

Call for FADEx Dark Side of the Universe Immersion Grants for PhD Students

October 19 – 23, 2026 | France (Paris, Modane) & Switzerland (Geneva)

1. Context

The French-American Doctoral Exchange (FADEx) program aims to foster scientific exchanges between American and French PhD students working in similar research fields, through a one-week immersion program organized in France. By bringing together the next generation of researchers from both countries, it supports the development of future Franco-American scientific collaborations. Each edition focuses on a different scientific topic.

The Embassy of France in the United States and the CNRS/IN2P3 will award up to 10 grants to support participation in the FADEx "The Dark Side of the Universe" immersion, dedicated to dark matter physics. The program will take place from October 19 to 23, 2026.

2. Presentation

The FADEX program's "Dark Side of the Universe" initiative invites outstanding US based PhD students specializing in dark matter research to immerse themselves in France's vibrant scientific ecosystem through a week-long journey of discovery and collaboration. Organized by the Office for Science and Technology of the Embassy of France in the United States and the CNRS/IN2P3, this exclusive program offers a unique opportunity to explore the forefront of dark matter physics, from theoretical advances to cutting-edge experimental innovations.

Participants will engage with leading French researchers during 2 days at the [GDR DUPhy annual meeting](#) in Paris. The GDR DUPhy, a CNRS research network, unites France's underground experiments and rare-event physics community, fostering collaboration between theory and experiment. The program features scientific presentations, a "my thesis in 3 minutes" session for participants to introduce themselves, and networking at a social dinner—providing direct access to France's entire dark matter research community.

The journey continues with a visit to the Laboratoire Souterrain de Modane (LSM), CNRS's unique underground laboratory hosting direct dark matter search experiments. Participants will explore DAMIC-M (a CNRS-University of Chicago collaboration) and discuss the future dark matter quantum experiment Tesseract (developed with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory) and experience the stunning Alpine setting during an overnight stay.

A highlight of the program is a visit to CERN, the world's leading particle physics laboratory, with potential tours at the ATLAS experiment at the LHC collider, the Neutrino Platform (protoDUNE), and the MADMAX axion-based dark matter experiment, alongside discussions with the LHC dark matter community.

By fostering direct exchanges between US and French scientists, and through visits to strategic CNRS and European laboratories, this program strengthens international collaboration in fundamental physics. It offers participants an unforgettable blend of scientific discovery and cultural enrichment, inspiring the next generation of researchers to unravel one of the universe's greatest mysteries while building lasting ties with the French and European scientific community.

3. Program Overview

During this one-week immersion, selected US and French PhD students will:

- visit unique European research facilities dedicated to the search for dark matter
- engage with leading French scientists across the full spectrum of dark matter research, from theory to experiment
- attend scientific presentations and thematic workshops
- present their doctoral research to the French dark matter community
- build connections that could lay the groundwork for future French-American collaborations

4. Eligibility

Applicants must be PhD students, or candidates who have defended their thesis within the last 12 months, currently enrolled in a U.S. university or research institution, working in dark matter physics or any closely related field.

Applicants must hold a valid passport with a minimum residual validity of 6 months beyond the planned return date. Participants are responsible for obtaining, if necessary, any visas required to enter France and Switzerland prior to departure, and for ensuring they hold the necessary documentation to re-enter the United States upon their return.

Applications will be evaluated based on academic excellence, scientific relevance and originality of the doctoral project, and motivation and potential for future French-American collaboration.

5. Application Requirements

- A completed application form (online)
- A Curriculum Vitae
- A cover letter
- A 10-line abstract summarizing the doctoral research project
- Proof of enrollment at a U.S. university or research institution
- Signed statement of endorsement from the applicant's Supervisor
- **Applications must be submitted no later than July 17th, 2026.**

6. Grant Coverage

The FADEx grant covers round-trip airfare between the United States and France/Switzerland, domestic travel within France/Switzerland, accommodation, and certain meals during the program. Please note that participants with dietary restrictions will be responsible for managing their own meals accordingly.

7. Contact

For any questions regarding the program or the application process, please contact Valerie Livrelli, Scientific Attachée in Chicago, and Eva Levi Acobas, Scientific Deputy Attachée in Chicago, at : fadex-dm@ambascience-usa.org