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

**P8 - Melinda**

**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)? Husband 100$ disabled Veteran
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Army, Navy, National Guard, Naval Reserve
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes – I’m getting my doctorate in non Ch35. In 2019, January
  + 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? For me, it was easy, I went where the scholarships money was. I went and applied for scholarships and
  + Do you remember any of the schools you were considering? Waldon university, Colorado university, that was mainly it. A few online universities
* 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?
* Name search, typed colorad….selected from dropdown. Schools popped up (caution warnings)…it’s the basic information, but it gives the tuition info, housing benefit info…I’m kind of confused how that would be for online school. I saw the caution warning…I’ll click on it and it says it reached a settlement but I don’t know what that means so I’d have to do more information online.
* There really isn’t a lot more to do than that…I’d look for more schools and kind of keep a list. I can see a Compare thing and try to see how that works….I’m not real clear on how that works exactly. Not real sure how to get the names in the boxes.
* How to add to compare? I don’t really know…but I don’t see any indication. I see Refine your search but that doesn’t look very helpful by the looks of it.
* I guess a part of me is looking for something to click. Like click here to add schools. I don’t see anything like that. Or click and drag…bjut I just tried to click and drag to put the university
* Other universities? Walden university…name searched that one…compare institutions drawer is up….walden also appears.
* I’m not really sure what Employer means – maybe it means they employ other people at that school, because I would not be going into anything a police department would be hiring me for. It’s interesting that all these schools have warnings on them.
* I’m wondering if I hit Compare…if I hit compare, it puts it down in other institutions…so now if I went in and were to type in (looked back at Colroado Tech). Closed drawer and then hit Compare. And I can get the two in there to compare and no with.
* It tells me how many are military or have military affiliations…I don’t know if a 4 year is helpful as I was looking for a PhD. And I see the institution locale is City, but I think it should say Online. At the top, it does have the city and state. The size of school I don’t know what that means in the larger scheme of things. It doesn’t tell me like what’s offered at this school. It says estimated benefits, I might be interested in that…to see what they’re offering.
* Now this says giving the estimated benefits with estimated fees, I like that. I don’t know if its accurate with all the different schools. I know they offer the bare Bas and different programs and I don’t know if these benefits would be the same for different programs. As I go down it says school ratings and it just says it’s not rated yet and that’s not helpful.
* Money is always important, the amount of money out of pocket, tuition, housing…the school rating thing is kind of important. I’m not sure what they’re based on, but if it was like applying for benefits. It would be nice to have a key to see what these things mean. If I want a chart like this to be helpful, I need to know what these mean.
* Missing? I guess like I talked about before…just because it’s the school name not all the programs cost the same. Master’s , PhD programs, it would be nice to have some of that info included. It doesn’t say what it is going for. If its for Bachelor’s I know my PhD class is like 5x that much. It also doesn’t say if its per semester or total. That might be important.
* Clicked highlight differences…I just clicked it because I was curious to see. I don’t know if that’s really all that helpful.
* Any of the new fields interest you? No, not really….looking at the student complaints. It’s good information I guess. I think that’s it really. The Veteran program things is probably very good if it’s the program you’re going to be using. It might be nice if you aren’t familiar with those programs, if you could see what it is. I might not know what all those programs are. You know some of the things, but not all of the things. Or for more information on any of these, go here to this website.

**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 think its an okay system…it left me with more questions than answers. To be honest, it wasn’t a waste of time, but it wasn’t all that helpful. At first it was really hard to figure out how to use the system. To find the comparison. So I might use it once. A lot of these things lead me to more questions.
* More helpful – key of terminology or instruction at the beginning so I know some of the terminology and how you do something. Getting started with that comparison…in order to compare, please search and click those buttons. Once I found those buttons, it was easier to do it. Before that, I just sat there not sure what to do
* 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? 4
* 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 Return to search results. Typed Harvard and clicked autocomplete . I see that and I’ll hit compare…so it should put it in the compare box….course it didn’t and now I don’t know what I’m doing…hit compare…so now I’m going to compare them and I can highlight the differences from them (clicked it) and I’m able to see the big differences…which of course is interesting. I’m wondering now more about this…GI Bill pays to school…I feel like Harvard should be way more expensive and is on a whole other level than these other schools. There’s a lot of information written in here about Harvard, but I’m not able to see…I was trying to see the differences looking at the financial stuff because I know that Harvard charges way more than these schools. It shows them paying $15 to Colorado and $14 to Harvard. Would make me wonder about the validity of these numbers. It does help that Harvard doesn’t have any cautions compared to these schools. And it shows me that Harvard doesn’t have programs, but the others do.
* Clicked Remove on Harvard on compare page. Clicked Remove for Walden…I don’t see a button to start over…and it took out
* I don’t think it saves it, but I’d probably have to start over. I’d just type in Colorado
* Numbers correct? I don’t think they are correct for mine…I think these are more like a Bachelor’s comparison, but it doesn’t say if it’s a Master’s, Associate..
* Expect it? I would because it would be very difficult to see those numbers and then see if they’re very different. In that way, it’s not very helpful.
* Opened update tuition and housing…this is helpful, I didn’t see this before. Spouse…you can put in which program you’re going to be using…I’m confused. I guess it’s educational assistance. But it still doesn’t give you like your program. See now it shows Chapter 35 numbers. Now all that makes a lot more sense now to me. But I didn’t even see that way to define yoru search before. There might be something to give instructions. For Update tuition and housing…to type in yoru program or if you’re getting a BA, Master’s, etc.

**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? It was easier because I understood how to use it. I was able to add it and compare
* 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? I would put it as a 2…I had a little bit of difficulty at first
* 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!