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

**P7 - Marsha**

**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)? Retired – served as Army reserve ambassador
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? On a break now, last 2 years, Post 9/11, studied nursing…started state school North Carolina Central University…ecpi…I wish
    - 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? I’ve looked at different things happening at
  + 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?
* Typed ecpi and clicked raleigh on autocomplete. Opened refine your search….found out that you can’t get a job with this school.
* Search cards – GI Bill students 150, not rated, tuition benefits, compare…that devry one says regionally accredited.
* Helpful info? Yes
* What you’re interested in? Another curriculum…IT work. Criminal justice. It would populate like the state schools. That would be a useful tool. If I was getting out that would be helpful…
* I don’t know if Devry is fully online maybe…I really don’t know. Your classes don’t transfer in these schools…like if I went to Durham NC where I started, but when you go to these private for profit schools you can’t transfer.
* I know that there’s a move in Congress to limit money to private for profit schools. Fail students and then re-take the class and charge again. None of my work would transfer to Devry.
* To know if its fully accredited, to know academic rating – I think there’s some place you can see their standing in their curriculum. Some rating mechanism. To be pro-military. It helps to be a Yellow Ribbon school. A lot won’t take the money. In Raleigh, that’s the only nursing school available. How much I would be compensated by the locale.
* Accurate – I think they’re accurate. [benefits] community college is a state funded program…
* School rating – I really don’t know…to me that would imply how well Veterans are satisfied. I wish that could be checked out and they have these things best for vets. I called and asked what best for vets means. I think its very misleading that they are very misleading because they don’t say why.

They messed up her debt – most of the people who do that have no idea how to do that. If they make a mistake, the Veteran has to pay for it. I can afford it, but younger might not be able to.

**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?
* 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? Wasn’t hard at all…I drive through Raleigh.
* How do you think these results were sorted?

**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.
* I don’t see an option on there where I could do a location. I don’t know how I would do that than call a school or an address and put it in Waze. I would expect to do it under the address of the schools. Maybe under Refine your search. I see a thing called Locations at the bottom. I see Search by location at the top…but it looks broken…clicked on it..that was muted out.
* Typed in 27612…let’s drop it down to 25 miles. And are these just schools in general or schools rated for Veterans…I would expect them to all be institutions of higher learning. Clicked X…clicked AA…that’s Watts College of Cursing
* Wanted to find more information on Watts? Wouldn’t take Post 9/11 GI Bill…it had a funny status. You had a preferred 10% discount…you would end up paying a whole lot of money.
* *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?
* Would you be able to narrow down your results here on the tool?

The problem I focus on is the amount of commute time and I was moving from VA and was looking to drive the least amount. If I put in that 276 zip code.

The part on the left doesn’t scroll….but I can move the map around…let me try clicking on it. Clicked D….

Regionally accredited…I don’t know what that is.

Mycareer at Raleigh LLC that’s obviously a private school (actually OJT). Moving map around and clicking on icons.

You don’t know

This would be really helpful if you had to take public transportation.

I would go and put the zip code in and pretend that’s where I was going from. When I traveled a lot with my job, these were very helpful tools.

I would go to the top…or would move the map…let me make the map bigger. I would put in the zip

Thinks country is county

Let me just take it all out…backspaced it all

Typed in address…no results..changed to 50 miles….that’s probably a good option to have.

Radius options – 5 miles would be nothing. This is out in 5 miles…this is farm country…I see one and it’s really 45 minutes.

I think it’s showing as the crow fly distances…like in Waze.

Largest commute personally – VA to Durham was about 70 miles each way. In daily commute it was taking 4-4.5 hours. I think I was getting $1400/month. So when I shortened the commute to Raleigh, it reduced to half an hour.

They tell you they are accredited, but they aren’t.

Most people aren’t going to travel more than 75 miles a day. In addition to your expense to gasoline and all that, you’re taking 4-5 hours out of your day.

This seems like a really good tool you’ve made for Veterans. When I was in school, they talked about other things others didn’t know about. Some of these schools must be online. When it gets to $22,805. The tuition? I don’t know…if they gave you 1590\*12…I guess it could be your…but I don’t really know.

Compare – what is compare? Compare quality of education?

**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?
* 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?
* 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!