**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?

Yes.

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

September 2018 or 19. I am currently going to Bryant University.

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

P: You know what? There was never really…I didn’t know how much it was. I had used it once before because I was living in Louisiana. I don’t think I had any problems with it.

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

P: Negative.

* 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?
  + 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: So first thing, military status, veteran. Gi bill post 9/11. I think it was 36 months…no, it was 80%. I want to say in person. UC Berkeley California is the name of the school. [typed uc Berkeley, got zero results]. [tried a couple of variations on the name with no luck] How about college of UC Berkeley California? [no luck still] [finally typed in the correct name ] it’s at the bottom [of the search suggestions]. Wow! I wish I was getting that BAH! Programs, student vet group. Do I click on University of California-Berkeley? [clicked institution name].

[profile] that’s pretty nice right there!

A: what are you looking at?

P: the actual setup. I wish I had known about this. I’m looking at your estimated benefits. That’s pretty neat. Can you scroll down a little bit more? Ok, calculate benefit. Is that all of it right there? learning format and schedule [opened tab]. [?]

A: You clicked on calculate benefits. Did you notice anything change?

P: negative. I would have used this if I had known about it!

A: that’s good to hear.

P: the only thing, when you went back to trying to find a school, some kind of hints, a comparison thing, would help. For search the school, a broader…that could be broader.

A: when you’re looking at estimate your benefits, what are your thoughts about what’s here on the left hand side?

P: about your school. I don’t understand what that is. Everything else is pretty plain. It gives you the ability to calculate your benefits and scholarships.

A: are you curious of about your school?

P: yeah, I would click on it. [amy opened accordion] ok, in-state. I’m living it. I’m from California. It doesn’t tell you much about the school, though. It’s not what I thought it was. I thought it was going to be specific information about uc Berkeley. Like general information.

A: what does this stuff look like to you?

P: I figure in-state means I’m from California, but I’m going to go to school there. For your benefits, I think that’s kind of redundant because everything is already over to the right.

A: so this looks like the same thing that’s over here? [your benefits and your estimated benefits]

P: yes. And I would click on learning format and schedule just to see what that was. [opened group] nope, I wouldn’t do it. A lot of us like to streamline the process. We come through standing in line quite often, so if we could get something more streamline. A lot of older veterans are, I’m about to be 50 years old.

A: so do you feel like you have a sense of how much money you’d get if you went to this school?

P: yes. [?]

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

P: except for that place where we had to put in, it took a minute to get…[lost his audio]…just that spot where we were searching for the school, if you had to change something, I guess give more keywords

* 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?

[?]

P: I would just call the education counselor. If your benefit was something with the gi bill,[?]

A: do you think there would be a place to look for your montgomery gi bill amount?

P: from what I’ve seen, no. now that I’ve seen, I think there would be other places where you could add that.

A: should we take a look at that?

P: yeah. Can we try to include the Montgomery gi bill?

A: how would we do that?

P: actually, I would try that [gi bill dropdown].

A: did anything change when we did that?

P: no, but I can’t scroll down further.

A: you want to try scrolling down?

P: yeah, but did anything come up there? no [kept scrolling down the page] it’s not telling me if I used my gi bill how much I’d have left. Should I say post-graduate studies?

A: so you’re thinking if you had used the post-9/11, and then you had benefits left. Is that what you’re thinking?

P: yes, yes. I would talk to the guy jay nelson, that’s the school certifying official. I would take out the information about the school. I don’t need it [accordion]. It doesn’t really give me anything. The way everything is broken down on the right, it just seems kind of extra. I don’t like that taskbar. I like the scholarship and other funding. Learning format and schedule, I don’t know anything about that because I could get that from the va rep at the school. could they tie this so that the va counselor could see it at the school?

A: that they would have access to the same information? this is a site that’s publicly available, so they do have access to this information.

P: other than this, I like it. I would have used this. I’m kind of disappointed that it was…it’s cool though. Everyone else can get it.

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)?
* 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: I would go by if there is a task bar with a list of tech schools that’s in that program. I would just go down here, vet tec providers. Search schools in my area… search schools, oh man, look at that. That’s lovely. [vet tec search results] is there scroll down? Well, we couldn’t search that in cities over to the left?i would search san Francisco. [amy typed in city] Oh, yeah. There it is, at the top. Galvanize, inc. I would click that. I like it the way it is, only because I don’t have any experience with the vet tec page. Maybe if I could get in touch with the person who’s at galvanize, can we communicate with them through this? I see the phone number. So I guess this email goes directly ot the person that’s in charge of the program?

A: ok

P: phone calls are reserved for after that initial email.

A: how would you figure out what the benefits would be?

P: I would do it the same way as the gi bill. But you said this is not coming out of the gi bill?

A: you have to have entitlement left. 1 day left.

P: I would assume you could use the gi bill. Maybe you could apply from this page. Clicking on the vet tec logo could take you to where you could directly apply to with that company. [clicked on school url]

A: how would you figure out how much money you would get from the vet tec program?

P: I think we get an answer from what you showed, I think it was 12,000 for the tuition. I would like to know how it is spread out, if there’s a limit on book stipend. I would do it just like the gi bill, maybe put it separate from the vet tec calculator.

A: let’s hop back to the actual page [scrolled down the page to eyb]

P: that’s school right there. your estimated benefits, I have the tuition and fees, what va provides. Ok, shoot, I might want to go work on that. I don’t even know what it is. I know reactors collide things.

A: nuclear reactors?

P: yeah, let’s do that. Sign me up for that program!

A: we’re getting close to time [went back to landing page and reviewed voc rehab as he brought it up].

C: did they have tap class when you were leaving the marines?

P: Mentioned they had tap class for him back in ’94, but it was random, boring, not helpful.

J: what was your experience searching for schools?

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?
* Any questions for me?
* I want to give a chanced to the other people on the line to ask a question.

**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!