

# XX University Admissions Usability Testing Script

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Please note that the university's name has been removed  
from this report at their request.

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## Informed Consent & Pre-Test Questionnaire

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Instruct participant to read/listen to and sign informed consent while in the waiting area (may do the consent form in the room as appropriate.) Participant will be oriented to restrooms and water fountains, offered snacks/drink.

***Participant must bring a signed copy of the parental consent form  
with him/her on the day of the session.***

*[Note: we will paraphrase.]*

### **Welcome**

Thank you for coming in today. My name is [facilitator's name]. I work here at the Design and Usability Center and will be facilitating today's session.

### **Session Details**

There are three parts to our session:

1. First, I'll ask you some **background questions**.
2. Then, we'll set up the computer to **record your eye-movements** while you **look at some emails and a website** designed to give high school students more information about a specific college.
3. At the end of the session, I'll **ask you about your experience** using all of the materials.

The session will last about **60 minutes**, so we will be done at [end time]. Is that OK? Please remember that you can take a break at any time.

### **Thinking Aloud**

During some parts of the session, I'm going to give you a series of tasks to work on. While you are working, I'd like you to think aloud. In other words, I'd like to you tell me what you are thinking, describe the steps that you are taking, what you are expecting to see, why you are doing what you're doing, and so on.

Your comments are very important to us. So, we ask you to give us your open opinions (both good and bad) of what you see. I did not design this website, so nothing you say is going to hurt my feelings. Feedback from you and other participants will help us evaluate the design of the website. Difficulties you may run into reflect the design of website, not your skills or abilities. We are testing the website, not you!

### **Using Mouse to Point to Areas on the Screen**

Also, since we're only recording the computer screen and a small inset of your face, please use the mouse pointer to indicate an area of the screen that you're talking about [DEMONSTRATE]. This way we can verify what your comments are referring to if we need to review the video.

### **Neutral Observer**

My role here is as a neutral observer. I will be taking notes, but will be mostly silent while you are working. I will attempt to answer any questions you may have at the end of the session.

## Consent Form

Did you have any questions about the consent form that you signed?

Reiterate: We will be **recording the session** to get an accurate record of your feedback. We may also have some **colleagues observing** the session in another room. The recordings will only be used for this research project. The data from this study will not be used for any other purpose. Your name will not be associated with the tapes or any other data collected during the session.

**Do you have any questions before we begin?**

## Pre-test questions (keep to 5 minutes)

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Before we start the tasks, I want to ask you about your experience with the college websites as well as emails you receive from colleges.

- Have you visited any college or university websites before? How frequently?
- What do you think of these websites?
- What were you trying to do while using them?
- What do you like most about emails you receive from colleges and universities?
- What do you like least about them?
- What kind of information about a college or university are you most interested in?

### Eye-tracker calibration:

We are going to be using eye-tracking technology that allows us to see where you are looking on the screen. It's going to take us a few seconds to setup. In a few seconds you will see a black dot on the white background. I want you to look at the center of the black dot and follow it as it moves around the screen.

Please try to stay close to the monitor and not lean back or to the sides in your chair.

## Emails:

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Now I am going to have you look briefly at a couple emails while we record your eye-movements. This part of the study is going to be done in silence.

### Email 1: Eye-tracking Session:

You have just received an email from XX University with the subject line “XX University – Schedule Your Visit Now” in your inbox. When you press the space bar, the email will open. It will be displayed for 15 seconds. Please look it over but don’t click on anything for now.

### Email 2: Eye-tracking Session:

The next email in your inbox is also from XX University. Again, you will have 15 seconds to look it over, but don’t click on anything at this point.

### Task introduction:

Now I am going to be asking you to complete some tasks with some of the same emails you already saw. During this part of the session, please be sure to **think aloud** and tell us what you are seeing, what you are looking for, etc. Try to complete the tasks as if you were doing this for real. Spend as little or as much time as you normally would doing similar tasks at home. Let me know when you have completed the task or gone as far as you can. It is ok if you cannot complete each task, and we may not get to every task

Just remember that it is the emails that we are testing, any difficulties you run into are because it wasn’t designed in a way that makes sense to you.

*(NOTE: the order of presentation of the emails was counterbalanced across participants.)*

### Email 1: Tasks:

**Task 1:** This is one of the emails you already looked at. Please take a moment to look over the email and tell me your overall impression of it.

- What do you think of the layout?
- What do you notice first?
- What would you do with this email?

**Task 2:** You decide that you are interested in visiting XX University to learn more about the school. Show me what you would do.

- Pass: participant clicks the “schedule a visit” link.

**Task 3:** Show me what you would do if you were interested in hearing more about a current student’s experience at XX University.

- Pass: participant clicks to watch the student video.

**Task 4:** Show me how you would find XX University on a social networking site.

- Pass: participant clicks the Facebook link.

## Email 2: Tasks:

**Task 1:** This is another one of the emails you already looked at. Please take a moment to look over the email and tell me your overall impression of it.

- What do you think of the layout?
- What do you notice first?
- What would you do with this email?

**Task 2:** You decide that you are interested in visiting XX University to learn more about the school. Show me what you would do.

- Pass: participant clicks the “schedule a visit” link.

**Task 3:** Show me what you would do if you were interested in hearing more about a current student’s experience at XX University.

- Pass: participant clicks to watch the student video.

**Task 4:** Show me how you would find XX University on a social networking site.

- Pass: participant clicks the Facebook link.

## Emails Post-Test Questions:

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- Based on the way the two emails look and the way the information is organized, which email do you prefer? Why?  
*(Moderator will show printouts of the two emails to the participant at this point so that the participant can reference them.)*
- What did you like best about the emails?
- What did you like least?
- Is there anything missing from the emails that you might have wanted?
- How do these emails compare to emails you receive from other schools?

## Website:

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### Website: Eye-tracking Session:

Now I am going to have you look a website while we record your eye movements. Please try to stay close to the monitor and not lean back or to the sides in your chair. This part of the study is going to be done in silence.

You're considering XX University as one of the places you'd like to learn more about. When you press spacebar the XX University admissions site will open. The website will be displayed for 15 seconds. Please look the page over but don't leave the page for now.

### Task introduction:

Now I am going to be asking you to complete some tasks with this same website. Please be sure to **think aloud** while you are completing the tasks. Spend as little or as much time as you normally would doing similar tasks at home. Let me know when you have completed the task or gone as far as you can; it is OK if you do not complete the task.

Just remember that it is the emails that we are testing, not you!

### Website: Tasks:

*(all tasks will begin at the homepage)*

**Task 1:** Take a minute to look over the website again and tell me your overall impressions of it. At this point, please stay on this page.

- What do you think of the layout?
- What do you notice first?
- What would you do with this site?
- What are the sections of the page that are clickable?

*If participant misses the clickable areas of the banner, follow up with "Are there any other sections at the top of the page that are clickable?"*

**Task 2:** You're interested in learning more about XX University. Show me how you would request more information about the school.

- Pass: participant lands on Request Materials page (<<URL>>) Note: student should not complete form

**Task 3:** You think that attending an open house might be a good way to learn more about XX University. Show me how you would register for the next open house.

- Pass: participant lands on the Open House page (<<URL>>)
  - Follow up question: What is the next step from here? (i.e. the appointment calendar)

**Task 4:** You're guidance counselor recommended that you attend an information session to learn more about the university. Show me how you would register for an information session.

- Pass: participant lands on the Information Sessions page (<<URL>>)

**Task 5:** A friend told you about XX University’s Facebook page. Show me how you would find XX University on Facebook.

- Pass: participant lands on the XX University Facebook page (<<URL>>)

**Task 6:** You want to have a better sense of what the XX University campus is like. Show me how you would explore the campus online.

- Pass: participant lands on the Virtual Tour page (<<URL>>)

**Task 7:** You’ve heard that XX University offers live video chats where you would be able to talk with students, faculty and staff online. Show me how you could sign up for one of these sessions.

- Pass: participant lands on the Webinars page (<<URL>>)

**Task 8:** You have decided that you want to apply to XX University. Show me how you would apply to XX University as a freshman applicant.

- Pass: participant lands on the Freshman Applicants page (<<URL>>).

**Task 9:** You’ve heard that college internships are a great way to secure a job for after graduation. Show me how you would find out about the kinds of internships XX University students have had.

- Pass: participant lands on Internships page (<<URL>>)
- Note what path participant takes: through Career Services or Experiential Learning

**Task 10:** You’ve heard that XX University offers liberal arts majors in addition to business degrees. Show me how you would find more information about what kinds of liberal studies majors are available.

- Pass: participant lands on the liberal arts page (<<URL>>) and notices the different available concentrations

**Task 11:** You currently live in California and are not too familiar with the XX University area. Show me how you could find more information about the area.

- Pass: participant lands on the XX University area page (under Campus and Community; <<URL>>)

**Task 12:** You want to learn how to use the latest technology as part of your college experience. Show me how you would find out what kinds of technology resources are available at XX University.

- Pass: participant lands on the Technology page (<<URL>>) and explores some of the subpages (e.g. <<URL>>, <<URL>>, etc.)

## Website Post-Test Questions:

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- How was your overall experience using the website?
- What did you like the best on the website?
- What did you like the least on the website?
- What is one thing you would change on the website?
- Is there anything missing from the website that you might have wanted?
- How does this website compare to other schools' websites that you have visited?
- Do you have any other questions which we did not get the chance to discuss?

## Incentive

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Thank you for your participation! You will receive \$50 in cash.