

## STATEMENT

### REGARDING THE COMPETITION FOR THE ACADEMIC POSITION "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" AT MU-PLOVDIV

#### **I. Analysis of the candidate's career profile**

Dr. Velichka Zaharieva Popova was born in the town of Stamboliyski in 1971. She graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University of Plovdiv in 1996. Her academic professional development began in 2009, initially as a part-time assistant at the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine, and subsequently in 2011 as a full-time assistant. In 2018, she defended her dissertation titled "Tissue expression of TNF- $\alpha$  and RANKL in patients with inflammatory joint diseases and acute coronary syndrome" at the Medical University of Plovdiv, for which she obtained the scientific degree of "Doctor". Since October 2019, she has been promoted to a "Senior Assistant". Her clinical work as a rheumatologist was at the University Hospital "Plovdiv" in the period 2003-2008, after which at the University Hospital "St. George" from 2008 to 2012, and in the University Hospital "Kaspela" from 2013 to the present. Dr. Velichka Popova is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Society for Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, and Other Rheumatological Diseases, the Bulgarian Association for Musculoskeletal Ultrasound, and the Union of Scientists of Plovdiv. She serves as a reviewer for Rheumatology International.

#### **II. General description of the materials submitted for the competition**

The candidate has submitted all required documents and materials under Art. 108 of Section IV of the Regulations for Education of the Medical University of Plovdiv, including a resumé; a notarized higher education diploma with an appendix; a certified copy of the PhD degree in the scientific specialty of the announced academic position; a certificate of internship in the relevant specialty; a reference for the academic positions held; an academic reference for the candidate's academic workload for the last three years; a copy of the latest attestation sheet; an abstract of the PhD dissertation; a published habilitation monograph; publications in scientific journals indexed only in Scopus and/or Web of Science; non-refereed peer-reviewed publications in journals, citations and reviews of scientific publications indexed only in Scopus and/or Web of Science, notarized diplomas for acquired specialties, a certificate of participation in national or intra-university scientific projects; a textbook for a higher education institution, certificates for training of interns, postgraduates; and doctoral students from a relevant department of a higher education institution/scientific organization, a reference to scientific originality; sample referential self-assessment for the scientometric requirements of the main units of MU-Plovdiv; a declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents in accordance with the template; copies of publications; summaries of the submitted publications in Bulgarian and English; and other documents, such as qualification courses, certificates, memberships, and others; a completed NACID card.

### **III. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific works for overall academic development**

In this competition, Dr. Velichka Popova, MD, has submitted the following scientific works:

#### 1) Articles

- 14 refereed articles in Scopus and/or Web of Science, 9 of which have an impact factor, with 5 of them being authored by her.
- 32 publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review, with 9 of them being authored by her.

2) A monographic work titled "Practical guidelines for vascular ultrasonography in rheumatology", published by University Publishing House MU Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-237-126-5 in 2024.

3) Her dissertation work, titled "Tissue Expression of TNF- $\alpha$  and RANKL in Patients with Inflammatory Joint Diseases and Acute Coronary Syndrome". This research is the first to examine the expression of the cytokine receptors TNF- $\alpha$  and RANKL on atherosclerotic plaques in patients with inflammatory joint diseases (IJD) and acute coronary syndrome (ACS) using immunohistochemistry. The prognostic significance and role of sTNF- $\alpha$  and sIL-6 as biomarkers for patients with ACS and SCD are major focal points in her work. Dr. Velichka Popova also contributes to determining the relationship between expression, cytokine levels (TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-6 at the 48th hour) and the hsCRP, hscTnI and GRACE score scale with the vascular risk of patients with SCD and ACS. Dr. Velichka Popova, MD, presented the widespread use of vascular ultrasonography in the daily practice of rheumatologists. This activity is further explored in her monograph on the topic: "Practical Guidelines of Vascular Ultrasonography in Rheumatology", published by University Press MU Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-237-126-5 in 2024. In this work, she summarizes the collected material, the result of many years of experience, and analyzes the application of various sonographic methods in modern rheumatological practice. The publication activity of Dr. Velichka Popova is entirely guided by her interdisciplinary scientific approach.

### **IV. Citations of the candidate's publications in the national and foreign literature (publication image)**

For her candidacy, the candidate has submitted 20 citations in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science; has an H-index of 4.

### **V. Comprehensive, qualitative assessment of the educational, methodological and teaching activities, including scientific supervision of students, doctoral students, and postgraduates**

Dr. Velichka Popova, MD, began working as an assistant at the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine in March 2011, and was promoted to chief assistant professor in October 2019. Her teaching workload exceeds 1150 hours per year. She teaches medical subjects in Bulgarian, trains students in rheumatology, and serves as a lecturer in postgraduate courses. Dr. Popova has collaborated on five intra-university projects with fellow researchers. Her research focuses on assessing vascular risk in patients with CVD, vascular ultrasonography, vascular wall assessment in vasculitis, discovering new markers and methods for vascular wall assessment, and creating new opportunities for their application in rheumatology.

## VI. Critical remarks and recommendations

There are no critical remarks or additional recommendations to make.

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

I believe that the candidate fully satisfies the requirements, mandatory conditions, and scientometric indicators described in the Regulations for Academic Development at the Medical University—Plovdiv: Art. 2b, paras. 2 and 3, respectively, the requirements under Art. 2b, para. 5 of the Law on Academic Development of the Medical University of Plovdiv, and the specific requirements for the Medical University of Plovdiv by field of study and for units with clinical activity.

Group indicators	Content	AD " Associate professor" (number of points)	Dr. V. Popova, (number of points)
A	Indicator 1	50p	50p
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicator 3 and 4	100p	-
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200p	663.38p
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	100p	300p
F	Sum of indicators 13 to 22	60p	193,41p
G	Teaching activities and academic position	300p	1668,4p
Total		810p	2875,19p

## VIII. Conclusion

I firmly believe that Dr. Velichka Zaharieva Popova, MD, fully satisfies the mandatory and specific conditions and scientometric criteria for obtaining the academic position of "Associate Professor." I recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury vote in favor of granting Dr. Velichka Zaharieva Popova, MD the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine "Prof. Dr. Anton Mitov."

Statement by:

Date:04.03.2025

Prof. Dr. Simeon Monov MD, PhD

Заличено на основание  
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