**Conversation Guide Template for GI Bill Comparison Tool Compare Functionality**

**P2 – Lucas**

**Moderator logistics**

*Use*[*#feedback-backchannel*](https://dsva.slack.com/messages/C40B45NJK/details/)*in Slack for real-time feedback from observers.*

*Mute your Slack notifications*

*Before the session, send out the*[*observer instructions*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/during-research/howto-observer-instructions.md)*to your observers (Slackbot will do this for you if you type "observer instructions" into*[*#feedback-backchannel*](https://dsva.slack.com/channels/feedback-backchannel)*).*

*In the Attendees section, make sure everyone except the participant is on mute.*

*In the Audio section, click the drop-down arrow and make sure "Play Entry/Exit Chimes" is unchecked*

*Check your [screensharing setup] and share permissions for participants.*

*When the participant is ready, begin the session with the following intro*

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Jen and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to talk about finding and comparing schools on the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

Have you done usability testing before?

If No – I’m going to put a couple scenarios in front of you and ask you to do some tasks on a website we’re working on. As you’re going through the tasks, we ask if you can “think aloud” – tell us what you’re seeing, what you’re looking for and any other thoughts that come to mind as you’re interacting with the site.

Before we start, a few things I want to mention:

* **This entire session should take about 45 minutes.** I do want to be respectful of your time, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* **In this session, we want to hear your honest opinions.** We are not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet the needs of our users. I will not be offended by any opinions you express, and any feedback you provide will be really helpful to us.
* **If for any reason and at any time you want to stop the session, please let me know.**
* **With your permission, I would like to record my screen and audio as we talk today.** We use the recordings just to make sure that we captured your opinions accurately. After that, the recordings are destroyed - usually within a week or two.
  + If yes: **Once I start recording, I am going to confirm that you are ok with me recording this session once more.**

*Start recording.*

* **I have started recording**. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen and the audio as we talk today?

**Warm-up Questions - X minutes**

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

* What is your military status (e.g. Veteran, child, spouse)? Son of a retired Veteran disabled
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes – well currently its in the process of being used. It has yet to go through.
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? Chapter 35
    - When did you start school? I started school in fall last year. I have yet to get payment back from that. Studying for Associates of transfer of transfer
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?
    - Which benefit? Where are you in the school selection process?
* When you first decided to go back to school, what factors were important to you in picking school options? Enough to get me started to get a computer science degree. It didn’t really matter what at that moment. The first thought was to get a tranfer degree then to a bachelor’s degree
  + Do you remember any of the schools you were considering? I only really considered XXX community college. It was the closest and easiest to get to. Also cheaper options. Given CH35 was not going to out.
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? No
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

**Initial Take - 2 minutes**

I’m going to start sharing my screen.

~~So you know – the website you’ll be interacting with is still under development, so the site may not function like you expect it to. If that happens (like if you click on something and nothing happens), I may ask you what you expected to see. Sound okay?~~

This is the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which allows you to see what education benefits you can receive at various institutions. Do you have any initial thoughts or questions before we get started?

**First Task: Finding schools - 5 minutes**

* Let's travel back in time and say you found the GI Bill Comparison Tool when you were first exploring schools. Could you show me how you'd use the Comparison Tool to learn about schools you might be interested in attending?
* Location – as it would work best with what’s around me. Can I even access the location tool? I’d search around the mcminnville area. Selected from autocomplete. Scrolling through options. I’d probably search through these looking at school ratings…since most of these aren’t rated, I don’t think I can base my choice off of that reliably at all.
* Information – I was mainly looking for school rating first. If I’m going to a school, I want it to be a highly rated one and just not any other school…if I’m going to go through classes for my bachelor’s. The more students that are there, I would probably look for those there….like this one, Western Oregon university, I would probably think about this one and copy it down and search for others.
* Open filters….oh refine search, that makes things a lot easier. I would look for 100% instate tuition. If I could search for that, that’d be. Opened tuition and housing…Chapter 35 where would that be? GI Bill…should be Chapter 35, but I don’t see it. Because I’m using Chapter 35, that makes it very confusing. That may be because I don’t have a full understanding of Chapter 35. Changed military status to Child “ah”…well I put the military status is a child to see if that changes the GI Bill benefit, which it didn’t….closed it….proceeded to go through results. Opened refine your search again….I don’t have a way to search through the type of school that I would like to go through…for me would be a tech school. Having a tool like this means I can’t do that. A technology school…a lot of these are going health or natural science. I would put those under one type – like a medical area…but there’s no computer science. No digital career. There’s no real choices. A bit more information on what this Hybrid (accreditation) would be helpful.
* What types of choices would you like to make? What kind of degree I’m going after and filter out those that are not highly recommended. There’s no way to search for what specific degree I’m going after. They’re just choices in the area. It’s just having it there and not being able to choose what type of schooling I want.
* Highly recommended – ones that are more geared towards the degree I’m going after. Ones with more people graduating from there with this type of degree. And the more the better. Because if I go to the college of health sciences for computer science it’s probably not going to end up well. # of GI Bill students might be helpful for some people – but doesn’t give me no real information. Regarding the school. It just tells me there are a lot of students who are Veterans who are studying here. It doesn’t tell me any solid information about the school. I would rather have that tell me, this is how many people go here or graduate. My main thing is the school rating as there is no information if that’s because it’s not fully released yet or if it isn’t because they haven’t been released yet. Having the miles up here doesn’t really help me…not sure if its up or down. I think it should be in this area (the card).

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the Compare checkbox?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went? Pretty poorly because it didn’t give me enough information to help choose a school. It tells me how much you’re willing to pay or if you’re going to pay the whole thing. After that, it didn’t do anything.
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of finding schools on the Comparison Tool? 4
* Can you talk to me about the school cards you see here?

If wanted more information on schools – I’d probably go to schools individually. This might tell me schools that existed….clicked on it…and it tells me this information…and this isn’t working…

**Second Task: Comparing schools - 20 minutes**

* Let's say you want to get a better idea of the differences between the schools you're considering. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine which school would be the best option for you?
* I would take them all and compare them like this (clicked Compare on multiple institutions)…opened drawer and clicked Compare.
* The main thing I’m looking at for these is having it help me with the type…if I’m looking for a specific degree from these, then I want to take that information and see how many students graduated after seeing the number of students going after said degree. But as this isn’t listed.
* Highlight differences – that does help (did it unprompted). If there’s nothing different in those, having those collapse might be nice so I can see what the differences are…instead of showing everything still.
* Being able to see what majors were offered and graduation rate for that major. No, not that I can think of at the moment.

Process of comparing schools – it has room for improvement, but pretty good. Collapsing of anything that is the same for all 3 schools and only showing the differences.

Other than possibly putting in the number of miles from the inputted area

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the Compare drawer?
* Do users notice the sticky header?
* Do users notice the "Highlight differences" functionality?
* Is user able to easily add schools to the compare tray?
* Is the user able to easily navigate to the compare page?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of comparing schools on the Comparison Tool? 1 or a 2, probably a 2
* Looking at the compare page, what do you think of the information you see here? Which ones are most important to you? Is anything missing that would be important to you?
* What do you think of the process of comparing schools?
* What do you think of the "Highlight differences" functionality? Is it useful?

**Third Task: YAY Harvard! - X minutes**

* You found out that you were accepted into **Harvard**. Even if you don't end up going, you're curious about how **Harvard** stacks up against some of the other schools on your short list. How would you use the Comparison Tool to see how **Harvard** compared to some of your other school options?
* Clicked Remove on Compare page. Clicked return to search results on page. Search by name. Harvard, enter. And immediately use the highlight differences. I feel like that should save from (before). The top part is taking up a majority of the screen. (sticky header). I don’t think Harvard is a medium sized school, but okay.
* I’d like to have a little more detail, possibly some of the information that’s specific to Harvard and comparing it to others. Possibly if you have more emphasis on what the complaints are, the area they are…if we’re talking about student complaints.
* Info specific to Harvard – if complaints are about specific instructors and if the idea is to apply for Harvard, add details on what the complaints are. If about a specific instructor, have it be about an instructor. Categorize it I guess. Harvard is the only one of these that has complaints.
* More info on Harvard – I would think a link to their website or to their Veteran page would be helpful. Maybe not every school, but larger schools like Harvard should have links to more information. Places where you can ask specific questions about VA at Harvard and what the differences may be.

**Things to watch for:**

* *If applicable,* can the user easily remove schools from the comparison?
* Where does the user go to remove schools (compare tray, compare page, search results)?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of adding Harvard Law School to your school comparison?
* For the benefit estimates you see here, do you believe these are accurate for your situation?

**Thank-You and Closing - X 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, well thank you so much again, and enjoy the rest of your day!