

STATEMENT

by **Vladimira Stefanova Angelova, PhD** –

Professor at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

of scientific works presented in relation with participation in a contest

for occupying the academic position of “**Associate professor**”

at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

under higher education area: **1. Pedagogical Sciences,**

professional field: **1.2. Pedagogy**

(Theory of education and didactics – Innovative educational models)

Assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD from Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” is the only candidate who took part in the contest for occupying the academic position of “Associate professor” announced in state gazette issue № 32 of 09.04.2024 and on the Web site of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” for the needs of the Department of *Pedagogy and Educational Management* of the Faculty of Pedagogy (FP).

1. Summary of the candidate’s procedure for the contest

With order № RD 21-11-81 of 07.06.2024 г. issued by the Rector of Plovdiv University ‘Paisii Hilendarski’(PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in a contest for occupying the academic position of “associate professor” at PU under higher education area: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics – Innovative educational models) announced for the needs of the Department of *Pedagogy and Educational Management* of the Faculty of Pedagogy (FP).

Only **one candidate** has submitted documents for participation in the contest announced: **assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD** from PU “Paisii Hilendarski”.

The set of materials submitted by assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD in paper and in electronic form complies with the Regulations on the Academic Staff Development of PU.

At the first meeting, held on 14.06.2024, the scientific jury accepted the documents for the contest and found that assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova's scientific production is in accordance with the national minimum and additional faculty requirements and is allowed to participate in the competition.

At that meeting I was appointed as a reviewer. After reviewing the submitted documents I did not find deviations from the procedure.

The set of materials submitted by assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD is accurately prepared and organized and allows objective and detailed assessment of the candidate in the contest for acquiring the academic position of “associate professor”.

Assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD participated in the contest with 15 scientific papers: 2 monographs, and 13 scientific papers. This scientific production was not submitted for acquiring the scientific position of “doctor”.

All the scientific papers comply with the profile of the contest, meet the requirements and can be reviewed.

Biographical information about the candidate

Assistant Professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD, received her bachelor's degree in "Preschool and Primary School Education" in 2007 at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". In 2010 and 2014, she obtained two master's degrees respectively, in the specialties "English language and methodology of early foreign language teaching" and "English language and methodology", again at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

Her professional career began in 2007 as an educator and teacher in the primary stage of secondary school. From 2012 to 2015, she was a part-time teacher of English Language Teaching Methodology at PU. And from 2015 until now, he has been working at the PU, Department of "Pedagogy and Educational Management" at the Faculty of Education. Consecutively held the academic positions: assistant (2015 - 2018) and assistant professor (2018 - until now) in Pedagogy.

In 2016 Diana Dimitrova, obtained the educational and scientific degree "doctor". The topic of her dissertation research is: Interactive methods of teaching English in primary education.

Her main duties and responsibilities are: teaching, research and administrative activities.

From 2021, she performs the functions of coordinator of the Bachelor's degree programme 'Pedagogy'. It should be noted that assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD has participated in many faculty committees for the preparation of documents for program accreditation of different professional fields.

The candidate's scientific interests are in the field of pedagogy. Her professional competence and qualification are in accordance with the profile of the announced competition for associate professor.

Personal impressions

I know assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD as a respected instructor, following and creating modern trends in education. As a scientist, she always adheres to high scientific criteria, as evidenced by her scientific output.

2. Summary characteristic of candidate's activities

Assessment of the candidate's pedagogical and educational activity

The pedagogical and educational activity of assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova PhD is over 12 year long. She has been teaching predominantly in the field of pedagogy. There are 15 (fifteen) subjects taught by the candidate in various bachelor's and master's programs.

It is worth noting that she is a sought-after lecturer under the ERASMUS+ program, where she conducts lecture courses in English.

The work of associate professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD with students is diverse. She regularly consults them on issues related to their theoretical and practical training. Under her guidance, 12 (twelve) undergraduates and graduates and 1 (one) postgraduate developed their thesis papers and successfully graduated their education.

Assistant Professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD actively participated in the development of 14 (fourteen) courses for different bachelor's degree programs, 5 (five) for different master's degree programs and 1 (one) for a qualification course for pedagogical specialists.

The assessment of the pedagogical and educational activity of assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD is high. She applies the most modern achievements of information technologies in his educational activities and uses contemporary instructional methods and technical means.

Her instructional workload during the last academic year was more than 900 hours with a norm of 360 hours.

Assessment of the candidate's scientific-research activity

The presented scientific production of assistant Professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD complies with the topic of the contest. Scientific works have a theoretical and applied benefits and deal with current pedagogical problems

The scientific production in the academic development of Assistant Professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD are 29. In the current contest for the academic position "Associate professor" are included 15 scientific works: 2 (two) monographs, 13 (thirteen) scientific articles, of which 4 (four) are scientific publications referenced and indexed in Web of Science and 9 (nine) – in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes.

The content and the developed ideas in the proposed scientific papers can be classified, according to the author's proposal, in the following thematic areas:

- Scientific papers related to research and implementation of innovations in primary school education

Scientific contributions in this field can be evaluated from the presented monograph [2] and scientific articles [3; 4; 5]. The relevance and significance of the research for modern education is indisputable.

The publications from this thematic area present the research related to the study of the features of the innovative educational environment. The main characteristics of interactive learning as an innovation are explored.

The monograph [2], the structure of which is built professionally, is of high theoretical and applied value. It presents the pedagogical model developed and approved by the author for learning English based on the application of interactive methods in primary school. The problems discussed in the book have important theoretical, practical and applied significance in relation to the modern educational organization, which implies effective implementation of innovations in order to increase the quality of education.

- Scientific research clarifying the nature and effectiveness of interactive teaching and its application in the educational process

The scientific and applied contributions here are defined according to the presented publications [2; 4; 5; 7; 10; 15].

An in-depth theoretical analysis of interactive teaching aimed at achieving effective knowledge acquisition, formation and development of skills is presented.

The research related to clarifying the essence, content and significance of interactive methods, intended mainly for educational purposes at school, as well as the possibilities of applying these methods as an opportunity for effective learning, are competently presented.

The researched and described opportunities for visualizing the learning content by applying interactive methods in primary English language learning are also of great interest.

- Research and scientific developments related to revealing the peculiarities of pedagogical animation and its application

Scientific contributions in this field are reported based on the analysis of the book [1] and publications [6; 8; 9; 11; 12; 13].

In terms of structure and content, the monograph [1] is professionally constructed. Theoretical aspects of animation in various fields with an emphasis on education are competently explained. Different types of animations are described in detail and their significance for learning is explained. A didactic model for the implementation of animation in education has been developed. The studies and possibilities of pedagogical animations for enriching the pedagogical interaction and stimulating the motivation for learning are presented in detail.

The completed research concerning the influence of animation on the formation and development of social skills of primary school students and the aesthetic culture of children in kindergarten and primary school is presented in detail. The possibilities of the musical game as a means of laying the foundations of the aesthetic culture in the formation of the personality of preschool children were also investigated.

- Scientific research concerning the possibilities for socialization and education of Roma children

Scientific contributions in this field are defined according to the presented scientific articles [3; 10].

The studies related to the socialization and education of Roma children in an innovative educational environment are presented with skill and professionalism. The interactive methods applied in training are considered as a means of forming a positive attitude of Roma children towards education and increasing their engagement in educational activities.

- Development of didactic models for application of interactive methods and animations for innovative presentation of educational content

The practical and applied contributions in this group are evaluated based on certain chapters of the monographs [1; 2] and the publication [14].

A didactic model for early foreign language teaching was professionally built and tested by applying interactive teaching methods

Criteria for measuring students' achievements in foreign language teaching have been precisely developed.

An author's model for the implementation of pedagogical animation in training has been competently developed. It includes methods and means of applying animation in education. Numerous games and digital resources have been developed for teaching through animation.

- Theoretical, practical and applied developments in creating teaching aids for innovative presentation of educational content

Scientific and applied contributions in this area are reported based on developed parts of the monographs [1; 2] and the scientific article [12].

The main attention here is directed to considering the specifics of the innovative educational environment and the effective application of interactive methods.

The theoretical and organizational issues related to training through animations are competently explained.

The specifics of the influence of pedagogical animation on the formation and development of social skills of primary school-aged students are described in detail.

The participation of assistant professor Diana Dimitrova, PhD in 7 (seven) scientific research projects, of which 6 (six) are national and 1 (one) – international is documented. She participated with reports in forums at national and international level.

The analysis of the research activity shows that it is extremely valuable.

Contributions and Citations

The presented analysis and my positive assessment of the quality of the materials submitted by assistant professor Diana Dimitrova, PhD for participation in this contest shows that there are indisputable indications for serious ***scientific and applied contribution*** in the field of pedagogy.

The submitted scientific papers are *personal achievement of the author*. Based on the analysis of these works, I conclude that there is *no plagiarism*.

The importance of the scientific production of assistant professor Diana Dimitrova, PhD can be judged by the numerous documented *citations*, which means that her works are known among the scientific community. The candidate submitted a reference for 19 citations. Of these, 17 are in in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and 2 in non-refereed journals with scientific review.

The Regulations for Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria define the minimum national requirements related to the scientific activity of the candidates for acquiring the academic position "associate professor". Assistant professor Diana Dimitrova, PhD not only fulfilled, but almost twice exceeded these requirements. She also fulfilled all additional requirements of FP at PU 'Paisii Hilendarski'. Evidence of the fulfillment of these requirements is presented in Reference No. 7 of the list of documents.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by assistant professor Diana Dimitrova, PhD comply with all the requirements of the *Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria*, the Regulations on its Implementation, and the respective PU 'Paisii Hilendarski' Regulations for acquiring the academic position of 'associate professor'.

The candidate in the contest has presented a significant number of high-quality scientific papers published after the materials used for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor". The candidate's publications contain original scientific and applied contributions. The theoretical developments have practical applicability, as some of them are directly oriented to the instructional activity. The scientific and teaching qualification of assistant professor Diana Dimitrova, PhD is undeniable.

The high results achieved by the candidate in the teaching and research activities fully comply with the requirements for acquiring the academic position of "associate professor".

I will explicitly note that the candidate in the contest fulfills the minimum national requirements as well as the additional requirements of FP at PU for acquiring the academic position "associate professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy. I have no doubt about plagiarism in the publications submitted for review.

After reviewing the materials and scientific works presented in the contest, and after analyzing their significance and the scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give a well-deserved high evaluation and my **positive assessment** and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy to appoint assistant professor Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD for the

academic position "associate professor" at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics – Innovative educational models).

25.08. 2024

**Statement, prepared by:
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