

EDGAR AND EVIDENCE:

How has ED streamlined and improved the requirements?

EDGAR describes the requirements that govern the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) selection of grantees for competitive grant programs. Entities applying for such grants from ED must adhere to the requirements in **EDGAR**. ED revised the **EDGAR** evidence requirements to better support entities applying for its competitive grant programs. The revisions do the following:

1. Align the evidence definitions in **EDGAR** with the evidence-based definition in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (see ESSA section 8101(21)).
2. Allow applicants to cite to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guides and intervention reports that meet standards relevant to the level of evidence required for a particular competition (see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/> Publication for practice guides and intervention reports).
3. When possible, accommodate the existing evidence base of specific program areas. For example, **EDGAR** now directly references single-case study designs in the experimental study definition to acknowledge the prevalence of such designs in special education interventions.
4. Clarify certain **EDGAR** evidence requirements to provide applicants more options to meet these requirements. For example, an experimental study required for an intervention to meet the "strong evidence" level can be a randomized controlled trial, regression discontinuity design study, or single-case design study.
5. Supplement selection criteria to facilitate greater fidelity of implementation of interventions and higher quality evaluations of grants by considering such factors within the quality of the project design and the quality of the project evaluation, respectively.

All revisions seek to lessen burden on grant program applicants and do not change the use of the **EDGAR** evidence requirements. The Secretary will continue to use these requirements consistent with the purpose of each program and permitted under applicable statutes and regulations.

How can I tell what level of evidence a particular intervention meets?

The following table shows the criteria for meeting the revised EDGAR evidence requirements.

Requirements	Level of Evidence from a Single Study			
	Strong	Moderate	Promising	Demonstrates a Rationale
Outcomes	At least one statistically significant and positive effect on a relevant outcome; no statistically significant and negative effects on a relevant outcome	At least one statistically significant and positive effect on a relevant outcome; no statistically significant and negative effects on a relevant outcome	At least one statistically significant and positive effect on a relevant outcome	Not Applicable
Study Design	Experimental study	Experimental study or quasi-experimental design study	Experimental study, quasi-experimental design study, or correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias	Logic model informed by research or evaluation findings
WWC Evidence Rating	Meets WWC without reservations	Meets WWC with or without reservations	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Sample Size	A large sample (n = 350+) and a multi-site sample	A large sample (n = 350+) and a multi-site sample	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

How do the EDGAR revisions relate to ED's Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Investments?



Under the Congressional Review Act, Congress has passed, and the President has signed, a resolution of disapproval of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), accountability and State plans final regulations that were published on November 29, 2016 (81 FR 86076). This guidance document is unaffected by that resolution and remains applicable.

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In considering whether to apply for a particular ED grant program, and when developing and completing an ED grant application, it may be helpful to consider the steps for effective decision-making described in the guidance document provided at the link below. In particular, after step one of identifying local needs, selecting relevant, evidence-based interventions is critical to ensuring that students, parents, and families will be well-served by a particular grant program.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseseinvestment.pdf>

How does EDGAR define the evidence levels?

Strong evidence: evidence exists of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (a) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “strong evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;
- (b) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or
- (c) A single experimental study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that meets the four criteria in the EDGAR definition of strong evidence.

Moderate evidence: evidence of effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (a) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;
- (b) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or
- (c) A single experimental study or quasi-experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, or otherwise assessed by ED using version 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that meets the four criteria in the EDGAR definition of moderate evidence.

How does EDGAR define the evidence levels?

Promising evidence means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (a) a practice guide prepared by the WWC reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice recommendation;
- (b) an intervention report prepared by the WWC reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or
- (c) a single study reviewed and reported by the WWC or assessed by ED, as appropriate, and that meets the two criteria for a single study in the EDGAR definition of promising evidence.

Demonstrates a rationale: a key project component included in the project’s logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

¹ EDGAR contains additional definitions to help grant applicants meet the EDGAR evidence requirements (e.g., definition of an experimental design study or quasi-experimental design study, etc.)