



OPINION

Regarding: a competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the Field of Higher Education 6. Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Professional Field 6.1. Crop Production, Scientific Specialty Ornamental Plants, announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 48 of 26 May 2026, with applicant Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev Panchev from the Agricultural University – Plovdiv

Reviewer: Associate Professor Dr. Nadezhda Gencheva Zapryanova, IDLR – Sofia, Agricultural Academy, in the Field of Higher Education 6. Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Professional Field 6.1. Crop Production, Scientific Specialty Ornamental Plants, appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order No. RD-16-812/29 June 2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv

One candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev Panchev, is participating in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the Scientific Specialty Ornamental Plants, announced for the needs of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

The materials and documents submitted for evaluation, reflecting the candidate's research activity and achievements, have been prepared in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Implementation at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

1. Brief presentation of the candidate

Chief Assistant Professor Valentin Panchev was born in 1982. In 2001, he completed his secondary education at the Construction Technical School in Plovdiv, specializing in Park Construction. He obtained his higher education at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, where in 2006 he was awarded a master's degree in landscape design. In 2013, he acquired a professional qualification in pedagogy at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

By Order No. RD-26-18/23 February 2018 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, he was enrolled as a part-time doctoral student at the Department of Horticulture in the Scientific Specialty Ornamental Plants for the period from 1 March 2015 to 1 March 2019.

In 2018, following the successful defense of his doctoral dissertation entitled "Studies on Different Methods for the Propagation of Species of the Genus *Tilia*", he obtained the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev Panchev participates in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor with materials reflecting his research, teaching, and project activities in the field of ornamental horticulture. The submitted documents demonstrate that the candidate holds the educational and scientific degree of Doctor, occupies the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor, and carries out teaching activities at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

His research profile is related to plant propagation, cultivation technologies, and the assessment of the ornamental qualities of ornamental plants. The thematic focus of his publications corresponds to the announced competition.

2. General description of the scientific output

A total of 29 scientific publications has been submitted for participation in the competition. Ten publications are included under Group B indicators as an equivalent body of scholarly publications constituting the habilitation thesis. One book, published on the basis of the defended doctoral dissertation, is reported under indicator G6; six publications are included under G7, and twelve under G8.

The candidate's individual contribution is reflected in 10 publications authored independently, 5 publications as first author, 9 as second author, and 5 as third author. The competition materials include publications indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, as well as six publications with reported impact factors or impact rank indicators. This demonstrates the international visibility of part of the scientific output.

Under Criterion A, the candidate reports 50 points. Under Group B indicators, 255 points are reported, against a minimum requirement of 100 points. Under Group G indicators, 256.65 points are reported, against a minimum requirement of 200 points, while under Group D indicators, 55 points are reported, against a minimum requirement of 50 points. According to the submitted scient metric table, the minimum requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor have been met.

3. Scientific and applied scientific contributions

The submitted scientific works demonstrate original scientific and applied scientific contributions.

The scientific contributions are related to research on propagation, biology, and development of ornamental woody and flowering plant species. New data has been obtained on the influence of climatic factors on the phenological development of seedlings of large-leaved lime. An effective protocol for its *in vitro* micropropagation has been developed, and approaches for overcoming seed dormancy have been proposed. Optimal conditions for the *in vitro* propagation of *Angelonia angustifolia* have been identified. New localities of the protected species *Goniolimon dalmaticum* have been described, together with seasonal and geographical variations in the content of ginkgolides and bilobalides in ginkgo.

The applied scientific contributions consist in the development and proposal of technological solutions for the cultivation and propagation of ornamental plants. Suitable gladiolus cultivars and optimal nitrogen fertilisation rates have been identified. The response of selected flowering species to the application of biocompost has been established. Presowing treatments for improving seed germination and viability have been proposed, and practical recommendations have been formulated for the seed and vegetative propagation of a number of ornamental species.

The results obtained expand scientific knowledge in the respective research areas and have direct practical relevance to producing ornamental plant material and landscape horticulture. The presented contributions demonstrate consistent research activity and the author's ability to direct research results towards the solution of specific practical problems in ornamental horticulture.

4. Citations of scientific publications

A list of five documented citations has been submitted with the competition materials. The scientometric table reports 45 points under indicator D13 and 10 points under indicator D15,

for a total of 55 points. The submitted citations support the presence of external scholarly interest in the candidate's publications in the field of propagation and biotechnology of ornamental plants.

5. Teaching and project activities

The candidate's teaching activity during the period 2019–2026 includes the following courses: Floriculture, Dendrology, Dendrology and Park Design, Ornamental Nurseries, Greenhouse Floriculture, Flower and Bouquet Arrangement, and Computer-Aided Design of Landscape Sites. This teaching activity is directly related to the scientific specialty and demonstrates a broad range of teaching competence.

The candidate has participated in national research programmes and internal university research projects, including as the project leader of a project focused on agrotechnological practices in gladiolus cultivation. Information has also been submitted on participation in international scientific forums, academic mobility, professional-development training, and certificates obtained.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

My critical remark concerns the lack of full consistency between the extended habilitation report and the scientometric table. This results in discrepancies between the number of publications in the individual research areas and the data presented in the scientometric report.

I recommend that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev focuses on the development of new textbooks and teaching materials for the courses he teaches. This would enrich the educational process and further strengthen his scholarly contribution.

7. Conclusion

The submitted competition materials provide grounds for concluding that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev Panchev possesses the required scientific output, teaching experience, and applied research results in the field of ornamental plants. The publications are thematically related to the announced competition, and the reported scientometric indicators, amounting to 616.65 points, meet the minimum requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2, 3, and 5 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Annex to Article 1a of the Regulations for its Implementation for the academic position of Associate Professor.

All of the above provides sufficient grounds for me to give a POSITIVE assessment of the overall activity of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev Panchev. I recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury also cast a POSITIVE vote and that the Faculty Council of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv elect Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Valentin Panchev Panchev to the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 6.1. Crop Production, Scientific Specialty Ornamental Plants.

Date: 06.09.2026
Sofia

Reviewer:
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nadezhda Zapryanova