

## **REVIEW**

**For obtaining an academic position**

**“Professor”**

**In the higher education field of 1. Pedagogical sciences,**

**With professional specialization in 1.2. Pedagogy (Special Pedagogy)**

**for the needs of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (Sofia University),**

**Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts,**

**announced in State Gazette No. 49 of 29.05.2020 and on the website of Sofia**

**University**

**Candidate:** Assoc. Prof. Emilia Hinkova Evgenieva, PhD

### **I. General description of the submitted materials**

#### **1. Details of the application**

The documents submitted in the competition by the candidate meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

To participate in the competition, the candidate has submitted a list of a total of 20 files with documents, which include:

- Publications - list of 21 publications and their scanned copies;
- List of all publications from the scientific output of the candidate;
- List of citations and accompanying evidence files;
- Scientific-metric data;
- Resume;

- Declaration of consent and a set of documents proving the teaching experience and project activity.

The presented documents are systematized and allow for their content to be traced.

## **2. Information on the Candidate**

### *Professional and biographical data about the candidate*

Assoc. Prof. Emilia Evgenieva, PhD has been a lecturer in the Department of Special Pedagogy and Speech Therapy at Sofia University since 1997. She started as a part-time assistant and was appointed as an assistant in the following year. She developed her doctoral dissertation in 1996 when she was a teacher at Veselin Hanchev High School in Sofia. Since 2007 she has been elected as an associate professor. According to information from the “Authors”, the candidate has taken part in 23 scientific and practical projects; has 43 publications; is a member of the editorial board of two journals; has supervised 11 graduate students who have successfully defended their doctoral dissertations. Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva is the head of two Master’s Programs: “Special Pedagogy for Graduates of Other Pedagogical Specialties” and “Ergotherapy for Children and Adults with Disabilities”. She leads classes in bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral programs on Special Pedagogy.

## **3. General characteristics of the scientific works and achievements of the candidate**

The scientific works submitted for review are 21, of which 1 monograph, 2 articles in refereed and indexed editions, 15 articles in non-refereed and indexed editions, 3 chapters in collective monographs. The submitted works also include 4 reviews of books and monographs, published in periodicals as well as 3 presentations of new books.

The problem areas in which Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD makes her publications are related to the current problems of the education of people with disabilities and the training of pedagogical specialists.

The training of pedagogical specialists is analyzed from a different point of view. For example, some of the conducted research takes into account the opinion of students from pedagogical specialties on certain problems of the processes in the educational system, for example in the monograph “Inclusive Education - Paradoxes and Innovations” (2020) and in the “Basic Training and Professional Qualifications of Teachers in Bulgaria and Turkey: A Comparative Study“ (2012). In others, an analysis is made of the process of preparation of students in these specialties and an assessment of the expectations for their future realization – “The Practical Preparation of the Students in the Field of Pedagogy” (2008).

The problems related to the education of people with disabilities are mainly considered from the standpoint of their language development and training. The research has addressed problems related to the language environment, the reduction of the learning content in Bulgarian, the structural characteristics of the language and their potential in the correction of problems in the development of students with special educational needs, interdisciplinary links and the role of various pedagogical tools to stimulate the process of integration of the different persons in the general education school and the society.

The presented monograph traces the trend of the results of research conducted in the last two decades, which is an interesting approach and allows to analyze not only the facts of the processes, but also to trace the development of the research idea. In the rest of the publications, the tendency is the same: for example, in several publications the theme of the fairytale is followed both from the point of view of the process, but also from the point of view of the therapeutic work. The fairytale is also the subject of analysis of the problems of reading comprehension in the collective monograph on this topic. Another topic worth noting is related to the profile and effectiveness of the teacher’s work. It is considered in relation to the teacher’s ability to construct the learning space, to reduce the learning content, to assess development by preparing individual characteristics, to regulate the language environment of students. These details can also be observed in the analysis of the teacher’s practical training.

The monograph “Inclusive Education - Paradoxes and Innovations” addresses several main ideas in the development of processes in the educational system by hierarchy: decentralization, integration, digitalization, inclusion and personal orientation. These basic directions for the development of the educational system are considered by observing the private-scientific educational content, the specifics of the administration and the resulting problems, the dependence of the integration process on the overall learning process in the system. Confirming or rejecting the theoretical findings are the participants in the process, directly dependent on its development: teachers, students, students of Pedagogy. The attitude to their opinion is equal and significant for the research conclusions and recommendations. It is noteworthy that the described innovations, such as the stages of introduction and acceptance of the digitalization of the process and the resulting digital literacy, are in fact well-prepared processes in the past, in the conditions of the tradition, which makes them possible. The paradox is rather in the way in which their innovative content is meaningful - namely the detachment from the root of the prerequisites for it. This is in the terms of digital literacy, which is preceded by electronic media information. With regard to the individual work, which is as old as the act of learning itself, it is presented as a basic approach in the inclusive education. The monograph lacks the bolder conclusion that explains these paradoxes.

This is the approach in the collective monograph “The Practical Preparation of the Students in the Field of Pedagogy”. The outlined contradictions in the organization and implementation of the pedagogical practice of the students are basic and continuing even today. One of the contradictions is presented in terms of the participants’ understanding of the normative texts. It turns out that the activities are carried out without making sense of the administrative provisions and therefore the roles are not made meaningful in their social and professional nature. This leads to the conclusion that the practical training is rather subordinated to the “deficient”, “lesson-in-the-center” model of organizing and implementing the learning process. Thus, even in the embryo of the pedagogical training, skills are set and formed, which later influence the effectiveness of the learning process.

Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva's participation in an international study presented in "The Diagnostics of Literacy" broadens the research perspective. The national peculiarities of literacy are sought in comparative terms.

Assoc. Prof. E. Evgenieva, PhD conducts several international comparative studies with her students in doctoral programs. In „Basic Training and Professional Qualifications of Teachers in Bulgaria and Turkey: A Comparative Study. Hacettepe University Journal of Education“ are presented the views of students from Bulgarian and Turkish universities on the problems of inclusion. An analysis of the cultural differences for this is made.

Last but not least, the candidate's interest in researching individual pedagogical techniques or working with different groups of children and students can be noted. Analyzes the use of art techniques in children with hearing problems and multiple disabilities in the publications "Children with Hearing Impairments and Their Classmates in Mainstream School" and "Children with Multiple Disabilities with Leading Visual Impairment", published in "Our experience. Art techniques for working with children with special educational needs" by "Flower" Theater.

In the overall scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD there is a purposefulness and commitment to the problems of the learning process and the implementation of the process of inclusion. Impressive is the constant search for interaction between general education trends and trends in the special pedagogy, on the basis of which to highlight the opportunities for their inclusion in each other.

#### **4. Characteristics and evaluation of the teaching activity of the candidate**

##### *Assessment of educational and pedagogical activity of the candidate.*

The teaching activity occupies a significant place in the professional realization of Assoc. Prof. Emilia Evgenieva, PhD. From the presented reports it can be seen that a significant part of her time is engaged in working with students in three stages: bachelors, masters and doctoral students. The main areas of teaching are as in her research - language training, inclusion and management of learning processes,

professional training. She is involved in both specialties of the Department of Special Pedagogy and Speech Therapy.

The information presented about the teaching activity by the candidate shows the same trend as outlined in her research work. The first thing that can be noted is that the disciplines she teaches in the three stages of higher education cover a wide range of competencies that are formed in future specialists. These are the private language problems that are considered in the preparation of specialists for working with children and students with special educational needs. The problems related to the organization and conduct of educational work, as well as problems related to assessment and self-assessment, which aspiring pedagogical specialists should be able to do.

Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD is also seriously active in the organization and management of the master's program in Special Pedagogy. In the conditions of constantly changing organization of the inclusion of children and students with special educational needs, it is necessary to constantly supplement and reorganize the preparation of the students in the Master's graduate programs. It is known that the training in a master's programs allows the system to acquire specialists with qualities and competencies to meet the latest changes. In this context, the master's program in Special Pedagogy is administered dynamically. For example, under project BG051PO001-4.3.04/0011 "Increasing the capacity of the academic staff of the pedagogical specialties of Sofia University in designing, conducting and providing quality electronic distance learning" the master's program is filled with electronic resources, which greatly facilitates the work of the team by teachers.

Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD works on the necessary distance learning and overcoming the problems with the authorship of the learning tasks presented by the students, through her participation in the project TeSLA - An Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning, 2016-2019 TeSLA - An Adaptive Trust -based e-assessment System for Learning, Horizon 2020 Project, as a pilot teacher. In this way the students, with which Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD had classes during the

academic years 2015-2018, are acquainted with the problems related to the anti-plagiarism policy and the way of solving in the electronic platforms.

An important moment in the development of the teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD is her work on projects related to teacher training and monitoring of innovative practices in the education system: she has presented 4 related materials as part of her documentation, while there are 24 related materials as referred in the “Authors”. The continuous connection with the practice from different teaching and expert positions gives an opportunity in the direct teaching work to present the main tendencies of the system and to increase the quality in the training of the pedagogical specialists.

Last but not least, I would like to pay attention to the training of doctoral students and their successful defense.

## **5. Content analysis of the scientific and scientific-applied achievements of the candidate contained in the materials for participation in the competition.**

### **6. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have no significant critical remarks on the submitted documents and papers.

### **7. Personal impressions of the candidate**

I have known Assoc. Prof. Evgenieva, PhD for more than 10 years, both in addition to the master’s programs in a foreign language and in addition to our work related to the development of the doctoral school at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts.

From the presented documents and from direct personal impressions I am convinced that the candidate is an experienced researcher, teacher and organizer.

She is able to work in a team so that the above findings are based on direct personal impressions, not just on documents.

I can summarize that my impressions are entirely positive and I make the recommendation below without reservation.

## **8. Conclusion on the application**

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition and based on the analysis of their significance and the scientific and scientific-applied contributions contained in them, **I confirm** that the scientific achievements meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the respective Regulations of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for holding the academic position “professor” in the scientific field and professional direction of the competition. In particular, the candidate satisfies the minimum national requirements in the professional field and no plagiarism has been established in the scientific papers submitted at the competition.

I give my **positive** assessment of the application.

## **II. General Conclusion**

Based on the above, **I recommend** the scientific jury to propose to the competent authority for selection to the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” to elect Assoc. Prof. Emilia Hinkova Evgenieva, PhD to take the academic position “professor” in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Special Pedagogy).

14.09.2020

Prepared the review:

Assoc. Prof. Milen Zamfirov, DSc