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

**P5 - Ed**

**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. Warrior Scholar.org program/project

* What is your military status (e.g. Veteran, child, spouse)? Retired military
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Navy
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Yes, kind of on hiatus with the devil bug. Looking to go back to school…2 classes left to finish. It’s kind of a liberal studies degree which sounds more complicated than it is. I walked in the door with 240 credit hours…and they said oh geez wiz. Any time I felt like learning something I’d just take a class so I had credits from 12 institutions. So we just tried to make it work…then I started taking other classes that didn’t apply.
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? 31 most recently
    - 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?
  + 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 enter…opened refine your search…(north Carolina?)
* There’s your housing benefit at 12/24.
* Benefit numbers accurate? For my situation no, but most people…as my generation ages out. My Montgomery GI Bill scenario will be less and less relevant. I’m good for $700 a month for housing benefit, but frankly I wouldn’t bother with it. Most people from my era were like the Vietnam era…we know we’re on the far edge of relevance. A lot of the Post 9/11 people are in mid to late 40s. We’re not a gigantic pool.
* Could you make them accurate? Opened tuition and housing…went to GI bill and changed to Montgomery Bill. It adjusted the housing benefit up…it is not correct. VRE which is 31…they’re…that is more correct on VRE which is Chapter 31. This would need to change and say Chapter 31. Also DEA…that’s correct. The Montgomery thing and pre 9/11 VRE thing..might need some adjustment. All of that stuff is really complicated. There’s a guy who is on Reddit who is a moderator. Sco that retired and he’s very prevalent on there as a moderator. He’s Midwest at Kansas office and he is probably one of the most versed schooled individuals I’ve ever seen. I would honestly go and find him and consult with him because he knows the answers in a very complex. I appreciate what you’re doing and you’re fixing something that has been awful for so long. What we’ve been going
* I despise for profit universities, but I will tolerate this for a moment. When hiring people see for profit universities they throw resumes away. You can in fact….you can go to an ivy league school. All you have to do is do reasonably well at a community college and sophomore year apply.
* There needs to be a designation that it is a for profit institutions. As a consumer, they need to know that it’s a for profit institutions. Some sort of consumer reports regents blah blah blah. % of placed seniors into jobs, some sort of outcome based rating.

**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? It was easy
* 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.
* Looking through filters….up here search by location…but that’s not going to populate…view details clicked maybe? I like this, there’s a lot of data.
* My goodness lookie there – this should have turned into a pointy finger thing. This archaic thing…unless it makes a finger at me I don’t respond. There’s always that. That is probably too soon for that one…interesting…they have a barber school…a place to get my nails license. Strayer another stealer
* I would intuit it myself…I would compare here and it would do something. I don’t know what it would do. Aveda Institute…dang.
* Education options – voc/tech….here’s one. Theological seminary…they could tell me where ot go. Do they have more than one location. This location has 1 GI Bill student and another has 4…shepherd’s is living the ddream. Here’s the distance. (next to dot)…I myself I would write it down on piece of paper or print out the map or something. Something that’s a whole lot less intuitive than what you have. I was not expecting this at all.
* What do you like? I like the degree of functionality and intuitiveness. I’m used to futzing around and printing out a map over here and getting info from over here. I’m used to having to do all that. I would have never thought of going down the rabbit hole this far with you. It’s like getting in the car and saying take me to the grocery stores. (Hasn’t touched radius). This is impressive. You guys should run the VA website…
* *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?
* I’d probably get rid of these outliers just based on the distance…if the distance was important. I’d click them off if I could…
* Decrease the distance. Use + or – and moving the map around.
* Important – the housing benefit that I would take a look at as a matter of course, when I’m helping somebody with their educational benefits, I explain if they’re in New York or Chicago and they would get more money. The # of GI Bill students. To a lot of people that’s very important especially for residential schools or live on or close to campus. That’s really handy and key piece of information because the schools don’t put out that information. And this school rating thing is of interest….I’d like to see that. Would that be like the US News and World report? US News and World
* Ratings – people who don’t complete the program, it’s usually their fault and not the school.
* Ryan Pavell

**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!