**Estimate Your Benefits Usability Testing Discussion Guide – Mobile**

**P2 – Amanda Nicklas**

**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?

**Setting up Screen reader**

For our next step, I'd like you to share your screen with me.

In Zoom, can you select the Share button?

On this screen, let's go with the default selection.

\*Confirm that screensharing works.

**Checklist for Participants**

* Are you using a mobile phone during our session today? iOS or Android? iOS
* What browser are you using 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. Used it last semester – I think that was the last little bit of my GI benefits

* (If applicable) When did you start school? Where are you going to school?
  + George Washington University

1. How did you (or would you) find out what benefits VA provides for your education and housing?
   1. I think I just went to the GI Bill website and just made sure – I wanted to go to the program at GW and covered in full. I ended up just doing a lot of clicking around – going to the GW website and asking them. Just double checking.
2. Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
   1. I might have. I’m pretty sure I did when I did my Master’s degree. I’m in my PhD program now. I think I learned about it on the website. I’m curious.

* 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.

Okay. Now I'd like you to open a new browser window or tab.

I have a website I want you to visit - I can send you the link via chat in Zoom or I can spell out the Url - which would you prefer?

* If link via chat - open Zoom, click the 3 dots on the bottom right of your screen. Click Chat to access.
* If spelled out, [**https://bit.ly/2xARJgI**](https://bit.ly/2xARJgI)

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're 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.

And, one last thing... we can't see exactly what you are tapping on the screen, so **before** you actually click on anything, stop and let me know what you're looking at and want to click on. Then we'll know and I'll give you the OK. Make sense?

**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?

First question is what is your military status – I know I’m a veteran but I’d probably click on it just to see what the other options are. I just always like to make sure when I’m clicking on something that it’s the right thing. I’d leave GI Bill alone. Cumulative…click on options just to make sure I know what the options are. I know I’m 36+…although I’m curious what +BASIC is…if I clicked on the Learn more, would it tell me what it is? Clicked it…I’m just curious, I don’t know what that means. I was right on the cusp where you could do the Montgomery or the Post 9/11 so I always have a question of what is best. So I have the option of choosing one or the other. Selecting schools. Are we doing in-person classes? And I would need to enter city, school…typed University of cali…oh look, options. I love it when they do that. Clicked option. It pulled up Univ of Cal Berk. So…I see it’s 100% in-state and $3500 housing…I’m going to click on View details because I’m wondering if you’re out of state. What is that pop-up? Your estimated benefits…housing, school. I’m looking at the benefits at the bottom. So does it cover a percentage of out of state? That would be my question at this point. I’d probably go to University of Berkeley site to find out that information. I suppose there’s a contact information that I could use to find out if out of state is covered. I would go to the University of California …I think is says…where’s that pop-up? Scrolling up and down. If I was out of state I don’t know if it would cover the same amount. So covering out of state…that would be my question at this point. I was thinking this would be more about my benefits about this school and not about the school. Not sure what I was expecting. I think I was more expecting information about what benefits are included in the GI Bill. I know if I want to go to that school, I know more about what Berkeley is. I’m just reading through what else is there. I guess I’m looking at other options. Opened about your school…oh there’s the in-state school question. Tuition and Fees per year. I’m just clicking to see what happens if I click yes/no to the in-state tuition. Clicked Learn more on in-state tuition and fees. Clicked learn more on tuition and fees per year…just reading that. Probably look at Learning format and schedule and opened scholarships and other funding. Learn more on Yellow Ribbon I’d want to know more about that. So if I was out of state I’d be curious about Yellow Ribbon. Clicked Learn more on kicker bonus. I don’t know what that is. [Hasn’t clicked Calculate benefits – I don’t think] The idea of using the GI bill is that I don’t have to pay out of pocket. One of the biggest things for me is paying for it. I did not use Yellow Ribbon because my program fell under the amounts provided by GI Bill, but my school does do Yellow Ribbon. So I didn’t use it, but it was there. And they have veteran programs at the bottom. Oh if you scroll down there’s like complaints…now I’m just scrolling. One compliant out of 2 years…probably pretty low. Certifying officials…looking at Additional Info at the bottom because it’s there. If I had more questions, now I’m going to click on this student complaints…oh that just talks about what the complaints are. I think if I have questions, then I think if I click around, I can probably find answers to those questions.

*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?

Click on Scholarships and other funding…oh look at that. Clicked Calculate benefits...that just reduces the out of pocket tuition. (She’s in out of state). Out of pocket is about $20000. Hmm…that was for in-state. (Not – is out of state. She doesn’t realize that she made changes)…Oh there it is..it’s out of state. I guess if I change that, and click Calculate benefits. Oh there. I’m just looking at benefits per term. I’m looking at tuition and fees. I’m wondering why it’s different between Fall and Spring. And Housing allowance is $15000….so that’s like 5 months housing. So yeah, the book stipend is $500 each semester. It wasn’t clear until I got my letter that that is pro-rated amount. ($1000 per year).

What I think about them? (Accordions). I think the title of your benefits, like the way that its presented right here. Like I haven’t given any information…Like the thing on the bottom likes it doesn’t stay and I have move around to get it back. I think if I was going to click on my benefits, I’d almost want to get this pop-up. I just think the wording is weird. I guess that one box is weird because I’m expecting something different. And then about your school..this makes more sense and it plugs in that information. Scholarships…this section. Like the radio buttons make sense. But the scholarships…I don’t’ know if that’s as explicit to know to input scholarships that you’ve received from other sources. So I think that could be more clear. The first time I see Your estimated benefits…I didn’t even see the Out of Pocket. Maybe bold that. To me, if I knew I was an out of state student then I need to know that I’m going to pay $20k out of pocket. I was considering that when I was looking at schools. It’s not just what is the VA going to pay, but what’s left over that I have to pay.

When I first click on your benefits…and if I click on the arrow, more appears. But then it goes away. If I saw that flash and then go away, I wouldn’t realize it’s the same information. It’s almost more annoying than anything else. It’s frustrating because why won’t it stay up. I mean, if Your estimated benefits, then it doesn’t seem like that’s necessary to pop up.

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)?
* Mobile: Do users expand and collapse the bottom sheet? If so, how?

**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?

**Mobile:**

* Mobile: What did you think of the sticky pop-up/bottom sheet displayed within the EYB section?
* Mobile: What did you think of the values shown in the sticky pop-up/bottom sheet (collapsed and expanded)?
* Mobile: When do you think those numbers should update? (as you make selections or after clicking Calculate)
* Mobile: When do you think that pop-up/sheet should appear? When should it disappear?
* Mobile: What do users think of the size of the expanded sheet (e.g. too big, too small)?

**Second 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 know about VET TEC because I did testing and they had me go through a staging page for it. Clicked on VET TEC…and hit search schools. And Galvanize…there’s a bunch of different providers, but you said San Franscisco…so filter it..typed in San Francisco in city and clicked See Results. Wait did it filter? So when I did that, the los angeles one still pops up…I see Galvanize on here, but I don’t’ see it. So let’s see if I type in California. So now, I’ve got Galvanize. So now I can see the program I’m looking for. Clicked program name. I would just start looking through the things…ok, so approved programs 480 hours. Tuition and fees…I don’t’ have any scholarships. So the VA pays it at 25%...and upon employment. And out of pocket tuition is $0. Clicked Learn more on VA pays to provider. I’m curious on the payment schedule. Housing allowance…oh it doesn’t count against your GI bill entitlement. I’ll have to remember that. I’d probably keep scrolling down to see what other information is there. And then I’d probably click on the application to see what it required.

4 maybe because I had to fill in that filter. I should be able to just filter by city and not have to put in the state. So it took me a couple clicks to get it entered properly. I hate looking at something with 5 pages of results. I just want to see everything on the same page.

Green checkmark – oh I don’t know what that is..So it’s like, I don’t know..oh well Galvanize is approved, but only the data science program? Why isn’t the other one approved? This part with the green checkmark…I can’t click on any of those names. Under these approved programs…sometimes with checkmarks, it’s selected and not approved. Where it works as selection.

Changing program…changed radio button and clicked Calculate benefits…and read through estimated benefits. I would be unsure if I should contact the VA or Galvanize since tuition is TBD. I’m not sure…honestly, I’d probably contact the school. Just from history, I’d probably get a faster response from the school.

What tuition and what VA covers and out of pocket – my priority concern is what I have to pay.

It seems to be unnecessary because it’s right there. If I expand it, it doesn’t really give me that much more information. I just don’t find it useful compared to like, just scrolling down, hitting the calculate button and reading through it. Honestly, if I wanted it to compare later, I’d screenshot the panel and then be showing someone later versus pulling it back up.

Second look:

-Not sure why Fall and Spring tuition breakdown is different

-Likes the book stipend breakdown because it was never clear that was a pro-rated amount until she got a letter

* I think the title of your benefits…the way it’s presented is almost misleading because I would expect..like I haven’t given any information beyond that information…
* I think that piece of it could be better, if I clicked on Your benefits, I’d almost want to see this pop-up instead of the questions…but I guess you’re calculating your benefits…
* I’m expecting something different when I click there (Your benefits).
* Veteran status or personal information. That’s weird wording
* About your school…this makes more sense
* The scholarships I don’t know if I would be plugging things in…I don’t know if that’s as explicit in saying, input scholarships from other sources
* The first time I was looking at Your estimated benefits, I didn’t see the out of pocket …I was only looking at the bolded amounts.
* I don’t like that…When I first click on my benefits it pops up, but that doesn’t stay up and it seems like it doesn’t want to come up right away. If I saw that in a flash, I’d be frustrated and wouldn’t realize it was the same thing. I’m annoyed that I can’t get it back up. Yeah, that’s annoying. That’s frustrating because I’m like what is that, where did it go? Like if it…if Your estimated benefits is not the far down, it doesn’t seem like that’s necessary.
* VET TEC: when filter, for San Francisco…it didn’t filter for some reason. Changed California

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?

Mobile:

* Mobile: What did you think of the sticky pop-up/bottom sheet displayed within the EYB section?
* Mobile: What did you think of the values shown in the sticky pop-up/bottom sheet (collapsed and expanded)?
* Mobile: When do you think those numbers should update? (as you make selections or after clicking Calculate)
* Mobile: When do you think that pop-up/sheet should appear? When should it disappear?
* Mobile: What do users think of the size of the expanded sheet (e.g. too big, too small)?

**Third 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!