



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel Files, 1954 - 1970 Record Group 307

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1. What is the National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel?

The National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel provided the Federal Government information regarding the name, location, and technical expertise of scientists and engineers during the early Cold War. Surveys were sent to multiple professional societies between 1954 and 1970, and the results were compiled for the National Science Foundation as part of its mandate. Since only the records from the 1954 survey are currently available through AAD, the information for this FAQ is limited to the 1954 file.

2. What information is contained in these records?

This series contains data compiled from social and natural scientists who responded to survey questionnaires sent to them by their respective professional organization. Some of the questions were universal across surveys (name, education, professional specialty, etc.), while others were society-specific (professional societies of which the respondent was a member, training qualifications, etc.). The surveys were designed to elicit as much information as possible about scientific and technical professionals and their fields of work.

3. Why were these records created?

The records were initially created to provide the government an overview on the nation's scientific and engineering workforce, which could be called upon in case of a national emergency. Later surveys were used to compile statistics about this workforce.

4. How are these records organized in AAD?

The only records currently available through AAD are the records from 1954. The 1954 file has been divided into eight tables, which are based on the eight professional societies that participated in the National Register survey for 1954. These are: the American Biological Institute (Society B); the American Chemical Society (Society C); the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (Society F); the American Geological Institute (Society G); the American Mathematical Society (Society M); the American Institute of Physics (Society P); the American Psychological Association (Society R); and the American Meteorological Society (Society W). Questionnaires for each society are identical up to column 123. Four of the societies, (B, F, G, and W) each asked questions related to its scientific field. Data in columns 124-165 reflect responses to these questions. The other four societies (C, M, P, and R) did not ask society-specific questions, and so for these societies the survey ends at column 123, and columns 124-165 are blank.

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5. How can I search for records in the 1954 file?

Each society/table can be searched independently. To search across societies/tables, users can enter queries in the Free Text search option at the series level, which will return records listed by society.

6. Why did NARA create public use files of the 1954 National Register?

Public Use files were created by NARA to mask information that might cause an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

7. Why is Society B listed as the American Biological Institute in the Society code list, but as the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) on the survey form?

In the codes in the documentation transferred to NARA by the National Science Foundation, the meaning of code B in the field used for Society is American Biological Institute. The actual survey included in the documentation lists the society as the American Institute of Biological Sciences. We followed the documentation in using the American Biological Institute in the AAD code table for the Society code, even though it differs from the organization's name on the survey.

8. Why doesn't the survey for Society F (Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology - FASEB) list the society's name at the top of the form?

The copy of one of the survey instruments that the National Science Foundation (NSF) transferred to NARA for the 1954 National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel does not list a society name. NSF surveyed eight societies; seven of the survey instruments show the name of the society at the top of the form, the exception being Society F. Since the questions in the survey are consistent with the layout and codes for the FASEB in the documentation and because the abbreviations FASEB and AIBS (American Institute for Biological Sciences - Society B) were handwritten across the top of the second page of the instrument that has the relevant specialty codes, we concluded that this survey instrument is for Society F and so identify it this way in the list of the AAD scanned documentation.