

International Research and Exchanges Board Records

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm89054285>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms016004>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

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Revised 2022 October

Collection Summary

Title: International Research and Exchanges Board Records

Inclusive Dates: 1947-1991

Bulk Dates: 1956-1983

ID No.: MSS80702

Creator: International Research and Exchanges Board

Creator: Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants

Extent: 331,000 items

Extent: 331 containers

Extent: 397.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and Russian

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm89054285>

Summary: American service organization sponsoring scholarly exchange programs with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Cold War era. Correspondence, case files, subject files, reports, financial records, printed matter, and other records documenting participants' personal experiences and research projects as well as the administrative operations, selection process, and collaborative projects of one of America's principal academic exchange programs.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

Organizations

Akademii nauk SSSR.

American Council of Learned Societies.

Columbia University.

Harvard University.

Indiana University.

Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants. Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants records.

International Research and Exchanges Board.

Kyivs'kyi derzhavnyi universytet im. T.H. Shevchenka.

Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi universitet.

Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. M.V. Lomonosova.

Soviet Union. Ministerstvo vysshego obrazovaniia.

United States. Consulate (Leningrad, Soviet Union)

United States. Department of State.

United States. Embassy (Soviet Union)

United States. International Communication Agency.

V.I. Lenin nomidagi Toshkent davlat universiteti.

Yale University.

Subjects

Cold War--Influence.

Cultural relations.

Diplomacy.

Intellectual cooperation.

Places

Europe, Eastern--Relations--United States.

Europe, Eastern.

Soviet Union--Relations--United States.

Soviet Union.

United States--Relations--Europe, Eastern.

United States--Relations--Soviet Union.

Acquisition Information

The records of the International Research and Exchanges Board were given to the Library of Congress by the board in 1986 and 1990.

Processing History

Following their accessioning and preliminary cataloging in 1990, the records of the International Research and Exchanges Board were stored off-site. When retrieved from storage, the records were classified within four series, reboxed in record center cartons, and described by their original folder headings that were recorded in Excel spreadsheet format by Karen Linn Femia, Michael McElderry, and Karen Stuart with the assistance of Jeffery Bryson, Brian McGuire, Jewel McPherson, and Chanté Wilson-Flowers. No further processing was performed.

Additional Guides

A detailed container list is available as a [PDF document](#).

Transfers

Some maps have been transferred to the Library's Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of these records.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the records of the [American Council of Learned Societies](#).

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of International Research and Exchanges Board is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The records of the International Research and Exchanges Board are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, International Research and Exchanges Board Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Organizational History

In 1956, the International Research and Exchanges Board's (IREX) predecessor, the Inter- University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), was created to enable American scholars specializing in Russian studies to travel to the Soviet Union on

thirty-day tourist visas, the maximum time the Soviet government then allowed. The committee was originally composed of seven founding universities that joined in a cooperative effort, selecting Columbia University, New York, New York, to manage and direct the program from 1956 to 1960 and Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, from 1960 until 1969 when the committee's functions were assumed by IREX. Since the end of the Cold War, IREX has become more global in its exchange programs and has shifted emphasis away from Russia and Eastern Europe.

On January 27, 1958, the United States and Soviet Union signed an agreement authorizing reciprocal academic exchanges with visits lasting from four months to two years. Although IUCTG was the largest of the independent organizations designed to administer the terms of the agreement, other organizations also promoted their own academic exchange programs including the American Council of Learned Societies, the Ford Foreign Area Fellowship Programs, the Institute of International Education, and the National Academy of Sciences. Financial support for IUCTG was provided by the committee's member universities and by a combination of public and private funding with substantial assistance from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Ford Foundation. In addition to funds, the State Department also contributed logistical support, and because the exchange program operated under the auspices of an intergovernmental agreement, the department increasingly influenced the day-to-day management of the committee's operations.

By the late 1960s, dissatisfaction with the structure of the IUCTG's area studies approach in general and with its management in particular resulted in the creation of the advisory Committee on the Future, established in 1967 to present a blueprint for restructuring American scholarly exchange programs with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The committee's final report proposed that a new organization administer the exchanges and broaden their coverage.

On July 1, 1968, IREX officially began operations and worked with IUCTG during the following transitional year, after which the committee disbanded. IREX assumed responsibility for the exchange programs formerly operated by the American Council of Learned Societies and IUCTG, and when fully organized, it operated programs in the Soviet Union and also in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The board was funded by grants from the Ford Foundation, the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In addition, IREX was for many years sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. IREX became an independent entity in 1991 and has been located at three successive addresses: New York, N.Y., 1968-1986; Princeton, N.J., 1986-1992; and Washington, D.C., 1992-present.

Scope and Content Note

The records of the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) span the years 1947-1991, with the bulk of the material dating from 1956 to 1983. The collection represents the combined records of IREX and its predecessor, the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), a multi-university organization created to administer academic exchange programs for qualified graduate students and scholars between the United States and the Soviet Union. Founded in 1956, IUCTG operated as one of the primary American-Soviet cultural exchange enterprises until 1969 when IREX assumed organizational responsibility, and as a consequence acquired the committee's files in an effort to insure administrative continuity for all existing programs and participants. The collection is of interest for the light it sheds on institutional relations during the Cold War between IREX and the United States government, foundations, and participating colleges and universities, as well as foreign governments and various cultural institutions behind the Iron Curtain. As such, the collection provides insight into the history of American cultural diplomacy and the intellectual history of American academic research on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The records are in English and Russian. The collection is minimally processed and organized largely as received from IREX. Because the physical order is not in sequence with series and file descriptions, an Excel spreadsheet has been created listing the intellectual contents of material together with its container location. An electronic copy of the spreadsheet is available from the Manuscript Division Reading Room for readers who wish to execute searches for more specific results. The following series comprise the collection: [Correspondence](#), [Participants](#), [Reports](#), and [Subject File](#).

[Correspondence](#) is maintained principally in the form of soft-bound volumes organized chronologically as general correspondence or according to the government agencies and offices with whom the various officers of IREX corresponded. Important American agencies represented include the State Department, American embassy in Moscow, American consulate in Leningrad, and the United States International Communication Agency. Associated agencies and institutions in the Soviet Union such as the Ministry of Higher Education and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR are

also highlighted in the series. As a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, cultural exchanges provided a guide against which to gauge the state of relations between the two countries during the Cold War. When relations were good, exchanges flourished and expanded; when relations were tense, exchanges suffered. In August 1968, the Warsaw Pact, led by the Soviet Union, invaded Czechoslovakia leading to public pressure on IREX to dissolve its exchange agreements. The board resisted, citing its apolitical objectives and its independent devotion to the advancement of knowledge. The series informs on these and other policy issues including administrative correspondence concerning the awarding of grants, the selection of exchange candidates, and other operational topics. Letters from American countries of destination can also be found in the series. [Correspondence](#) filed alphabetically by name includes an entry for Allen H. Kassof, executive director of IREX from 1968 to 1992.

Academic exchanges were operated on a reciprocal basis with American scholars supported overseas by host countries and foreign scholars by American university sponsors. In the early period of the exchange programs, a disproportionate number of American scholars representing the social sciences and humanities applied for exchanges, while applications from their counterparts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were weighted toward science and technology. The [Participants](#) series is the largest in the collection and contains case files for the individual American, Soviet, and Eastern European scholars who applied to the exchange programs. Of singular importance in the files are the participants' reports that record their overseas experiences and impressions. American participants often provided interim reports halfway through their projects and more comprehensive final reports upon their return. Compiled copies of participants' reports may also be found in the [Reports](#) series. Foreign participants did not write reports, but reports about them were provided by their university sponsors. In addition to reports, the case files contain records used to establish and maintain the exchange, including restrictions imposed by both the United States and foreign governments and the strategies used to handle the numerous problems that arose because of them, further illuminating the selection process with all of its political and diplomatic overtones.

Each exchange applicant submitted detailed information concerning his or her academic career and proposed research project. Letters of reference, a language skill test, and personal interview were all part of the selection process. All or part of these records are filed within the participant's case file. Information concerning each case file, as entered in the Excel format, is contained in columns designated for name, beginning and ending dates of exchange, country of origin, country of destination, field of study, and general notes. Data was mostly obtained from folder headings and front covers. Applicants who were rejected or withdrew, if so identified on the folder, are noted in the general notes column. However, it should be noted that descriptions listed on folders were often inconsistent, and in order to insure complete and accurate information for any particular participant, further research within the respective folder is recommended.

IREX operated many types of exchange programs for different scholars with different needs and backgrounds. Among these were programs designed for graduate students/young faculty members, senior research scholars, and summer language teachers. Other available programs and grants included Ad Hoc Grants, Bilateral Travel Grants, Collaborative Project Grants, Faculty Grants Program, Preparatory Fellowships, Multilateral Faculty Exchange Program, and Senior Faculty Exchange. These various programs are identified with participants, where applicable, in the general notes column.

IREX gathered a large amount of statistical and narrative information that was published in a variety of organizational reports. The [Reports](#) series contains published and unpublished reports that taken together provide a broad overview of the board's activities. The series includes reports on faculty grants, tours and travel, multilateral programs, and graduate study in the Soviet Union. Periodic reports such as annual, end-of-year, and summary reports provide detail concerning the political climate surrounding the board's operations and the evolution of its programs over the years. In addition, these reports provide comprehensive lists of American and Soviet participants and their research projects. Compilations of American exchange students' interim and final reports complement those included in the [Participants](#) series.

In 1967, the Committee on the Future was created by the National Advisory Committee on Travel Grants to recommend a new approach to American scholarly exchange programs with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The committee's final report, published in 1968, proposed the formation of a new organization that resulted in the creation of IREX. Material relating to this important committee is located in the Reports series, as is an unpublished survey and appraisal report of IREX conducted by Marshall I. Goldman and Norman Holmes Pearson and funded by the Ford Foundation in 1972.

The [Subject File](#) also contains material relating to the Committee on the Future and to a wide variety of other administrative and operational topics. The series lists American and Soviet participants and includes records outlining their nominations, evaluations, and placements within the IREX exchange system. Minutes and other records produced in meetings of the board's selection committees are also located in the Subject File as are files documenting collaborative projects and grant programs. Records in the files of colleges, universities, and other organizations reflect the broad network of

institutions united in support, both financially and logistically, of IREX's mission. In addition to funding from participating colleges and universities, IREX also received financial support from a combination of other public and private sources. Financial records include correspondence and contracts relating, in particular, to funding requests negotiated with the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Ford Foundation.

Although IREX was governed by its own board during its early years, it was fiscally responsible to and cosponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies until it became independent in 1991. The relationship between the two organizations may be studied in council files located in the [Subject File](#). In addition to this material, the Library of Congress also maintains a separate collection of American Council of Learned Societies Records that may be consulted in the Manuscript Division Reading Room.

IREX signed separate exchange agreements with each country with which it had established an exchange program. These agreements were periodically renewed, and the [Subject File](#) contains material documenting the negotiations of these agreements. Early agreements attempted to link researchers and lecturers from a specific university in the United States to a corresponding affiliate in the Soviet Union. Referred to as bilateral exchanges, these university exchange programs partnered schools such as Columbia University and Moscow State University, Harvard University and the State University of Leningrad, Indiana University and Tashkent University, and Yale University and Kiev University. Because it was not successful, the arrangement was replaced by a system of multilateral exchanges, wherein scholars nominated for exchange programs were chosen by all participating universities. Files pertaining to both types of programs are located in the [Subject File](#).

The [Subject File](#) contains a series of books documenting policies and procedures associated with individual programs and countries. Collated within three-ring binders, the books consist of correspondence, memoranda, minutes of meetings, policy and briefing papers, reports, data sheets, and other records and sketch a selective history of IREX in an accessible and convenient form. Categories of these multi-volume compilations include biographical data sheets, Eastern European country books, graduate student exchanges, multilateral programs, procedural manuals, program books, and Summer Exchange of Language Teachers books. The summer exchange program was designed to improve the skills of foreign language teachers by allowing them to spend approximately ten weeks during the summer in the country of their language discipline. Applicants were to have had at least four years of college-level language study and a minimum of two years teaching experience. For many participants it was their first experience in the country of their adoptive language. The summer intensive training program was a success and one of several creative exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union operated by IREX in its effort to foster international understanding and reduce mutual suspicion between the two superpowers through the promotion of knowledge.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series. A detailed container list is available as a [PDF document](#).

- [Correspondence, 1956-1982](#)
- [Participants, 1947-1991](#)
- [Reports, 1956-1981](#)
- [Subject File, 1947-1989](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

Correspondence, 1956-1982

Letters received and copies of letters sent, correspondence books, memoranda, telexes, cables, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.

Participants, 1947-1991

Correspondence, reports, memoranda, letters of recommendation, interviews, applications, data sheets, writings, notes, transcripts, background material, printed matter, and miscellaneous material comprising the case files of applicants for and participants in the various exchange programs operated by the International Research and Exchanges Board.

Reports, 1956-1981

Reports, correspondence, memoranda, minutes of meetings, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.

Subject File, 1947-1989

Correspondence, memoranda, minutes of meetings, briefing and policy papers, reports, participants' applications and data sheets, legal and financial records, articles and miscellaneous writings, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.

Container List

The collection is minimally processed and organized largely as received from IREX. Because the physical order is not in sequence with series and file descriptions, an Excel spreadsheet has been created listing the intellectual contents of material together with its container location. An electronic copy of the spreadsheet is available from the Manuscript Division Reading Room for readers who wish to execute searches for more specific results. A detailed container list is available as a [PDF document](#). The following series comprise the collection:

Container	Contents
	Correspondence, 1956-1982 Letters received and copies of letters sent, correspondence books, memoranda, telexes, cables, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.
	Participants, 1947-1991 Correspondence, reports, memoranda, letters of recommendation, interviews, applications, data sheets, writings, notes, transcripts, background material, printed matter, and miscellaneous material comprising the case files of applicants for and participants in the various exchange programs operated by the International Research and Exchanges Board.
	Reports, 1956-1981 Reports, correspondence, memoranda, minutes of meetings, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.
	Subject File, 1947-1989 Correspondence, memoranda, minutes of meetings, briefing and policy papers, reports, participants' applications and data sheets, legal and financial records, articles and miscellaneous writings, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.