

REVIEW

on the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" by professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (ICT in education, e-learning of students with special educational needs), for the needs of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "(SU), Faculty of Pedagogy (FP), announced in State Gazette no. 57 of June 26, 2020 and on the website of Sofia University

Candidate: Head Assistant Dr. Blagovesta Stoyanova Jovkova

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Roumiana Peytcheva-Forsyth

1. Data for the competition

Dr. Blagovesna Stoyanova Yovkova is the only candidate in the competition for associate professor position, announced by the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the field of higher education 1.2. Pedagogy (ICT in education, e-learning of students with special educational needs), The competition is announced on the basis of a sufficient total number of compulsory subjects.

The documents submitted by the candidate for the competition comply with the requirements of ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "(PURPNSZADSU). The procedural requirements of the competition are met.

2. Details of the candidate

Head Assistant Professor Dr. Blagovesna Stoyanova Yovkova was born in 1971 in Sofia. The candidate acquired her "Master" degree in 1997 at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "in the specialty Bulgarian Philology: Specialist in Bulgarian language and literature and teacher in secondary school. In 2000 she obtained a second master's degree in pedagogy: Hearing and speech rehabilitation. In 2011 Blagovesna Yovkova acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics - Information and Communication Technologies in Education) after successfully defending a dissertation on: "Interactive educational multimedia in the teaching of oral speech to children with hearing impairment", Diploma № Sofia University 2011-42. During her doctoral studies, the candidate completed a six-month doctoral specialization at the Doctoral School of the Institute of Education at the University of London in the Doctoral Program "Methods of Educational Research" in 2007 and a three-month specialization at the same institute in 2009. In January -

November 2014. Blagovesna Yovkova attended a postgraduate professional qualification program at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" at the Faculty of Pedagogy and acquired the qualification "Specialist in design and conducting online training".

The candidate started her teaching career at Sofia University in 2008. From 2008 to 2012 she was a part-time assistant in "ICT in Education" at the Faculty of Pedagogy, and since 2013 she has been elected as a Head assistant at the same faculty.

Blagovesna Yovkova successfully combined her teaching with research in the frame of 3 international and 6 national and institutional projects. Particularly representative is her participation in the project "TeSLA - An Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning" under the program "Horizon 2020 - Research and Innovation Framework Program", where she was a researcher in one of the priority areas of the project - students with special educational needs.

3. Teaching

The teaching commitment of Head Assistant Professor Dr. Blagovesna Yovkova is impressive and respectful. She teaches 12 different disciplines in several specialties of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", which are part of bachelor's and master's programs and 1 in the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy - "Inclusive Education". The candidate is an assistant in some of them and a lecturer in others. Some of the disciplines are strongly theoretical in nature, while others are mainly practically oriented. Some of the subjects taught by the candidate are located thematically in the field of ICT in education, and the other part - in the field of special pedagogy. This makes Dr. Yovkova's teaching experience multifaceted and comprehensive, inspiring trust and respect. Since 2013 she has been teaching in 7 of the courses of the master's program "Information and Communication Technologies in Education" at the Faculty of Pedagogy, which since 2013 is the first accredited program in distance education at Sofia University. Dr. Yovkova participates in the team of the E-learning Center which provides training and qualification of university professors and teachers in the field of design and application of e-learning, as well as in the development of e-learning resources.

The teaching of the candidate is directly related to the announced competition in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (ICT in education, e-learning of students with special educational needs). Her courses are part of 3 bachelor's and 5 master's programs. For all courses in which she is a lecturer or assistant, Dr. Yovkova has developed a digital equivalent of learning activities and resources for classroom and extracurricular learning activities of students.

4. General characteristics of the scientific publications and research results of the candidate

The applicant's author's reference (Appendix №14. Reference to the original scientific contributions) correctly reflects her scientific contributions. The scientific interests of Dr. Blagovesna Yovkova are focused on the integration of information and communication technologies in a diverse educational context, and in particular in the training of students with special educational needs, and meet the scientific field of the announced competition.

Of the peer-reviewed 21 research papers, 12 have been published in internationally peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals, 9 articles have been published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals in Bulgaria. The other publications are a monograph (main habitation thesis) and a published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Of the publications submitted for the competition, the candidate has 4 publications, where she is the only author and in three of the other 21 scientific papers she is the first author.

The research publications meet the minimum national requirements (under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB) and respectively the additional requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific field and professional field of the competition, as follows:

Group of indicators	Contents	Number of points according to the minimum requirements for associate professor	Points of the candidate
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	0	0
B	Indicator 3	100	100
Г	Sum of indicators from 4 to 10	200	268,8
Д	Sum of indicators from 11 to 13	50	225
E	Sum of indicators from 12 to the end	0	–

The reference presented by the Department of Library and Information Services of the University Library at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the cited and indexed publications of the candidate shows 9 indexed publications and 15 citations in Web of science (h-index: 2), 5 indexed publications and 20 citations in Scopus (h-index: 2). A Google Science report shows h-index 5 for the candidate's indexed publications and 79 citations. Also EBSCO: Academic Search Complete shows 2 citations and Central and Eastern European Online Library / CEEOL / - 7 citations. In addition, the candidate has 4 indexed publications in EBSCO:

Academic Search Complete, 1 publication in SpringerLink and 1 publication in the Russian Index of Scientific Citation eLIBRARY.ru / РИИЦ /. Of the 21 publications presented, 15 are in English. The presented data from the number of published studies in international databases and their citation is a reliable indicator of the internationally recognized quality and significance of Blagovesna Yovkova's research publications and results.

5. Scientific contributions

In her research and published results, Dr. Yovkova demonstrates interest in the field of ICT integration in a diverse educational context, but with a special research focus on already established as specific sub-areas of this field – namely the educational multimedia, serious games, e-learning design and assessment. In most of the publications the author seeks the specifics of application of these technologies in the teaching and learning of students with SEN and disabilities, which attaches special importance to her research in this integrated theoretical and practical field. It is important to emphasize Dr. Yovkova's ability to conduct research within international teams (3 of the publications in English), which expands both her own research horizons and experience, and increases the significance of the results of these studies beyond Bulgaria.

An example of a successful research approach to the integrated field of information and communication technologies in education is the monographic work of Dr. Yovkova - "E-learning - opportunities to expand access to higher education for students with special educational needs'.

The following scientific contributions can be distinguished in this publication:

- The problems that students with different types of disorders encounter in the traditional attendance at the university are identified and presented in a systematic way.
- Valuable theoretical ideas related to the application of e-learning to expand access to higher education for students with SEN are analyzed.
- Different approaches and models for conceptualisation of accessibility of e-learning in the context of education of students with SEN are systematized.
- A toolkit has been developed that can be used for further research in this specific area.
- For the first time in Bulgaria, the opinions and attitudes of students with SEN were studied regarding the possibilities of electronic assessment to expand access to education in general, and to use the innovative online system for student authentication and anti-plagiarism TeSLA.
- The experience and the capacity of the academic staff of Sofia University for effective development, adaptation and use of electronic resources in the educational process of students with SEN are identified. As a result of the conducted empirical research, the needs of teachers

for increasing their competencies in this field in order to improve access to educational content have been defined.

To the scientific contributions of the monograph of Dr. Yovkova can be added some specific contributions of the other publications with which she participated in the competition, namely:

- With the help of various research approaches, among which stand out those of qualitative research, the candidate identifies the parameters of pedagogical effectiveness of the integration of various educational technologies (educational multimedia, virtual workshops, serious games) in different educational contexts;

- The parameters of successful approaches and models of design and application of e-learning in its various forms are outlined to optimize the learning of students with different types disabilities and disorders and to ensure full access and training of this group of students in higher education;

- Conceptualization of the concept of "accessibility" of e-learning in the context of training students with different types of disorders.

6. Personal impressions

Blagovesna Yovkova has been part of my teaching and research team for 12 years. Her ability to work and dedication, fairness - professional and human, loyalty to her colleagues, devotion to her students, make me fully convinced when I support her in her professional and career development with the clear awareness that I leave people like her after myself as a worthy successor to my mission in university education.

CONCLUSION

Comprehensive research and teaching activities, professional and personal qualities of the candidate Dr. Blagovesna Yovkova are convincing proof of her merits and a reliable basis for a promising professional career. The presented evidence and arguments give me grounds to convincingly propose to the members of the respected scientific jury to support her candidacy in the announced competition and to vote positively for the award of Dr. Blagovesna Yovkova for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (ICT in education, e-learning of students with special educational needs).

29/10/2020



Reviewer:

(Prof. Roumiana Peytcheva-Forsyth)