

STATEMENT

Regarding the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor"
at Medical University - Plovdiv

I. Analysis of the candidate's career profile

Dr. Velichka Zaharieva Popova was born in 1971 in the town of Stamboliyski. In 1996, she graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University of Plovdiv. In 2009, she began working as a part-time assistant at the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine, and in 2011, she was appointed as an assistant professor. In 2018, she defended her dissertation on "Tissue Expression of TNF- α and RANKL in Patients with Inflammatory Joint Diseases and Acute Coronary Syndrome," earning the academic degree of Doctor (PhD). Since October 2019, she has held the academic position of Senior Assistant Professor.

As a rheumatologist, Dr. Popova has extensive clinical experience gained at several leading medical institutions. She worked at University Hospital Plovdiv (2003–2008), University Hospital St. Georgi AD (2008–2012), and since 2013, she has been practicing at University Hospital Kaspela Ltd. She holds two medical specialties: Internal Medicine (2005) and Rheumatology (2013).

Dr. Velichka Popova is a member of the Union of Scientists – Plovdiv, the Bulgarian Association for Musculoskeletal Ultrasound (BAMSU), the Bulgarian Medical Society for Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, and Other Rheumatic Diseases (BMDOO), and serves as a reviewer for Rheumatology International.

II. General description of the submitted materials

The candidate has submitted all the required documents and materials as per Article 108, Section IV of the Regulations for Academic Development at the Medical University of Plovdiv, including:

- Résumé
- Diploma for higher education with an appendix and notarized diplomas for acquired specialties
- Certified copy of the PhD diploma corresponding to the announced academic position
- Certificate of professional experience and an overview of academic positions held
- Academic report on the candidate's teaching workload over the past three years

- Copy of the latest evaluation form
- Abstract of the PhD dissertation
- Published monograph
- Publications in scientific journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science
- Non-indexed, peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals
- Citations and reviews of scientific publications indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science
- Certificate of participation in intra-university scientific projects
- University textbook
- Certificates of training for interns, residents, and doctoral students, issued by the respective university department or research institution
- Statement on scientific originality
- Sample-based self-assessment meeting the scientometric requirements of the core units of MU – Plovdiv
- Declaration of originality and authenticity of the documents
- Copies of publications
- Summaries of publications in Bulgarian and English
- Other documents, including certificates, memberships in scientific organizations, acquired qualifications, and conference participation
- Completed NACID (National Centre for Information and Documentation) form

III. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific work and overall academic development

The scientific activity of the candidate has made significant contributions both in the field of rheumatology and in other medical specialties, reflecting Dr. Velichka Popova's interdisciplinary approach and focus.

In the current competition, Dr. Velichka Popova, PhD, presents:

1. Scientific Articles:

- 14 peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus/Web of Science, 9 of which have an impact factor, and in 5 of them, she is the first author
- 32 publications in non-indexed, peer-reviewed journals, in 9 of which she is the first author

2. Monograph entitled "Practical Guidelines for Vascular Ultrasonography in Rheumatology," University Publishing House MU – Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-237-126-5, published in 2024

3. Dissertation entitled "Tissue Expression of TNF- α and RANKL in Patients with Inflammatory Joint Diseases and Acute Coronary Syndrome," which is the only study to date using immunohistochemical analysis of TNF- α and RANKL cytokine receptor expression in atherosclerotic plaques in patients with inflammatory joint diseases and acute coronary syndrome.

Her contributions include the identification of sTNF- α and sIL-6 as biomarkers for patients with acute coronary syndrome (ACS) and inflammatory joint diseases (IJD), as well as the determination of the prognostic significance of hsCRP, hscTnI, TNF- α , and IL-6 levels at the 48th hour and their correlation with hsCRP, hscTnI, and GRACE Score scale. This study is the first of its kind in Bulgaria.

Dr. Velichka Popova actively promotes the vascular ultrasonography method and its application in daily rheumatology practice. Her extensive experience in this field is reflected in her monograph "Practical Guidelines for Vascular Ultrasonography in Rheumatology," published in 2024 by the University Publishing House of MU – Plovdiv. The monograph is an independent scientific study, distinct from her dissertation. It compiles comprehensive clinical materials based on her long-standing expertise and provides a thorough analysis of the primary ultrasonographic techniques for vascular assessment and their application in rheumatology.

Her publication activity reflects her scientific and research interests spanning various internal medicine specialties.

IV. Citation impact of the candidate's work in national and international literature

For this competition, Dr. Popova presents 20 citations in journals indexed in Scopus/Web of Science. Her H-index in these databases is 4.

V. Comprehensive assessment of teaching and academic activities, including supervision of students, doctoral candidates, and residents

Dr. Velichka Popova, PhD, started working as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine in March 2011 and has been a Senior Assistant Professor since October 2019. Her teaching workload exceeds 1,100 hours per year. She teaches medical students in Bulgarian and residents in rheumatology.

She is a member of examining committees and participates in the organization of core rheumatology courses for residents. Additionally, she serves as a lecturer in CME (Continuing Medical Education) courses. Dr. Popova has participated in five intra-university projects in collaboration with researchers from various departments and universities.

Her contributions focus on promoting the benefits of vascular ultrasonographic assessment in rheumatology, expanding its indications for vasculitis, and emphasizing the need for cardiovascular risk assessment and the application of modern ultrasonographic methodologies in rheumatology.

VI. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks regarding the candidate. However, I recommend that she expand her scientific and research activities by not only actively participating in multidisciplinary teams but also engaging in multicenter projects and studies involving other university clinics in Bulgaria and abroad.

VII. General assessment of the candidate's compliance with the minimum national requirements

I consider that the candidate fully meets the requirements, mandatory conditions, and scientometric indicators as outlined in the Regulations for Academic Development at the Medical University of Plovdiv, specifically Article 2b, Paragraphs 2 and 3, in accordance with Article 2b, Paragraph 5 of ZRASRB, and the specific requirements for clinical departments at MU – Plovdiv.

Group indicators	Content	AD " Associate professor" (number of points)	Dr. V. Popova, PhD (number of points)
A	Indicator 1	50 pts	50 pts
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicators 3 and 4	100 pts	-
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200 pts	663.38 pts
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	100 pts	300 pts
F	Sum of indicators 13 to 22	60 pts	193.41 pts
G	Teaching activities and academic position	300 pts	1668.4 pts
Total		810 pts	2875.19 pts

VIII. Conclusion

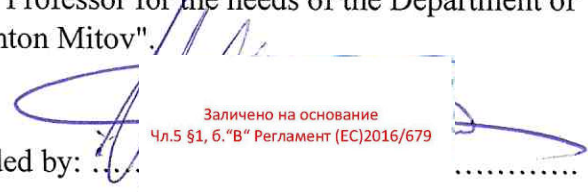
Based on the detailed analysis of the teaching, research, and development activities of Dr. Velichka Popova, PhD, I can confirm that she fully meets the mandatory and specific requirements, as well as the scientometric criteria for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1.

Medicine, specialty Rheumatology, in accordance with the regulations of the Medical University – Plovdiv and the Higher Education Act. I give a positive evaluation of the application and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury support her candidacy with a positive vote for the awarding of the academic position of Associate Professor for the needs of the Department of Propedeutics of Internal Medicine "Prof. Dr. Anton Mitov".

04.03.2025

Varna, Bulgaria

Statement provided by:



Заличено на основание
Чл.5 §1, б."В" Регламент (ЕС)2016/679

Associate Prof. Dr. Tsvetoslav Georgiev, PhD