

## STANDPOINT

**By Prof. Yuliya Georgieva Doncheva, DSc, University of Russe “Angel Kanchev”**

of the materials submitted for participation in a competition  
to hold the academic position of “**associate professor**”  
at the “**Paisii Hilendarski**” University of Plovdiv

by: area of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences  
professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Innovation in Education)

In the “doctorate” competition announced in the State Gazette No 92 of 18. 11. In 2023 and on the website of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” for the needs of the Department of “Botany and Biological Education”, at the Faculty of Biology, as a candidate participated Chief Assist Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva from the same Department.

**1. General presentation of the procedure, inventory of the materials received and presentation of the applicant.**

**1.1. General presentation of the procedure and inventory of the materials received:**

By Order No RD-21-327 of 15. 02. In 2023, at the Rector of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” (PU) I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for holding the academic position “**Associate professor**” in the Plovdiv University of Higher Education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Innovation in Education), **declared for the needs of the** Botany and Biological Education Department, at the Faculty of Biology.

For participation in the announced competition, a single candidate has submitted documents: Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva from the same department of the Pedagogic Faculty at PU.

The set of paper and electronic materials presented by Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vaklara **is** in accordance with the Rules for the development of the academic staff of the PU, and includes all the necessary documents required for participation in the announced competition for occupying an academic position “associate professor”.

The applicant has included a total of **81** scientific **papers**, **2** monographs, **1** textbook and **9** teaching tools - **5** aids for students, **4** teaching aids for school students, as well as a list of **69** research papers in several fields. She is head of **2** research projects, and in **8 others she** is a member, active participant, of the scientific team. All scientific production fully corresponds to the issues of the competition.

There was no lack, neither in the full text meaningful description of scientific and academic papers, nor of the main and additional production. Everything is arranged, certifying the publication, activity and activity of the candidate. That is, documentation, materials, can serve as an absolute example to many other candidates regarding the orderliness and correctness of such competitions.

## **1.2. Short biographical details of the candidate.**

Since November 1993 and until now, the professional and career path of Chief Assistant Dr. Zlatka Vakleva has been fully committed to the Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of Botany and Biological Education:

- 1993-1994 - *assistant* in the methodology of biology training - Philial - Smolyan, 4700 Smolyan, 32 Dicho Petrov Str.;
- 1994-1996 - *Assistant* Professor of Biology Training - PU “Paisii Hilendarski”.
- 1997-2003 - *Senior Assistant* in Methodology of Biology Training;
- 2004-2023 - *Chief Assistant* in Methodology of Biology Training.

*Teaching, scientific and professional experience in connection with the present competition.*

Organises and conducts lectures, practical seminars, monitored on site teaching practice, current pedagogical practice, internship practice, semester exams with students from the Bachelor’s Degree, EQD Master, NS Doctor and Additional Qualification “Teacher” in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogy, scientific field 1.3. The pedagogic of the training in... and the Bachelor’s Degree in direction 1.2. Pedagogy. Develops and updates curricula and curricula in disciplines from undergraduate and master’s degree programs. Develops new lecture courses and teaching aids for students. Evaluates students’ preparation in semester exams and ongoing supervision. She has developed and conducted a course “Communicative and Presentation Skills” (with code - AU00005) for the training of PhD students and postdoctoral students at the University Center for Work with Young Scientists, Doctoral Students and Postdoctoral Students - Academia iuventutis. Also - short-term courses with qualification credits - “Area 8. The natural sciences. Methodology of training” at the Department of Qualification and Professional Development of Pedagogical Specialists. *Her research activity* — scientific publications in specialised scientific publications, monographs, textbooks and teaching aids for students and school students. Active participation in international and national scientific forums, in national educational and research projects. She realised and successfully finalised the scientific management of graduates from the Bachelor’s Degree and Master’s Degree. Scientific guidance (1/2) of a successful doctoral student. Reviews articles in international journals, collections of scientific works, diploma works.

### **1.2.1. Personal impressions.**

I have personally known Dr. Vakleva as a dedicated colleague, professional and highly erudite scientist. From all her scientific output, from the facts that are present, it can be said that the quantitative and qualitative data and indicators are times the required for “associate professor”. Her materials are for AD “professor” both as a scientific and as academic value! Admiration for the perseverance, systematicity and scientificity in continuum applicability, practicality, efficiency with a look into the future, surpassing the present.

### **2. A common characterisation of the applicant’s activity.**

*Assessment of educational and pedagogical activity* and preparedness of the candidate (training tools, lecture courses, work with students, graduates and doctoral students). I will not present the factual and quantitative data in my opinion because of the limited amount of chargeability for this type of characteristics. Very briefly - Auditorial Employment (57); extra-mural work (5); Preparation of curricula (50), a total of 848 points of execution by the candidate. It is clear from the reports, signed and stamped by the officials concerned, and personally from my acquaintance with her, that the department, the faculty and, respectively, the PU need such a professional in her person. I'm personally impressed!

*Evaluation of the scientific and applied - scientific activity of the candidate.* Indicators in Group D +381 points; Publications in scientific journals Scopus and/or Web of Science - 3 pieces and Indicators from Group E. +355 points. In addition, research has been exposed in several areas:

- Head of research projects; Projects in which she is a participant in the scientific team; Participation in projects at the Scientific and Research Center of Agricultural University - Plovdiv.

- She has been a regular member of the Union of Scientists since 2005 with Union No 8797.

- Participation in the Organising Committee and Programme Committee of the “Civil Education in Natural Sciences” 30 September - 1 October 2017 20<sup>th</sup> - Plovdiv Conference; Participation as a trainer in the “Civil Education” Master Class under the program “Formation of Key Competences in Natural Sciences in an interactive educational environment - under a program for up-qualification of teachers of the Department of KPRPS at “Paisii Hilendarski” University.

- Recommendation by Maria Gaidarova (current Deputy Minister of Education and Science) on a scientific study on: Innovative pedagogical-methodical models for ecological education using modern information tools.

- Trainer of RAABE Bulgaria Ltd. since 2013. She has been engaged as a trainer on national projects, as well as periodically “Organising and conducting trainings of pedagogical specialists”. Training programmes for pedagogical specialists organised by RAABE are presented (Applied annotation of the program "Formation of key competences in natural sciences in interactive educational environment. The program is displayed on the website of Raabe Bulgaria.

- In 2013 she participated as a trainer on a large-scale national project “Qualification of pedagogical specialists” BG051PO001-3.1.03-0001.

- Participation as a lecturer in the Second National Teachers’ Forum “The Teacher in Action”, held on 2 September 2016 in Sofia, with a presentation on the topic “Health-environmental competencies in the training in natural sciences”.

A small part of the scientific and scientifically applied activity declared by the candidate has been highlighted. My assessment of the publications and results used in scientific and social practice; in the projects, in the monographs, in her articles in prestigious magazines and forums abroad, the reports in works at international scientific conferences, sessions and seminars in Bulgaria and abroad, etc. present as evidence Chief Assist Dr. Zlatka Vakleva as a scientist with recognised experience and competencies in the field for which the competition was announced.

*Contributions (scientific, applied- scientific, applied) and citations.* The contents analysis characterising the main achievements of scientific, applied-scientific, applied and methodological contributions is divided as follows into those with theoretical and practical - applied contributions of relevance to science and practice. Special attention is paid to the monographs summarised in associate-professor theses, plus equivalent publications, gives me reason to consider that the contributions are the exclusively personal work of the candidate. After each contribution, it is indicated where exactly it is contained and to which of the following groups it is assigned: it is formulated and justified the problems of the researched scientific field and the solution of the problem; it is available to formulate and justify a new theory and hypothesis in the fields in which she works; she proves with new means significant new aspects of already existing scientific fields, which makes her research completely innovative by solving existing problems, theories, hypotheses and obtaining confirmatory facts. The most relevant is the prospect of development, the continuum of scientific searches in an upgraded and complementary grading.

Zlatka Vakleva has well-known: *E-11* citations in scientific publications referenced and indexed in world-famous scientific information databases (**105 points**); *E-12* Quotations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review (**680 points**); *E-13* Quotes in unreferred journals with scientific review (**95 points**). Of the cited citations by content, in detail, by authors (foreign; outside a team in which the candidate participates; by her colleagues in the country and

abroad, etc.), by periods and years (used before/for/after other procedures, in recent years, etc.) there is an assessment of the recognition of Chief Asst. Vakleva in scientific circles in Bulgaria and abroad From the fact of quantitative and qualitative indicators, an analysis of the significance of the contributions to the candidate's scientific works is made unambiguously, observing the indicators of the criteria for occupying the academic post "associate professor", I will repeat once again that they are equivalent to academic position (AP) "professor".

### **2.1. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution.**

My assessment of the candidate's personal contribution to relevant publications, scientific and academic works, etc. is that the results formulated and obtained are her personal work and merit.

### **3. Critical remarks and recommendations.**

I don't have any critical comments or remarks. In principle, my recommendation to the scientific works and the activities of the candidate, to the sets of materials, is in an aspect of the future use of scientific and applied contributions, for their promotion, i.e. to be presented in scientific forums and publications in foreign languages, as much as possible, so that Bulgarian science can be visible, recognizable. Here the author does it with regularity and perseverance. As a wish - not to stop her dissemination activity.

## **CONCLUSION**

My overall assessment of the presented scientific works is extremely high and positive. There are sufficient scientifically applied and applied contributions.

As a member of the scientific jury, I express my unequivocal position that **I am in favour** of holding the corresponding academic position of associate professor by the candidate.

The documents and materials presented by Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva **meet all the requirements of the** Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rules for Implementation of LDASRB and the respective Regulations of the PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The candidate in the competition **has** submitted a **sufficient, significant and impressive** number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defence of the Educational and Scientific Degree (ESD) "doctoral" thesis. In her works there are original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition as a representative part of them have been published in journals and scientific collections published by international academic publishers.

Theoretical developments have practical applicability, some of them are directly oriented towards learning work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Dr. Zlatka **Vakleva cannot be questioned.**

The results achieved in the academic and scientific research activities are **fully** in line with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Rules of the PU for implementation of the LDASRB.

After having been acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysis of their significance and contained in them scientific, applied- scientific and applied contributions, I find it reasonable to give my **positive** assessment and **recommend to** the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogics for the selection of Chief Assistant Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva at the academic position “associate professor” at the PU “Paisii Hilendarski” in: the area of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Innovation in Education).

09 March 2023

**Jury member’s opinion:** .....  
(signature)

**(Prof. DSc. Yuliya Georgieva Doncheva)**