

STATEMENT

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. **NADEZHDA ANGELOVA KALOYANOVA**

in a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences. Professional field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Special pedagogy- Pedagogy of children with intellectual disabilities), published in State Gazette, issue #74 / dated: 21 Aug 2020)

Applicant: Head Assistant Professor Dr. **PENKA TODOROVA SHAPKOVA**

I. General description of the application according to the legislative requirements

The set of documents submitted by the applicant Penka Shapkova for participation in the competition meets the requirements of Art. 107. (1) of the Regulations on the conditions and the order for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University.

It is evident – from the presented documents – Dr. Shapkova is an established lecturer and scientist, with definite contributions to the development of special pedagogy, and she fits adequately into the academic community of Sofia University.

Dr. Shapkova acquired the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in 2013. Since 2007, she has held the position of Head Assistant Professor in Special Pedagogy. She is currently a member of the Faculty Council with the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts and the Academic Council of Sofia University.

For the competition, Dr. Shapkova has submitted a scientific paper that does not repeat publications submitted for acquiring the DOCTOR educational and scientific degree. There is no legally proven plagiarism in the submitted scientific papers.

From the reference pursuant to Art. 112, para. 2 of the regulations of Sofia University it is clear the teaching activity of Dr. Shapkova includes 31 subjects in the MASTER educational degree course, BACHELOR educational degree course and courses for post-graduation qualifications. All tutored subjects correspond to the profile of the competition. Dr. Shapkova has participated in the development of curricula for the specialties she teaches in. She is the author of curricula and periodically updates the currently established programs. Moreover, Dr. Shapkova teaches some of the courses in English. All subjects Dr. Shapkova is the main

lecturer have been developed as electronic courses and are currently conducted in an electronic environment.

Dr. Shapkova is an active coordinator of student internships and practice programs in both formal education and extracurricular activities. Particularly indicative of her responsibility for the training of future special educators is the work on their involvement in volunteering activities, as well as their joint research and publication activities.

She is a member of the National Association of Speech Therapists in Bulgaria and the Trade Union of Bulgarian Teachers.

She has participated in one international and 10 national projects as a trainer, researcher and supervisor. I would emphasize as particularly important from a scientific point of view her participation in the project entitled “Effective approaches in providing an accessible environment and stimulating the play of children with special educational needs as an element of early intervention and pre-school support”, funded by the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts.

II. Compliance of the application with the minimum national requirements and with the additional requirements set by St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University

I express the following standpoint on the presented scientific papers:

The presented 2 monographs by the author correspond to the requirements described in item 10 of the Additional Provisions of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

The presented chapter by the author in a collective monograph is described as part of a book entitled “Children with Down Syndrome – A Guide for Professionals and Parents”, ISBN code: 978954-9400-59-5, Ral-Colobar Publishing House, 2008, Sofia. The subtitle itself clearly says it is a guide or a manual, i.e. to be used as educational literature. In addition, on page 11, the authors themselves state: “The purpose of this book is to serve as a guide for professionals and parents, as well as a textbook for students who study the issues of these children”. Accordingly, the said book is registered with COBISS in the subject section of Manuals and Guides (see: <https://plus.bg.cobiss.net/opac7/bib/1231267044#full>). Apart from the fact the book does not meet the requirements for a monograph, the sections indicated as a “chapter of a collective monograph” by Dr. Penka Shapkova do not correspond in volume to the requirement of item 5 of the remarks [notes] to the scientometric indicators described in the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and in the Statutes of Sofia University, respectively. According to the said item, “Relating to monographs with

more than one author, there must be a separation statement between/among the authors; and in order to consider the work as monographic, the author should have a separate number of pages corresponding to the definition of a monograph. In case of authorship of a smaller number of pages, the participation of the respective author is considered as study paper or article". I propose this publication be removed from the list, as it essentially refers to indicator E.21: Published university textbook or a textbook used in the school network. This indicator is not part of the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor". This scientific work will not be considered in the substantive part of my standpoint – for the reasons stated above.

The article entitled "Approaches for therapy and education of children with SEN in new realities in Bulgaria, Knowledge International Journal International Journal, KNOWLEDGE IN PRACTICE, Vol. 28.3., Pp. 1015-1020, ISSN (print): 1857-923X, ISSN (online): 2545-4439, Global Impact & Quality Factor 1. 322 (2016), Skopje, 2018 does not meet the requirements of the National Center for Information and Documentation for publication in referenced and indexed in world known databases with scientific information (publications in SCOPUS and Web Of Science indexed periodicals are considered as such). This article should be considered a publication under indicator D (Bulgarian: Г), item 7: Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes.

In accordance with the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" and the requirements of the Statues of St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University (essentially overlapping with the national ones), I believe the report submitted by the applicant should be re-structured as follows:

Indicator A. Dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor – 50 points

Indicator B. Habilitation paper – monograph, 1 pc. (100 points)

Indicator D. 4. Published monograph, not presented as a main habilitation paper – 1 pc. (100 points)

7. Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes:

- By the author – 31 pcs. (310 points)
- Co-authored – 3 pcs.: 1 x 5 points; 1x 2.5 points; 1 x 2 points (9.5 points)

9. Study papers published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes – 1 pc. (15 points)

Indicator E. 12. Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review – 7 pcs. (70 points)

13. Citations or reviews in non-refereed journals with scientific review – 2 pcs. (10 points)

TOTAL number of points: 664.5

Despite the corrections made, the submitted materials meet all scientometric indicators and significantly exceed the minimum required points required for participation in a competition for the academic position of Associate Professor.

III. Substantive evaluation of the scientific paperwork of the applicant

1. “Approaches to personal development, support and inclusion of children with Down syndrome” Monograph

The focus of the monographic study is the peculiarities of the physical (somatic), motor, neuro-cognitive, linguistic and social development of children with Down syndrome. They are reflected in the context of the potential capabilities of these children, their learning style, as well as the planning of effective educational strategies and approaches for personal support according to their [individual] needs. The author's model of a specific program of educating children with Down syndrome in preschool and primary school age has been empirically derived. As a result of the approbation of the model, positive trends in the development of children's articulation abilities, speech, graphomotor skills, development of cognitive skills, enrichment of active vocabulary, formation of communication skills, stimulation of social competencies and development of emotional intelligence have been reported.

The structure of the monograph meets the requirements for this type of scientific paper. The monograph systematically and in a logical sequence summarizes the author's scientific research, the partial results of which can be traced in 6 author's publications and 2 co-authored publications.

A very good impression is made by the complex approach the author applies to the study of the issue of development and social integration of children with Down syndrome. All aspects of the concern are covered – medical, social, educational ones. The monographic research has a current trans-disciplinary vision and at the same time it is definitely concentrated in the

direction of the competition. The author's model has been developed in the context of the established competence approach and in accordance with the requirements of inclusive education.

2. “How to work with children with autism?” Monograph

The monograph examines the peculiarities of the development of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) based on an analysis of research and achievements of authors from around the world. Therapy and education approaches are presented, used successfully in the educational practice in Bulgaria. Emphasis is given to the early intervention and its effects and help for children with autism.

The topic of autism has been reflected on in 6 publications in specialized periodicals preceding the publication of the monographic study.

The monograph is significant from the point of view of a substantiated and practically developed idea of differentiating and refining the approach to each specific case.

3. Individual Cognitive Differences in Children with the Down Syndrome Study Paper

The study presents the results of an in-depth study of the features of cognitive functioning in children with Down syndrome in Bulgaria. Cognitive profiles of the studied children have been made empirically and effective strategies for working with them in the process of correctional and therapeutic impact and training have been established. The results of the research and the conclusions made are important for the pedagogical practice and can generate ideas for future research in this field.

The study is yet another significant contribution to the study of children with Down syndrome. In it, once again Dr. Shapkova authoritatively and scientifically confirms her theses about the need for a differentiated approach to the examination and education of children with Down syndrome.

4. Publications in specialized editions

Dr. Shapkova's publications are clearly concentrated in three thematic areas and show many years of in-depth research and applied activity in the areas of the open competition:

- **Diagnosis, therapy and education of children with Down syndrome**

This thematic area includes 13 publications, of which 1 monograph, 1 study and 11 publications in peer-reviewed editions. It is noteworthy 6 articles on the issue were published in the respected magazine of Special Pedagogy, a high credential for the author. The publications cover a 19-year period and present in development the scientific research of the applicant regarding the possibility for effective differentiated approaches to the research, correctional and therapeutic activity and education of children with Down syndrome.

· **Diagnosis, therapy and education of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)**

7 publications are presented in this field, of which one monograph, 6 publications in peer-reviewed editions. 4 articles were again published in the Special Pedagogy journal and 2 – in conference proceedings. The main emphasis in the publications are the approaches for early diagnosis and the inclusion programs for children with autism. These papers reflect trends in a 7-year period of the study and inclusion of children with autism from the position of Dr. Shapkova.

· **Diagnosis, therapy and education of children with intellectual disabilities**

In this field, the applicant has made 8 publications, one of these is co-authored. All publications show a complex and specific aspect where the applicant has methodically worked on the differentiation and the individual approach in the research and inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities.

· **Diagnosis, therapy and training of children with special education needs (SEN)**

In this field, the applicant has published 8 scientific papers, 2 of which are co-authored. They express relevantly, but in a broader context, the theses on the education and inclusion of children with SEN in reference with the ongoing changes in the educational and social policies. In some of the publications, the issue of the training and qualification of special teachers is considered. Others focus on the possibilities of art therapy for the personal development of children with SEN.

5. Description of the applicant's scientific contributions

In short, the contributions to the scientific production and the overall activity of Dr. Penka Shapkova could be summarized as follows:

- New theoretical concepts for cognitive development derived empirically for children with Down syndrome, on the basis of which individual cognitive profiles of these children

with expressed strengths (strong sides) have been introduced, and effective correctional-therapeutic and educational strategies have been proposed;

- The author's enriched diagnostic toolkit with evaluation criteria and stimulating material for examination of children with Down syndrome / SEN has been proposed, as it can be used for correctional and developmental purposes;
- A new concept has been introduced, conceptualized and presented for discussion by the scientific community – the so called “cognitive deficit”, based on sufficiently presented evidence of highly scientific value on the grounded-ness of the concepts of “mental retardation” and “mentally retarded” applied to children with the syndrome of Down;
- Developed, tested and systematized specific pedagogical approaches for working with children with SEN and in particular with children with intellectual disabilities;
- Techniques and programs for inclusion of children with various developmental disorders have been studied and applied in various educational situations.

I address the following questions to the applicant:

1. What are the typical mistakes kindergarten, pre-school and primary school teachers could make when including a child with Down syndrome in the group / classroom?
2. What are the main deficits of the Bulgarian educational system that hinder the successful inclusion of children with SEN?
3. According to you, in which specific aspects is inclusive education more effective for the education and development of children with SEN than the previous models of integrated and inclusive education?

CONCLUSION: By its volume and nature the scientific study paper of Head Assistant Dr. Penka Shapkova meets the requirements of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its application and the Statutes of St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. The proven scientific contributions, as well as the teaching profile of the applicant, are grounds to propose Senior Assistant. Dr. Penka Shapkova to be elected to hold the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field: **1.2. Pedagogy** (Special Pedagogy – Pedagogy of Children with Intellectual Disabilities).

Date: 27 Nov 2020, Burgas

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nadezhda Kaloyanova):

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.