

OPINION
by Prof. Iliya Nikolov Iliev, PhD,
University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”

**member of the scientific jury, according to the order of the rector of Plovdiv University
No. P33-4708/25.09.2020.**

**regarding the materials submitted for participating in the competition for occupying the
academic position “Associated Professor” in University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”,**

in Area of higher education:	4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics
Professional Field:	4. 3. Biological Sciences
	scientific specialty Cell Biology, for Department of Developmental Biology in Plovdiv University

Senior Assist. Prof. Dr. Tsvetelina Georgieva Batsalova from University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” participates as the only candidate in the “Associated Professor” competition proclaimed both in State Gazette no. 57, dated 26 June 2020 and in the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” website.

1. General overview of the procedure and the candidate

The set of materials presented by Senior Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Batsalova (in electronic form) is in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Development of Academic Staff Regulation in the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” and includes all necessary documents for participating in the competition.

The materials presented for participation in the competition for the academic position of ‘Associate Professor’ include 19 scientific publications in referenced scientific journals, which are not included the scientific publications for obtaining the educational and scientific degree ‘Doctor’. The materials for participation in the competition for the academic position of ‘Associate Professor’ also include 2 guides for laboratory exercises, which are the result of the scientific activity of the candidate after the academic position ‘Senior Assistant Professor’. Senior Assistant Professor Batsalova is a leading author in 10 scientific papers.

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tsvetelina Georgieva Batsalova was born on December 26, 1983. She graduated with honors from the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" (bachelor and master), and in 2007 she obtained a professional qualification master in cell biology. In 2009-2011 she was a full-time doctoral student and successfully defended a dissertation for ONS "Doctor" on "The role of MHC class 2 and post-translational modifications of collagen type 2 for intercellular communication in rheumatoid arthritis." The work experience of the candidate in the specialty with his doctoral studies exceeds 9 years and she has acquired the following positions - as a biologist (2005-2006), full-time doctoral student (2009-2011), lecturer at the University of Plovdiv "P. Hilendarski". assistant (2011- 2012) and as chief assistant from 2013 to the present. She has been a visiting researcher at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm and Lund, Sweden. Ts. Batsalova is a member of the USB, sections Immunology, Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology and BAC (Bulgarian Association of Cytometry).

The scientific activities presented by Senior. Assist. Prof. Ts. Batsalova fully comply with the national minimum requirements for professional field 4. 3. Biological Sciences.

For criterion A (min. 50 p.) - 50 points

In 2011 she defended his doctoral dissertation on **Cell Biology** "The role of MHC class 2 and post-translational modifications of collagen type 2 for intercellular communication in rheumatoid arthritis."

For criterion B (min. 100 p.) - 100 points

An equivalent number of publications covering the points for habilitation work are presented. There are 4 pieces from category Q1, which do not repeat the ones presented for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", and for holding the academic position "Chief Assistant".

For criterion G (min. 200 p.) – 214 points

Includes 12 publications in publications that are referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus), which are in categories Q1 – Q4.

For criterion D (min. 50 p.) – 152 points

Includes 76 citations in scientific journals, monographs, collective volumes and patents, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus).

2. General characteristics of the activity of candidate

Senior Assist. Professor Dr. Ts. Batsalova has a very active and diverse activity both in scientific research and in the training of students.

Scientific and applied activities

The main scientific interests of the candidate are in the field of in vitro cytotoxicity and antitumor activity of various biologically active substances and materials, also in autoimmunity and immunological tolerance, autoantigen- and allergen-specific immune response, bionanotechnology, diagnosis of autoimmune diseases. All quantitative indicators of criteria for holding the academic position of associate professor, both national and specific requirements of the Faculty of Biology in Plovdiv University are met.

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.

Dr. Batsalova is a part of 12 scientific projects: 5 with financial support from National Scientific Found in Ministry of Education and Science, and another from Found for Scientific Work in Plovdiv University. For two of the projects she is a Project Leader, exceeding the minimal requirements for this indicator.

She is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Bioscience and Biotechnology at the Faculty of Biology in Plovdiv University. With her diverse activity (reviews of articles in international journals, participation in the preparation and conduct of the candidate-student campaign at BF, in organizing committees of scientific forums, presenting reports at scientific forums, etc.) she actively works to raise the prestige of the Biological faculty.

Teaching and participation in funded contracts

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tsvetelina Batsaliva has 9 years of experience as a lecturer at the Faculty of Physics and Technology of Plovdiv University. The candidate's academic work is related to students from different specialties of the Faculty of Biology and includes lecture courses and laboratory exercises (practical exercises) in bachelor and master degree. He has independently developed 5 lecture courses in bachelor degree and 5 – in master degree. Participates in the competition with 2 manuals for laboratory exercises. She was the research supervisor of 7 successfully defended graduates and co-supervisor of one PhD thesis.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Senior Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Georgieva Batsalova, PhD, meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Specific additional requirements of the University of Plovdiv as publications and scientific activities exceeding the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position “Associated Professor”. The candidate’s works contain original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition through their publication in journals and scientific publications published by international academic publishers. Undoubtedly, the very active teaching activity of Senior Assist. Prof. Tsvetelina Georgieva Batsalova should be added. On the basis of all this, I wholeheartedly support the candidacy of Senior Assistant Professor Tsvetelina Georgieva Batsalova, PhD, for the academic position “Associated Professor” at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”.

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Plovdiv

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