

## The Complutense University of Madrid sets up a network of laboratories to help diagnose COVID-19

- The School of Veterinary Medicine - including its Visavet Center - and the School of Biological Sciences are ready to carry out analysis of samples for the detection of SARS-CoV2.
- Over 6,000 people have volunteered to participate in this initiative in which the Complutense puts its knowledge, infrastructure, experience and research capacity at the service of society, in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, and to contribute to the capacity of the health system.

Madrid, March 25, 2020.- The Complutense University of Madrid has set up a network of laboratories to help diagnose COVID-19. The School of Veterinary Medicine, including its Visavet Center, and the School of Biological Sciences have begun to analyse samples for the detection of SARS-CoV-2. [SALUVET Innova](#), [Antimicrobial Resistance Unit](#) and the [Molecular Basis of Adaptation](#) laboratories have as well joined.

The UCM has thus created a network of laboratories with the aim of helping the diagnosis of COVID-19 in this epidemic crisis, and in which specialists in health, infectious diseases and molecular biology from different research groups and UCM centres provide PCR equipment and staff.

This initiative, started by researcher José Manuel Bautista, Professor of Molecular Biology at the Complutense University, involves, in addition to the research groups of the Schools of Biological and Veterinary Sciences, those of Medicine, Optics, SALUVET Innova, and the CAI of Biological Techniques, from CIEMAT, thus joining scientific resources in the detection of the coronavirus under the tutelage and support of the Carlos III Health Institute.

All these UCM groups of researchers and scientists have the capacity and the appropriate equipment to detect RNA molecules, such as are present in this virus. For example, at the School of Biology, where the Genomics Unit is located, whose head is Professor Javier Arroyo, from the School of Pharmacy, there is genetic analysis equipment, which can detect the presence and quantity of virus. At the School of Veterinary there is a very important biosecurity unit, which in principle will be placed at VISAVET, where specialized equipment is placed and where there are professionals ready to undertake the work.

Above 6,000 people have volunteered to collaborate in this project, which is being coordinated by Professors Jesús Plá, from the School of Pharmacy, and Celia Sánchez Ramos, from the School of Optics and Optometry. The volunteer registration period ended on Friday, March 20,

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and selection is now underway in order to choose those who have sufficient technical training and are engaged under UCM employment contracts. In addition, other criteria must be taken into account, such as, for example, **candidates not having under their care anybody belonging to any risk group.**

**VISAVET will be the sample reception point at the Complutense University of Madrid**, where the phase of the analysis procedure will be carried out in its biological containment facilities. The samples to be analysed will reach the Centre only through the channels enabled by the health authorities.

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