

# Washington Association on Postsecondary Education and Disability – (WAPED)

## Position Paper: Psychiatric / Psychological Disabilities

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Students seeking support services at postsecondary institutions in the State of Washington on the basis of a psychiatric disability may be required to submit documentation verifying eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the appropriate office as designated by each institution. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation **shall be borne by the student.**

A *psychological/psychiatric disability* is defined as an impairment of cognitive, educational and/or social functioning caused by a disorder. For the purpose of this policy, the definition provided in the American Psychiatric Association *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, (DSM-IV)* – or successive editions - will be utilized.

Documentation should indicate the current impact of the disability. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations.

The report must be prepared by a qualified mental health professional.

The documentation should:

1. Specify the nature, severity, current impact, and anticipated duration of the disability;
2. state the diagnosis in the nomenclature used by the DSM-IV, or successive editions;
3. address the student's current ability to function in the college environment (e.g. ability to focus, organize one's time, attend class, work in groups or alone, etc.);
4. list medication and any current side effects that may impact the student in an educational setting.

With supporting documentation, suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services may be included. However, the final determination rests with the postsecondary institution.