

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

« *PhD Expertise Missions* »

Supported by **Unys – Pôle Universitaire d’Innovation**,¹ in collaboration with the **laboratories, Doctoral College** and **Doctoral Schools**, the “Offre Découverte” initiative seeks to strengthen the links between academia and the socio-economic world.

DESCRIPTION DE L’A.M.I.

OBJECTIVE

The Call for Expressions of Interest aims to invite **volunteer PhD students** to carry out short **expertise missions (6 to 10 days)** to address specific needs of **companies, local authorities, or associations** in the region.

These missions aim to:

- Put PhD students' scientific skills at the service of concrete projects,
- Offer companies a fresh and rigorous perspective on their innovation challenges,
- Foster new synergies between research and industry,
- Promote doctoral expertise across the Lorraine region.

WHO CAN APPLY?

This Call for Expressions of Interest is open to all PhD students from the Lorraine academic site, whether or not they hold a doctoral contract.

Not eligible: CIFRE PhD students or those employed by a company

By joining the program, PhD students can:

- Discover how companies operate and understand real-world challenges,
- Showcase their scientific expertise beyond the academic framework,
- Develop transferable skills (analysis, communication, project management),
- Build a professional network and establish industrial contacts,
- Prepare for their career transition,
- Receive additional salary.

¹Unys is a unique initiative in France that brings together public research and innovation stakeholders in Lorraine. The Innovation Hub of the Université de Lorraine (Polaris) lies at the heart of the collective approach driven by Unys: a framework that unites expertise, supports collaborative research and technology transfer, fosters the emergence of innovative startups, and strengthens the link between science and society to transform major scientific challenges into concrete opportunities for the region

WHAT KIND OF MISSIONS?

These missions, independent of the PhD subject, rely on the students' expertise and know-how. They may include :

- **Scientific or technological studies and monitoring** (technological, economic, social, environmental, legal, etc.),
- **Diagnostics and recommendations** on research, innovation, or development issues,
- **Foresight analyses or trend studies,**
- **Science communication or knowledge transfer actions.**

They are open to **all disciplines** — scientific, technological, human and social sciences, law, economics, management, and business studies — serving innovation and transition.

Duration: 6, 8, or 10 days, depending on company needs and PhD student availability.

Supervision: Provided by the Pôle Universitaire d'Innovation and validated by the thesis supervisor and the doctoral school

PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS

These missions are considered a **complementary activity** to the PhD (Code de la recherche, art. D412-12).

- **Maximum annual duration:** 32 days (\approx one-sixth of total working time).

Mandatory documents

- **A partnership agreement** between the University and the host organization,
- **An authorization for secondary activity** and **an amendment to the doctoral contract**, or **a temporary teaching/research contract.**

Remuneration: additional payment in accordance with current University regulations

The legal framework was developed jointly by the **Human Resources Department**, the **Doctoral College**, and the **Research and Innovation Support Division (SDVI)**.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested PhD students are invited to submit:

- Name, surname, laboratory, doctoral school,
- Title and general theme of their thesis,
- Expertise and skills applicable to a mission,
- Fields of interest or preferred sectors,
- Expected availability (number of days possible).

Send your application to : unys-contact@univ-lorraine.fr

SELECTION AND MATCHING PROCESS

1. Collection of applications through this Call for Expressions of Interest.
2. Development of **a map of doctoral expertise.**
3. Matching PhD candidates with partner companies.
4. Validation by **Unys – Pôle Universitaire d’Innovation** and **Doctoral Schools.**
5. Signing of contractual documents.
6. Launch of the first missions in spring 2026.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The mission must not delay PhD progress.
- The PhD student remains an employee of the University throughout the mission.
- Any additional activity must comply with the (Code de la recherche, art. D412-12) and Decret No. 2020-69 on public service ethics.

TIMELINE 2025–2026

Stage	Period
Launch of the Call	December 2025
Continuous selection	Until June 2026
Mission implementation	Q1 / Q2 2026
Promotion event	June 2026 – Rencontres Docteurs & Entreprises (Nancy)

A PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE ECOSYSTEM

The “*Offre Découverte*” initiative is part of Unys’s mission to strengthen collaboration between:

- The Lorraine academic community (+60 laboratories, +100 technology platforms),
- Companies, local authorities, and associations,
- And the **strategic focus areas** of the University Innovation Hub (PUI):
 - Digital & Artificial Intelligence
 - Health & Autonomy
 - Industrial Transition
 - Innovative Materials
 - Bioeconomy & Environment
 - Societal Transition (RSE, EDI, SHS, etc.)

CONTACT

For any further information, please contact the Pôle Universitaire d'Innovation:

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