ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА
Вх. № 7220-1946/26.10.2026

REVIEW

by Prof. Evgeni Petrov Stanimirov, PhD, University of Economics – Varna, concerning the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management", scientific specialty "Social Management (Human Resource Management - Talent Management and Leadership)"

1. General Information

This review has been prepared pursuant to a decision of the academic jury appointed by Order No. RD 06-153/15.09.2026 and the decisions taken at its first meeting, held on 28.09.2026. The assessment is based on the documents submitted by the candidate for the competition, including the list and abstracts of publications, the statement of scientific and applied scientific contributions, scientometric reports, academic curriculum vitae, and evidence of teaching and expert activities.

2. Information about the Competition

The competition was announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 65 of 17.07.2026, for the needs of the Department of Management and Administration at the University of Economics - Varna. The competition profile encompasses human resource management, talent management and leadership.

3. Candidate in the Competition

The sole candidate is Chief Assistant Professor Petar Krasimirov Petrov, PhD. By a decision dated 28.09.2026, we, the members of the academic jury, established that he meets the minimum national and quantitative requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field of the announced competition (pursuant to Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act), as well as the requirements of the University of Economics - Varna (pursuant to Article 2b, paragraph 5, of the same

Act). This decision is the starting point for the present review, which is not limited to assessing quantitative compliance with the competition requirements.

4. Information about the Candidate

Petar Petrov is a graduate of the University of Economics - Varna (UE-Varna): he earned bachelor's degrees in Marketing and Business Administration and, in 2009, a master's degree in Management. In 2019, he obtained the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in professional field 3.7 with a dissertation entitled "The Relationship between Work Values and Attitudes towards Human Resource Management Activities (The Case of Airport Operators)". Since 2019, he has held the position of Chief Assistant Professor at UE-Varna. His previous professional experience includes work as an assistant professor and part-time lecturer, as well as expert activities related to accreditation and the management of electronic and distance learning at the university. Since 2021, he has been the coordinator of the university's business accelerator.

This professional trajectory demonstrates the accumulation of experience at the intersection of academic teaching, institutional management and business engagement - areas that correspond to the subject of the competition.

5. Description and Assessment of Scientific Works

The submitted report on compliance with the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management" demonstrates that the candidate exceeds the cumulative quantitative requirements under Section I, National Minimum Requirements, pursuant to the Academic Staff Development Act (Article 2b) and its Implementing Regulations (Article 1a, paragraph 1). The required minimum is 400 points, while the candidate has accumulated 619.99 points.

The competition documents include the necessary reports substantiating the above-mentioned points declared for compliance with the minimum national requirements under

Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act for the academic position of Associate Professor.

The works submitted for review comprise 31 publications totaling 1,014 pages. These include four monographs (two of them single-authored), totaling 628 pages; one study of 25 pages; eight articles (153 pages); 17 conference papers (179 pages); and one contribution to a textbook (19 pages). Twelve publications are single-authored (613 pages), and 19 are co-authored (401 pages).

Three publications are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. Fifteen publications appear in journals or other outlets included in the national reference list maintained by NACID.

A total of 27 citations have been recorded for 12 of the publications. All publications are subject to peer review and relate to the topic of the announced competition.

The central place in the submitted body of work is occupied by the single-authored habilitation monograph "Talent Management in an Academic Environment" (Varna, University Publishing House "Science and Economics", 2026, 301 pages). It examines the applicability of the concept of talent management to higher education and aims to develop a conceptual model for the systematic management of student talent through cooperation among the university, academic staff, students and business.

I positively assess the distinction between different approaches to talent and the treatment of the university as an ecosystem in which human potential management requires coordination of educational, research and organizational practices. This provides an appropriate conceptual foundation for the scientific specialty of the competition. Contributions can be identified in several areas of the monograph:

First. At the theoretical and methodological level, the author critically analyzes a substantial body of literature on talent management and develops and substantiates a conceptual model for talent management in an academic context.

*Secon*d. In terms of practical application, evidence of good talent-management practices across various dimensions at leading universities is synthesized. Conclusions are drawn regarding the attitudes and readiness of the three target groups surveyed to establish

a talent-management system. Specific recommendations are formulated for developing sustainable mechanisms for identifying, developing and realizing talent, taking account of the particular characteristics of Bulgarian higher education institutions.

Other significant works include the single-authored monograph "Work Values and their Role in Human Resource Management" (2021), which extends the research line initiated in the doctoral dissertation. In the international collective volume "Hidden Champions in Rising Economies" (Springer, 2026), the candidate co-authored the chapter "Hidden Champions of Bulgaria" with Assoc. Prof. D. Serafimova, PhD. A collective monograph on the intercultural and educational bridge between community cultural centers (chitalishta) and museums (2023) is also presented. The remaining publications address work values, employee satisfaction, leadership, intercultural competence, entrepreneurship, university–business interaction and the assessment of institutional effectiveness.

I positively assess the thematic continuity between the research on work values and human resource management and the more recent line of research on talent management in an academic environment.

6. Contributions to the Candidate's Research Work

Based on the submitted statement and the substantive focus of the works, I consider the following groups of contributions to be the most significant:

First. *In the field of talent management:* systematization and critical analysis of perspectives on talent; development of an integrated conceptual model for talent management in the academic community; and substantiation of a methodology for diagnosing the attitudes of students, faculty members and business representatives towards talent. The applied scientific value lies in the recommendations for institutional policies and tools for monitoring student development.

Second. *In human resource management: exam*ination of the relationships between work values and practices for attracting, selecting, evaluating, remunerating, developing and retaining personnel; assessment of the links between organizational change and employees' attitudes towards management practices; and investigation of the determinants of job

satisfaction. It is positive that these studies focus on employee perceptions and behavior rather than solely on formal management mechanisms. This makes the recommendations formulated for the development of internal organizational systems considerably more appropriate.

Third. *In leadership and intercultural competence: systematization* of leadership approaches and contemporary tools for developing and assessing leadership competencies; investigation of relationships between leadership styles and team effectiveness; examination of adaptation during international student mobility; systematization of metrics for assessing intercultural differences; and formulation of recommendations for optimizing international assignment policies. At the practical level, an applied model for developing intercultural communication competence and leadership skills has been developed.

Fourth. In *entrepreneurship and university–business relations: participation* in a team developing a model for a sustainable partnership network; participation in a team formulating rules for maintaining the sustainable operation of the university–business network; identification of the principal reasons for changes in entrepreneurial activity; and enrichment of the theory of niche leadership.

Fifth. *In higher education management: d*evelopment of proposals for key indicators of institutional effectiveness in higher education institutions; analysis of interactive methods for e-learning; and identification of the relationship between the education system and labor-market demand for information and communication technology specialists. The applied nature of the research stands out in these areas.

I assess the contributions predominantly as the enrichment, systematization and adaptation of scientific approaches, combined with specific empirical and applied developments.

7. Participation in Research Projects and Scientific Forums

The submitted contracts and certificates document participation in international and national initiatives, including: Erasmus+ PROMINENCE, EIT HEI TANDEM+, a project to build an intercultural and educational bridge between community cultural centers and

museums, as well as expert and consultancy activities. Evidence is provided of participation in scientific forums, roundtables and international intensive programs, including Dukenet and Erasmus+ formats during 2023–2026.

Particularly valuable for the candidate's profile is the connection between project activities, international cooperation and the practical application of entrepreneurial and leadership competencies.

8. Teaching Activities

The academic curriculum vitae and teaching workload reports outline a diverse range of teaching activities at bachelor's and master's levels. The principal bachelor's-level courses include: Human Resource Management, Intercultural Competence and Leadership, Research Methods, Online Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Marketing, Human Resource Management in the Public Sector, and International Human Resource Management and Quality. At master's level, the candidate teaches courses such as: Startup Consulting and Digital Technologies in Education Management. Some teaching is delivered in English. In the last two years alone, he has delivered 445 teaching hours at bachelor's level and 484 hours at master's level.

Twenty certificates documenting successfully completed courses have been submitted. Among them, I would highlight "Innovative Educational Technologies" in 2022 and participation in the TANDEM+ International Training Programme. These facts demonstrate an effort to update pedagogical approaches and provide internationally oriented education. The candidate's teaching profile is substantially aligned with the scientific specialty of the competition.

9. Other Activities

The candidate has served as Deputy Director of the Center for Electronic and Distance Learning, an accreditation expert and coordinator of the university's business accelerator. Mentoring activities within ABLE Mentor and expert commitments involving training and consultancy are documented. These activities demonstrate organizational cooperation skills

and a contribution to the university's practical environment, without conflating them with scientific results in the strict sense.

10. Plagiarism

The submitted set of documents contains no grounds for establishing plagiarism. This review does not constitute an independent technical check for textual similarities.

11. Questions, Critical Remarks and Recommendations to the Candidate

*First. I*n the future development of the talent-management model, validation on a broader basis should be sought. This would allow the results to be interpreted more reliably without being constrained by the specifics of a particular institutional environment.

Second. It would be advisable to develop a system for subsequently measuring the impact of the proposed policies—for example, on student participation, competence development and transition to professional employment.

Third. In view of the candidate's methodological and international experience, I recommend even more active publication in internationally refereed journals.

12. Conclusion

The submitted materials present a candidate with consistent academic development, a thematically coherent body of scientific publications, teaching experience and active project and expert engagement. The habilitation monograph "Talent Management in an Academic Environment" is directly relevant to the competition profile and contains conceptual and applied scientific developments with potential use in the management of higher education institutions. A decision of the academic jury has confirmed compliance with the applicable minimum national and university quantitative requirements.

On the basis of the above assessment, I give a positive opinion and propose that the esteemed academic jury support the election of Chief Assistant Professor Petar Krasimirov Petrov, PhD, to the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management", scientific specialty "Social Management (Human

Resource Management - Talent Management and Leadership)", for the needs of the University of Economics - Varna.

Заличена информация съгласно ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679

26.10.2026

Reviewer:

/Prof. Evgeni Stanimirov, PhD/

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА
Вх. № РД20-1996/02.11.2026г.

ACADEMIC REVIEW

Regarding: Scientific monograph titled 'Talent Management in an Academic Environment'

Author: Petar Krasimirov Petrov, PhD

Publishing House: 'Science and Economics', University of Economics – Varna, 2026, 284 pp., ISBN 978-954-21-1228-0

Reviewer: Prof. Emil Velinov, PhD, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences (Riga, Latvia)

1. General Characteristics and Degree of Timeliness of the Monograph

The reviewed monograph by Dr. Petar Petrov, titled 'Talent Management in an Academic Environment,' addresses a highly relevant yet long-neglected issue in contemporary economic theory, educational economics, and Human Resource Management (HRM). The core focus lies in exploring the possibilities for conceptually transferring, transforming, and adapting the talent management paradigm—traditionally developed within corporate business environments—to the specific institutional and social framework of higher education.

Amidst intensifying global competition among higher education institutions, dynamic shifts in the labor market, and evolving stakeholder expectations, transitioning traditional universities into comprehensive 'talent ecosystems' is not merely an academic enrichment but a strategic imperative for institutional survival. The author successfully undertakes a comprehensive examination of these complex multi-stakeholder interactions. Spanning 284 pages, the monograph exhibits impeccable internal logic, organized into abstracts in four languages (Bulgarian, English, German, and Russian), an introduction, four substantive chapters, a conclusion, five specialized appendices, and an extensive bibliography featuring over 200 domestic and international sources.

2. In-Depth Analysis of Content and Scientific Results by Chapters

Chapter One: Evolution of Talent Management Ideas in Human Resource Management

The first chapter establishes a robust theoretical and methodological foundation for the monograph. Dr. Petrov conducts a thorough etymological and historical examination of the term 'talent,' tracing its semantic evolution from the Ancient Greek unit of mass and monetary value (talanton) and the Biblical Parable of the Talents in Matthew's Gospel to modern psychometric, pedagogical, and managerial dimensions. Core debates surrounding talent are critically evaluated: the nature versus nurture dichotomy, object-oriented (specific traits) versus subject-oriented (the individual) perspectives, and the divergence between inclusive and exclusive philosophies.

Special attention is dedicated to HRM paradigms, including the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, Human Capital Theory (G. Becker, T. Schultz), Social Capital Theory, and Institutional Theory. The author

successfully connects these paradig ıs to workforce planning, talent acquisition, identification, development, and retention practic s. A critical observation is made regarding how corporate entities rapidly embraced these tools while ducational institutions remained marginalized from systematic research.

Chapter Two: Understandings of Talent Management in Higher Education

In the second chapter, the author c ntextualizes HRM talent tools within the higher education ecosystem. The university is concep ualized as a living talent ecosystem, robustly defending the thesis that institutional environments, fac lty members, administrative staff, and external stakeholders must interact synergistically.

A notable contribution of this chapt r is the analytical review examining academic and administrative personnel as critical internal drivers of institutional capacity. The author deconstructs student talents through the lens of multiple intellig nces and differentiated development frameworks. The chapter culminates in the presentation of ar original conceptual model for systematic, multi-level, and multi-dimensional student talent manage nent based on a tripartite partnership model (Students–Faculty–Business).

Chapter Three: Best Practices for Talent Management in Higher Education

Chapter Three possesses a strong a plied and practical focus. Dr. Petrov systematically evaluates best practices from leading global univer ities, European university networks, and Bulgarian higher education institutions. The comparative analy is is rigorously structured, highlighting both positive frameworks and potential barriers when transferrin international practices into the national academic context. The resulting logical framework of talen development practices serves as a direct bridge to the empirical study.

Chapter Four: Empirical Study on Talent Management in Higher Education

Chapter Four forms the empirical c re of the monograph, deployed across a robust sample at the University of Economics – Varna. Th e survey captures three primary ecosystem perspectives: 965 students, 193 faculty members, an 91 business representatives. The methodological framework is sound, utilizing advanced statistical data processing techniques—cluster analysis, cluster profiling, qualitative content analysis, and co nbined composite indices (e.g., ATTITUDES_COURSE).

The empirical results conclusively d monstrate strong support for targeted talent development forms (mentorship, internships, practical raining, entrepreneurial initiatives) and validate the author's conceptual model. The concluding ections synthesize findings and propose an actionable monitoring and evaluation index system.

3. Critical Analysis, Limitations, and Discussion Points

Despite its exceptional scientific merits, theoretical depth, and methodological rigor, Dr. Petrov's monograph invites several constructive criticisms and discussion points that can further refine the research paradigm in future scholarly pursuits:

- **Institutional Scope of Empirical Research:** Although the sample size from the University of Economics – Varna is substantial and representative of the institution (965 students, 193 lecturers, and 91 business representatives), the empirical validation of the model remains confined to a single economics-oriented university. In the contemporary academic landscape, economic universities differ significantly from technical, medical, or comprehensive classical universities. The absence of a comparative empirical study involving at least one technological or humanities-focused university in Bulgaria limits the generalizability of the findings on a national scale.
- **Asymmetry in Target Group Focus:** In the methodological limitations, the author explicitly notes that the study prioritizes student talents, while talent management among academic and administrative staff is largely excluded from standalone empirical analysis. Although methodologically justified, this creates a certain structural asymmetry. In a modern university ecosystem, building a sustainable student talent management framework is difficult if faculty members themselves are excluded from effective internal talent development practices.
- **Challenges of the Tripartite Partnership (Students–Faculty–Business):** The proposed 'tripartite partnership triangle' is conceptually compelling; however, the empirical data reveal notable gaps and misalignments between business expectations and academic priorities regarding timing, practical orientation, and knowledge commercialization. Deepening the discussion around potential conflicts of interest between academic autonomy and market-driven corporate pragmatism would further enrich the text.

4. Questions for Scientific Discussion with the Author

- In the context of rapid technological transformation and the widespread adoption of Generative AI in education, how do you perceive the evolving definition of a 'student talent'? Does the rise of algorithmic tools pose a risk of homogenizing student achievements and obscuring true creative and critical aptitudes within academic environments?
- What major institutional and regulatory barriers do you foresee in practically implementing your conceptual model across state universities in Bulgaria, given that administrative and financial flexibility is heavily constrained by the Higher Education Act?

5. Recommendations for Future Research

- The author is encouraged to broaden the scope of observation by conducting comparative empirical studies across at least three distinct types of universities within the European Higher Education Area.
- The empirical findings and conceptual model should be presented to the National Rectors' Conference and the Ministry of Education as a practical baseline for future institutional reforms.

- The author should pursue publi: ning a series of papers in high-impact international journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science t(disseminate Bulgarian insights on higher education talent management globally.

6. Conclusion and Final Ev aluation

Notwithstanding the critical remark and discussion points raised above, Dr. Petar Krasimirov Petrov's monograph 'Talent Management in an Academic Environment' represents a mature, rigorous, scientifically sound, and original sch olarly contribution. The work delivers substantial theoretical, methodological, and applied value t o economic science and managerial practice. As a reviewer, I extend my highest positive evaluation of th e monograph and strongly recommend it for wide utilization by academics, doctoral candidates, an(university leadership.

Verification Details
Date: October 30, 2026
Riga, Latvia
Reviewer: Prof. Emil Velinov, PhD (I ISEBA University, Riga)

Заличена информация съгласно ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679