

More on OA to education research

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I've learned more about why the [GAO report](#) singles out the Department of Education ([ED](#)) from all the other federal agencies that fund research (see [previous blog entry](#)). The answer is that Congress adopted the [Education Sciences Reform Act](#) in November 2002. The statute created the [Institute of Education Sciences](#) within the ED, and directed it to "conduct research, evaluations, and wide dissemination activities in areas of demonstrated national need (including in technology areas) that are supported by Federal funds appropriated to the Institute...." The GAO was willing to recommend open access for the results of ED-funded research, and the ED was willing to accept the recommendation, because the Education Sciences Reform Act already required essentially the same thing and the ED was already in the process of implementing it.

If you're looking for ways to generalize from the ED to other federal funding agencies, then look at *why* the Education Sciences Reform Act requires "wide dissemination" for education research. The statute gives the Institute of Education Sciences the mission "to provide national leadership in expanding fundamental knowledge and understanding of education...in order to provide parents, educators, students, researchers, policymakers, and the general public with reliable information about the condition and progress of education...." The good news is that Congress has already adopted a policy about education research that it could well adopt for almost any other kind of research. The bad news is that some federal funding agencies might think that they have to wait for Congress to act.