

To
The Chairperson of the Scientific Jury,
appointed by Order No. R – 3669/22.07.2025

OPINION

by

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Regarding: competition for the academic position of *Professor* in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty *Hygiene*, announced for the needs of the Department of Hygiene at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Plovdiv, in State Gazette, issue 41/20.05.2025.

The opinion has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, the Rules for Academic Development of the Medical University of Plovdiv, Order No. R – 3669/22.07.2025 of the Vice-Rector for Scientific Research of the Medical University of Plovdiv for appointing a Scientific Jury, and following a meeting held (Protocol No. 1/29.07.2025).

One candidate is participating in the present competition – Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Nikolaeva Harizanova, MD, PhD.

I. Biographical data and career profile

Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova, MD, PhD, was born in 1979 in Plovdiv. She graduated with honors in Medicine in 2005 from the Medical University of Plovdiv. Since 2008, she has been professionally engaged in active teaching, research, and administrative work at the Department of Hygiene, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Plovdiv. Her academic development has progressed through the positions of Assistant Professor (2008), Senior Assistant Professor (2014), and Associate Professor (2018). In 2014, she obtained the educational and scientific degree *Doctor* (PhD) in the scientific specialty "Hygiene".

Over the years, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has continuously enhanced her professional qualifications. She holds three medical specialties – *Occupational Medicine* (2016), *General Hygiene* (2019), and *Nutrition and Dietetics* (2023).

Her strong commitment to administrative responsibilities is notable. She represents the Medical University of Plovdiv in matters related to: optimizing the procedures and requirements for acquiring medical specialties within the healthcare system; updating the State Educational Requirements for the specialty "Nursing"; and drafting the Strategy for the Development of

Professions in the field of "Healthcare" in the section concerning the profession "Physician Assistant."

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova is the Head of the Master's Program in *Dietetics*.

Given her high professional competence, she actively participates as chairperson or member in numerous scientific juries under the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

In both 2020 and 2024, she was unanimously elected Head of the Department of Hygiene. Since 2022, she has served as Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs of the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Plovdiv. In 2023, she was elected member of the Academic Council of the Medical University of Plovdiv. She has been a member of the Commission for the organization and conduct of intra-university competitions at MU-Plovdiv since its establishment.

She is an active member of national and international organizations, including the Bulgarian Medical Association, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Association of Public Health, the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Public Health, the Bulgarian Society of Nutrition and Dietetics, and the European Public Health Association.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova conducts annual teaching in English for Erasmus+ students. She is proficient in English, French, and Spanish.

II. General description of the submitted materials for the competition

The submitted documents are in compliance with the requirements of the relevant legal and sub-legal regulations and provide the full scope of necessary information for carrying out both quantitative and qualitative evaluation.

III. Evaluation of the scientific works for the overall academic development

✓ General characteristics of the submitted scientific works

The scientific output of Assoc. Prof. Harizanova after her habilitation as Associate Professor includes: one dissertation abstract for the PhD degree; one monograph; one published book based on the defended PhD dissertation; three published university textbooks, of which one is in English; five published university teaching aids, of which one is in English; and a total of 45 publications, including 21 articles indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science, and 24 articles in non-indexed but peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes. The publication lists are accurate, and the necessary supporting evidence has been provided.

There are 11 articles with Impact Factor in prestigious international journals, such as *Work, Healthcare, Cosmetics, Pharmacy, Journal of Functional Biomaterials, African Health Sciences, Journal of IMAB*, and others.

The research activity of Assoc. Prof. Harizanova, PhD, covers a wide range of topics, addressing relevant and significant issues in the field of hygiene and public health in the following main areas:

- Nutrition
- Occupational stress and burnout
- Risk management of biological agents and ensuring workers' safety in wastewater treatment plants during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Legal protection and challenges in safeguarding employees with mental health problems in Bulgaria
- Risk management related to exposure to antineoplastic agents among pharmacists
- Monitoring health risks associated with body modifications (tattoos, permanent make-up, and piercings)
- Application of 3D bioprinting in the pharmaceutical industry
- Legalization of surrogacy
- Application of innovative technologies in student education

✓ *Research activity*

The presented research demonstrates a high degree of topicality in its thematic directions, broad recognition in established scientific journals, and ensured visibility through the presentation of results at 41 national and international conferences and publications in prestigious journals. The scientific contributions reflect an in-depth, systematic, and interdisciplinary approach, with a clear focus on key areas of hygiene and public health. Noteworthy is the active involvement of students and doctoral candidates in the research process, which is essential for generating innovative scientific ideas and conducting empirical studies across a wide spectrum of topics.

✓ *Participation in and leadership of projects*

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has participated in three projects. She is the leader of the international project “*Étude et évaluation des états de prédiabète, syndrome métabolique et détresse psychologique induites par le stress chez des étudiants fragilisés par la situation de pandémie prolongée de COVID-19 et prévention des risques par une plateforme web «STOP COVID-19 STRESS»*”, funded under the call of the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie “AUF-COVID-19.2” – 2021. Thanks to the joint work of an interdisciplinary international team, an inclusive student community was created by consolidating students’ leisure activities as a way to achieve well-being, strengthen mental health, and prevent the psychological and socio-economic effects of the pandemic on student life.

She is also the principal investigator in the research project “Development and implementation of a web-based information system for prevention and diagnosis of burnout syndrome using V. Boyko’s methodology and conducting sectoral studies across the country.”

IV. Evaluation of the monograph

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova participates in the competition with a monograph entitled “*Academic Burnout among Medical Students: Assessment and Approaches to Prevention*”, which is distinguished by its topicality, solid scientific foundation, and social significance.

- The prevalence and degree of manifestation of academic burnout among international students studying medicine in English have been examined.
- The manifestations, factors, and consequences of academic burnout among foreign English-speaking medical students in Bulgaria have been studied.
- Interventions and policies aimed at improving students’ psychosocial adaptation and academic resilience have been proposed.
- The main sources of stress and distress among students have been identified, including academic requirements, personal safety and health, as well as social isolation caused by the measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.

- The psychological effects of distress have been established, including increased levels of anxiety and depression, as well as reduced concentration and motivation. These factors negatively affect students' academic performance, with difficulties observed in the acquisition of new knowledge and its application in practical work.
- Various coping strategies have been suggested, including improvements in online learning, provision of psychosocial support through counseling and support groups, as well as the organization of stress management and emotional resilience programs.
- Active engagement of universities has been recommended in providing psychosocial assistance and adapting the educational process to new realities, in order to minimize additional stress and ensure emotional support for students.

The monograph is written with academic maturity, maintains a high scientific standard, and contributes to the expansion of knowledge in the field of academic mental health. The conclusions are well-grounded, and the recommendations are practically oriented and applicable in a real university environment. I consider that the monograph fully meets the requirements for high-quality scientific work.

V. Impact (citations) of the candidate's publications in national and international literature (publication image)

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova provides:

- a list of 63 citations in scientific journals and 4 reviews of publications in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science;
- a list of 7 citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes;
- a list of 45 citations in non-indexed but peer-reviewed journals.

Although not included in the total number of points, I consider it a significant contribution that her articles have been cited in 56 international dissertations, 23 of which are indexed in global databases. This constitutes objective evidence of the recognition of Assoc. Prof. Harizanova as a scientific authority and researcher.

VI. Comprehensive qualitative evaluation of teaching, educational-methodological, and supervisory activity, including scientific supervision of students, doctoral candidates, and postgraduates

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has made a significant contribution to the training of students from all medical specialties at the Medical University of Plovdiv and the Medical College. She is a leading lecturer for students of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Physician Assistants, Public Health Inspectors, Healthcare Management, and Pharmaceutical Business Management. She has continuously participated in the updating and publication of textbooks, manuals, and workbooks with tasks and tests in support of students studying discipline Hygiene. She serves as course coordinator for the pre-graduate internship in Hygiene for sixth-year medical students, both in the Bulgarian and English-language programs.

She is chair of state examination boards for the specialties Medicine and Public Health Inspector. She also serves as chair and member of committees conducting colloquia with postgraduate trainees in the specialties General Hygiene, Nutrition and Dietetics, Occupational Medicine, Community Hygiene, and Consultant in Breastfeeding and Healthy and Dietary

Nutrition. Since 2018, she has been a member of examination boards for the state examination for acquiring medical specialties under Ordinance No. 1/2015, specifically Occupational Medicine and General Hygiene.

She supervises two postgraduate trainees and leads a Hygiene student club in English.

A particularly noteworthy aspect is her considerable teaching workload (lectures and practical classes only), amounting to a total of 2284 academic hours over the past two years.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova supervises three doctoral students, two of whom have successfully defended their dissertations.

Her overall teaching, research, and administrative activity and commitment are also reflected in the Attestation Report of the Attestation Commission of the Medical University of Plovdiv for the last five-year period (2018–2022), according to which she meets the criteria and has received the maximum “very good” evaluation.

VII. Critical remarks and recommendations

The documentation submitted for the competition is complete, accurate, and in full compliance with the procedural requirements.

VIII. Overall assessment of the candidate’s compliance with the mandatory conditions, quantitative criteria, and scientometric indicators according to the regulations for holding academic positions at the Medical University of Plovdiv

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova, PhD, fully meets the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of *Professor* in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules and Regulations for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions at the Medical University of Plovdiv. The analysis of the indicators demonstrates that Assoc. Prof. Harizanova significantly exceeds the requirements stipulated in the Regulations for Academic Development at the Medical University of Plovdiv for attaining the position of *Professor*. Comparative data are presented on the table.

Group of Indicators	Content	Requirements for the Academic Position <i>Professor</i> at MU–Plovdiv	Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova, MD, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50 points	50 points
B	Indicators 3 or 4	100 points monograph	100 points monograph
C	Sum of indicators 6 to 8	300 points 20 full-text articles 15 refereed articles in <i>Scopus</i> and/or <i>WoS</i> – of which 8 with IF	593.7 points 45 full-text articles 21 refereed articles in <i>Scopus</i> and/or <i>WoS</i> 11 with IF (<i>Clarivate Analytics</i>)
D	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	400 points 25 citations in refereed journals in <i>Scopus</i> and/or <i>WoS</i>	1300 points

Group of Indicators	Content	Requirements for the Academic Position <i>Professor</i> at MU–Plovdiv	Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova, MD, PhD
		h-index ≥ 3	63 citations and 4 reviews of articles in <i>Scopus</i> and/or <i>WoS</i> h-index = 4
E	Sum of indicators 14 to 22	150 points 2 defended PhD students 1 project 1 textbook/teaching manual	392.4 points 2 defended PhD students 2 projects 3 textbooks 5 teaching manuals
F	Teaching activity	300 points Teaching load for the last 2 years (1 point per academic hour) 200 points Academic position “Associate Professor” (100 points per year)	2984 points Teaching load for the last 2 years (lectures and practical classes) – 2284 points Holding the academic position “Associate Professor” (7 years) – 700 points

Conclusion

Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova, PhD, is a researcher and lecturer of high authority, with excellent professional qualities and leadership skills. Her scientific works are original and provide significant theoretical and applied contributions. The comprehensive analysis of the materials submitted for the competition clearly demonstrates that she meets and substantially exceeds the specific requirements of the Regulations for Academic Development at the Medical University of Plovdiv, with a total of 5420.1 points.

Based on the thorough analysis of the numerous indicators, I confidently give my positive evaluation and recommend that Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Nikolaeva Harizanova, PhD, be elected to the academic position of *Professor* in the scientific specialty *Hygiene*, in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, for the needs of the Department of Hygiene, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Plovdiv.

Заличено на основание
Чл.5 §1, 6.“В” Регламент (ЕС)2016/679

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