



Standpoint

regarding the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty of Horse Breeding and Other Equine Sciences, announced in the State Gazette, Issue No. 41 of May 5, 2026, with candidate Maya Georgieva Popova

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boyko Atanassov Georgiev, appointed as Chairperson/Member of the scientific jury pursuant to Order No. RD 16-811/June 29, 2026, issued by the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

Maya Georgieva Popova; holds a Master's degree in Equestrian Sports and a PhD in Farm Animal Breeding, Biology, and Reproductive Biotechnology. Specializations: Horse breeding; animal reproduction; farm animal breeding, biology, and reproductive biotechnology. Previously employed as a Junior Expert in Horse Breeding Control and Coordination at the General Directorate for Control and Coordination of Breeding Activities (Horse Breeding) within the Executive Agency for Selection and Reproduction in Animal Husbandry (IASRZH), Sofia (State Administration). Chairperson of the East Bulgarian Horse Breeding Association, Shumen. Fluent in English and Russian. Holds the following additional training/courses and certificates:

- ☐ Erasmus+ Training – Introduction to donkey behavior, milk production and processing, Croatia, 2019;
- ☐ Agri-Train Short-term Training – Centro de Formación Vallebarco, Spain, 2019;
- ☐ ENTER Expert Workshop – Exam formats at university, Bulgaria, 2018;
- ☐ Inclusive Learning and Teaching in Higher Education – Izmir Katip Çelebi University (Erasmus+), 30 hours, 2024;
- ☐ QA Basics – September 2024, Software University (SoftUni), grade 6.00;

He is currently the main assistant at AU Plovdiv.

Candidate Chief Assistant Professor Maya Popova is participating in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with a total of 25 works, categorized as follows:

- ☐ Scientific publications in the designated field of specialization – 25 items, comprising:
 - Publications related to the doctoral dissertation – 3 items (excluded from review);
 - Publications with an impact factor – 7 items;
 - Publications in peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals – 15 items;

Chief Assistant Professor Maya Popova's personal contribution to the 22 works subject to review is evidenced by the fact that 3 are single-authored, 13 list her as the first author, 4 list her as the second author, and the remaining 2 list her as the third or subsequent author.

A total of 22 works are subject to analysis for the purpose of this assessment.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Maya Popova has authored a total of 13 curricula: 9 for the Bachelor's degree level and 4 for the Master's degree level.

Teaching experience: 13 years and 4 months. Over the last five academic years, the candidate's total teaching workload amounted to 3,517.9 hours—an average of 703.6 hours per year—including an average of 256 hours of lectures annually.

Her teaching activity is complemented by the supervision of 25 students who have successfully defended their theses: 19 at the Bachelor's level and 6 at the Master's level.

Published teaching materials.

No textbooks or study guides have been submitted for the competition.

Areas of publication. The research activity of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Maya Popova lies entirely within the field of horse breeding and focuses on four main areas: selection, genealogical structure, and performance capacity; conformation and morphological characteristics; physiological, hematological, biochemical, and reproductive parameters; and the behavior, conservation, and sustainable use of local horse breeds.

Citation and indexing of research output.

Four citations of four research papers published in journals indexed in international databases (with Q1–Q4 quartile rankings) are presented:

Vilhanová, Z., F. Novotný, I. Valocký, V. Hura, P. Horňáková & M. Karamanová (2021). Effect of seasonal environmental changes on selected reproductive parameters in mares. *Bulgarian Journal of Veterinary Medicine*, 24, No 2, pp208-218., ISSN: 2076-2615, Q4, SJR(2021) - 0.157

Derisoud E., J. Auclair-Ronzaud, E. Palmer, M. Robles and P. Chavatte-Palmer (2021). Female age and parity in horses: how and why does it matter?. *Reproduction, Fertility and Development* 34(2) 52-116 <https://doi.org/10.1071/RD21267>, Online ISSN 1448-5990, Print ISSN 1031-3613, Q2, SJR(2021) - 0.47

Yordanov, G.; Mehandjyiski, I.; Palova, N.; Atsenova, N.; Neov, B.; Radoslavov, G.; Hristov, P. (2022). Genetic Diversity and Structure of the Main Danubian Horse Paternal Genealogical Lineages Based on Microsatellite Genotyping. *Veterinary Sciences* 2022, 9(7), 333., ISSN: 2306-7381, Q1, SJR(2022) - 0.524

Zohier, A.S., Baraka, T.A., Abdelgalil, A.I. et al. (2023). Oxidative stress biomarkers status in selected equine sports. *Comp Clin Pathol* 32, 461–466., ISSN 1618-565X, Q3, SJR(2023) - 0.224

Participation in research projects. Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Maya Popova has participated in a total of 4 research projects: 3 at the university level and 1 national project. She served as the principal investigator for 2 of the projects and as a team member for the other 2.

☐ Project 06-21: Possibilities for studying horse behavior under free-range, unregulated management conditions using modern monitoring technologies. 2021–2022; Principal Investigator.

☐ Project 07-24: Study of the relationships between conformation and performance in East Bulgarian horses in the context of developing a linear assessment scheme. 2024–2026. Scientific Supervisor.

☐ Project 07-25: Impact of agricultural waste on certain bird species in agricultural landscapes within representative habitats. 2025–2026. Participant.

☐ Project "Reproductive Biotechnologies in Livestock Breeding in Bulgaria" (Reprobiotech). Work Package 3: Reproductive biotechnologies in equids (mares and jennies). 2018–2021. Participant.

I have no remarks regarding the submitted materials. I recommend that, in her future academic work, the candidate also direct her efforts toward developing a textbook or a teaching aid in the field of horse breeding and equine sciences.

Based on the analysis of the candidate's pedagogical, research, and applied research activities, I consider that Chief Assistant Professor Maya Popova meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, and the Agricultural University's own regulations regarding its application.

The candidate's published research, teaching activities, participation in and leadership of research projects, as well as her practical work in the field of horse breeding, demonstrate consistent professional and academic development.

All of this leads me to give a POSITIVE assessment of her overall work.

I therefore recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury also vote in favor, and that the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Agronomy at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv elect Chief Assistant Professor Maya Popova to the position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty of Horse Breeding and Other Equine Sciences.

Date: 17.08.2026

City of Plovdiv

PREPARED BY:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boyko Georgiev

