**STEM Usability Testing Discussion Guide - Round 2**

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Amy and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to take a look at the application for a new scholarship for Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries.

Before we get started, a few things I want to mention:

* This entire session should take about 30 minutes. I don't want to keep you much longer than that, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* During this session, we want to hear your honest opinions. We're not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I won't be offended by any opinions you express and welcome your feedback.
* If for any reason and at any time you want to stop the session, please let me know.

We will be working in a prototype so some functionality will not work as expected. For example, when you click on a field, an answer or selection may pre-populate or alternatively, you may click on something and nothing may happen. In those cases, I'll let you know that the functionality isn't working and ask what you would expect to happen.

Are you comfortable if I record the screen and audio as we talk today? We use the recordings to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately. The recordings are deleted after we finish analysis, and none of your comments will be attributed to you directly.

* If yes: Great - thank you. Once I start recording, I'll ask again so we have your audible confirmation.
* If no: Ok. My team will just observe and take notes as we go.

Start recording.

* I have started recording. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen the audio as we talk today?

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

1. Are you currently using or have you ever used your VA education benefits?

P: not currently using, but have used in the past

* + Which benefit?

P: the post 9/11 gi bill.

1. Do you know roughly how much of your education entitlement you have left?

P: about 7 months left.

A: do you have an undergraduate degree?

P: I have an undergraduate degree and I have multiple advanced degrees. My eduational benefits are being used by my daughter. She just finished an undergraduate degree in a non-stem field. It still has 7 months left on the benefit

1. Are you familiar with the Rogers STEM scholarship?

P: I have not heard of it.

* If yes, what have you heard about it?

P:

* If no, as a quick summary of the scholarship, the Rogers STEM Scholarship provides up to nine months of additional Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits (to a maximum of $30,000) to qualifying Veterans/Fry Scholars seeking an undergraduate STEM degree or who have earned a STEM degree and are seeking a teaching certification.

P: nice, but it only applies to stem? My daughter has a non-stem undergraduate degree, but is working on a teaching certification and is thinking about a master’s teaching program. I wasn’t sure if that would be part of the application.

For our session today, I'm going to give you a couple tasks to do online. While you're going through them, it would be really helpful if you'd think aloud - kind of like you'd do if you were talking to yourself. We are interested in your first reactions, what you're thinking & wondering as you go through the process. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn.

When you think aloud, it helps us understand what works well and where we might want to make improvements to make things even easier. If you have questions, it’s likely that many other Veterans will, as well, so feel free to ask them along the way.

I'm going to give you control of my screen & mouse. I'll pass control to you and you should receive a message that prompts you to control the screen.

Note: Each participant will go through ONE of the tasks below.

**Task 1: Authenticated User with Too Much Entitlement - 15 minutes**

We're going to do some role playing. Let's say you're Sammy Smith and you're using the **Post 9/11 GI Bill** to obtain an undergraduate degree in **Chemistry** from **Chicago State University**. How would you go about filling out this application? You will log in as an authenticated user.

P: so if I was coming to apply for the scholarship, you’re looking to what I would do on this site.

A: we’re going to do a little roleplay. We had to come up with some stuff to fill into the prototype so you don’t have to type everything [read scenario to her, told her she has 8 months of entitlement left]

P: the first thing I would do is take a look at the eligibility criteria to see if I fit the criteria. I’d probably click on the stem programming to see if my degree was one of those [opened pdf] I’d probably just search to see if I can find [ran browser search and typed in chemistry] and I found, boy, there’s a bunch of chemistries. My degree is in basic chemistry, so I’m just looking for…ok, there’s chemistry. I found my degree. That’s good. It appears that I’m covered, so I’d go back. How do I go back? Let’s see. I’d click the arrow button to go back [browser back] for some reason, it’s not taking me back. How do I go back?

A: [told her to click the tab]

P: so typically, I’d just have x’ed out of that if I didn’t have the option to go back. If I didn’t know what my remaining benefits was, I’d check my remaining benefits to ensure… I’m assuming that I’m coming to this site because I know what the Edith Nourse rogers stem scholarship is, so I wouldn’t click on that. I’d check the next step to see what I need to do next. It looks like if I need help, I could work with the VA certifying official t my school and just looking at information on how to apply. Then I understand [?] [ my audio cut off for one minute]

A: if it did come back that it was accurate, what do you think you’d do then?

P: I think that I would just log out and assume that I couldn’t apply because I don’t meet the criteria for the scholarship. And I missed that on the previous page somehow. I guess it was because I didn’t hit. Hmm, it doesn’t say right here…it would be helpful to have one of these bullets say that you have less than 6 months [had gone back to pre-signed in intro] ok, have used… I missed that part. I don’t know if there’s a, maybe highlight this right here, maybe 6 months, make it bold to make it stand out a little bit more. If I’m looking at this right now to see if there’s more information that would be useful to me for the stem scholarship [went to stem info page] so this is interesting. I have to have less than 6 months of eligibility left, and the rogers stem scholarship will provide another 9 months of additional…I’m assuming that means, if I have 6 months left, the post 9/11 will pay for 6 months and then the rogers stem scholarship will kick in for an additional 9 months. It also appears that veterans are eligible, but not dependents of veterans…so yeah, if the veteran is still alive, the children of the veteran are not eligible. At least I don’t see that. I’m just reading through the eligibility here. The eligibility criteria for the stem scholarship. Yeah, I don’t see that it applies to the children of veterans. It just applies for veterans.

A: yeah, like transfer of entitlement… It’s just for veterans

P: after learning that I have too much eligibility left, I would close out the application and take note of that so that when I do get down to less than 6 months, I can then come back to the site and apply, so that’s what I would do. I would probably print something out and maybe put a note on the calendar to come back in the future, that’s what I would do so that I don’t forget about it. But yeah, I think that’s what I would do now that I’m familiar with the eligibility and how to apply

A: so you confirmed that your program was an approved stem program and you know you’re post 9/11 and you’re Sammy smith, the veteran, but when you saw that, you have 7 months and you need 6 months, you’re like, wait a second, I’m over and in need to come back in a little bit.

P: I thought I was eligible and I’m not eligible yet, but the good news is that I will be eligible. So is this a new scholarship?

A: it launched last summer. There’s been a lot of good response to it. The application is part of another form, and we’re in the process of making it its own form, and people can see when they’re eligible and when they’re not eligible.

P: I completely missed it. It’s clearly there

A: your point is good. You took a good look at this page, and it didn’t pop out at you, and you’re one of the people who actually look at this page, so it’s helpful to see

[she mentioned she didn’t understand the “start your application without signing in” link because it seemed like an afterthought, and why wasn’t it at the top, why wouldn’t va want your information to be in the system]

*When eligibility warning alert on intro page appears*

* What did you think of the eligibility alert message you saw?
  + Where do you think the information is coming from?
  + Do you think this information is accurate?
  + Would you still apply?

*When school information appears*

* What did you think of the pre-population of school information? What would you do if the information wasn't right?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user read the subway map?
* Does the user experience any confusion in determining how to start the application? (Need to scroll to bottom of page)
* How does the user react to the eligibility alert message (entitlement)?

**Upon completion of task**

* In your personal field of study, would you expect to be eligible for this scholarship?
* In terms of applying for this scholarship, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Task 2: Unauthenticated User that is Not Chapter 33 - 15 minutes**

We're going to do some role playing. Let's say you're Jamie Lee and you're using the **Montgomery GI Bill** to obtain an undergraduate degree in **Chemistry** from **Chicago State University**. You don't currently have an account and aren't interested in creating one. How would you go about filling out this application?

P:

*When eligibility alert appears*

* What did you think of the eligibility alert message you saw? Would you still apply?

*When 2nd (STEM) eligibility summary page appears*

* What are your thoughts on seeing this information again?
* What would you do at this point?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user read the subway map?
* Does the user experience any confusion in determining how to start the application? (Need to scroll to bottom of page)
* How does the user react to the eligibility alert message (wrong benefit)?
* How does the user react to the 2nd ineligibility alert message?

**Upon completion of task**

* In your personal field of study, would you expect to be eligible for this scholarship?
* In terms of applying for this scholarship, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**TASK 3: Authenticated User in non-STEM program - 15 minutes**

We're going to do some role playing. Let's say you're Jordan Johnson and you're using the **Post 9/11 GI Bill** to obtain an undergraduate degree in **Philosophy** from **Chicago State University**. How would you go about filling out this application? You will log in as an authenticated user.

P:

*When eligibility alert appears*

* What did you think of the eligibility alert message you saw? Would you still apply?

Things to watch for:

* + Does the user read the subway map?
  + Does the user experience any confusion in determining how to start the application? (Need to scroll to bottom of page)
  + Does the user check the Approved STEM programs document?
  + How does the user react to ineligibility alert?
  + If they click "Check remaining benefits", what would you expect to happen (e.g. modal, new page, etc.)?

**Upon completion of task:**

* In your personal field of study, would you expect to be eligible for this scholarship?
* In terms of applying for this scholarship, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Post-Task Interview - 10 minutes**

Circle back on

* School contact details - Is your school ID the same as your SSN? If applicable, what would you put down for your school email?

Those are all the tasks I have for you today.

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the application that you’d like to share?
* Any questions for me?
* I want to give a chanced to the other people on the line to ask a question.

**Thank-You and Closing - 3 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, thanks so much and enjoy the rest of your day!