

TO  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,  
DETERMINED BY ORDER NO. R-2303/03.07.2024  
OF THE VICE RECTOR OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES  
OF MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLOVDIV

## REVIEW

by Professor Slavi Dimitrov Delchev, MD, PhD  
from the Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology  
of Medical University - Plovdiv  
elected member of the Scientific jury

**Regarding:** Conducting a procedure for the selection of a "Professor" in the area of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine, announced in SG no. 35/19.04.2024 for the needs of the Department of "General and clinical pathology", in the scientific specialty "Pathology and cytopathology", for the teaching of Bulgarian and English.

### I. General description of the submitted materials for the competition.

For participation in the announced competition for the academic position of 'Professor' at the MU - Plovdiv in the area of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine, only one candidate has submitted documents: Associate Professor Elena Galabova Poryazova-Markova, MD, PhD from the Department of "General and Clinical Pathology" of the MF of the MU - Plovdiv.

The set of paper and electronic materials presented by Associate Professor Elena Poryazova is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the MU - Plovdiv, and includes the following documents:

1. Application to the Rector for participation in the competition
2. Professional curriculum vitae (EU model)
3. Copy of master's degree diploma
4. Copy of diploma for ESD "Doctor"
5. Copy of the contract for the position of "Associate Professor"
6. Certificate of internship in the relevant specialty and reference to the academic positions held so far
7. Academic report on the academic workload certified by the Head of the "Educational Activities" department for the last 3 academic years
8. Copy of last attestation sheet
9. Author's abstract of a dissertation work for ESD "Doctor"
10. Habilitation work – monograph
11. List of publications in scientific publications, referenced and indexed only in Scopus and/or Web of Science.

12. List of publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes
13. Chapters of collective monographs and collective volumes
14. List of citations and/or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed only in Scopus and/or Web of Science with evidentiary material from databases.
15. Copy of a diploma for a specialty (notarized)
16. Document/s certifying participation in a national scientific or educational project (certificate from the financing institution or copy of contract, etc.)
17. Document(s) certifying participation(s) in an international scientific or educational project (certificate from the funding institution or copy of contract)
18. Published university textbooks
19. Published university teaching aids
20. Documents certifying training of interns, specialists and doctoral students, issued by a relevant department of the higher school/scientific organization (orders, contracts, references).
21. Reference to the original scientific contributions with evidentiary material.
22. Reference-self-assessment according to a sample for the implementation of the specific scientometrics requirements in the main units of MU-Plovdiv.
23. Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents, according to the model.
24. Copies of scientific publications in full text after the acquisition of academic position "Associate Professor".
25. Summaries of the presented publications in Bulgarian and English.
26. Current reference for the Hirsch Index (h index) for the scientific direction of the competition
27. Other documents certifying the indicators specified in Art. 120, (33) of the Regulations for occupying the academic position "Professor" at MU-Plovdiv:
  1. Related to educational activity:
  2. Related to scientific research activity:
  3. Related to administrative activity in higher schools and in national ones and international organizations.
28. Completed card for NACID
29. Language certificate

The materials provided to me were of high quality of the copies recorded on electronic media.

The candidate Associate Professor Elena Poryazova has submitted a total of 45 scientific works, 1 monograph, 6 book chapter, 3 textbooks in English, 1 pathology manual in English and 3 study aids. The distribution of scientific works by relevant headings, in the country and abroad, is described below. Documents (in the form of official notes) for participation in participation in projects, committees and scientific juries are also presented.

The documents are comprehensive, reliable and correctly presented, without any comments on my part.

## II. Brief biographical data of the candidate

Associate Professor Elena Poryazova graduated from Medical University - Plovdiv in 1992. In 1993, she started working as an assistant, and then grew professionally to senior and, accordingly, chief assistant in the Department of General and Clinical Pathology of the Medical University - Plovdiv. She acquired a specialty in "Pathology and cytopathology" in 2000, and in 2005 - a specialty in "Health Management" at the European College of Economics and Management. In 2010, after the defense of a dissertation, she acquired the ESD "Doctor". Since 2014, she has been elected

as an "Associate Professor" at the Department of General and Clinical Pathology at the MF of the MU - Plovdiv. From 2024, she holds the position of Deputy Dean for Project Activities and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Finance of the MU - Plovdiv. Assoc. Prof. Poryazova also has extensive experience in medical and diagnostic work: since 1993 - worked as a pathologist, specialist and resident in the Department of Clinical Pathology, UMBAL "St. George" EAD, Plovdiv, and in 2011 she was appointed for the Head of the Department of Clinical Pathology at UMBAL "Pulmed" EAD, Plovdiv.

### III. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

#### *Assessment of educational and pedagogical activity*

Associate Professor Elena Poryazova actively participates in the teaching activities for the "Master" and "Bachelor" degrees of MF, FDM, FF and for the ESD "Doctor" as a supervisor of doctoral students. The total number of lecture and seminar hours of the applicant for the last three academic years exceeds the required annual minimum. Assoc. Prof. Poryazova led lectures and exercises (a total of 409 hours for 20/21, 498 hours for 21/22 and 421 hours for 22/23 academic years). She also participates in training students under the Erasmus+ Program.

The candidate participated in the publication of 5 textbooks and 10 study aids in Bulgarian and English; there are 2 successfully defended doctoral students and 1 enrolled; she has 31 years of teaching experience; she is the head of 3 doctoral projects, a participant in 1 international Erasmus project and in 2 PSNIIR projects of MU - Plovdiv. Assoc. Prof. E. Poryazova is a member of the Bulgarian and European societies of pathology, she was the chairman and member of scientific juries. He participates in organizing and conducting colloquiums of medical specialists and is a member of the state examination commission.

#### *Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied activity*

Associate Professor Poryazova has submitted a monograph that meets the content and volume requirements. Contributions to 6 chapters of a collective monograph are also presented.

The candidate has a high publication activity in specialized journals. Among those in which most of her articles have been published, renowned publications with an impact factor such as: *Cureus Journal of medical science*, *Journal of Environmental Protection and Ecology*, *Comptes Rendus de L'Academie Bulgare des Sciences*, *Journal of IMAB*, *EC Paediatrics* and others.

Publications can be classified by type: articles – 45 items; by importance: publications in journals with an impact factor - 8 issues; by place of publication: a) articles in refereed international journals (*Scopus* and *Web of Science*) – 20 issues; b) according to the language in which they were written: in English – 31 issues, in Bulgarian – 14 (in Bulgarian are the monograph and book chap-

ters); c) by number of co-authors: independent – 1 number; with one co-author – 6 issues; with two co-authors – 4 issues; with three or more co-authors – 36 issues; reports in proceedings of national and international scientific conferences - 36 issues.

The reference in the Scopus database shows that the candidate's H-index is 5, with a required minimum level of 2. This is an internationally recognized objective criterion that is indicative of the quality of her scientific works.

From the reference submitted for the competition, the candidate's total IF of publications is 9.54 and IF of citations is 105.259, which are also an objective indicator of the high quality of her scientific output.

Candidate Associate Professor Poryazova is the head of 3 projects and co-author in 3 projects in the last ten years. One of the projects is international, two are under PSNIIR. The listed activities of the candidate in projects of different scale and scientific direction show her ability to organize and lead research activities. Her work as a leader of three scientific projects and as a team member of another 3 projects is proof that she possesses the necessary qualities for successful coordination and team management.

Indicators	Minimum requirements of MU - Plovdiv	Assoc. Professor E. Poryazova
A) Indicator 1, Dissertation work for the award of ESD "Doctor".	50 pts.	50 pts.
B) Indicator 4. Habilitation work	100 pts.	100 pts.
C) Indicator 7. Scientific publication in publications that are referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus), Indicator 8. Chapter of a book	250 pts.	513.34 pts.
D) Indicator 10. Citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information	300 pts.	1080 pts.
E) Indicators from 12 to 20	140 pts.	405 pts.
F) Academic workload and academic position	400 pts.	1817 pts.
<b>Total points</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>3965.34</b>

It is evident from the attached table that the scientific production of the candidate fully covers and exceeds all the indicators of the minimum requirements of the Medical University - Plovdiv for occupying the academic position "Professor".

*Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied) and citations*

The contributions of Associate Professor E. Poryazova are in the following main areas:

## 1. Contributions of a theoretical nature.

Epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT) in ovarian serous tumors - benign and borderline tumors, carcinomas and their metastases - was investigated in relation to tumor progression. This is the first study for Bulgaria regarding the relationship between marker p53 and EMP in ovarian serous tumors. The association of the proliferative index with p53 expression in high-grade ovarian serous tumors was investigated.

A positive EMP status (with reduced E-cadherin expression) was also found to be a feature of ovarian carcinomas and metastases, but not of benign serous ovarian tumors. E-cadherin expression may be useful in elucidating the pathogenesis of primary ovarian and tubal carcinomas.

New hypotheses on the development and differentiation of carcinosarcomas are presented. Different mechanisms and markers of EMF involved in the development of endometriosis and endometrial carcinomas and their morphological characteristics are reviewed.

For the first time, the association of the proliferative index (Ki67) with p53-expression in endometrial carcinomas and carcinosarcomas of the corpus luteum, as well as the dependence between the expression of other markers, was investigated.

## 2. Contributions of an applied nature.

In the field of medicine, the works are on the diagnostic search and application of a complex of modern morphological methods for the diagnosis of metastases from adenocarcinomas in the peritoneum; to establish an immunohistochemical profile in colon and ovarian carcinomas; morphological studies in the field of oncopathology, tumor and non-tumor gynecological pathology, endometrial pathology, mammary gland pathology; examination of tumors and cysts of the jaws and rare localizations of tumors of the CNS. Gastric carcinomas, tissue hypoxia and the mechanisms of tumor progression and metastasis of solid malignant tumors were studied. For clinical practice, the correct interpretation of the obtained results of the immunohistochemical examination is important, which makes it possible to search for the primary focus in metastases from poorly differentiated carcinomas. A large part of the publications is co-authored with clinicians, in which the participation of the specialist-pathologist ensures accuracy in the diagnostic verification of the results and their morphological interpretation.

The monographic work of Associate Professor E. Poryazova is an in-depth study of E-cadherin expression, metastasis and tumor progression. Current and complex biological mechanisms in the progression and metastasis of malignant tumors of the mammary gland, stomach, colon, ovary and uterus are examined from the point of view of the pathologist. Based on the immunohistochemical expression of E-cadherin, a parallel was made with clinical-morphological characteristics.

Research in this area is up-to-date and very valuable for specialists in the field of gynecological pathology and breast surgery.

In the field of educational activity: three textbooks in English have been issued for the needs of teaching English-speaking students - on general and clinical pathology, and one manual on histopathology in English.

*Significance of the contributions and reflection of the results in the works of other authors.*

The numerical indicators of the presented citations of the candidate's works at the time of the competition are 72 in Scopus and Web of Science, of which 39 citations are in IF journals. The noted citations are in the field of the scientific activity of Assoc. Prof. Poryazova, the quoting authors are mainly foreign; citations are outside the teams in which the candidate participates and are not used for other procedures.

The recognition of the candidate among the scientific circles at home and abroad based on the cited citations is indisputable.

#### IV. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution

The presented set of documents convincingly proves the personal contribution of Assoc. Prof. E. Poryazova both in the scientific and teaching activities of the department, also at the level of MU - Plovdiv, as well as among the international scientific community.

Her personal contribution to scientific research work is definite and is documented through the presentation of 4 scientific publications, of which she is the lead author, in 1 of them she is an independent author, in 16 publications she is the second author, and in 16 she is the last author.

#### V. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no objections to the scientific works and materials presented by the candidate. The field of scientific interests of Associate Prof. E. Poryazova is focused on the field of pathology, pathomorphology and diagnostics, which gives an excellent perspective for the further development and enrichment of scientific research.

#### VI. Personal impressions

Associate Professor E. Poryazova is a scientist and teacher with indisputable authority, both at the national level and abroad. Her teaching, clinical, scientific, administrative and public activities are highly appreciated and are an integral part of the life of Medical University - Plovdiv.

#### CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by the candidate, Associate Professor Elena Poryazova, **meet all the requirements** of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the

Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of MU - Plovdiv.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defence of the ESD "Doctor" and academic position "Associate Professor". The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, a representative part of which has been published in authoritative journals issued by international academic publishing houses. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to academic work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Elena Poryazova are unquestionable.

The results achieved by Associate Professor Elena Poryazova in the educational and research activities **fully correspond** to the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Biology, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the MU - Plovdiv for the application of the ZRASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my **positive assessment** and **to recommend** the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury **to support** her and to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine for the selection of Associate Professor Elena Poryazova, MD, PhD for the academic position of "Professor" at MU - Plovdiv in: area of higher education 7. Health care and sports, Professional direction 7.1. Medicine.

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Prepared the review: .....

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