

REVIEW

by

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*external member of the Scientific Jury pursuant to Order No. R-109-68/28.01.2026
of the Rector of Medical University “Prof. Dr Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna*

Re: competition for the academic position of “Professor” in Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.3. Pharmacy, scientific specialty “Technology of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms and Biopharmaceutics”, announced in the State Gazette, issue 102/28.11.2025, for the needs of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmaceutical Technologies.

LEGAL BASIS AND COURSE OF THE PROCEDURE

Pursuant to Order No. R-109-68/28.01.2026 of the Rector of Medical University “Prof. Dr Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna, I was appointed as an external member of the Scientific Jury. Under Minutes No. 1 of the Jury’s first meeting, I was assigned to prepare the present review in the procedure for appointment to the academic position of “Professor” in the scientific specialty “Technology of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms and Biopharmaceutics”. The sole applicant in the competition is Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD. Having examined the submitted set of documents, I find that the competition procedure has been conducted in compliance with the applicable regulations and that the evidentiary materials correspond to the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University – Varna.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, is an established university lecturer in Professional Field 7.3. Pharmacy whose academic and professional career is marked by continuity, steady advancement, and consistent development of expertise. Between 1991 and 1996, she studied at the Faculty of Pharmacy of Medical University – Sofia, where she obtained the educational and qualification degree of Master in the regulated profession of Pharmacy. An important stage in her professional formation is associated with Medical University – Plovdiv, where in 2010–2012 she acquired the recognized specialty “Technology of Medicines with Biopharmaceutics”, and in 2012–2014 she was an independent doctoral student at the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in the scientific specialty “Technology of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms and Biopharmaceutics”. In 2014, she defended a dissertation entitled “Indomethacin Nanoparticles—Drug Delivery Systems for Ocular Application” and obtained the educational and scientific degree of Doctor. Her academic development progressed through the positions of Assistant Professor and Chief Assistant Professor at Medical University

-- Plovdiv, and since 2018 she has held the academic position of Associate Professor at the Department of Pharmaceutical Technologies, Faculty of Pharmacy, Medical University "Prof. Dr Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Her professional profile combines many years of practical work as a master pharmacist and pharmacy manager with sustained academic and organisational development, reflected in her service as Head of Educational Sector, Head of Department, and Vice-Dean for Educational Activities, Accreditation, and Quality. Her commitment to systematic professional advancement is further evidenced by a broad range of additional qualifications and specialized training, including Pedagogical Competence, Safety Assessment of Cosmetic Products, Design of Scientific Research and Statistical Analyses, Innovative Educational Technologies, as well as training in the protection and humane treatment of experimental animals. This profile is further enriched by a research mobility at Ovidius University of Constanța, Romania. Her biographical and professional profile is also complemented by a clearly developed expert and editorial activity, expressed through participation in scientific juries, preparation of reviews and opinions in procedures for the award of scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions, editorial work in specialized journals, invited lectures, and membership in national and international professional and expert organisations. Taken together, these data outline a candidate with sustained commitment to pharmaceutical science and higher education, a consistently developed professional profile, and clearly recognizable academic maturity.

TEACHING ACTIVITY

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Andonova, PhD, represents an important component of her academic profile. She has been consistently involved in teaching disciplines directly related to the scope of the competition and, at different stages of her academic development, has delivered courses in "Technology of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms", "Biopharmaceutics and Pharmacokinetics", and "Radiopharmacy" for students in Pharmacy, as well as "Technology of Medicines with Biopharmaceutics" for students in the Assistant Pharmacist programme. In addition, her teaching portfolio includes disciplines of an interdisciplinary and innovative character, such as "Technology of Cosmetic Product Manufacturing", "Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms and Innovations", and courses related to digital health, three-dimensional modelling and printing, and the application of nanotechnology and nanomedicine in contemporary pharmaceutical and biomedical education.

The submitted evidence shows that her teaching commitment is sustained and long-term, and that her contribution extends well beyond classroom instruction. She has participated actively in the development and revision of curricula, in quality-assurance activities, and in organisational formats aimed at modernising the educational process. Further weight is added by her published teaching materials and by her work with diploma students, trainees, and doctoral candidates, which speaks clearly to pedagogical continuity and scholarly mentorship. Taken as a whole, her teaching activity demonstrates a stable presence in the educational process and a consistent contribution to the development of teaching within the professional field.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

The research activity of Assoc. Prof. Andonova, PhD, outlines the profile of a productive and thematically coherent scholar in the field of pharmaceutical technologies and biopharmaceutics. For participation in the competition, the candidate presents 10 publications equivalent to a habilitation thesis under Indicator B4, amounting to 165.81 points, as well as 20 publications under Group G indicators, of which 17 fall under Indicator G7 and 3 under Indicator G8, with a total of 242.22 points against a required minimum of 200. The greater part of these works has been published in journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, while the remaining publications are reported under Indicator G8.

In substantive terms, the candidate's research develops significant lines of inquiry in contemporary pharmaceutical science, including the design and characterization of innovative drug-delivery systems, the formulation of biologically active substances of natural origin, the development of lipid-based and nanosized systems, as well as nasal and oromucosal delivery. The citation impact of these results is likewise notable: the candidate presents 30 citations in publications indexed in internationally recognized databases, which account for 450 points under Group D against a required minimum of 300. Under Group E, 252.33 points are reported, arising from scientific supervision, an acquired specialty, participation in and leadership of projects, teaching materials, and training of specialty trainees and doctoral candidates. The results of her research have been presented at a total of 55 scientific forums, 43 in Bulgaria and 12 abroad. These data outline a consistently developed research programme and a stable presence within the professional scientific community.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE CANDIDATE'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS, QUANTITATIVE CRITERIA, AND BIBLIOMETRIC INDICATORS UNDER THE ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACT IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND THE RULES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF AT MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – VARNA FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE ACADEMIC POSITION OF "PROFESSOR"

After analysing the submitted documents, the academic reference sheet, and the accompanying evidentiary materials, I find that Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, fully satisfies the mandatory requirements, quantitative criteria, and bibliometric indicators set out in the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University – Varna for appointment to the academic position of "Professor" in Professional Field 7.3. Pharmacy. The submitted data demonstrate not merely formal compliance with the regulatory requirements, but a substantial surplus over them in the principal indicator groups. According to the Rules, the minimum total required for Professional Field 7.3. Pharmacy is 750 points, and the candidates must also meet the requirement of $h\text{-index} \geq 5$ in Scopus or Web of Science.

Group of indicators	Minimum requirements for the academic position of "Professor" (points)	Points of Assoc. Prof. Velichka Y. Andonova, PhD
A1	50	50
B4	100	165.81
G (5-9)	200	242.22
	at least 20 publications	20 publications
	at least 15 publications in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science	17 publications in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science
	at least 8 publications with IF	requirement fulfilled
D (10-12)	300	450
	minimum 20 citations in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science	30 citations
E (13-22)	100	252.33
	scientific supervision, recognized specialty, project participation, textbooks/teaching materials, training of medical trainees and doctoral students	requirements fulfilled with a clear surplus
Total	750	1160.36

On this basis, it may be concluded that the candidate's compliance with the criteria for the academic position of "Professor" is quantitatively secured and substantively well grounded. The total number of points amounts to 1160.36, against a required minimum of 750 under the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University – Varna. The additional specific requirements are likewise met, including those concerning the number of publications in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science, the presence of publications with impact factor, the required number of citations, and the h-index threshold.

What matters here is that behind these numerical indicators stands academic work with real substance, internal coherence, and clear professional relevance. The candidate's scientific output is thematically structured and published in authoritative outlets; demonstrable citation impact is present; meaningful participation in research and educational projects has been documented; successful scientific supervision has been carried out; and her teaching and expert activity organically complement the profile of an established habilitated scholar and university lecturer.

In summary, I find that Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, satisfies the formally established minimum requirements and, in substantive terms, meets the academic standards applicable to appointment to the academic position of "Professor". Accordingly, my overall assessment of her compliance with the mandatory conditions, quantitative criteria, and bibliometric indicators is positive.

ASSESSMENT OF THE SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, as reflected in the publications submitted in the competition, may be grouped into several principal, internally connected, and consistently developed areas that correspond to the profile of the announced competition in “Technology of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms and Biopharmaceutics”. The statement of original scientific contributions is based on 33 full-text scientific articles published in the period 2020–2025, of which 30 appeared in journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus and 24 carry an impact factor; 21 publications report original scientific results, while 12 are of a review and analytical nature. The officially formulated areas are: biologically active substances of natural origin—challenges in their formulation into dosage forms for dermal application and cosmetic products; nanosized drug-delivery systems; nasal and oromucosal drug delivery; biologically active substances from aquaculture—methods of extraction and application; and ensuring the physical stability and rheological characteristics of liquid and semi-solid dosage forms through the use of natural polymers and lipids.

1. Biologically active substances of natural origin and technological approaches to their incorporation into dermal and cosmetic systems.

This area encompasses studies on the incorporation of natural biologically active substances into dermal and cosmetic systems, with attention focused on overcoming problems related to solubility, chemical stability, and penetration across the skin barrier. Representative publications in this area include B4:1, B4:2, and B4:10.

2. Nanosized drug delivery systems.

This area occupies a central place in the candidate’s scientific output. It covers the development, characterization, and critical analysis of solid lipid nanoparticles and nanostructured lipid carriers as contemporary platforms for ocular, dermal, and brain drug delivery. Representative publications in this area include B4:4, B4:5, B4:6, G7:1, and G7:2.

3. Nasal and oromucosal drug delivery.

This area includes studies focused on non-invasive and patient-oriented approaches to drug delivery via the nasal and oromucosal routes. Representative publications include G7:4 and G8:1.

4. Biologically active substances from aquaculture—methods of extraction and application.

This area includes studies directed at the obtaining, extraction, and application of bioactive components from aquaculture, with emphasis on extraction approaches and on the possibilities for their practical use. Representative publications include B4:8 and G7:5.

5. Ensuring the physical stability and rheological characteristics of liquid and semi-solid dosage forms.

This area comprises studies of a distinctly practical orientation, related to the stability of extemporaneously prepared paediatric suspensions, the influence of polymers on the physical stability of lipid self-emulsifying systems, and the role of natural oils in the textural and rheological characteristics of cosmetic creams. Representative publications in this area include B4:3, B4:7, and B4:9.

These areas are conceptually linked and mutually complementary. They outline a coherent line of research in which a sound technological basis is coupled with a clear applied orientation. Taken as a whole, the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, possess contemporary scientific and applied value, contain original results, and include substantial contributions within the scope of the announced competition for the academic position of "Professor".

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the submitted competition materials and of the overall evaluation of the scientific, teaching, and academic-expert activity of Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, I find her candidacy to be sound and consistent with the requirements for appointment to the academic position of "Professor". The submitted evidence outlines an established habilitated scholar and university lecturer with recognizable scientific contributions, substantial publication activity, demonstrable citation impact, active teaching involvement, and consistent participation in the training of young academic staff. I consider that the candidate satisfies the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University – Varna, including the criteria for appointment to the academic position of "Professor".

For these reasons, I give a positive evaluation and respectfully recommend that the members of the Scientific Jury vote in favour of the appointment of Assoc. Prof. Velichka Yordanova Andonova, PhD, to the academic position of "Professor" in the scientific specialty "Technology of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms and Biopharmaceutics", in Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.3. Pharmacy, for the needs of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Medical University "Prof. Dr Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

16.03.2026

Sofia

Reviewer

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(Prof. Milen Dimitrov, PhD (Pharm.))