

To
The Chairperson of the Academic Committee,
appointed by Order № R – 3669 / 22.07.2025

According to your Protocol № 1 / dated 29.07.2025

I hereby submit the following: **Review**

for the competition for the academic position “**Professor**”
in the scientific specialty **Hygiene**, for teaching in both Bulgarian and English,
with a mandatory requirement for the candidates to hold a recognized specialty in
Nutrition and Dietetics,
announced for the needs of the Department of Hygiene, Medical University – Plovdiv,
in State Gazette № 41 from 20.05.2025

Reviewer: Prof. Emil Vlaykov Vodenicharov, MD, PhD

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The review has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and Section III / Section IV of its Implementing Regulations – Conditions and Procedure for Appointment to the Academic Position of “Professor.”

REVIEW

by

Prof. Emil Vlaykov Vodenicharov, MD, PhD

Medical University – Sofia, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Epidemiology and Hygiene
External Member of the Academic Jury for MU – Plovdiv,

REGARDING: The competition for occupying the academic position of *Professor* in the scientific specialty *Hygiene* at the Department of Hygiene, for teaching in both Bulgarian and English, with a mandatory requirement for the candidates to hold a specialty in *Nutrition and Dietetics*, as announced in State Gazette, issue 41 dated 20.05.2025.

This review has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the Rules for Academic Development at the Medical University – Plovdiv.

Only one candidate has submitted application documents and has been admitted to the competition: ASSOC. PROF. STANISLAVA NIKOLAEVA HARIZANOVA, MD, PHD
Vice Dean for Educational Activities and Head of the Department of Hygiene at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Plovdiv.

I. Analysis of the Candidate's Career Profile

Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova MD, PhD, is a graduate of the Medical University – Plovdiv, where she has built her entire academic and professional career within the Department of Hygiene. She began her professional path as an Assistant Professor in 2008, progressed through the position of Senior Assistant, and attained the academic rank of Associate Professor in 2018. In 2014, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation entitled “Burnout syndrome among employees working in correctional institutions”, thus earning the educational and scientific degree *Doctor* (PhD).

Her professional development has been marked by deliberate and consistent upskilling, reflected in her acquisition of three medical specialties: *Occupational Medicine* (2016), *General Hygiene* (2019), and *Nutrition and Dietetics* (2023).

Following her promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate has continued to enhance her professional qualifications by participating in a wide range of trainings, seminars, and certification programs. These have focused on expanding and updating her knowledge in key areas such as public health, archival management, biomedicine, and the protection of healthcare

workers – areas for which she has presented undisputed evidence of engagement and achievement.

Her strong professional competence and administrative involvement are evident in her positions as Head of the Department of Hygiene since 2020 and Vice Dean for Educational Activities at the Faculty of Public Health at MU–Plovdiv since 2022. She is a member of both the Faculty and Academic Councils, Head of the "Dietetics" master degree program, and an institutional representative in various committees and strategic bodies. Her active membership in numerous scientific and professional organizations – including the Bulgarian Medical Association, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, the European Public Health Association, the Bulgarian Association of Public Health, the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Public Health, and the Bulgarian Society of Nutrition and Dietetics – demonstrates her established scientific and public reputation.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova's high professional standing is further affirmed by her selection as an editorial board member of the renowned peer-reviewed journal *Journal of Health and Environmental Research*.

She is fluent in French, English, and Spanish, which she actively utilizes in her professional work and international academic communication.

II. General Overview of the Submitted Application Materials

The documents submitted by Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova, MD, PhD, are complete, well-structured, and properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Medical University – Plovdiv. They reflect not only her academic career and professional qualifications but also the consistent development of her scientific interests, pedagogical experience, and applied competencies. The documentation confirms full compliance with all national regulatory and institutional requirements for occupying the academic position of Professor in the scientific field of Hygiene.

III. Evaluation of the Candidate's Scientific Contributions to Overall Academic Development

1. General Overview of Scientific Output and Publication Activity

A total of 56 scientific works have been submitted in the current competition, none of which overlap with those presented in previous academic procedures. These works are distributed as follows:

- 1 doctoral dissertation (PhD)
- 1 habilitation thesis – monograph
- 1 book based on the defended doctoral dissertation
- 21 articles in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science, including 11 with an impact factor (total IF = 22.382)
- 24 publications in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals
- 3 textbooks on hygiene, one of which is in English
- 5 teaching manuals in hygiene, including one in English

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has submitted convincing evidence of her active scholarly engagement, demonstrated by her participation in 41 scientific forums, including 24 international and 17 national conferences, where she presented research papers.

The thematic diversity of the publications and conference presentations, as well as their focus on contemporary and practically relevant issues in the field of hygiene, reflect the sustained scientific and research activity of Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova.

2. Scientific Activity – Dissemination and Application of the Candidate's Scientific and Practical Achievements within the Academic Community

The research activity of Associate Professor Dr. Stanislava Harizanova demonstrates clearly defined scientific interests and consistent achievements, both within the thematic scope of the competition – Hygiene, and across a broad range of interdisciplinary areas related to contemporary medical education, occupational medicine, and public health policy. I fully accept the main thematic areas and contributions presented by the candidate, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Nutrition and Dietetics

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova's research in this area encompasses a wide range of issues – from examining the dietary habits and health status of medical students (both Bulgarian and international), to analyzing the relationships between eating patterns and body mass index (BMI). Special emphasis is placed on the effects of shift work on nutritional behavior and health risks among industrial workers. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on dietary behavior changes is also explored. Noteworthy scientific contributions in this domain include publications in the fields of nutrigenetics and nutrigenomics, addressing their role in the management of obesity and metabolic disorders. A particular focus is placed on personalized

nutrition as a preventive strategy, with concrete recommendations for clinical application and directions for future research.

2. Occupational Stress and Burnout

A significant portion of the candidate's scientific output is dedicated to the issues of stress and burnout syndrome in both professional and academic settings. Her studies examine the levels and manifestations of distress and academic burnout among international medical students, offering intervention proposals such as psycho-social support, resilience-building programs, and optimization of online education. She also develops specific strategies for coping with occupational stress among public health inspectors, nurses, and correctional officers, as well as the socio-psychological challenges faced by newly employed medical professionals. Her publications on digital stress among IT professionals explore the links between technological overload and mental health. Particularly valuable are her studies on general practitioners during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the validation for the Bulgarian population of the COVID-19 Peritraumatic Distress Index, a tool proven to be reliable and cross-culturally applicable.

3. Biological Hazards and Occupational Safety During the Pandemic

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harizanova conducts an in-depth analysis of biological exposure risks among workers at wastewater treatment facilities during pandemic conditions. The research emphasizes the importance of training, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and raising awareness as key factors in ensuring workplace safety.

4. Protection of Individuals With Mental Disorders

Several of her publications focus on the legal framework for the protection of workers with mental disorders in Bulgaria. The candidate offers concrete proposals for improving legislation, implementing monitoring mechanisms, and integrating mental health policies more effectively within occupational health and safety strategies.

5. Occupational Hazards in Handling Antineoplastic Agents

Her research identifies major occupational risks for pharmacists working with antineoplastic (cytotoxic) drugs. Preventive measures are proposed, including use of PPE, strict hygiene protocols, and specialized training for safe handling of cytotoxic substances.

6. Health Risks Related to Body Modifications

A detailed analysis is presented regarding health risks associated with tattoos, piercings, and permanent makeup. The research highlights the need for professional regulation, control over materials used, and strict adherence to hygiene standards in body modification practices.

7. Technologies and 3D Bioprinting

Her scientific contributions in this field explore the integration of 3D printing in pharmacy and medicine. The studies emphasize the potential for creating personalized drug delivery platforms and bio-tissues for both clinical application and experimental research.

8. Ethical and Social Aspects of Surrogacy

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova investigates public attitudes toward the legalization of surrogacy in Bulgaria. The results of her surveys inform recommendations addressed to legislative and institutional stakeholders, advocating for a balanced, ethical, and legally sound approach to regulation.

9. Innovative Approaches in Medical Education

The candidate has developed training programs aimed at enhancing student competencies in communication and psychological support, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These innovations place strong emphasis on developing emotional resilience, stress management, and preventive thinking as part of the educational process.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harizanova actively applies the results of her research through the development of the following:

- ✓ A burnout syndrome diagnostic software tool (based on V. Boyko), available as open-access: <https://mu-burnout.com>;
- ✓ The web platform "STOP COVID-19 STRESS", designed to assess and prevent psychological distress and metabolic risk among students: <https://stopcovidstress.mu-plovdiv.bg>;
- ✓ Original health promotion programs aimed at children and adolescents.

The submitted scientific works demonstrate a high level of originality and offer practically applicable conclusions. They are characterized by theoretical depth, methodological consistency, and a proven applied-scientific value with real significance for the development of hygiene science and educational practices in medical universities.

3. *Participation in and Leadership of Research Projects*

In support of her scientific activity, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova has submitted documents certifying her participation in two significant research projects. Within the framework of an internal university-funded project, she played a leading role as principal investigator. Additionally, in the context of an international scientific initiative, she is designated as project leader—a fact that attests to her high level of professional competence, scientific expertise, and organizational capabilities. These activities demonstrate that the

candidate not only develops original ideas aligned with national and international priorities, but also possesses the ability to structure and lead teams conducting complex research.

In parallel, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harizanova fulfills an important educational mission through her involvement as an academic mentor in student internship programs, implemented under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”.

4. *Scientific and Creative Achievements (Scientific Authority)*

The professionalism and strong academic reputation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova are affirmed by her active participation in numerous scientific and expert initiatives at both national and international levels. She has been appointed as chair or member of a total of 18 academic committees under the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), which clearly reflects the academic community’s trust in her objectivity, scientific competence, and professional ethics.

The candidate is also actively engaged in the organization of scientific forums, having served on three organizing and scientific committees, including as chair of one. This involvement demonstrates her leadership qualities and her contribution to the development of academic platforms for the exchange of scientific ideas and best practices.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has served as reviewer of three scientific monographs, one of which was published in English, as well as of numerous scientific articles in impact factor journals – further evidence of her international visibility and recognition in the academic field. In addition, she is the editor of a university textbook, contributing to the development and maintenance of high-quality educational materials.

In recognition of her scientific achievements, she has received two awards for “Best Presentation” in the “Public Health” section (2024), underscoring the significance of her research findings and her ability to communicate them effectively.

Within the internal scientific infrastructure of Medical University – Plovdiv, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova serves a second term as a member of the university’s project commission, responsible for the organization and management of institutionally funded research projects. Through this role, she contributes to the strategic development of scientific activities at the university.

Her expertise also extends beyond academia—she co-authored an expert opinion commissioned by the Mayor of the Municipality of Rodopi, assessing health risks associated

with radiation-emitting facilities. This further highlights her real-world impact and analytical approach to addressing issues of public concern.

5. Supervision of PhD Students

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova plays an active role in the training and development of young researchers, serving as the academic supervisor of three PhD students enrolled in the accredited doctoral program in Hygiene. Two of these doctoral candidates have successfully defended their dissertations, which is a clear indicator of her effective mentorship, ability to lead the research process, and commitment to nurturing a new generation of scholars in the field of hygiene.

IV. Evaluation of the Monograph Submitted for the Academic Position of “Professor” by the Candidate

The monograph by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova, titled “Academic Burnout among Medical Students – Assessment and Prevention Approaches”, is a significant scholarly work dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of academic exhaustion in one of the most demanding and vulnerable student groups – future physicians. The author combines a critical review of international scientific literature with original empirical research conducted among English-speaking international students at the Medical University – Plovdiv.

The work is well-structured and logically organized, distinguished by an extensive bibliography, precise methodology, validated assessment tools, and convincingly interpreted results. Of particular value is not only the scientific description of the symptoms and determinants of burnout, but also the proposed preventive model, which includes educational, psychosocial, and organizational approaches applicable within real university settings.

The monograph stands out with its original and contributory nature, reflects independent research activity, and skillfully integrates theoretical depth with practical orientation. It fully meets the criteria for a habilitation work in the field of medical education and contributes to the advancement of interdisciplinary aspects of hygiene science and mental health within academic environments.

V. Citation Impact of the Candidate’s Publications in National and International Scientific Literature (Scholarly Visibility and Reputation)

The significance, visibility, and scientific impact of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova's research are convincingly evidenced by the citations of her publications. According to Scopus data the h-index of Assoc. Prof. Harizanova is 4 (without self-citations). The presented citation list includes:

- ✓ 67 citations in scientific articles published in peer-reviewed and indexed journals within international databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, covering 13 of her scholarly works, including 4 peer reviews of articles in journals with an impact factor;
- ✓ 7 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, referring to 3 individual publications;
- ✓ 45 citations in non-indexed but peer-reviewed scientific journals, referring to 13 research articles.

These figures reflect a sustained scholarly presence of the candidate's work in the academic discourse and demonstrate not only quantitative but also qualitative influence in the fields of hygiene, public health, and interdisciplinary health sciences.

An additional noteworthy fact is that 56 foreign doctoral dissertations have cited the publications of Assoc. Prof. Harizanova as scholarly sources, 23 of which are indexed in global databases, although these citations are not formally scored. This represents a strong indicator of the international recognition of her work and its practical relevance for a broad range of young researchers and doctoral students from various countries.

With a considerable number of citations in prestigious scientific databases and growing international reach, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova undoubtedly affirms her scholarly identity and authority within the research community.

VI. Comprehensive, High-Quality Assessment of the Teaching, Methodological, and Supervisory Activity of the Candidate

The academic reference on the teaching workload of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova clearly demonstrates that her commitment to the educational process significantly exceeds the regulated requirements set by the official documents of the Medical University – Plovdiv. In the last two reporting years, she has delivered between 1110 and 1174 hours per year of in-class instruction (lectures and seminars only), along with 320 to 340 hours per year of extracurricular activity—figures that attest to a high degree of responsibility, academic dedication, and sustainable involvement in all forms of teaching.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova is actively involved in teaching students from various degree programs, including Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Physician Assistant, Health Care

Management, Public Health Inspector, and Pharmaceutical Business Management. Instruction is conducted in both Bulgarian and English, including clinical (pre-graduate) internships and within the framework of international academic exchange programs.

In the field of educational and methodological work, she has co-authored three university textbooks, one of which is in English, and five teaching manuals, including one in English intended for foreign students.

Within her teaching duties, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova performs a number of important academic functions, including:

- ✓ Academic supervisor of three PhD candidates, two of whom have successfully defended their dissertations;
- ✓ Mentor of two medical residents;
- ✓ Leader of a scientific student circle in Hygiene (in English), thus promoting extracurricular scientific and practical student activity;
- ✓ Course coordinator of pre-graduate internships in Hygiene for sixth-year students, ensuring practical, field-based instruction;
- ✓ Regular lecturer in the Erasmus+ program, with annual participation in English-language training abroad.

As a result of her intensive and high-quality academic activity, 12 scientific publications have been co-authored with students and PhD candidates, presented at scientific forums and published in reputable journals – clear evidence of effective academic mentorship and her dedication to the professional growth of young scholars.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova also takes part in a variety of high-responsibility academic committees, including:

- State examination boards for specialties such as Occupational Medicine and General Hygiene;
- Chair and member of committees for colloquiums involving residents in Nutrition and Dietetics, Occupational Medicine, General Hygiene, Community Hygiene, and Consultancy on Breastfeeding and Healthy and Dietary Nutrition;
- Chair of examination committees for the final state exams in the specialties of Medicine and Public Health Inspector.

In addition to the above, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova contributes to the development and periodic revision of the educational curricula taught in the Department of Hygiene, ensuring alignment with current scientific advances and the evolving practical requirements of the healthcare system.

The current competition has been announced to meet the needs of teaching in both Bulgarian and English. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova holds a **Cambridge Certificate**, certifying a high level of English language proficiency, which fully meets the linguistic requirements for the academic position. The competition also includes a **mandatory requirement for a recognized medical specialty in "Nutrition and Dietetics"**, which the candidate also possesses, thereby fully satisfying all criteria set out in the competition procedure.

IX. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the submitted materials and a comprehensive evaluation of the mandatory quantitative scientometric indicators and the additional qualitative criteria for scientific activity, teaching, reviewing, expert, and administrative contributions, I consider that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova **fully satisfies and significantly exceeds** the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its implementing regulations, and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Medical University – Plovdiv for holding the academic position of "Professor."

I give **my positive assessment** and **confidently recommend** to the members of the scientific jury that **Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Nikolaeva Harizanova MD, PhD**, be elected to the academic position of **Professor** in the scientific specialty: **Hygiene**, in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine, for the needs of the Department of Hygiene at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Plovdiv.

August 7, 2025

Sofia

Reviewer: 

Prof. Dr. E. Vodenicharov, PhD

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