

2439	Universal Access to Medicines & COVID
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Summary:	
<p>One year on and COVID remains at the forefront of our lives. Whilst the British population are offered a silver lining in the shape of a vaccine, we cannot say the same for the 130 countries¹ that are still yet to receive a single dose. In order to show solidarity with these countries and offer a helping hand to vulnerable nations we are asking the University to:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pledge to provide full transparency regarding ongoing research into COVID-19 technologies. 2. Pledge to act to promote open access to COVID-19 health technologies. 3. Pledge to promote socially responsible licensing and transparency around licensing of intellectual property. 	
<p>We hope to see the University continue to be at the forefront of sustainability and global advocacy by meeting these requests and engaging in an open conversation to encourage wider access to health technologies and medicines for populations regardless of borders and socioeconomic status.</p>	
Council Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - March 11th 2021 marks one year since the World Health Organisation declared a COVID-19 pandemic². In just one year there have been 120 million confirmed cases and 2.6 million deaths in nearly 200 countries³. - Our best chance of ending this horrific pandemic is to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments. - However, the disparities in access to these health technologies are continually widening. Just recently on March 10th, richer members of the World Trade Organisation blocked a push by over 80 developing countries to waive patent rights to COVID-19 vaccines which would have allowed for increased production for poorer nations⁴. - Furthermore, Oxford-AstraZeneca has priced its' COVID-19 vaccine nearly 2.5 times higher for South African than European countries⁵. It is morally unjust for richer nations to be vaccinating one person every second whilst countries in the global South are unlikely to receive a vaccine until 2023⁶. - Currently, at UEA, multiple ventures are being persuaded with regards to coronavirus health technologies⁷. Professor Fraser is developing an antibody test. Professor Hunter is researching into creating more rapid recovery from the pandemic for use in future threats. Dr Rushworth is producing more specific coronavirus testing. Dr O'Grady spearheads a portable test kit initiative. - The accumulation of these projects provides great hope for the community but to establish such ground-breaking research and initiatives without ensuring equitable access would be unjust to the researchers and global population alike. - Back in December the University of Edinburgh published their 'Essential Medicines Position Statement' in response to these clear inequalities in health technologies. They committed to goals that "improve global equitable access [...], promote further development [and] improve the transparency of health technology transfer"⁸. 	
Council Believes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We believe in equal medicine for all. - We believe that it is completely unacceptable that health inequalities have only been amplified by the pandemic. - We therefore believe that not least because UEA is a highly ranking UK university priding themselves on sustainable development, that UEA has a responsibility to do everything in their power to support equal access to medicines and there are several ways in which they can do this . 	

- **We believe** they should provide full transparency regarding ongoing COVID-19 research at the university.
- **We believe** they should publicly to promote open access to COVID-19 health technologies.
- **We believe** they should promote socially responsible licensing and transparency around licensing of intellectual property.

Council Resolves

1) To work with UEA to pledge publicly to provide full transparency regarding ongoing research into COVID-19.

To meet this request, we ask UEA to make public:

- a) Information regarding funding for all COVID-19 technologies developed by UEA. Including any access and affordability conditions attached to that funding.
- b) The results, including negative results, of any ongoing research at UEA related to COVID-19 as soon as they are available to encourage greater and more rapid research collaboration.

2) UEA to pledge publicly to act to promote open access to COVID-19 health technologies. To meet this request, we ask that UEA:

- a) grants non-exclusive, royalty-free licenses for all COVID-19-relevant intellectual property.
- b) Makes a statement to that effect on the UEA website followed with an official press release.
- c) Joins other institutions and organisations across the world in adopting the [Open COVID Pledge \(https://opencovidpledge.org\)](https://opencovidpledge.org).

3) UEA to pledge publicly to promote socially responsible licensing and transparency around licensing of intellectual property.

To meet this request, we ask that UEA make public:

- a) To which organisations UEA licenses COVID-19 related IP to.
- b) The mechanisms attached to the licensing agreement which encourage transparency and affordable access.

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/18/wildly-unfair-un-says-130-countries-have-not-received-a-single-covid-vaccine-dose>
2. <https://time.com/5791661/who-coronavirus-pandemic-declaration/>
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-51235105>

4. <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/rich-developing-nations-wrangle-over-covid-19-vaccine-patents>
5. <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/2021/feb/11/astrazeneca-must-justify-unequal-vaccine-pricing-after-bumper-profits>
6. https://peoplesvaccine.org/take-action/?fbclid=IwAR0FxqqvYOi_b_Plt5zNqnKx4B458iM-1QocwQQcBi9Qpv8RVtenW46x5tw#join_the_action
7. <https://www.uea.ac.uk/web/about/giving-to-uea/covid-19-appeal/research>
8. https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/essential_medicines_sep2020.pdf