**Estimate Your Benefits Usability Testing Discussion Guide - Standard Desktop**

**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 to calculate your GI Bill benefits for institutions and programs within the Comparison Tool.

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

* This entire session should take about 50 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?

**Warm-up Questions - 5 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. Since 2018.

* (If applicable) When did you start school? Where are you going to school?

P: Calverson University. Go Tigers.

1. How did you (or would you) find out what benefits VA provides for your education and housing?

P: Originally in TRS [?].

1. Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? [he learned about it in TRS]

* 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: In TRS before I separated they showed us all about it, and the GI Bill Comparison Tool was in there.

* + If no, no worries. We're checking that out today and always appreciate getting a fresh perspective on it.

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: Calculate Benefits at School / IHL - 15 minutes**

You are considering attending **UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY** for data science and want to know what costs (including tuition, fees, etc.) are covered under the Post 9/11 GI Bill. How would you use the Comparison Tool to find out what benefits you would receive if attending University of California-Berkeley?

*Potential prompt:* Let's say you were interested in taking classes at this school remotely, how would you go about incorporating that information?

P: Ok, I’m a veteran post-9/11. 36 months was already in there. and then type of institution, school, and I’ll be going in person, correct?

A: yes

P: university of California? [the search was being problematic and causing double letters]

A: [offered to type for him] [he told her to type school name] [on srp] I see that tuiton is covered at 100%. [clicked on view details]

[profile] so I see gi bill pays to school, and I’d pay nothing out of pocket.

A: any initial comments or thoughts on what you’re seeing here?

P: No. My big thing would be making sure I’m not paying out of pocket. And I’d look to see the housing rate.

A: how would you do that?

P: I would google that just to make sure the bah covers what I’m going to need.

A: let’s say that you got a 3,000 scholarship that you also wanted to apply to your education. How would you go about incorporating that scholarship into your calculation of benefits?

P: [scrolled down, opened scholarships tab] so you click on scholarships and funding. [typed in amount in scholarships field] and then I would hit calculate benefits.

A: did you see anything changing?

P: yes, so the gi bill pays to school is going to be less because of the scholarship. That tells me if I lose the scholarship, I’m going to be a little bit in the hole.

P:[?] I think it’s good. I did get a scholarship at my last school, and the va called asking for their money back.

Things to watch for:

* How does the user select the school (School name or View Details)?
* Where does the user initially look for their benefit information?
* How often and after what actions are users viewing “Estimate your benefits” panel to track changes there?

Accordions

* Does the user engage with the accordions without prompting?
* Which accordions does the user open?
* When making changes to inputs located in several accordions, do users go back and check previous accordions to see if changes are holding?

Calculate button

* Do users click calculate for every accordion or just once after all changes are made?
* When users click Calculate, do they notice which values have changed?
* When do users expect re-calculations to occur (as they are making them or after clicking Calculate)?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?

P: I think it was very easy as long as you know the name of the school you’re looking at or you have a broad spectrum, that’s a good thing. When I was looking, I think I typed in Maryland, and I got to compare all the schools in Maryland. That was helpful.

A: have you had experiences with the search bar before?

P: yeah. I used it before

A: how did you think that process went?

P: I think it was pretty simple.

A: any challenges with the search going through that process?

P: not that I remember.

* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?
* Were you able to find what you were looking for? Did it seem like anything was missing?
* Do you have any questions about the benefits you would receive at this school?

Accordions: Let's take a look at the Estimate Your Benefits part of the page.

* What did you think of the accordions (Your benefits, Learning format and schedule, Scholarships and other funding)?

P: I think the categories make it easy for everyone so they don’t have to go searching very far. [in benefits accordion ]Most people are using post-9/11, and then 36 months. I don’t know much about the other ones, but it’s pretty much what I’d be looking for.

[opened about your school] instate student, yes, full time.[opened learning format] in person, does that change anything? [went back to previous accordion to see if anything had changed] no. some of the schools do have the option for yellow ribbon, which is good. I think everything I would be looking for is pretty much here now. The only other thing I was looking for was how to calculate yellow ribbon.

[?] It was just, I just had to reach out and ask.

A: from 1-5 how would you rate that task?

P: I thought it was a 5, very easy.

A: have you heard of the vet tec program?

P: I have. It’s when you go to a tech school, isn’t it?

A: it sounds like you had some good training when you got out.

* What did you think of how the questions were grouped together?
* When you were clicking through the accordions, what did you think about how they opened and closed?

**Second Task: Ivy League school - 10 minutes**

You know that the Post 9/11 GI Bill covers Ivy League schools like Brown University, Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Princeton. Let's say you wanted to know what costs would be covered at one of those schools. Pick an Ivy League school of your choice and see what benefits you would receive at that institution.

Things to watch for:

* How often and after what actions are users viewing “Estimate your benefits” panel to track changes there?

Upon completion of the task:

* How do the benefits at this school compare to what you'd get at UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY?

**Third Task: OJT or VET TEC - 10 minutes**

OJT - A friend of yours told you that **RAGING WIRE DATA CENTER in Sacramento, CA** does on-the-job training for veterans in data science. Can you find that data center and let me know what benefits you would receive if you trained with this employer?

VET TEC - A friend of yours told you that **GALVANIZE INC** is a VET TEC training provider with a program in San Francisco, CA for data science. Can you find that provider and let me know what benefits you would receive if you took this program?

P: [selected vet tec at landing page]

[srp] you said that was in California?

A: yep

P: Data science immersive? There it is. [clicked view details]. Ok, there it is. It tells you the length of the training…ok, so it’s got the scholarship area there [calculators]. it tells you how much you have to pay. Ok, that’s pretty self-explanatory.

A: as you’re looking at this, can you tell me the benefits that would be available to you would be?

P: aside from getting a scholarship, it would be 4368 a month for tuition. Ok, that’s housing allowance. [IDEA: CHANGE IN PERSON MONTHLY RATE TO STIPEND INSTEAD OF RATE]. […] Ok, and then, so it says here that va pays, I assumed you’d go through the va rep on campus [had clicked open modal for VA pays to provider learn more]. Seems pretty self-explanatory. You’re not paying a lot out of pocket.

A: so who’s paying the provider?

P: va does. It says right here under tuition and fees, va pays to provider. The first and second is 25%, and then once you receive employment, it’s 50%. So va pays to provider, you’re paying 0 out of pocket tuition.

A: do you have any questions about the benefits you’d receive here at galvanize?

P: no… as far as things I would be most interested at first, I’d say everything’s here. The layout of the other one because I’ve used it before, was a little bit easier for me.

A: can you talk about the program names above, the approved programs?

P: yeah. It gives you a rough estimate of how much you need to expect, and it does give you the tuition and fees. When I see that price, I’d look down to your estimated benefits to see if I’d owe anything on that. When I look down, I also see the other programs that I assume the school offers. I also see tbd which isn’t there yet for what the school offers.

A: so you’re visually comparing them at the top part of the page there?

P: yeah. I think it’s cool how they pop up at the top

A: if you wanted to see your benefits for hack reactor engineering how would you go about doing that?

P: it doesn’t let me click on it, so, I think I would just go back up and look for that one on the last page we were on. Do you want me to do that?

[It seems he was expecting the Approved Program selected to change when he selected a different program in the radio button below without clicking calculate button. I don’t think it’s fair to expect people to relate changes below to what’s happening at the top since they will not look down to the calculate benefits button]

A: [asked him to calculate for 3k scholarship]

P: ok, here we go [he input 3k and hit calculate button, then read out benefits pane].

Things to watch for:

* How does the user navigate to this program/employer?
* What, if any, fields do they change within the EYB section?
* How often and after what actions are users viewing “Estimate your benefits” panel to track changes there?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What did you think of this information versus University of California/Ivy League school?
* Were you able to find what you were looking for? Was anything missing?
* Do you have any questions about the benefits you would receive at this school?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Fourth Task: Benefits Change - 5 minutes (Optional)**

You recently found out that you are eligible for the **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment** GI Bill. You are curious how your benefits with this bill would compare to the Post 9/11 GI Bill. How would you go about changing your GI Bill selection within the Comparison Tool?

Things to watch for:

* Where do users try to change their benefit?
* Do users realize they can change “Your benefits” values on Search Results page?

Upon completion of task:

* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

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

P: I think it was good. […]

* Any questions for me?

P: is there a way to compare side by side two different schools? I think that would have been really helpful trying to decide where to go. That would have been pretty helpful.

A: how would you do it now?

P: I would just open two tabs.

A: that’s a good approach. We don’t have it yet, but that’s something we hear about.

* I want to give a chanced to the other people on the line to ask a question.

C: What do you think the green check mark is for under the approved programs?

P: I think it’s for the program that’s currently approved

C: You mentioned you learned about the comparison tool in TRS. Did you use it when you were searching for a school to attend?

P: yes, I did. [was initially searching for a community college to attend]

J: what would you like to compare side by side?

P: out of pocket tuition…

**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!