



REGENTS CENTER FOR LEARNING DISORDERS
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Date: March 24, 2014

To: Kelly Woodruff, Director
Access/Disability Services

From: George W. Shaver, Psy.D. *DIS by GWS*
Director

Beverly M. Sermons, Ed.D. *BMS*
Liaison/Consultant

Re: Jasmine N. Thomas

Per your request, we reviewed the documentation submitted by Jasmine Thomas to support her request for accommodations at Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU). Ms. Thomas is a 24-year-old freshman, and she has provided a copy of a recent Veterans Affairs (VA) "rating decision" for our review and response. The rating decision indicated a previous evaluation and diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder with depressive disorder. A 70% disability rating was established based on the evaluation results. *The evaluation report referenced here was not included for our review during this submission.* At this time, Ms. Thomas has requested academic accommodations from AASU due to a disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The provided documentation did not address all of the domains necessary to document a Psychological Disability as mandated by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents (USG BOR) criteria. In order to be considered for the most appropriate academic accommodations based on a psychological disorder, Ms. Thomas' documentation should be updated to include the following additional criteria:

- Documentation of current symptoms relative to the indicated psychological disorder, (i.e., PTSD), consistent with the diagnostic criteria in the current DSM.
- Documentation of functional abilities and impairments, and a description of how the symptoms and impairments impact the student's functioning within the academic setting. *Documentation should describe symptoms specific to the student, their severity, and the potential impact on her academic performance.*

We recommend that Ms. Thomas follow up with a licensed professional to update her documentation as indicated above. Documentation must include the names, signatures, titles, and license numbers of the appropriate evaluators, as well as the dates of testing and contact information. Evaluators must be licensed professionals whose training and licensure status is consistent with expertise in the disability for which they provide documentation.

In the meantime and based on the submitted information, AASU may wish to grant provisional accommodations for one semester pending receipt of updated documentation. These accommodations would be appropriate to provide equal access to classroom information while upholding the academic integrity of the institution. The recommended institutional accommodations should be negotiated with Ms. Thomas, her professors, and the Director of the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at AASU.

Institutional Accommodations (Provisional)

- Extended time for tests and in-class essays
- Reduced distraction test environment
- Use of an audio recorder for lecture classes

Client Recommendations

1. We recommend that Ms. Thomas work closely with professionals in the ODS at AASU, to access the recommended accommodations and related academic support services on your campus.
2. We recommend that Ms. Thomas follow up with professionals in the ODS to provide the updated documentation in a timely manner. Ms. Thomas should be counseled about the possibility of removing [or increasing] her academic accommodations, based on findings in the updated evaluation report(s).

Psychologists seeking to perform an evaluation that addresses the BOR criteria for diagnosis of psychological disabilities should visit the following website for more information.

http://www.usg.edu/academic_affairs_handbook/section3/handbook/appendicesDH

The Regents Center for Learning Disorders at Georgia Southern University was established to assist university system institutions in making decisions about students who have learning problems due to a disability. Please feel free to contact us if we can be of further assistance.