**GIBCT Colmery Act Sec 116 Veteran Discussion Script**

*June 14, 2019*

**Welcome and Opening Remarks (5 minutes)**

*[When the participant is ready, the moderator will begin the session with the following introduction.]*

Thanks for joining us today! My name is [name], and I also have two colleagues on the line, Amy and Cindy. They are observing and taking notes. We work with a team at the VA that is enhancing the VA.gov website and we're interested in speaking with you today about a pilot program called VET TEC.

VET TEC is a tuition assistance program designed to help Veterans advance in IT careers by enrolling in high-tech training programs.

We’d like your thoughts on what aspects of the website work well and where we might make improvements to make things even easier for Veterans.

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

* We are interested in hearing your honest opinions. We are in no way testing your knowledge or ability. Our goal is to be sure that application meets Veterans’ needs. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas and welcome your feedback.
* If for any reason you want to pause or stop the session at any time, just let me know. I'd be happy to do so.
* By testing the site thoroughly, we hope to ensure that it’s written in a thoughtful way and gives Veterans all of the information they need to make informed decisions.
* Do you have any questions so far?
* Lastly, 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! I'm going to turn on screen and audio recording now. Once it's on, I'll ask again, as we like to have your verbal consent

[The meeting host will begin audio and screen recording.]

Are you comfortable if we record the audio and screen movements today?

**Warm-up Questions (5 minutes)**

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

1. What interest, if any, do you have in pursuing a career in the high-tech industry? I would say interested.
2. If you were interested in attending a high-tech training program, how would you decide what course to attend? I would try to find something I’m interested in, like web development, customer support. I’d compare what makes the most money, what requires the most certification.
3. What factors would be most important to you when selecting a course? I’d probably be most interested in something that pays the most, so money.
4. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience? I have never used this tool before.
5. Any education benefits at all? I extinguished my Post-9/11 Gi Bill. I didn’t quite get my undergrad degree with it, and then I used Tuition Assistance to get my degree.

Okay, let's go ahead and walk through a few scenarios.

**Think Aloud**

While you are going through the site, we ask that you please think aloud and vocalize your thoughts and decisions. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn. We are interested in your first reaction to each page, as well as what you are thinking as you engage with each page. If you have questions about what information needs to go in a particular field, it’s likely that many other Veterans will too. Sharing your thoughts aloud may seem strange at first, but it helps us understand what you are thinking and give us valuable information.

**Review the VET TEC Overview Page (5 minutes)**

<https://vagov-content-pr-433.herokuapp.com/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/vettec-high-tech-program/>

To give you a little more background on the VET TEC program, we'd like to share an overview page with you. Feel free to take as much time as you like reading the page and let us know when you are ready to continue.

Do you have any questions about what you’ve read?

I like how you guys keep it pretty simple. It’s not confusing. It’s not a bunch of hyperlinks. You’re keeping it pretty short. I like the eligibility. It seems pretty standard. I like the training that’s covered. If you’re interested in those fields, that’s good. Vet tec providers, this looks like places that do it in person, at least they’re showing an address. That’s pretty cool, that it keeps it pretty basic, the address of the place, I like how they put the time. That’s nice. I don’t know what that equates to, but I’m guessing that has to be at least a couple of months. Preferred training provider, I don’t know what that means, though. I actually like this a lot, it’s pretty easy. One thing to say in that box is I don’t know what preferred training provider means. I don’t know how much simpler that can get other than adding a video up there.

**Prototype**

Let switch over to the Comparison Tool.

Just so you know, this is a prototype, rather than a real website. We create mock-ups like these and share them with Veterans in sessions like this to be sure we have everything right before we code the actual website. You'll notice that only certain links have been activated and you’ll not need to enter any data. When you click a field, text will appear automatically.

**Scenario #1 (10 minutes)**

Let’s assume you're moving to Detroit, Michigan and you'd like to advance your IT career by taking advantage of the VA's new high-tech program. Using the GI Bill Comparison Tool, how would you find a training course in Detroit and determine how much money you’d receive to help pay your rent while attending the course?

Please talk aloud and let us know what you are thinking.

Veteran, that’s good. Which benefit do you want to use? I guess if I’m a veteran, I’m going to use the post 9/11. Cumulative service? I don’t know what that is, so I’m just going to click on vet tec. [he then clicked search button]

This says it’s a preferred provider, but yeah. Looks like I see what I want to see. [He compared housing rates].

*[After the participant has selected one of the DSDT programs and shared thoughts aloud.]*

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. What amount would you expect to receive to help pay your rent as you take classes?
2. What are your thoughts on why the Monthly BAH rate is different from what you will actual receive while taking the course?
3. Would you expect to receive the same benefits for both programs?
4. How would you determine what amount of BAH you'd receive for the other course?
5. What aspect of the page or the process might other Veterans find confusing or unclear? Why?

**Scenario #2 (10 minutes)**

Let say you work full-time during the day and are interested in taking a web-based course in the evenings to build your technical skills. Using the site, how would you find a couple of web-based courses to compare?

Web based courses in the evening or just web based in general? I would do the learning format. It looks like I can only have 2 choices. The Detroit one, and the Chicago, Illinois. This one here in Detroit, it does say preferred provider, and that’s nice. To decide, I’d click view details, or web developer. Maybe I can google it. I’m sure they’d just give me an overview, what the course provides, how long it takes. Since it’s all online, they won’t tell me much about the campus, they would probably tell me about the course and certifications I would get, and probably the prerequisite requirements.

[clicked on view details] ok, looks like it’s on code platoon. So this is less than I thought and they’re giving me a link. I’d probably check out the website. Yep, that’s probably what I’d expect, that link. What is that, 14 weeks is roughly 5 months? Estimate your benefits, tells me what va pays to school. That’s nice. Scholarships, online rate, housing allowance, total paid to you. That’s nice, you get an idea of what you actually get. School address, SCOs, if I had more questions, they would be the people to talk to. Application process, oh we were talking about that in the beginning. Institution code…Yeah, this is pretty decent, too. It’s not overwhelming, and if I wanted more details, I’d go to that school website. [1:36]

*[After participant finds at least two online programs (Code Platoon & DSDT]*

If you were going to attend one, how would you decide between the two?

I would do the search we did for the Chicago one, but for the Detroit one. [he went back to search results] The things I’m looking for are length, tuition cost, and how much the va covers. It looks like va will ocver the whole thing, so that’s good. I don’t remember the last number, but this looks pretty good. The school code would be different. I would probably check out the website, but I guess it doesn’t matter how much the total costs are because it looks like the va is covering the whole thing. […] 1:37

T: credentials upon graduation? It looks like I saw something about school certifying officials. I might need to talk to them, but I’d also look in the website up here.

T: comparing courses? You know what would be easy, if I had two computer screens and I could compare that way?

T: which search method do you prefer? This one seems more specific. [provider

*[After the participant has explored the prototype and shared thoughts aloud.]*

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. What led you to select [Program Name] over the others?
2. If both courses offered the same certification course in the same city, how would you determine which you'd prefer? (Would user select the preferred program?)
3. How would you learn more about the contents of the course?

**Alternative version of the Search Results Page**

[Return to the result page]

We’d also like your thoughts on a different version of the results page. The version you just looked at showed a list of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . We have another version that displays a list of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ instead.  
We are interested in your thoughts on which you find most useful.

Would you rather see and be able to compare providers (like on this tab) or courses (like on this tab)?

[see 22:30]

**Thank-You and Closing**

*[The moderator concludes each session by thanking the participant for their time and for offering his/her opinions and suggestions.]*

Thank you very much for taking the time to give us your feedback today. We really appreciate your help!

C: preferred training providers. What does that mean to you now that you know what it is?

C: How would you compare two programs within the same school? [he went to a provider page and started reading the program details, did not click radio buttons, finally did click radio buttons and compared in the benefits panel] It looks like I can’t cross compare them, but I kind of like it this way. I’ll definitely tell people about this. It’s cool!