

OPINION

by

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External member of the Scientific Jury, according to Order No. PD-22-33 of 09.01.2026 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski".

Subject: Competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy), announced for the needs of the Department of "Preschool Pedagogy" at the Faculty of Pedagogy in the State Gazette No. 96/11.11.2025 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The only candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Angelova Kamenova, lecturer in the Department of "Preschool Pedagogy" at the Faculty of Pedagogy at PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

I. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate for the competition

At its first meeting, the Scientific Jury accepted the documents for the competition and established that the scientific production presented by Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Angelova Kamenova is in accordance with the national minimum and additional requirements of the PF, and is admitted to participation in the competition.

Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Kamenova has prepared the documentation for the competition correctly and precisely. All necessary documents provided for in the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" have been presented, which allows for a precise quantitative and qualitative assessment of the overall academic development of the candidate.

The necessary evidence of publication activity is attached and a list of citations is presented. References for compliance with the minimum national requirements and with additional requirements at the faculty level are also available.

In addition to the required documents, the evidence also contains additional references certifying all circumstances related to the qualification, professional activity and achievements of the candidate in the competition.

Candidate's Career Profile

Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Kamenova graduated from the Petko Rachov Slaveykov Secondary School in Kardzhali in 2004. In 2010, she graduated from the Bachelor's Degree in Preschool Pedagogy and English at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Paisii Hilendarski University.

She has completed a master's degree program at the Paisii Hilendarski University in English Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of Philology with a professional qualification of English Teacher (Grades 1-12) (2012). In 2019, she obtained the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics) after successfully defending a dissertation on the topic: "Innovative pedagogical model for learning a foreign language in preschool age".

After successfully passing competitions, in 2019 she was appointed to the academic position of "Assistant", and since 2023 she has held the position of "Chief Assistant" in the Department of "Preschool Pedagogy" at the Faculty of Pedagogy, where she has been working to this day.

The above-mentioned highlights from the professional biography of the candidate in the competition undoubtedly prove that she has significant teaching experience and is establishing herself as a competent specialist in her professional field. The scientific works presented by her show purposefulness and consistency in her research and pursuits, interest in the problems of upbringing and socio-emotional development of preschool children, which fully satisfies the requirements for the profile and qualification of the candidate for the announced competition.

II. General characteristics of the candidate's activities

1. Assessment of the candidate's teaching and learning activities

Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Kamenova is an established and respected lecturer. Her teaching workload report shows that she has a significantly higher than the norm teaching workload. Her classroom workload in recent academic years has been doubled (between 800-900 hours), with a norm of 360 hours. This proves that the competition is provided with the necessary number of hours.

The teaching and learning activities of the candidate in the competition are in the field of her professional training and scientific interests. She teaches students from bachelor's and master's programs (full-time and part-time study) academic disciplines related to Preschool Pedagogy - Preschool Pedagogy, Psychology and Pedagogy of Early Childhood, Continuity between Kindergarten and School, Pedagogical Interaction in a Multicultural Environment, etc.

Dr. Kamenova's work with students, as a scientific supervisor of diploma projects and as a mentor of the Young Pedagogist Club at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Plovdiv, deserves attention.

The teaching and teaching activities of Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Kamenova undoubtedly deserve high praise. She actively participated in the development of 10 curricula, as well as in the development of teaching and methodological materials for students - exam options for semester exams. Her activity in faculty committees for the preparation of documents for program accreditation of professional areas and a doctoral program is significant. She is the coordinator of the preschool pedagogy and preschool pedagogy with a foreign language specialties (2020-2025).

2. Evaluation of the candidate's research activity

The scientific works of Dr. E. Kamenova are grouped precisely, according to the instructions for covering the minimum national requirements for occupying the position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy.

The list of total scientific production contains 25 titles, of which 11 were submitted in previous procedures and are not reviewed.

he scientific works with which he participates in the competition for "Associate Professor" are 14 (all after acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in 2019 and a competition for Chief Assistant in 2023), which are distributed as follows:

- 1 (one) independent monograph, which is presented as a habilitation work;
- 1 (one) book based on a defended dissertation work;
- 5 (five) articles published in refereed and indexed scientific publications in world databases (of which 1 in English and 4 in Bulgarian);
- 7 (seven) articles published in non-refereed, but scientifically reviewed publications.

The topics of the publications fully meet the requirements of the competition.

In a comprehensive chronological view of the scientific publications presented by the candidate, the upgrading and deepening of the research questions in the direction of the competition is impressive. In her publication activity, Dr. Kamenova appears as the sole author in almost all publications (only 2 publications are co-authored).

I have no doubt about plagiarism in the publications submitted for review.

Her works contain certain scientific contributions to pedagogical theory and practice, and cover a wide range of scientific issues. They are a reflection of the research and teaching activities of Chief Assistant E. Kamenova and confirm her erudition and competence. I fully accept the exhaustive, reasoned reference of the candidate in the competition. Without claiming such exhaustiveness (and details), I emphasize the following contributing moments of the scientific production in three thematic areas:

Contributions

The research activity of Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Kamenova in the first thematic area is focused on revealing the role of movement as an indispensable health resource, supported by the results of empirical research. The main functions of movement and the need to develop motor activity are outlined. The author emphasizes the role of parents

and educators in stimulating motor activity in preschool children. The trends of the activity approach in the educational process are examined, and an empirical study was conducted that studies the important role of additional activities in stimulating socio-emotional development in preschool children. Outdoor play and games with open rules are studied as a significant resource for stimulating motor activity and the emotional-volitional preparation of the child for school.

The object of her research interests in the second thematic area are some aspects of organized activities as a means of stimulating the educational process and activities of preschool children. Specially organized work activities are proposed. Their educational value and their place in the educational process in kindergarten are examined.

A significant contribution is made by the developed and presented games to stimulate foreign language learning in kindergarten, as well as author's games to stimulate the emotional-volitional preparation of the child for school. The positive aspects of children's presentation are taken into account, as well as its place in the educational process, as a modern resource.

Other contributions are found in the third thematic area, dedicated to the main challenges faced by teachers in modern preschool practice. Research related to identifying the determinants that influence the quality of pedagogical work is presented with experience and erudition. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of a large-scale empirical study conducted among teachers in preschool education in Bulgaria is presented.

The monographic work and the book developed on the basis of the dissertation work are distinguished by their contribution, which will ensure the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills by students, as well as the upgrading of existing ones.

The areas in which Ch. Asst. Dr. E. Kamenova works are extremely important, relevant and promising. Proof of the significance of the research conducted with her participation are the publications in specialized publications, as well as the numerous citations.

● **Reflection (citation) of the candidate's publications**

The citation report presents a total of 24 citations, of which: 5 are in journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information; 3 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review, and the remaining 16 are in non-refereed journals with scientific review. It is evident that there is interest in the candidate's scientific works in the competition, which speaks of the quality of the scientific production.

● **Scientific activity**

The research activity of Dr. Elena Kamenova leaves a good impression. She actively participates with reports in international and national conferences on the problems of preschool upbringing and education. In addition to her teaching activities, the candidate in the competition is a member of a research team in 1 (one) scientific research project, at the Scientific Research Fund at the Paisii Hilendarski University.

III. General assessment of the candidate's compliance with the mandatory conditions and mandatory quantitative criteria and scientometric indicators

The volume and quality of the presented scientific production by Chief Asst. Dr. E. Kamenova fully meets the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to the Regulations of the "Paisii Hilendarski" University, the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation.

From the presented report it is evident that the scientific production of Ch. Assistant E. Kamenova not only covers, but by some criteria even exceeds the minimum national requirements and those of the "Paisii Hilendarski" University for AD "Associate Professor" (table 1). Additionally, there are 15 points by indicator E.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of the results of Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Kamenova and the minimum required points for AD "Associate Professor" by groups of indicators

a group of metrics	minimum required number of points for associate professor	Number of points based on the evidence presented by the candidate
A	50	50
B	–	–
W	100	100
G	200	265
D	50	185
E	–	15
Total points	400	615

IV. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

From the materials submitted for the competition, I am left with the impression that Dr. Kamenova has invested a lot of energy and strength in her professional development and has achieved significant results. My overall assessment is that she demonstrates thoroughness and systematicity in her work, a high sense of responsibility and consistency in the search for innovations in the chosen scientific field.

V. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks or recommendations regarding the activities and achievements of the candidate in the competition. I wish her successful development in the scientific areas to which she has directed her research interest.

VI. Conclusion

The candidate participating in this competition fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LAADRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of LAADRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Paisii Hilendarski University for holding the academic position of Associate Professor.

Chief Assistant Elena Kamenova, PhD shows a strong desire for development and potential for an academic and scientific career. She presents a sufficient volume of scientific production, with significant teaching and research experience.

My overall assessment of the professional development, teaching and research activities and scientific contribution is a reason to give a positive opinion and to confidently recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the election of Chief Assistant Dr. Elena Angelova Kamenova to the academic position "Associate Professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy)" for the needs of the Department of "Preschool Pedagogy" at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the "Paisiy Hilendarski" University.

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city of Plovdiv

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