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

**P5 - Michelle**

**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)? Disabled Veteran
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Navy
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Currently using GI Bill – the Post 9/11, Oct 2020, Studying to be HR
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?
    - When did you start school?
  + 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? Due to Covid, it was being able to do school online. And a school that was respectful to servicemembers…noticed that tuition would go up when they found out that I had the GI Bill. The program choices – I didn’t want a school that, with online school you can redo tests and work until you get it. I wanted to do it like in person
  + Do you remember any of the schools you were considering? University of Phoenix online one, WGU, one called Military Veterans online school…I actually settled Granthom University
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? I did – that’s how I decided on the school I’m at. I went on to the GI Bill to get certification letter and said let me check this out and it shot out a lot of information at me.
  + 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?
* I just looked at university of phoenix…seeing cautionary info was like whoa
* Seeing warning for phoenix online
* Highlight differences unprompted
* Caution flags was a big one
* Student complaints – I wanted to see what other students said. Sadly we are seen as monehy coming in the door
* Credit for military traiing – boosted me from to sophomore
* Grantham actually has a Student Veteran group
* Not all the info is updated on these…so not sure how updates come through. Went to campus school website too. Just to verify that it was up to date. Like having a Veteran group at this school gives me a group of people who know what my thinking is like…I’m one of those people who have to continue pushing on and its easier to go with people in my same age group….and I was the oldest person in class and I was only 24.
* It would have been nice to see more about out of pocket. Grantham covers everything, but University of Phoenix actually does charge. So like supplies and things – like which tools offer laptops. And some other universities do that too.
* Just did Google search for “schools that accept GI Bill”
* There’s a lot of information…it turned out awful because I got 50 phone calls from schools I wasn’t interested in. I ended up looking up the programs I was interested in. Immediately when COVID hit, I was working for a corporate travel agency and I worked for them for 6 years and it was hard to be told it I was nonessential after giving up so much. I wanted to make myself essential…so I went for HR. So I was doing the job for a year without a degree and that was another thing about the schools…career services, so I’ve been unemployed in the state of TX and our governor is taking away unemployment. Grantham helped me with resume and helped me find a job.
* It would be nice to see if it included the degrees they offerd

**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? I like the Comparison Tool. It gave me general information. Just career services.
* 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?
* Can you talk to me about the school cards you see here?

**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?

**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
* 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?

3 I think

**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? 1 I have to admit I’m an IT person
* For the benefit estimates you see here, do you believe these are accurate for your situation?
* It’s all basic information that you need. The more money I can save the more education I can get. It’s all there
* Yes accurate – for the most part, I don’t know who updates it. The numbers are off on some schools. Due to COVID things have changed – everything has changed
* I went in-person in 2012. Weatherford. It’s the local community college…now gone to a 4 year university…due to COVID, they jacked up their prices. With a kid of my own and only one person who deals with Veterans and I was like that’s not fair. I’m waiting in a 2 hour
* With Weatherford, I had no guidance with what I wanted to be when I grew up. Was firefighter. I was told it was a boys world and I didn’t want to play in it. Was told by Weatherford. He said you can do that, but it’s mostly men. It deterred me from continuing with that. Especially face to face. Going to an online school now, I have a counselor that calls me once a week and encourages me. Grantham is very unique in that. Now that I’m considered a junior, almost a senior. Grantham calls me every 2 weeks…do you need help? They offer free online tutoring…I get a certain amount of free tutoring. At Weatherford there was a study hall, but had to pay for math tutoring. Also had to pay for parking passes and things like that.
* I would actually stick with Grantham because they offer that.
* Amy – Samsung, Android phone. S21 I actually just got it 2 weeks ago. The other one I somehow broke. I did it both from phone and desktop. I looked everything up on phone first and husband got home from work and then showed him on the desktop.

**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!