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

**P6 - Marco**

**Moderator logistics**

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

*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]*

*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 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.
* **You are free to stop the session at any time. If you would like to do so, 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. **Are you comfortable if I record my screen and audio as we talk today?**
  + 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 - 5 minutes**

Before we get started, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

* What is your military status (e.g. Veteran, child, spouse)? Still in Army reserves – part time
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes Post 9/11 2010 and 2012, Master’s degree in mental health. Porter University
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?
    - When did you start school? Where did you go?
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?
    - Which benefit?
    - Where are you in the school selection process?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? No, I haven’t. I don’t think it was launched or available in 2009….I’m aware of it. Became aware when VA launched it – when revamped Post 9/11 webiste. Was already working at the VA. Find out via email? Yeah…I get emails from different sources in VA
  + 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. Additionally, for one of the tasks in this session, I’ll have you verbally describe to me how you would interact with the site since the functionality isn’t completed yet. 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: Find a Campus - 5 minutes**

* You've recently moved to **Raleigh, North Carolina**. Prior to moving, you took a few classes at **ECPI University** and you want to see if there is a campus in your area. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine if **ECPI University** has a campus in your area?

**Things to watch for:**

* Which search option does the user attempt to use (name or location)?
* Does the participant use the autocomplete?
* How does the user attempt to search/filter results?

**Upon task completion:**

* How did you think that went? It depends on what a person had knowledge of. I would use the mapping panel, I’d use it. If I didn’t know the city, I’d do it by name and search by name.
* Allow popout when hovering over icons to see what school it was. Mapping is good for housing opportunities – knowing specifically what is near. Popout – name of school
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of determining if ECPI University had a campus in your area?
* How do you think these results were sorted?

Search card - not knowing what school rating means. Likes tuition and housing benefit. Regionally accredited – not sure what that means, by what body? Maybe having a legend what accredited or school rating is. Rated by the VA? US News and World Report? VA has location finder…when you click…it’ll jump to that. For populated cities, it could be hard to see with so many icons and make it hard to navigate. Possibly hundreds of icons

Standard Google map info would be good – roads,

Is there a way to see VHA or VBA overlay – to see how far

**Second Task: Location Search - 15 minutes**

* Since you live in the downtown part of Raleigh, you’d like to keep your commute under 15 minutes. How would you use the Comparison tool to find schools in Raleigh that would have a 15 minute commute? The zip code you live at is 27601.

Went to filters first – then dropped to 5 miles. Says his situation is different and since he’s in NY, he looks to public transportation

* *Prompt* Let's say when you performed this search, there were a lot of results. What factors would be important to you in narrowing down your search to find the right place for you? Accredited
* Would you be able to narrow down your results here on the tool?
* Compare multiple schools – what each school has, refine search tools, degree programs, if I picked a couple compares or would it build a worksheet or spreadsheet document.

**Things to watch for:**

* What search criteria format does the participant use (city, "city, state", "use my current location" etc)?
* Does the participant use the autocomplete?
* Does the user notice the "Update housing and tuition" accordion?
* Does the user interact with the filters?

**Upon task completion:**

* How did you think that went? I don’t know – what does a 15 minute commute mean. Does it take into account traffic – means different things to different people. Public transportation, driving…lots of variables
* Maybe have a circle that represents 5 miles on the map
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of searching for educational institutions by location? 3 because it doesn’t seem very intuitive
* Put some type of asterisks that says 100% rate so people know or maybe put 1-2-3 (step 1,2,3) and maybe #1 is the top 2 boxes, then updated tuition and housing results and 3 update results. Maybe just a logical way to say step 1,2,3. Leave as permanent screen at the top before they start changing data sets
* What do you think of how results are displayed?
* How do you think the search results were sorted?
* What information would be important to you if you were choosing where to take training?
* What types of education options do you think you can find on the Comparison Tool?
* Do you think these benefit estimates are correct for your situation?
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see?

**Third Task: Map Utilization - 5 minutes**

* You've found some good options in Raleigh, NC, but you’ve also heard that Durham, NC has a lot to offer. How would you go about seeing all the educational options in both Raleigh and Durham at the same time?
* Could you talk me through how you would use the Comparison Tool to see all the training opportunities offered in both San Antonio and Austin?

**Things to watch for:**

* How does the user expand/interact with the map?
* Does the user try to enter any additional search criteria into the search fields?

**Upon task completion:**

* What do you think of how the map showed your results?
* What do you think of the filters offered? Which ones would you use? Are there any you wouldn't use?
* For you personally, how far would you be willing to commute to go to school?

**Alternate Questions**

- When you are conducting searches online, do you ever use the map functionality?

- If yes, what are you typically looking for?

- Which sites are you visiting?

- What do you like about those sites? Any frustrations?

**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!