

To the President of the Scientific Commission
nominated by Order № № P33-4708/25.09.2020
of the RECTOR of University of Plovdiv ‘Paisii
Hilendarski’

OPINION

Call for academic position ‘Associate Professor’, published in State Journal N: 57 of 26.06.2020 for academic position ‘Associate Professor’ in the field of 4.3. Biological Sciences, Scientific speciality ‘Cell Biology’ for the needs of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Plovdiv ‘Paisii Hilendarski’.

Reviewer: Prof. Stefan Vacev Panaiotov, PhD, DSc

Scientific speciality: Microbiology

Institution: NCIPD - Sofia

In the call for academic position 'Associate Professor' in the field of academic education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, Professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences, Scientific speciality ‘Cell Biology’ published in State Journal N: 57 from 26.06.2020 there is one candidate – Assistant Professor Tsvetelina Batsalova, PhD.

I declare that I have no conflict of interests within the meaning of art. 4, par. 5 from the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in Bulgaria. I have no common publications with Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Batsalova.

This OPINION is prepared according to the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in Bulgaria, and Chapter IV, section III, according to the Regulation for conditions and procedures for assuming the academic appointment ‘Associate Professor’ at the University of Plovdiv ‘Paisii Hilendarski’.

The submitted documents are prepared according the Regulation for application of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in Bulgaria and the internal Regulation for development of the academic staff at University of Plovdiv ‘Paisii Hilendarski’.

I. Analysis of candidate's career profile.

Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Batsalova, PhD graduated in 2006 with a Master Degree in 'Cell Biology' at the University of Plovdiv. Between 2009 and 2011 she is a PhD student at the University of Plovdiv in 'Cell Biology' Since 2011 she is Assistant Professor at the University of Plovdiv. She passed several specializations in leading research centers and laboratories abroad.

II. General description of the submitted materials for the call.

In the call Assist. Prof. Batsalova presents:

- A PhD dissertation for doctor's degree,
- 14 scientific articles in peer reviewed journals with total impact factor of 45.493,
- Two publications in congress proceedings,
- Three publications in journals without impact factor,
- Two textbooks for students in the speciality 'Cell Biology',
- Participation in 12 research projects being Project Leader of two of them,
- Total number of citations – 76.
- Significant teaching activity during nine years of work.
- Scientific supervisor of 7 Master students and
- Supervisor of one PhD student.

The Candidate meets the national minimal requirements for assuming the academic position of 'Associate Professor' and the criteria of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Plovdiv 'Paisii Hilendarski' in the field 4.3 Biological Sciences.

III. Evaluation of candidate's scientific activity and overall academic career.

The overall scientific activity of Assist. Prof. Batsalova consists of 19 publications, 4 certificates for participation at scientific events and two textbooks for students in the speciality 'Cell Biology'. In ten of the publications Dr. Batsalova is first author. Her Hirsh Index is 8. During the years she demonstrated progressive publication activity. The candidate worked mainly in six research fields:

- Analysis of the autoimmune response for establishing the molecular cell mediated mechanisms of the autoimmune illnesses,
- *In vitro* cytotoxicology and analysis of the biological activity,
- Role of different chemokine types in pollen allergies during and outside the pollene season,
- Clarification of the taxonomic status of cyanobacteria species,
- Establishing the effect of prebiotics on immunomodulating properties and adhesion of different species and strains of genus *Lactobacillus*,
- *In vitro* analysis of cytotoxicity of nanoparticles of ferric oxid: Biofunctionality of the nanoparticles and development of diagnostic methods for autoimmune diseases.

Assist. Prof. Batsalova demonstrated excellent scientific activity in communicating her scientific and practical results among the scientific community by taking part in 12 national and international projects. For two of the projects she is a Project Leader, exceeding the minimal requirements for this indicator.

IV. Evaluation of the publications presented in the call for ‘Associate Professor’.

Significant scientific contributions of Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Batsalova are associated with studies on the autoimmune response and the molecular cell mechanisms of the autoimmune diseases, the role of different chemokine types in pollene allergies, the taxonomy of cyanobacteria, studies on the effect of prebiotics and the cytotoxicity of nanoparticles and development of diagnostic methods for autoiimune diseases. Her publications reflect innovativeness and multidisciplinary.

The two textbooks for practical exercises in Cell Biology and Animal Cell Cultures are intended for training of students in different biological specialities at the University of Plovdiv ‘Paisii Hilendarski’ The textbooks are in accodrdance with the teaching program of the students.

V. Reflection (citations) of the candidate’s publications in the national and international literature (publication image).

All publications, citations and participations in scientific events and research projects reflect the active participation and significant contribution of the candidate in the development of the speciality ‘Cell Biology’ at the University of Plovdiv ‘Paisii Hilendarski’ and in Bulgaria during the last 10 years. The number of 76 citations (in total 145 with

autocitations) of the publications exceeds the minimal requirements for the position of ‘Associate Professor’. H-index of the candidate is 8. This makes the candidate visible by the international and national scientific community.

VI. Overall, qualitative assessment of candidate’s research activity including scientific supervision of students and master students

During the last 10 years Assist. Prof. Batsalova gives examples for gradual and increasing scientific career development. She gives evidences for active participation in supervision of seven Master and one PhD students. The candidate conducts research, which has a significant contribution to his personal career development and training of new professionals and scientists.

VII. Critical remarks and recommendations.

I have no remarks or recommendations to the candidate. All documents are prepared according to the requirements.

VIII. A general assesment of the candidate’s compliance with the mandatory rules and the mandatory quantitative criteria and scientific indicators according to the Law for the Development of the Scientific Staff in Bulgaria.

The documents presented by the candidate fulfill all scientific indicators according to the Law for the Development of the Scientific Staff in Bulgaria for appointment to the academic position ‘Associate Professor’.

Conclusion: The candidate Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Batsalova **meets** the mandatory and specific conditions and scientific criteria for appointment to academic position ‘Associate Professor’ according to the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Scientific Staff in Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application at the Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarsi’.

I convincingly give my **positive evaluation** to the candidate for the appointment to academic position ‘Associate Professor’ in the field of academic education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, Professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences , Scientific speciality ‘Cell Biology’.

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