

## STATEMENT OF OPINION

by

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Regarding:

Procedure for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor in the specialty Orthopaedics and Traumatology, Professional Field 7.1 Medicine, Area of Higher Education 7. Healthcare and Sports, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna, announced in State Gazette No. 102/28.11.2025, with candidate:

Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD

### 1. Basis for the preparation of the opinion

This statement has been prepared pursuant to a decision of the Scientific Jury and in accordance with the provisions of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the corresponding regulations of the Medical University – Varna. Its purpose is to provide an independent academic evaluation of the candidate’s scientific achievements, teaching activity, and professional development in the context of the procedure for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

### 2. Academic development and professional profile

Dr. Preslav Penev belongs to the actively advancing generation of academic orthopaedic surgeons whose professional development is characterized by consistency, clinical depth, and focused scientific orientation.

Following graduation from the Medical University – Varna, he established his clinical practice within high-volume surgical institutions, thereby developing a solid foundation for subsequent academic progression. The acquisition of both specialist qualification and a PhD degree in the field of ankle pathology reflects an early and clearly defined academic trajectory that has been systematically expanded over time.

The candidate successfully combines university teaching responsibilities with sustained clinical and operative activity, a balance that represents a key prerequisite for high-quality medical education. Participation in international fellowships and professional forums demonstrates a continuous commitment to integrating contemporary concepts and evidence-based approaches into both clinical practice and academic teaching.

### 3. Teaching and academic activity

The candidate's pedagogical work encompasses teaching undergraduate medical students in both Bulgarian and English-language programs, as well as participation in postgraduate education and hands-on training courses. Particular merit lies in his practice-oriented teaching methodology and the incorporation of contemporary clinical standards into the educational process.

His active engagement in national and international educational initiatives, including AO Trauma and specialized foot and ankle courses, confirms a sustained commitment to professional development and to the enhancement of the academic environment.

### 4. Scientific output and bibliometric indicators

The submitted scientific portfolio includes a monograph, a book based on the doctoral dissertation, an extended dissertation abstract, and publications in national and international peer-reviewed journals. A considerable proportion of these works are published in English, contributing to international visibility and broader dissemination of the candidate's research outcomes.

The presence of publications with leading authorship highlights an active and independent role in generating scientific concepts and translating them into clinically relevant research. The thematic coherence and practical applicability of the scientific output represent clear strengths of the candidature.

The presented bibliometric indicators fulfil the requirements of the national regulatory framework and the internal regulations of the Medical University – Varna for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

### 5. Scientific contributions

The candidate's scientific contributions are predominantly practice-oriented and may be summarized in several principal domains:

#### 5.1. Ankle and foot pathology

- › Development of diagnostic and therapeutic algorithms for lateral ankle instability;
- › Implementation of contemporary operative techniques for chondral lesions and traumatic injuries;
- › Application of weight-bearing computed tomography and advanced imaging approaches;
- › Optimization of surgical stabilization strategies for selected fracture patterns.

#### 5.2. Paediatric orthopaedics

- › Evaluation of modern treatment strategies for congenital deformities;
- › Analysis of multidisciplinary approaches and long-term follow-up concepts.

#### 5.3. Injection and minimally invasive techniques

- › Systematization and promotion of ultrasound-guided interventions;
- › Improvement of procedural precision leading to reduced complication rates.

#### 5.4. Additional research directions

- › Prevention of infectious complications;
- › Individualization of surgical decision-making;
- › Application of modern physical and rehabilitation modalities in orthopaedic practice.

Taken together, these contributions demonstrate a strong ability to integrate scientific inquiry with everyday clinical practice — a defining characteristic of successful academic surgeons.

#### 6. Overall assessment

The overall analysis of the candidate's academic profile demonstrates clear professional maturity, stable scientific productivity, and sustained institutional engagement. A consistent progression from clinical specialist to academically established university teacher with a recognizable research profile is evident.

The combination of clinical excellence, scientific activity, and teaching commitment corresponds fully to the profile expected for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor in contemporary university medicine.

#### 7. Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive evaluation of the submitted materials, the scientific achievements, the teaching activity, and the professional development of the candidate, I conclude that Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD not only fulfils but in several aspects exceeds the minimum criteria required for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

His scientific work demonstrates coherence, clinical relevance, and a clear commitment to the advancement of modern orthopaedic surgical concepts, while his academic engagement reflects a sustained contribution to the training of future physicians and specialists.

With full professional conviction, I provide a positive assessment of the candidate and recommend that the members of the Scientific Jury support the appointment of Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD to the academic position of Associate Professor in Orthopaedics and Traumatology. In my opinion, his academic development, scientific productivity, and clinical expertise constitute a strong and convincing foundation for the further advancement of both the Department and the academic tradition of the Medical University – Varna.

Sofia, 22 February 2026.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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