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

**P1 - Marie**

**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 30-45 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)? Veteran
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Army
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? No, not currently
  + 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? Yes – for master’s
    - Which benefit? Post 9/11
    - Where are you in the school selection process? Speaking to someone in the VA – public health
* 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. 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 **San Antonio, Texas**. 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?

Search by location…enter San Antonio, click Search. Look for ECPI. Scrolling up and down the page. It would be listed as ECPI…I would expect it ot be listed out as whatever ECPI stands for because everything else is listed out. I would think it would be in alphabetical order. I don’t see it here. I would assume its not offered in that area…or I would go to the school listing…so go back up and go to search by name. type in ECPI…hit enter. And then it shows their location. One in NC, VA, FL…oh so this shows all yoru locations. This does

**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? Better to type in search name
* 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? 1
* How do you think these results were sorted?
  + Search by name….I would think they are sorted by location because I think I saw a couple of VA locations…maybe its by cost…not sure how. I would think the locations would be close. Two in NC and VA, I would expect them to be side by side
* Search cards – GI bill students, 2000 – I don’t know if that’s important, none have a school rating and they give you what you’re eligible for. Helpful – school rating would be helpful. Location, cost and the rating.
* Yes they are – well they are because they show what you would be eligible for tuition and housing. You need to know you’re working with monthly…its just important information you need to know before pursuing these schools.

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

* Since you live in the downtown part of San Antonio, you’d like to keep your commute under 15 minutes. How would you use the Comparison tool to find schools in San Antonio with a commute under 15 minutes? The zip code you live at is 78205.

Search by location…put in within 25 miles. Put in search…and they have these two locations. I would have to type in the school into Google to see if its within 15 minutes of my house. This doesn’t show distance.

* *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?
* *I see there are only 2 things here….school and technical school…that would be easy to pursue. You have to see what the university offers to pursue. You probably want to look at school ratings and program that they offer. Tuition and benefits info*
* *What options – certificate to a degree. I would assume cosmetology would offer a certificate.*
* Would you be able to narrow down your results here on the tool?
  + The tool doesn’t tell you much about the school. Maybe a dropdown giving a list of programs. I have no idea what either schools offer – does it offer a certificate or degree. How long does it take to complete an education? Computer based or in person? I see this one is regionally accredited…that’s important. I would be concerned that its not accredited. You kind of wasted your time.
  + Maybe 30 min commute

**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? Not very well…this is within 25 miles, so you only get there in `5 minutes if you’re really speeding. So you’ll have to do additional work on the site.
* 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? 4
* 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 looked at training opportunities in Austin and San Antonio separately, but want to see all of those results 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?

- Yes, often

- If yes, what are you typically looking for? Distance, pinpoint closest to my house.

- Which sites are you visiting? Usually whatever site – Groupon,

- What do you like about those sites? Bottom of map lists number, # of locations…number 1-6 and you can go down and compare.

- Any frustrations? Only when you can’t zoom in to see the roads

Don’t know what town locale is….

Link – this is the information I would want to need. I would want to know what programs they offer. Tuition rate…that’s on the original page….list type of programs for Veterans…oh here’s the address, the information I would need to figure out a commute.

Ratings – who? Would be in the details of the particular academic program. I’m not in a field that’s concerned about school ratings and I was in an MBA program I might be concerned. (Would think it’s a 3rd party)

Benefits – what would you expect from update tuition and housing estimates button? Doesn’t see it…oh, no I did not. Opened it…I would expect to put in my information and see what benefits would apply to me.

**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!