**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? [9:05]
2. If you were interested in attending a high-tech training program, how would you decide what course to attend?
3. What factors would be most important to you when selecting a course?
4. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience? I think I have. I’m pretty sure that I have.
5. Used GI Bill benefits before? Yes, I have. I’m actually using them right now.

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 do like the intro to it. It’s easy to understand and gives you a broad idea of what exactly this is. After reading the eligibility stuff, my only question would be the last one. Are you accepted into a program by a VA-approved provider? Is there a list somewhere? Maybe if there’s a list, do a link next to that. Like, is there a current list?

I think it’s helpful that it has the training areas. It might also be helpful to have a list alongside that of actual careers that align with those. When I was reading about the benefits and the housing allowance, my first thought was, what if it’s online, and that’s directly under that, so that’s helpful.

The link under the how do I apply? Does that take you directly to the VA form listed there? That makes it really easy.

Ok, the list that I was looking for [list of training providers]. I like that it says in there whether it’s in person or online because that’s going to be one of the first questions that people have. The contact information for any questions is right there in the bottom.

**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.

Dropdown here, already a veteran. I’m assuming that I’d be using the post 9/11 gi bill or is that an actual option. [she clicked around and found vet tec fairly easily]

[searched, now in SRP]

That was really easy to find the list. [tried clicking into country/state] It looks like the second one is for Detroit. Housing looks like it’s 2,136 a month, and then the tuition is 19,950. For Detroit, the housing is 825 to 1746, and the tuition is 5399 to 17995.

T: thoughts on range? From my experience with the gi bill, my thoughts would be that the 825 is if you’re doing it online, and the other if it’s in person.

[school profile for DSDT]

Looks like they have a couple of different programs, and the tuition and fees, length, oh, and there’s a link to view the different program details. It looks like that’s what I was looking for.

T: tell me what you’d be looking for on their site. I’d be looking at what the program details are, what certification you get out of completing either of them, and how they compare to each other. It looks like you can click on the individual programs at the top here.

T: how would you decide between those two courses? I would look at the individual course details, and look at which was best for my career choices, and choose one that was the best.

T: let’s say you’re curious about the housing for the courses. How would you determine that? I would look here at the bottom [gray panel] It tells you the details for each of them. It breaks it down. Because this is a 2 week program, you would get the prorated rate of 873.

*[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?

[she searched again for vet tec] It gives you options for the learning format. It gives you online, so I would choose that.

T: what does hybrid mean? To me, I’ve done a hybrid course before. Some are in person, some are online.

T: what else would you call it? I would leave it as hybrid, but maybe a details box explaining that it’s a combination of online and in person.

*[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?

Both of them have two programs, so I would probably go into the individual schools and see the programs they offer, see what fits my schedule the best. [code platoon] it seems these programs are the same, just one is in person and the other is online. I would go into the provider’s website and look at the program details for each of them. What I’m looking for is what fits my career best. Then I’d go into the other one, and see what they offer as well [DSDT].

T: thoughts on comparing the two programs? It’s pretty easy. I would just have an option to be able to compare multiple courses side by side [on srp].

*[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)?

I don’t know. I never would have thought to compare them the two different ways, honestly. I think I might actually like this better because if you’re looking for a specific courses or a specific career path, it might be easier to prioritize them than just by looking at the different schools.

T: thoughts on preferred provider? I think from before is, if you weren’t making enough of a job progress, then they’d refund you the money. I think it’s a great option, if you have an emergency situation that comes up or if you have a different job option, that’s nice to know that you’re not going to be paying that money out of pocket.

**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!