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

**P4 – Chris Huey**

**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?
   1. Currently using

* (If applicable) When did you start school? Where are you going to school?
  + Starting using it in Aug 2018. --- University.

1. How did you (or would you) find out what benefits VA provides for your education and housing?
   1. Originally in TRS..and then in the GI bill Tool
2. Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
   1. Yes

* If yes, fantastic!
  + When do you think the last time you used it was?
    - In TRS right before separated. CT was in there.
  + 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?

So I’m Veteran, Post 9/11 GI Bill benefit…type of institution school, yes, in-person, typed university of California, clicked option. I would assume program is just under normal school. I see in-state tuition is covered 100% and that’s what I get for housing and books. Clicked view details. The actual tuition…GI Bill pays to school, tuition and fees charged and I see that there is nothing out of pocket. My big thing would be to look and make sure I’m not paying out of pocket. I would personally be looking to see the housing rate in the area to make sure that it covers it. I would just Google that to see what cost of living is…just so I can see what BAH covers.

*Potential prompt:* Let’s say you received $3000 from your local Rotary Club to help fund your education. How would you go about factoring in that money?

Opened scholarships and funding, entered amount and clicked Calculate benefits. Up here under what GI bill pays is going to be less because I’m getting a scholarship. That tells me if I’m losing the scholarship, I’m a little bit in the hole.

I’m assuming Your benefits are what your GI Bill covers…opens, that’s the original screen.

About your school –

Learning format and schedule – semesters and how the school does their semesters and learning format

No, it’s good because I got a scholarship at my last school and VA called asking for some of their money back.

I think it’s very easy as long as you know the name of the school…or know that you want to look in the university of California schools. Or you can type in Maryland and see all the schools there.

Search bar – that’s what I used to look up the school I’m currently at. I also wasn’t looking at schools with similar names. Those names are easy to find. No trouble with search when I was looking.

I know most people I know are using Post 9/11, Montgomery or Vocational. Yellow Ribbon – that was a pain to try and find information about. I think everything I would be looking for is pretty much here now. The only thing I was trying to find out was how to calculate Yellow Ribbon in and scholarships.

Yellow Ribbon – had to contact the school? If I didn’t know about it, I’d Google it. To figure out what it is and how it works. Veteran office had information, I just had to reach out and ask.

I did it even before the tabs, so now it just makes it easier.

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? No
* Which accordions does the user open? Scholarships – only when prompted
* 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?
* 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)?
* 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** provides 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?

I’ve heard of VET TEC, but don’t know anything about it.

I think I actually just paid attention, most people were sleeping.

Clicked VET TEC, clicked Search. Went to State and clicked California. Scrolling through options. Clicked Galvanize Data Science Immersive. Looking at these, it’s different programs at the same location that they offer. Okay, that’s pretty self-explanatory. Aside from getting a scholarship…upon enrollment…for in-person you’d be making $4368 and for online I’d be $825

Clicked Learn more for VA pays to provider. Seems all self-explanatory, you don’t pay anything out of pocket.

My main concerns would be if VA is paying directly to them, would you be getting BAH while you’re there. I’m sure there would be some fine details like when money is coming through, but most info I’d want to know is here.

I’m more familiar with college one. I haven’t seen VET TEC before.

Table – it gives you the hours and time to expect and tuition and fees. It also shows it in comparison for other programs that school offers. I think it’s cool that it lays it out so you can compare them with each other. You can compare course work or hours or cost for each one.

It won’t let me click on it…(table)…so I’d think I’d just go back and click on it at the last page we were on. Went back to SRP and clicked new program. (Went back to original page). Note bug on page – it is not loading the correct page.

Can you see a way to change it on this page…oh here you go, clicking radio buttons. It’s letting me click on it and nothing is changing. [ expecting numbers to change when using radio buttons without ] Entered scholarships and then clicked Calculate Benefits.

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**

Those are all the tasks I have for you today.

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the Comparison Tool that you’d like to share?
  + I like it. I like that they make it easier to click on it and all the information is there. I like how you can see it change with scholarships and how things change. And I’m not the most computer savvy person.
  + Is there a way to compare schools side by side? That would be helpful. I just opened two tabs when I was researching schools.
  + Green checkmark – I’d say that’s the one that’s been approved for tuition and fees
  + In school search: I was going to go to community college. So I was trying to figure out what BAH is. I was looking at that to see where I could afford to live.
  + If there is a comparison, how much out of pocket, Yellow Ribbon, BAH rates
* 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!