

STATEMENT

By Prof. Albena Vasileva Merdzhanova, DSc
Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy
Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna

Regarding: competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.2. Chemical Sciences, specialty “Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry” for the needs of the Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy at the Medical University – Varna, announced in State Gazette No. 6/16.01.2026.

1. Information about the competition

Pursuant to Order No. R-109-133/16.03.2026 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna and the decision of the Scientific Jury (Protocol No. 1/27.03.2026), I hereby present my opinion statement regarding the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.2. Chemical Sciences, specialty “Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry”.

The set of documents submitted by the admitted candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Anelia Tsvetanova Gerasimova-Peneva, PhD, fully complies with the legal requirements, criteria and indicators for occupying the respective academic position, in accordance with the provisions of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the Medical University – Varna concerning the position of Associate Professor and the conditions of the competition.

2. Brief biographical data and career development of the candidate

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Anelia Gerasimova-Peneva began her professional career in 2010 at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen as a chemist and subsequently as an Assistant Professor in Analytical Chemistry. Since 2012, she has been a member of the academic staff of the Department of Chemistry at the Medical University – Varna, where she has successively held the positions of Assistant Professor and later Chief Assistant Professor in “Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry”. In 2017, she defended her doctoral dissertation and obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the specialty “Bioorganic Chemistry, Chemistry of Natural and Physiologically Active Substances”. In 2022, she acquired the specialty “Theoretical Foundations of Medicinal Chemistry” within the healthcare system.

3. Evaluation of the candidate’s teaching activity

Chief Assistant Professor Anelia Gerasimova-Peneva has more than 14 years of professional experience in the specialty and demonstrates substantial and diverse teaching and educational-methodological activity. Her academic work includes delivering lectures and conducting seminar and laboratory classes in the discipline “Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry” for students

in Pharmacy, as well as lectures in the elective course “Environment and Health”. Her teaching profile also includes practical training in “General, Inorganic and Organic Chemistry” and “Analytical Chemistry” for students in Medicine, Dental Medicine, Medical Laboratory Assistant and Assistant Pharmacist programs in Bulgarian-language education.

With an average annual teaching workload of 558 hours, the candidate demonstrates strong commitment to the educational process within the Department of Chemistry and significantly exceeds the required teaching norm (360 hours) adopted by a decision of the Academic Council of the Medical University – Varna in 2011.

During the period 2018–2020, Chief Assistant Professor Gerasimova delivered lectures and conducted seminar and laboratory classes at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen in the disciplines “Physical Chemistry” Part I and II and “Colloid Chemistry” for students in “Medicinal Chemistry”, “Chemistry and Environmental Protection”, and “Biology and Chemistry”.

It should also be noted that Chief Assistant Professor Gerasimova participated as co-author in two textbooks: “Colloid Chemistry: Lectures, Problems and Laboratory Exercises”, 2025, published by the Medical University – Varna, and “Physical Chemistry: Lectures, Seminars, Problems and Laboratory Exercises”, 2020, published by STENO – Varna, intended for students in Pharmacy, Medicinal Chemistry, and Biology and Chemistry. She has also participated in the development of curricula, educational materials, examination tests, admission preparation manuals, and other teaching resources.

4. Evaluation of the candidate’s scientific research activity

4.1. Scientometric indicators and fulfillment of the minimum national requirements

For participation in the present competition, Chief Assistant Professor Anelia Gerasimova-Peneva has submitted an academic report demonstrating fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, accompanied by the necessary supporting documentation concerning her scientific research activity. The presented data, distributed according to the respective indicator groups, show the following:

Under *Indicator A* – doctoral dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” – the candidate fulfills the requirements with 50 points.

Under *Indicator B4* – habilitation work presented through scientific publications in journals indexed and abstracted in the international databases Web of Science and Scopus – 10 publications are included with a total of 156 points, exceeding the minimum required 100 points.

Under *Indicator G7* – scientific publications in journals indexed and abstracted in Web of Science and Scopus – 10 publications are presented with a total of 237 points.

Under *Indicator G10* – published patent application or utility model – 15 points have been reported. The total number of points under Indicators G5–G10 amounts to 252 points, substantially exceeding the required minimum of 200 points.

Under *Indicator D11* – citations in scientific publications indexed and abstracted in internationally recognized databases – according to the submitted report, the scientific works of Chief Assistant

Professor Gerasimova have been cited 65 times, corresponding to 130 points, with a required minimum of 50 points.

The comparison between the presented scientometric data and the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor demonstrates that the candidate formally fulfills all mandatory indicators (summarized in Table 1).

Table 1. Summary scientometric indicators of the candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor

Indicator Group	Minimum National Requirements	Data from the Academic Report
A	50	50
B4	100	156
G7-10	200	252
D	50	130
Total	400	588

The presented scientometric indicators demonstrate good fulfillment of the formal criteria for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor, while the qualitative evaluation of the scientific output should also be considered in the context of thematic coherence and the degree of individual scientific contribution.

In addition, the candidate has presented three publications in scientific journals that are not included in the fulfillment of the minimum scientometric requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor. According to the submitted report, the cumulative impact factor of the journals in which Chief Assistant Professor Gerasimova has publications is $IF = 48.260$. The presented studies correspond thematically to the scientific field of the competition; however, they are predominantly of an applied nature and develop, to a more limited extent, fundamental physicochemical aspects characteristic of the specialty "Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry".

Chief Assistant Professor Anelia Gerasimova-Peneva reports participation as researcher in 15 scientific and educational projects (institutional, national, and European-funded). Five of them are registered in the NACID database, while four are currently ongoing.

4.2. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific publications

The scientific research activity of Chief Assistant Professor Anelia Gerasimova-Peneva is characterized by good publication activity and the presence of citations in internationally indexed scientific journals. The presented scientometric indicators testify to the visibility and relevance of part of her research within the respective scientific field, as well as to the interest of the scientific community in the published results.

The candidate participates as co-author in a total of 37 scientific publications, of which 25 articles have been published in international journals indexed and abstracted in the Web of Science and

Scopus databases, distributed as follows: 9 publications in Q1 journals, 5 in Q2, 4 in Q3 and 7 in Q4 journals. The remaining 12 publications are in international and national journals indexed in other abstracting databases.

Chief Assistant Professor A. Gerasimova-Peneva has participated in 23 international and national scientific forums, where she presented scientific results in the form of oral presentations and posters. Her scientific output is characterized by an h-index in Scopus of 6 (respectively 5 when excluding self-citations of all authors), as well as an h-index of 5 in Web of Science.

At the same time, a significant increase in the candidate's publication activity during the last two to three years is noticeable, coinciding with the expansion of the thematic scope of the presented scientific studies.

The principal scientific contributions presented in the author's report may be grouped into three thematic areas:

1. *Biologically active compounds from extracts and essential oils – composition, properties, therapeutic potential and applications in pharmacy, cosmetics, and dietary supplements – 10 publications;*
2. *Application of microalgae extracts in the food industry and for pharmaceutical and cosmetic purposes – 8 publications;*
3. *Determination of phycotoxin content in Black Sea mussels from the Bulgarian Black Sea coast – 2 publications.*

The presented scientific publications are focused on the study and application of biologically active substances in the development of systems and formulations with potential applications in the food, pharmaceutical and nutraceutical fields.

The main research emphasis is placed on the evaluation of physicochemical characteristics, stability and functional properties of various natural raw materials, plant extracts, algae and essential oils, considered as possible components of food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical products. Part of the studies are directed toward investigating the applicability of natural biologically active substances in emulsion and encapsulation systems, as well as evaluating their stability and potential biological activity.

A significant part of the scientific studies falls within one of the major scientific priorities of the Medical University – Varna, namely "Nutrition and Quality of Life", through research related to functional foods, nutraceuticals and natural supplements. Another part of the publications is oriented toward exploring nature-based approaches with potential applications in pharmacy and cosmetics, including studies on the antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties of various plant extracts and essential oils.

I accept the scientific contributions presented in the author's report as corresponding to the candidate's research activity within the scope of the indicated thematic areas.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

The presented extended habilitation report demonstrates good applied orientation and the use of contemporary analytical approaches. At the same time, the scientific studies encompass a broad thematic spectrum – from emulsion and encapsulation systems to phytochemical and spectroscopic

analyses of plant extracts – which creates the impression of a weaker thematic and methodological interconnection between the individual publications. This, to a certain extent, makes it difficult to distinguish a clearly defined and consistently developed scientific profile in the field of Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry.

It should be noted that the candidate is first author in two publications and last author in three publications, while she has not yet participated as a corresponding author. This, to some extent, complicates the assessment of the degree of individual scientific contribution and scientific independence in part of the presented publications.

Based on the above remarks, I formulate the following *recommendations*:

- It is recommended that the candidate's future scientific research activity be directed toward clearer thematic and methodological integration of the investigated topics, with emphasis on the consistent development of an independent scientific thematic focus in the field of Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry.
- In order to more clearly distinguish the individual scientific contribution and scientific independence of the candidate, it is desirable that in future publications she assume a more active leading role, including as first and/or corresponding author.

The critical remarks and recommendations made above are constructive in nature and do not diminish the positive evaluation of the scientific activity of Chief Assistant Professor Gerasimova-Peneva, but rather reflect the need for clearer thematic focus and more distinct identification of the individual scientific contribution in her future research activity.

6. Conclusion

Based on the submitted documents and supporting materials, the quality of the scientific publications and their citation record, the scientific and scientific-applied contributions, as well as the long-standing active teaching activity of Chief Assistant Professor Gerasimova-Peneva, I consider that she meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Academic Staff Development Act, and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the Medical University – Varna under the announced competition, while fulfilling and exceeding the minimum requirements for acquiring the academic position of Associate Professor.

Therefore, I give a positive evaluation and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury elect Chief Assistant Professor Anelia Tsvetanova Gerasimova-Peneva, PhD, to occupy the academic position of Associate Professor in the specialty “Physical Chemistry with Colloid Chemistry” in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.2. Chemical Sciences.

07.05.2026
Varna

Chair of the Scientific Jury:
(Prof. Albena Merdzhanova, PhD)

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