NEW FUTURELEARN COURSE ON DIAGNOSTICS AND TESTING FOR COVID-19
FROM FIND, ASLM AND LSHTM

- New course on COVID-19 diagnostics and testing will go live on 20 April 2020
- The course is designed for professionals involved in the diagnosis and testing of COVID-19, with a focus on low- and middle-income settings

Geneva, Switzerland; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia & London, United Kingdom – 16 April 2020 – The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), a global non-profit organization driving innovation in the development and delivery of diagnostics to combat major diseases affecting the world’s poorest populations, has developed a course on COVID-19 Diagnostics and Testing in partnership with the African Society of Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). The course begins on Monday 20 April 2020 and is available to join now on leading social learning platform, FutureLearn.com.

With diagnostics emerging as one of the most pressing issues in the COVID-19 crisis, the 3-week course will cover: the role of diagnostics in the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, current recommendations on use of COVID-19 diagnostics and testing strategies, how countries are establishing and scaling up COVID-19 testing, and key considerations for safety, quality and impact of diagnostic services. As with all short courses on the FutureLearn platform, learners can participate and complete the course at their own pace to fit with the demands of busy schedules.

The course is designed for professionals involved in the testing and diagnosis of COVID-19, with a focus on low- and middle-income settings. This may include Ministry of Health officials, laboratory managers, laboratory technologists and technicians, clinicians, programme managers and implementing partners. On the course learners will be able to engage with an impressive list of technical experts who will be serving as mentors on the course as well as an educator representing each organization.

Lead educator for the course, Dr Cassandra Kelly-Cirino, Director of Emerging Threats at FIND, said: “The COVID-19 pandemic throws up many questions. What tests should be used? What strategies can be used to rapidly scale up testing capacity? What can we learn from other countries who have already scaled testing capacity? This course will help answer these questions and share experiences of COVID-19 diagnostics and testing with peers.”

Course educator, Dr Collins Otieno Odhiambo, Project Lead at ASLM said: “This MOOC resonates well with ASLM’s Laboratory Systems strengthening Community of Practice project which aims to foster knowledge exchange and co-creation. It provides the opportunity for joint learning, and understanding of COVID-19 diagnostics among professionals, country teams and global experts.”

Course educator, Dr Debi Boeras, Director of the International Diagnostics Centre, USA at LSHTM said: "This pandemic is fast moving and has really brought the need for testing to the forefront. Our course aims to develop a community of learners and experts who will hopefully walk away with greater
knowledge of the current testing scenario. We want this shared learning platform to be useful to all those who are at the frontlines of COVID-19 testing."

Helen Fuller, Global Healthcare Lead at FutureLearn, said: "We increasingly recognize the importance of robust testing for COVID-19 to help each country better understand the challenge it’s facing. At FutureLearn, we’re proud to be a part of such an important collaboration between leading organizations in the diagnostic space. We continue to work closely with our partners to share their expertise at scale, and provide healthcare professionals across the world with the necessary information they need to navigate these unprecedented times."

The first run of the course will be available online for 5 weeks. Participants can enrol at www.futurelearn.com/courses/covid-19-diagnostics-and-testing.

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About FIND
FIND is a global non-profit organization that drives innovation in the development and delivery of diagnostics to combat major diseases affecting the world’s poorest populations. Our work bridges R&D to access, overcoming scientific barriers to technology development; generating evidence for regulators and policy-makers; addressing market failures; and enabling accelerated uptake and access to diagnostics in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Since 2003, we have been instrumental in the development of 24 new diagnostic tools used in 150 LMICs. Over 50 million FIND-supported products have been provided to our target markets since the start of 2015. A WHO Collaborating Centre, we work with more than 200 academic, industry, governmental, and civil society partners worldwide, on over 70 active projects that cross six priority disease areas. FIND is committed to a future in which diagnostics underpin treatment decisions and provide the foundation for disease surveillance, control and prevention. For more information, please visit www.finddx.org

About ASLM
The African Society for Laboratory Medicine is an independent, non-profit organization working to improve healthcare in Africa by enhancing professional laboratory practice, science and networks. ASLM is the first pan-African society for laboratory professionals, endorsed by the African Union and supported by multiple African Ministers of Health through its Ministerial Call for Action.

About FutureLearn
Here at FutureLearn, our purpose is to transform access to education. We do that by partnering with over a quarter of the world’s top universities to support over 11 million learners across the globe to develop skills and achieve their personal and professional goals. We’re a leading social learning platform founded in December 2012 by The Open University and are now jointly owned by The Open University in the UK and The SEEK Group. We use design, technology and partnerships to create enjoyable, credible and flexible short online courses and microcredentials, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. In addition to top universities, we also partner with leading organisations such as Accenture, the British Council, CIPD, Raspberry Pi and Health Education England (HEE), as well as being involved in government-backed initiatives to address skills gaps such as The Institute of Coding and the National Centre for Computing Education.

About the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is a world leader in research and postgraduate education in public and global health. Its mission is to improve health and health equity worldwide.

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