**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 wish I had that brain capacity, but unfortunately, no. I don’t think that’s going to happen.
2. If you were interested in attending a high-tech training program, how would you decide what course to attend? Something that definitely co-aligns with whatever it is that I’m trying to get into. Usually what I do is I look over the syllabi and look over the coursework, if it will actually end up enhancing my ability to obtain a job.
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? Remind me. What does that do exactly? [T explains] Yes, I have.
5. Used GI Bill benefits before? Oh, yeah.

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.

[3:36]

So I have a question. It says here to qualify for VA education benefits under the Gi Bill and to have one day of benefit left. Is that for the post 9/11 or is that also Montgomery?

Is this anything like vocrehab, do you know? If you have just one day, you can connect with the vocrehab office and connect with employers. That’s awesome. Oh, ok, so it’s just like bah for regular university sites, So, I have a question, too. What if I’m at a brick and mortar university and then I graduate, and I want to do this program. Am I able to?

Oh, wow, that’s awesome [list of training providers] The provider will refund tuition if the veteran doesn’t find meaningful employment after completing the program.

The recommendations that I have are where it says here, how to apply. It has the name of the va form, but I would recommend having the actual link to the actual form to fill out [vet tec form].

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

**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.

The tech school in Detroit you said? I guess I search for school.

[SRP] So, definitely wouldn’t consider Chicago. I’m looking at Detroit, MI. Based off of this, depending on the school, you’d see how much the housing costs. From my familiarity with the GI Bill, the housing allowance is based off of the zip code of the school.

T: How would you decide between them? I would look up the location of the school…I would mostly look at the one that says preferred provider. I’m assuming that would be a pretty good place to go to.

…[3:48] I would figure out who’s teaching the course. [didn’t think the cards were clickable]

[school profile] I’m not technologically savvy so I’m trying to put my mind with somebody who is. The program name, I’m looking at tech pro 2 and tech pro 6. I’m assuming those are two different courses, one is taught in person, the other is taught online.

Just because it says 2 and 6, I’m assuming they’re two different courses and one is more advance than the other.

T: how would you determine the housing for paying rent? [he played with the radio buttons then looked at benefits panel] It tells you the housing amount.

[3:52] It says here the va pays tuition to the school…Having less steps to manage when they can focus on more important things is definitely amazing.

*[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?

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

[he tried clicking online only on landing page] [T suggested he click the type of institution button]

[srp] If I’m not paying a tution and I’m receiving a housing allowance, but the housing allowance is based on where the university is. A veteran can go to any institution and receive the housing allowance for that university.

[technical issues w/ hotspots]

[School Profile] I think it’s good for somebody that’s new to know that they’ll be receiving that housing allowance. Somebody might think the total paid to you is paid at the beginning of the program. The total paid to you might be misconstrued by somebody. They would be like, well, is it at the end of the program?...For me, living in Washington, dc, I receive 2300 or 2400 on the first of every month.

T: where would you learn more about the class? I can tell you right now it would be amazing if the va would be able to obtain the syllabi and have it accessible on the website. Obtaining the syllabi sometimes can be extremely difficult. If the university was able to work with the VA to create an accessible folder where it will have all the syllabi loaded, that would be fantastic. Even if it’s not the whole syllabi, but maybe the topics of discussion, the schedule.

T: where would you want that? It would be on this page, to be honest with you. It would be beneficial to have somewhere clickable where it would take you to the topics of discussion for the class and take you to what you’ll actually be learning.

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

[for searching for cybersecurity, he tried searching for keywords] What confuses me is that there is a section for keywords [keyword title], but the fields below aren’t keywords.

*[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)?

**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!

T: thoughts on preferred providers? To me, they would be schools that have a superior background and that they’re preferred by the VA.

T: thoughts on alternate SRP? I think what would be good is to have the programs listed underneath the actual name of the school. Another thing, too, is how these are organized because, just looking at them, ok, these are alphabetical, so that makes sense. Another thing, too, is that I’m seeing here that the housing is 825 to 2058, but is one online and then the other at the school itself or is that, how is that differentiation listed here?

[he couldn’t tell which courses were online or in person based on the cards alone on courses SRP]