

## STATEMENT

**from Assoc. professor PhD Vania Angelova Sivakova,  
University of Plovdiv “Paisiy Hilendarski” Faculty of Education,  
Department "Pedagogy and Education Management"**

of materials, submitted for participation in a competition  
for occupying the academic position "docent"  
at University of Plovdiv „Paisiy Hilendarski“

in area of higher education 1. Educational sciences,

of professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics – Innovative educational models)

In the competition for "docent", announced in the State newspaper, No. 32 from 09.04.2024 and on the internet page of University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU) for the needs of the Department "Pedagogy and Education Management" at the Faculty of Education, as a candidate participates Ch. Assist. Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD, from the "Pedagogy and Education Management" Department, University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski".

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate**

By order No. № ПД -21-1181 from 07.06.2024 of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski", I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of 'docent' in the PU in the area of higher education 1. Educational sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics – Innovative educational models), announced for the needs of the Department "Pedagogy and Education Management" at the Faculty of Education of the University of Plovdiv “Paisiy Hilendarski”.

Only one candidate submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Ch. Assist. Diana Minkova Dimitrova, Ph.D., from the Department of "Pedagogy and

Education Management" at the Faculty of Education of the University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The presented by Ch. Assist. Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD a set of materials in paper format is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" (RDASUP), and includes the following documents:

- an application for admission to competition;
- CV in European format;
- copies of two higher education diplomas with an acquired educational-qualification degree "master";
- a copy of a diploma for academic degree "Doctor" (PhD);
- a list of scientific works;
- scientific works (copies of publications and citations);
- a reference of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
- a reference of compliance with additional faculty requirements;
- annotations of the materials with the scientific works under Act. 65. from RDASUP in Bulgarian and English;
- self-assessment of scientific contributions in Bulgarian and English;
- a declaration of originality and authenticity of the applied documents;
- a reference of work experience;
- documents for scientific research and educational work;
- certificates for teaching mobility and certificates for participation in international scientific conferences.

The candidate Ch. Assist. Diana Minkova Dimitrova has applied a list of a total of 15 scientific works, of which 2 monographs, 4 scientific articles in Bulgarian, 9 scientific articles in a foreign language – 5 in English, 2 in Russian and 2 in Ukrainian. I accept all scientific works for the statement. The distribution of the scientific works by relevant rubrics, in the country and abroad, is as follows: 6 in the Bulgarian language and 9 in a foreign language.

The candidate Ch. Assist. Diana Minkova Dimitrova, PhD graduated in 1993 from secondary school "Paisiy Hilendarski", Plovdiv and 1994 musical school "Dobrin Petkov" with profile classical singing. In 2007, she graduated Preschool and primary school pedagogy from

University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" Bachelor's degree in the Faculty of Pedagogics. In 2010, she graduated with a master's degree in English language and method for early foreign language education in University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski". In 2014, she graduated with a second master's degree in English language and methodic in University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski". In 2016, she defended her doctoral dissertation in the area of higher education 1. Pedagogical studies, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy. In 2016, she was appointed to the position of assistant in the Faculty of Education of University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski". From year 2018 to the present, she holds the position of chief assistant at the Department "Pedagogy and Education Management" of the Faculty of Education.

I have known Dr. Diana Dimitrova since 2014 and my personal impressions are positive. Dr. Dimitrova is a responsible, diligent and fair teacher.

## **2. General characteristics of the applicant's activity**

### ***Compliance of minimum national requirements***

From the applied reference of compliance with the minimum national requirements, it is clear that Ch. Assist. Diana Dimitrova has 50 points on indicator A, 100 on indicator B, 310 on indicator G, 220 on indicator D, i.e. the total number of points is 680 with a minimum of required 400 points. There is a complete coverage of the minimum national requirements and even a significant excess of the points in indicators G and D. Additionally she has 110 points on indicator E.

### ***Assessment of educational and pedagogical activity***

Ch. Assist. Diana Dimitrova, teaches various academic disciplines in specialties for the acquisition of the bachelor's degree and the master's degree. All of them are related to pedagogy – (Theory of education and didactics, Paradigms of upbringing, Paradigms of education, Educational history and etc.).

### ***Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied activity***

Ch. Assist. Diana Dimitrova participates in the announced competition for 'docent' with 15 academic publications. The distribution of scientific works is as follows: habilitation work – 1 monograph, 1 monograph that are not presented as the main habilitation work, 4 articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information, from which I found only 3 in Web of science, 9 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective

volumes. In one of the publications, some texts partially overlap with texts in another publication (under number 7.1 and 7.9 in the National Minimum Requirements Reference).

The teaching activity of Dimitrova is provided with over 1000 hours of auditorium occupancy, realized by lecture courses on "Pedagogy", seminar exercises on "Pedagogy", current and internship practices in the field, directly corresponding with the announced competition. Dr. Dimitrova participates in lecture courses in master's and qualification programs. In her teaching work, Dimitrova uses innovative methods based on modern science and technology in education, which leads to the improvement of the quality of the educational process and the overall culture of the students.

To the activity of the candidate should be added the participation in 6 national, educational and scientific research projects mainly for the "Scientific Research" Fund at University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" and 1 international project as a member of research teams. Participation in six international scientific conference on the topic of pedagogical animation and interactive learning methods gives the candidate the opportunity to promote scientific achievements in the field of innovative educational models.

The applied references show the activity of the candidate in two areas: teaching and scientific research, between which there is a constant transfer.

### **Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied) and citations**

Form the provided citation reference, I find a total of 22 properly documented citations. As 17 of which in monographs and collective volumes and 2 citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and 3 in refereed peer-reviewed journals, of which I can find 2 in WoS. The citations cover the period from 2018 to 2024. The total number of points obtained in the end is 645, where there is full coverage of the minimum national requirements and even a significant excess of points.

Information about the contributions is contained in the self-assessment made by the candidate Diana Dimitrova, who points out the contributions of her publication in six areas:

- Contributions to the first thematic area are presented in research and development related to tracking and improving the content of education through the introduction of innovations. The features of the innovative educational environment in the primary school are described. Interactive learning as an innovation is explored.

- The researches related to clarifying the essence and effectiveness of interactive learning suggest that the application of interactive methods to create conditions for active interaction between the participants in the educational process and are presented in the second thematic area. The essence, content and significance of interactive methods are described, including for forming students' motivation for learning. A comprehensive review of the possibilities for the application of interactive methods as an opportunity for effective learning through experience and training has been made. The possibilities for visualizing the learning content through the application of interactive methods in the teaching of English in the primary school have been studied.
- A comprehensive study was made and the features of pedagogical animation, the types of animation, their importance for education, the application of animation as an innovation in education to increase the effectiveness of educational activities, the easier absorption of educational content and the enrichment of pedagogical interactions with children of primary school age. The possibilities of pedagogical animation for enriching the pedagogical interaction with animation elements and stimulating the motivation for learning, based on learning through fun and experience, are presented and are presented as contributions in a third thematic area. The influence of pedagogical animation on the formation and development of social skills in students, of educational animation on the formation of aesthetic culture in children's personality, including through musical games, has been studied.
- The contributions in thematic area four are related to research and analysis of inclusive processes and tracking the change of attitudes towards the socialization and education of children and students with Roma ethnicity. A study has been carried out tracking the possibilities of the innovative educational environment, used as a prevention factor in the case of Roma children dropping out of school. A study was carried out revealing the possibilities of interactive methods used as a means of forming a positive attitude of Roma children towards school.
- Technologies have been developed for the application of interactive methods and pedagogical animation for innovative presentation of the educational content,

including for early foreign language learning. Models of good practices and recommendations in the work and education of children and students in primary school are indicated and presented as a contribution to the fifth thematic area. An author's system has been developed for measuring the achievements of students in learning a foreign language. An author's model developed and planned for testing for the implementation of pedagogical animation in training through the application of animation elements.

- The contributions in thematic area 6 are theoretical and practical-applied related to the creation of textbooks, for student teachers, pedagogical specialists, and other specialists in the field of training related to the innovative educational environment as well as to the optimization and offering of innovative models for the inclusion of pedagogical animation in the learning process.

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

I do not have any remarks and recommendations regarding the documentation and publications in the competition.

### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by Ch. Assist. Diana Minkova Dimitrova correspond to all the requirements of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Law (ASDRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ASDRB and the relevant Regulations of University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific research works published after the materials used in the defense of the ONS "Doctor". There are scientific and applied contributions in the candidate's works. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to academic work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Dr. Diana Minkova Dimitrova are doubtless.

The results achieved by Dr. Diana Minkova Dimitrova in her educational and research activities fully correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Education, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Plovdiv for the application of ASDRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to **give my positive assessment** and **to recommend** to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty board of the Faculty of Education for the election of Dr. Diana Minkova Dimitrova for the academic position of "docent" in the University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics – Innovative educational models).

Date:  
04.09.2024

Composed the statement:  
Assoc. Prof. PhD Vania Angelova Sivakova