

To the Chairman of the Scientific Jury,
determined by Order № P - 3669/ 22.07.2025
of the Deputy Rector of the Medical University Plovdiv
15A Vasil Aprilov Blvd, 4002 Plovdiv

Based on your Protocol № 1 from 29/07/2025

Attached I present: STATEMENT

on a competition for the academic position of "**PROFESSOR**"
in the scientific specialty HYGIENE (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)
announced for the needs of Medical University Plovdiv, Department of Hygiene
in State Gazette issue 41/20.05.2025

Reviewer: Professor Teodora Todorova Dimitrova, MD, PhD

Scientific specialty: Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)

Institution: Medical University Varna "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", Faculty of Public Health

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

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The statement has been compiled in accordance with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff (ADASRB) and Section III/Section IV of the RI-DASRB – Regulations and Conditions of Service of Academic position "Professor".

STATEMENT

by

Prof. Dr. Teodora Todorova Dimitrova, MD, PhD

Dean of the Faculty of Public Health,

Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”, Varna

Member of the Scientific Jury appointed by Order No. R-3669/22.07.2025

of Prof. Dr. Maria Tokmakova, MD – Vice-Rector for Research Activities, Medical University – Plovdiv

Subject: Competition for the academic position “**Professor**” in the field of higher education 7. “Healthcare and Sport,” professional field 7.1. “Medicine,” specialty “**Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)**”, announced in State Gazette No. 41/20.05.2025, for the needs of the Medical University – Plovdiv, Department of Hygiene.

By Order No. R-3669/22.07.2025 of the Rector of the Medical University – Plovdiv, I was appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury. According to Protocol No. 1/29.07.2025 from the first meeting of the Jury, I was assigned to prepare a statement regarding the application for the academic position of Professor in the specialty “Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)”. The sole candidate in the competition is Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova MD, PhD. The procedure of the competition has been properly conducted, and the candidate’s documentation complies with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Rules, as well as the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Plovdiv, including the criteria set forth therein for the academic position of Professor.

Biographical Data and Career Development: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova was born in 1979 in Plovdiv. She graduated in Medicine from the Medical University of Plovdiv in 2005. In 2008, she won a competition for the position of Assistant Professor at the Department of Hygiene, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Plovdiv.

She subsequently held the academic positions of Senior Assistant Professor and Associate Professor at the Department of Hygiene, MU-Plovdiv. In March 2020, she was appointed Head of the Department of Hygiene, and two years later, she was elected Vice-Dean for Educational Activities at the Faculty of Public Health.

Since 2016, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova has held a medical specialty in Occupational Medicine; in 2019 she acquired a second specialty in General Hygiene, and in 2023 – a third specialty in Nutrition and Dietetics.

In 2014, she was awarded the educational and scientific degree PhD, with a dissertation on the topic: “Burnout syndrome among employees working in correctional institutions.”

In the meantime, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova participated in numerous postgraduate training courses organized by the National Center of Public Health and Analyses and the Medical University – Plovdiv. Her interests are diverse, and the trainings she has completed have enabled her to apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills in her teaching, research, and clinical work at the Department of Hygiene and the Faculty of Public Health.

Expert Activity: Assoc. Prof. Harizanova demonstrates the application of her scientific work in inventions and intellectual property products through the following three developments:

1. Development of software for the prevention and diagnosis of burnout syndrome based on the methodology of V. Boyko, available online with free access at: <https://mu-burnout.com/>.
2. Creation of a web-based platform “STOP COVID-19 STRESS” for the investigation and assessment of stress-induced conditions such as prediabetes, metabolic syndrome, and

psychological distress in students during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as for risk prevention. <https://stopcovidstress.mu-plovdiv.bg>

3. Development and distribution of authorial health promotion programs targeted at risk groups within the population.

Membership in Professional and Scientific Organizations: Bulgarian Medical Association; Union of Scientists in Bulgaria; Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health (BSSPH); Bulgarian Association of Public Health; European Public Health Association (EUPHA); and the Bulgarian Society for Nutrition and Dietetics.

Assoc. Prof. Harizanova is also a member of the editorial board of the peer-reviewed scientific journal "Journal of Health and Environmental Research".

Assessment of Quantitative and Qualitative Scientific Indicators:

According to the submitted academic reference, the candidate has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) for holding the academic position of Professor (Table 1).

Table 1. Reference for Compliance with the Minimum National Requirements

| Group | Indicators | Professor (points) | Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Harizanova MD, PhD |
|-------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| A | Indicator 1 | 50 | 50 |
| B | Indicator 3 или 4 | 100 | 100 |
| Г | Total Score for Indicators 5 to 9 | 300 | 593,7 |
| Д | Total Score for Indicators 10 to 12 | 400 | 1300 |
| Е | Total Score for Indicators 13 to 22 | 150 | 392,4 |
| Ж | Teaching activity | 500 | 2984 |

In the competition for the academic position of Professor, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova participates with a habilitation thesis, a doctoral dissertation, one monograph based on the defended dissertation, contributions to three textbooks, four manuals, one workbook, and a total of 45 scientific publications (excluding those submitted for the position of Associate Professor).

The publications included to meet the requirements are as follows:

1. Full-text publications in scientific journals indexed in internationally recognized databases (Scopus and Web of Science) – 21 articles, published in: Journal of IMAB (3), Healthcare (3), General Medicine (2), Open Access Macedonian Journal of Medical Sciences (2), Work (1), Cosmetics (1), Journal of Functional Biomaterials (1), Pharmacy (1), Iranian Journal of Public Health (1), Nursing (1), Acta Medica Bulgarica (1), Folia Medica (1), Journal of Environmental Protection and Ecology (1), African Health Sciences (1), Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing (1).
2. Full-text publications in Bulgarian journals – 3 articles, published in: Management and Education (2), Health Policy and Management (1).
3. Full-text publications in Bulgarian conference proceedings – 10 articles, including: Proceedings of the Seventh Scientific Conference with International Participation "Public Health – A Look to the Future" (3), Proceedings of the conference "Social Aspects of Mental Health and

Mental Disorders” (2), Proceedings of the National Scientific and Technical Conference with International Participation "Ecology and Health” (2), Scientific Works of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv, Series G. Medicine, Pharmacy and Dental Medicine (3).

4. Full-text publications in foreign non-indexed journals – 6 articles, including:

MEDIS – International Journal of Medical Sciences and Research (1), KNOWLEDGE International Journal (2), Scientific Works of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv, Series G. Medicine, Pharmacy and Dental Medicine (2), Open Access Macedonian Journal of Medical Sciences / Management and Education (1).

5. Full-text publications in foreign conference proceedings – 5 articles, including:

Science and Youth Conference; Scientific Reports (1), EDULEARN22 Proceedings (2), Proceedings of ICERI2022 (2).

Among these peer-reviewed journal and conference publications, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova is first or last author in 25 publications (55.5%), including first or sole author in 4 articles (16%), second author in 5 articles (11.11%), and third or subsequent author in 15 articles (33.3%).

For the present competition, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has submitted evidence of active participation (oral or poster presentations) in 24 international and 17 national scientific forums.

The total number of citations submitted by the candidate for this competition is 77, of which: 63 citations in peer-reviewed journals indexed in international databases (Scopus and Web of Science) – 1,005 points; 45 citations in non-indexed journals – 225 points; 7 citations in monographs and collective volumes – 70 points.

Brief Overview of the Candidate’s Research Activity: The main scientific topics in Assoc. Prof. Harizanova’s publications are related to nutrition across different age and occupational groups, occupational medicine, and mental health risk management in the workplace, as well as the possibilities for preventive measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the report submitted with the competition documents, contributions are outlined in nine major scientific fields, with the first two being of particular significance:

I. Nutrition

(Peer-reviewed articles – 6, 9, 11, 14, 15; non-peer-reviewed articles – 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 19, 20)

For the first time in Bulgaria, the effect of shift work on body composition, dietary behavior, and health risk among individuals employed in the mechanical engineering sector has been studied using an adapted and validated lifestyle assessment questionnaire tailored to industrial settings. In addition, research has been conducted on the eating habits and health status of young adults (ages 20–25), including a systematic analysis of medical students in Plovdiv. A correlation was identified between unhealthy eating habits, lack of physical activity, and elevated Body Mass Index (BMI) among medical students, which potentially leads to metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular diseases. Further analysis revealed differences in the nutritional habits of Bulgarian and international students studying in Japan, highlighting the impact of cultural factors. Based on these findings, specific recommendations were proposed to university institutions aimed at increasing awareness of healthy nutrition and integrating programs to promote healthier dietary behaviors. In a separate study, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on changes in eating behavior. Additionally, genetic factors influencing the body’s responses to nutrients were analyzed, with an emphasis on personalized strategies for managing obesity. Evidence was presented to support that genetically and genomically informed approaches may enhance the effectiveness of obesity treatment compared to generalized dietary regimens, underscoring the potential of personalized diet planning. The perspectives for the future of nutrigenetics and nutrigenomics in obesity management were outlined, emphasizing the growing understanding of personalized nutrition and its role in preventing metabolic syndrome.

II. Occupational Stress and Burnout

(Author's monograph; intra-university project – 17.2; peer-reviewed articles – 8, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21; non-peer-reviewed articles – 1, 2, 3, 5, 14, 18, 22, 24)

Studies were conducted on the prevalence and contributing factors of academic burnout among international medical students, as well as the consequences of distress, including increased anxiety and depression, which negatively affect academic performance. Coping strategies were proposed, such as improving online education and providing psychosocial support.

Approaches were investigated to enhance resilience to stress and conflict among public health inspectors, with key stressors identified and strategies developed for managing occupational stress.

Burnout and job satisfaction were studied among general practitioners during the COVID-19 pandemic, and recommendations were made for reducing burnout and improving the work environment. A comparative analysis of burnout among nurses and prison officers identified specific factors and proposed tailored interventions.

Workplace satisfaction among academic staff was also explored, with findings confirming a link between dissatisfaction and high burnout levels. A questionnaire was validated for assessing distress during the pandemic. The factors and consequences of digital stress among IT professionals were identified, with strategies proposed for its mitigation and the role of employers emphasized.

Challenges faced by newly employed nurses in healthcare settings were examined, underscoring the importance of training and mentorship for successful adaptation. Strategies were suggested to optimize the adaptation process.

III. Risk Management of Biological Agents and Ensuring Worker Safety in Wastewater Treatment Facilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Peer-reviewed articles – 12)

IV. Legal Protection and Challenges in Safeguarding Employees with Mental Health Problems in Bulgaria

V. Risk Management Related to Exposure to Antineoplastic Agents among Pharmacists

(Non-peer-reviewed articles – 4)

VI. Monitoring of Health Risks Associated with Body Modifications (tattoos, permanent makeup, and piercings)

(Peer-reviewed articles – 1, 2)

VII. 3D Bioprinting

(Peer-reviewed articles – 5)

VIII. Legalization of Surrogate Motherhood

(Peer-reviewed articles – 10; non-peer-reviewed articles – 21, 23)

IX. Student Training and the Use of Innovative Technologies in Support of Medical Education

(International project – 18; non-peer-reviewed articles – 10, 11, 12, 13, 17)

Teaching Activity: Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has over 17 years of teaching experience. She teaches students from the programs Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Healthcare Management, and Public Health Inspection. Her total annual teaching workload in recent years has ranged from 304 to 442 hours of lectures and 496 to 732 hours of practical training, depending on the students' curricula. She delivers instruction across various academic disciplines, including: Hygiene and Ecology – for students in Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, and Physician Assistant programs; Modern Trends in Nutrition and Dietetics – as part of elective

education for international medical students; Hygiene and Ecology in the Healthcare Facility – for students in Healthcare Management; Organization and Ergonomics of Labor in Healthcare Institutions. In recent years, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has been a member of the State Examination Board for the acquisition of the medical specialty Occupational Medicine.

She is a co-author of three university textbooks, developed for students in Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, and other medical specialties. She is also actively involved in the training of medical interns during the Hygiene module of their pre-graduation internship in Hygiene, Epidemiology, Infectious Diseases, and Social Medicine.

Project Participation:

Since her appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor, Assoc. Prof. Harizanova has participated in a total of two national and university-funded research projects.

She serves as the principal investigator of an international project entitled: "Investigation and assessment of stress-induced conditions such as prediabetes, metabolic syndrome, and psychological distress among students in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and risk prevention through the development of a web-based platform 'STOP COVID-19 STRESS'."

She is also a member of several research projects at the Medical University of Plovdiv and has acted as lead researcher in Project No. NO 13/2018, titled: "Development and implementation of a web-based information system for the prevention and diagnosis of burnout syndrome based on the V. Boyko methodology and conducting sector-based studies across various economic fields in the country."

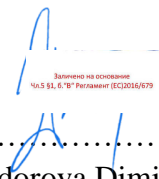
Supervision of Doctoral Students:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harizanova has served as doctoral advisor for two PhD students, both of whom successfully defended their dissertations at the Medical University of Plovdiv in the doctoral program: "Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)".

Conclusion: Based on the materials provided for the competition, I consider that the scientific output of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova and the submitted evidence comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Medical University of Plovdiv, including the criteria established therein for occupying the academic position of Professor.

Therefore, I give my *positive* evaluation and support the appointment of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stanislava Harizanova to the academic position of Professor in the scientific specialty "Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)", for the needs of the Department of Hygiene, Medical University – Plovdiv.

Varna
14 August 2025


Reviewer:
(Prof. Dr. Teodora Todorova Dimitrova, MD, PhD)