

ANNOUNCEMENT

A New Opportunity for Academic Space Experiments

NASA's LDEF (the Long Duration Exposure Facility) will offer scientists a new opportunity for space research. LDEF is a large passive unmanned structure on which over 70 separate self-contained experiment packages will be mounted. It will be carried aloft by the Space Shuttle Transportation System, left to orbit the Earth for a number of months, then retrieved, brought back to Earth, and the experiments returned to their owners for analysis. LDEF offers prolonged exposure to the conditions at its 300 n.mi. orbital altitude: weightlessness, extreme vacuum, high particle and radiation fluxes. A unique feature is the return of materials and instruments at the end of the mission.

The Universities Space Research Association (USRA) has been given the task of seeking worthwhile experiments for LDEF in all fields of science and technology, particularly from academic scientists. NASA will provide pre-flight acceptance testing, orbital flight and return for experiments endorsed by USRA. Experimenters will need to secure research funding – USRA will assist in this, and in all phases of experiment development and management, where necessary.

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