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

**P3 - Yolanda**

**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)? Honorably discharged Veteran
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Navy
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? GI benefits, medical – specifically, I don’t know (Post 9/11)
    - When did you start school? Where did you go? 2008, I believe. Psychology and business management with concentration in business
  + 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? That doesn’t
  + 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, San Antonio, clicked search. Scrolled through options…went to search by name. Clicked ECPI university in autocomplete. Opened filter, Went to state and input Texas, clicked update).

**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? I think it went well…if I had to give feedback, it would probably be better…instead of having it in two steps and not just one…searching by name and location. So instead of search by name and location.
* 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 cards – shows how many benefits, tuition, regionally accredited that’s useful information. So I think overall this is good…I think it would be good if there was a search where you can see regional or national accredited. Probably something in the filtering for regionally or nationally accredited instead of having to….opened filters. So yeah, it doesn’t give that information. Especially for military veterans…the worst thing is not knowing what level its accredited. I can see here that it is here (accredited). Moving around is a thing and you have to transfer. And for cautionary warnings, I would be interested to figure out…what measuring tool you use for that. For example, Virginia tech has a shooting, does that put them on that list? Are they added to that cautionary list? I would probably add demographics…I think that’s a large factoring when they’re picking a school. Diversity or lack thereof. I think I would definitely add that in here. There’s an incentive for coming to that school. Predominantly, adult learners or single parents. Hey this is friendly for single parent. For adult learner, offered on that campus…is childcare offered? Would be a huge incentive for people with deployed spouses. It wouldn’t affect people like me who are single with no kids.

Important to you? Definitely tuition, what % is being offered to be covered. Book stipend was extremely helpful. If they’re only offering $1000 and books cost $200 each. Out of pocket costs would be helpful info. So this is what we offer, but here’s what you pay. And if they offer distance learning classes. I’ve taken distance learning classes during the Air Force because sometimes there’s a significant distance between class and that service member. Maybe a mapping tool that…almost like Google, okay Papa Johns near me.

Benefit numbers accurate to you?

When it says school rating, what does it mean? I would think realistically when it comes to job placement that’s what they would be rated on. The way that they are rated on – based on the number of graduate or almost say test scores…you don’t normally do standardized testing in college. I would think in a perfect world, it would be based on how likely our graduates to be placed in actual job fields once they get a degree.

**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.
* Typed in zip, opened drop down for radius, was asking myself if I could drive 25 miles in 20 minutes. I feel like it’s doable. I know I could do 5 miles in 20 minutes. About 30-45 minutes each way.
* I would put in the zip code and select either 5 or 25 miles. A lot of Veterans can’t go to school full-time so I think 25 would be a lot. And would compare tuition. I would also take into consideration the number of GI bill students they have. This number, they don’t have as many…they might not be as accustomed to service members. Where this one, San Antonio has tons of Gi bill students are aware of how life works for service members. I’d be inclined to go with colleges with higher numbers of GI bill students.
* *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?

**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 as well as I would have liked. 5 miles and the next is 25…and that’s a lot. Maybe 10 miles or 15 miles
* 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 – I think its because of the distance here, but its no time measurement. Zillow has where you can put in your actual address and you can put in work address and tell you how long it will take to get to work.
* 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

- If yes, what are you typically looking for? Usually looking at distance and commute

- Which sites are you visiting? Almost always Google and Waze GPS app….unfortunately it does not come standard on my car.

- What do you like about those sites? Google has really fast results and pictures. It gives me more than one route and tells me what’s near that. Like Papa Johns pizza near me. I like that function of it. Waze gives you real-time directions and routes you around traffic which is extremely helpful…there’s a roadblock or a train and can give you a real-time accurate…anything under 2 or 3 hours.

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!