**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: Yes

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: Yea I remember at some point I didn’t get my housing. I think, I forget the reasons why, but I got a lump sump for housing a couple of months into the semesters.

Ak: any issues with tuition?

P: I remember that, yes, because there was a hold on my account and I had to call the veterans office. They managed to take it off. The registrar’s office placed a hold on my account.

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

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

P: I think years ago.

Ak: what were you looking for?

P: I was just looking at the yellow ribbon, things like that.

* 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?

P: browsing the va website. I was trying to figure out what was on the website. I don’t think I was marketed to.

Ak: you mentioned you used a screen reader a couple of times in the past?

P: I think it was for classes.

**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: [started typing midland in search] here it is, Fremont, Nebraska. Guess I have to go to view details. [clicked that]

[profile] midland, you’re asking for what do they need? I see cost. There’s a lot of radio buttons on the left. Contact details…[scrolled down to institution summary] looks like there’s a lot of information here. [scrolled back up]. Just from this website, I don’t know what they need.

Ak: what sort of information, words or phrases are you looking for?

P: documentation. I know certifying officials use them. This person right here is the main person. I was thinking it might be down here. I see it requires certificate of eligibility, but that doesn’t tell me anything.

Ak: anything about what in particular?

P: this says protection against late va payments. It doesn’t tell me what documentation they need if you’re enrolled. [?] [clicked on policy link] this seems like it’s the page I need to be on. It has a lot of information right here.

Ak: veteran tuition policy is the one you think you need to be on?

P: yeah. I just don’t see where else on the page.

Ak: in terms of easy or difficult, how easy or difficult do you think it was completing that task?

P: it was difficult.

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 } [**COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON, CHARLESTON, SC**]

P: [Searched and went to school profile] [scrolled down to 103 indicator] so now it says no information available [opened 103 modal]. I’m reading this blurb right now. Ok, that makes sense. I’d probably contact the institution, I guess. Frankly, I didn’t even think about this, about late va payments. I just assumed the school would take care of it. I didn’t even think about it. Even back then, I didn’t think about the va making late payments, or if I did, I would have blamed the school. I didn’t have an issue. I didn’t think about it at the time.

Ak: it’s interesting because recently we’ve been talking to some people. Around the country, there were many veterans who experienced significant challenges, and in particular, you mentioned, the housing allowance, that also caused some veterans significant challenges.

P: I don’t remember the exact time. It was a few years ago. I was frustrated. When you talk about va late payments to the schools, I just went straight to the veterans office. They got 5, 4. Something million. It seems like this school does some good, finds some good va students. That’s what I look for, a large veteran population. It’s guaranteed money for them. That’s how I thought about it.

Ak: that’s good. It’s a good peace of mind for you.

P: yeah, and it wasn’t just me. Here, it’s 417 students. It’s a good deal of the school.

Ak: so you would just say, ok, that’s not a problem, you’d probably just contact the shool.

P: if you didn’t even mention it, I wouldn’t even talk about it.

Ak: do you recall the relevant information you were getting, was that coming from the school or the va?

P: the primary point was the school itself, the veteran’s office. Like anything, I learned this myself, universities are companies where one division may not talk to another one… even though it’s all going to work out in the end, it’s going to take some time to go through the process. I should have been able to register for classes. That was my biggest hassle because they said I didn’t make the payments.[?] It didn’t raise the level of me submitting a complaint because I felt everything got taken care of.

aK: where would you have complained?

P: probably just complained to my wife. She’d tell me don’t worry about it.

Ak: are you familiar with the feedback tool?

P: no. I am aware that there was an ombudsman-type person.

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?

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

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

Let's say you are also interested in attending **Chadron State College in Chadron, NE** 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 school, then went to profile]

P: additional criteria, the coe. Ok, well, there you go.

* What do you think “additional criteria” is?

P: I have no idea.

Ak: any guesses?

P: no.

* How would you go about finding out more information?

P: I wouldn’t even take my time to find out. My school had like a 100-page student book. If I had a question, it’s probably in the book. If you wanted the real answer, I’d probably email the school… if va payments are late, I’d go right to the school. why is that the student’s fault? Like if the school told me, I’m sorry, you can’t enroll. We got bigger issues than that.

[?]

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?

[?]

* 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?

P: I’d go to the school. I wouldn’t have thought to come to the va.gov website.

[knew what a coe is]

[was eventually able to register for classes]

* 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!