as I thought it would be. [started looking down filter column]. View details, there we go [clicked]. Got it.

[On profile] Ok, small size, 4 year program…ooh, out of pocket tuition? Full time…Yellow ribbon, military tuition assistance, school address… benefit. Veterans tuition policy? View policy [clicked]. I think I missed something. Protection against late VA payments: requires certificate of eligibility (COE). Is that what I’m looking for?

AK: does that seem like it?

P: Yes

Ak: are you familiar wth a coe? Do you have one?

P: Yes. When I went to northern virginia community college, they needed it for my certification for my enrollment saying that the va will pay the school. For mason, I didn’t have to submit one. I don’t know why.

Ak: how do you have one?

P: for my former school, I would screenshot it off of ebenefits saying that I had so many months of school left, but I would also receive it in the mail.

Ak: how do you think that process went for finding information about va late payments?

P: I thought it was pretty easy.

Things to watch for:

* Where does the user initially look for the information?
* Does the user look under the Institutional Summary section?
* What, if any, interest does the user show in the “Protection against late VA payments” modal information?
* Does the user click on the modal for more information?
* Screen reader: how does the user move throughout the page? (quick tabbing through options, listening to every control/element, etc.)
* Screen reader: how does the user interact with modals?

Upon completion of task: How did you think that went?

**Second Task: Section 103 Content - 10 minutes**

{ Get participant to 103 indicator }

As you're reviewing the information in this area of the page, could you tell me what “Protection against late VA payments” means to you?

P: that if va is late with payments to the school that it would n’t be the student’s responsibility to pay that tuition still because the va will pay it. It’s just late getting there.

* Have you heard of a Certificate of Eligibility before? If so, when? Have you submitted one before? [see above]
* Do any other questions come to mind about this?

**Third Task: Additional Criteria - 5 minutes**

Let's say you are also interested in attending **College of Charleston in Charleston, SC** and are curious about their requirements for obtaining protection against late VA payments. How would you go about determining those requirements for this school?

P: [searched for college of Charleston] ok, view details for college of Charleston. Scroll down ot the additional information, and theire is no information available at this time for their protection against late payments.

Ak: what are your thoughts on that?

P: probably that the veteran would have to contact the school and ask them

Ak: how would you go about dsoing that?

P: I would go to the school’s website and then to the military services page and get their phone number and call them.

Ak: how would you get to the school’s website?

P: I’d probably google it, but I’m pretty sure I saw it up here [scrolled up to inst. Summary].

Ak: so your first instinct would be to google that?

P: yeah.

Ak: ok, last task. [had participant search for CHADRON STATE COLLEGE IN CHADRON, NB]

P: ok, view details. Oh, that tuiton is cheap! Down to the bottom, they require a COE and additional criteria.

Ak: what do you think that means?

P: I have no idea.

Ak: how would you figure that out?

P: my first instinct would be to click on this [ first time opened modal]. Contact this school’s certifying official to learn more about the school’s policy or learn more about the veterans transition act. So for this one, you actually have to contact the school’s office. So I assume it could be the dd214 and stuff.

Ak: when you say “and stuff” what might that be?

P: proof that you live in the state, dd214, your college requirements to make sure you’re following a degree plan. And that’s really all I got.

[?]

Ak: could you walk me through that process?

P: I can, so go back to the gi bill comparison tool. I feel this is a little bit different since the last time I used it. [searched for Georgetown u]. [went to view details for Georgetown u] ok, so Georgetown university…gi bill pays 22k but you still have to cover 13k.

Ak: what’s the most important information you’re looking at here?

P: I’m looking at how much gi bill pays to school and how much is out of pocket. The yellow ribbon program would pay 10k per year. I think that’s included up here, though. That’s not very clear, if the gi bill pays to school includes yellow ribbon or not.

Ak: when did you first learn about yellow ribbon?

P: I learned about it when I was in the marine corps.

Ak: did you learn about it from your unit, taps..?

P: I learned about it from people and then I learned about it from TRS.

Ak: you mentioned the comparison tool looks different than the last time you used it.

P: no, honestly it’s been a long time since I used it. I couldn’t point out specifics to you.

* What do you think “additional criteria” is?
* How would you go about finding out more information?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user click on the modal?
* Does the user search around anywhere else looking for more information on “additional criteria”?

**Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the Comparison Tool that you’d like to share?

P: other than about changing the gi bill pays to school and yellow ribbon, not really. … The yellow ribbon part is confusing [benefits panel]

Ak: what part is confusing? Here it says the yellow ribbon amount is 5k per year and here it says it’s 10k. ok, so I see it’s paid by school and then here it’s paid by va.

Ak: what do you think is happening?

P: it’s breaking it down where that’s coming from. I guess before I wasn’t looking at it clearly. I was looking at the bolded items.

Ak: I want to circle back to the late payments…If you were going through that process again, where do you think you would look in real life for information on how to deal with that? Would you go to the comparison tool or would there be another place that you’d look to find that information?

P: I’d probably look at it individually based by school. I’d go to the military services page and see if it was on there. if it wasn’t, I’d probably email one of the military services office to ask them.

[JJ asked about COE]

CC: Earlier I noticed you took a look at the Veterans tuition policy. What did you think you might find there?

Initially thought she’d find information about protection against late va payments within “Veteran tuition policy” link in institution summary section.

CC: Back in 2018 when va payments were late, you mentioned the School knew it was coming. Who notified you, was it the school, va or did you learn about that on your own?

She learned about this on her own. She was working or volunteering for Wounded Warrior Project and she heard about it form other Veterans there. The school had only let her know bah payments would be late.

* We had you look for information on delayed VA payments within the GI Bill Comparison Tool. If this situation arose in real life where do you think you’d look for information on how to deal with this issue?
* Any questions for me?

**Thank-You and Closing - 3 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, thanks so much and enjoy the rest of your day!