

REVIEW

By prof. Boryana Georgieva Tumanova, Ph.D.

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”,

member of a scientific jury by order of the Rector of Sofia University № ПД 38-168/19.04.2023 for the presented scientific production for occupying the academic position of “Associate Professor” in professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Physical Education and Sports – Fitness disciplines).

Candidate: Chief. Assis. Prof. Petya Stoyanova Hristova, Ph.D.

Информация за конкурса

The competition is for “Associate Professor” in Physical Education and Sports – Fitness disciplines. Information about it is presented on the website of the Sports Department of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Information has been published in the State Gazette, № 24/17.03.2023 and all legal provisions have been complied with.

In the competition participates as the only candidate Chief Assis. Prof. Petya Stoyanova Hristova, Ph.D.

Brief information about the candidate

The candidate Petya Stoyanova Hristova, Ph.D., is a chief assistant professor in sports, teaching the fitness disciplines: aerobics, callanetics, low-intensity interval training, high-intensity interval training, gymnastics for proper posture and stretching at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. She graduated from the National Sports Academy “Vasil Levski” with Bachelor's and Master's (1992 –1996) with two majors: Teacher in Physical Education and Sports, and Sports Management. In 1996 she acquired an additional professional specialty - Sports journalism with a qualification as “editor in the sports department of newspaper, television, and radio” at NSA “Vasil Levski”. She has worked as a flight attendant at Gulf Air Airlines, Bahrain; instructor in aerobics, callanetics, and bodybuilding at “Al Wazzan” sports center, Manama, Bahrain; teacher in rhythmic gymnastics at Student Sports School “Iskar”, Sofia; instructor in aerobics, callanetics and bodybuilding at “New Chance” sports center, Sofia. She started her teaching career as a part-time assistant professor in aerobics and callanetics at the Sports Department of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" from 1995 to 1999 and from 2014 to 2015. In 2015, after winning a competition, she was appointed as an assistant professor in Physical Education and Sports – fitness disciplines (aerobics and callanetics). In 2017, she defended her dissertation and obtained the scientific degree “Doctor”. Since 2017, after winning a competition, she has held the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor in Physical Education and Sports at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

Over the years, she has performed her academic work at the Sports Department with students from all faculties and Bachelor and Master programmes of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” teaching in mandatory, elective, and optional classes. She conducts classes in the

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subject “Sports” (aerobics, callanetics, low-intensity interval training, gymnastics for proper posture, high-intensity interval training, stretching in particular), and in the subject “Sports – sports mastering” (aerobics and cheerleading in particular). She has a lectures course for students at the Faculty of Sciences for Education and Arts of Sofia University on the discipline “Management of Sports and Tourism Activities” in the Master's programme “Physical Education and Sport”, as well as a lectures course “Theory and Methodology of Physical Education” for teachers at the Department of Information and Improvement of Teachers. She is the author of eight developed and applied curricula for students at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

Scientific, project, editorial, and public activities of Chief Assist. Prof. Hristova. It includes 5 scientific projects – in 2 of them as a leader and in 3 of them as a participant. One of the projects is international. She has 18 participations in scientific forums – 2 abroad and 16 in Bulgaria. She is a member of the editorial board of the Journal Research in Kinesiology (RIK), UDC: 796, ISSN 1857-7679 – as an editor of the “Physical Education” section and is the editor-in-chief of the Annual of the Sports Department of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

She is a member of the following sports organizations: Coach in Sports Club “Sports Club Academic - Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski”; Member of the Technical Commission of the National University championship in Aerobics; Member of the Technical Commission of National University championship in Cheerleading.

She has dozens of titles and awards in the National University Championships, as a coach of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” representative teams in aerobics and cheerleading.

Along with her professional academic development, Chief. Assis. Prof. Hristova also holds several management positions: since 2021 she is Head of the Unit “Individual Sports and Recreation” of the Sports Department; since 2022 she is authorized representative of the Sports Department of Sofia University for the National Center for Information and Documentation (NACID); since 2021 she is a member of the Council of the Sports Department of Sofia University; Since 2016 she has been responsible for the subject “Sport” at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University; in the period 2018-2021 she was a member of the Attestation Committee of the Sports Department of Sofia University.

Her level of English language proficiency is C1, and she is fluent in and handles Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and SPSS.

General characteristics of the presented materials

The candidate has submitted the following documents for participation in the "associate professor" competition: CV, diplomas, certificate of academic position, certificate of work experience, reference for the implementation of MNR, reference for citations, contribution moments, abstracts of peer-reviewed publications and others, and a list of publications (1 monograph, 3 articles published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (Web of Science) and 11 articles and papers published in non-refereed journals with scientific review and in edited collective volumes, of which: 2

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articles in Bulgarian scientific journals, 1 article in a scientific journal abroad, 6 papers in collections of international scientific conferences in Bulgaria and 2 articles in edited collective volumes. All 15 scientific publications submitted are in the field of the competition. Publications are related to the scientific field. The author's share of the scientific works is expressed in 15 independent publications. Eleven of the works are written in Bulgarian and 4 in English. The author has been cited in scientific publications 5 times. The lists of scientific publications, abstracts, and references for the contributions present clearly and conveniently the information in the texts with which Chief. Assis. Prof. Hristova applied for the academic position of "Associate Professor". The presented table information for Minimum National Requirements by a group of indicators for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" shows that the candidate fulfills the required national minimum of 400 points and participates in the competition with 405 points.

The publications submitted by the candidate are proof of the development of Chief Assist. Prof. Hristova as a teacher, researcher, and active participant in scientific forums related to Physical Education, Sports, and in particular grassroots sports, health culture, prevention, and preservation of health.

Scientific and scientific-applied achievements of the candidate

For her participation in the competition, Chief Assis. Prof. Hristova has presented a variety of scientific articles and reports related to the Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology of the subject "Physical Education and Sports" in the higher education system, university sports, grassroots sports, health-enhancing physical activity, physical culture as part of general human culture, health culture, prevention, and preservation of health.

One group of her publications is related to competencies and innovations in the educational process, theoretical foundations, and applied aspects of "Physical Education and Sport" as a subject in the higher education system in Bulgaria (publications № 1, 2, 4, 13, 15). The main contributions of the candidate are presented in the Monograph (№ 1) "Purpose and potential of the subject "Physical education and sport" in the higher education system in Bulgaria". The monograph has a logical structure, and there is a balance in the presentation of knowledge in the field of education and methodology for improving the efficiency of the PES subject in the higher education system in the Republic of Bulgaria. In this work, the author attempts to analyze the characteristics of physical education as an expression of Bulgarian State policy and looks at the role of the subject "Physical Education and Sport" in terms of prevention and preservation of the health of young people, the creation in them of beliefs, knowledge, skills, and habits for a future healthy lifestyle. New teaching opportunities are related to a targeted policy for the prevention and improvement of students' health. This is where the author's contribution and innovation lie - the different approaches and solutions for stimulating young people to be physically active. The author's research experience allows her to present the different models for physical education and sport as part of general human education, as well as their benefits. There is sufficient evidence in the monograph text to conclude the excellent theoretical and methodological experience of candidate Hristova, which justifiably leads to rethinking the possibilities and prospects for the development of the PES subject in the higher

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education system in Bulgaria. In theoretical terms, the potential and improvement of the efficiency of the PES subject is emphasized. The emphasis is placed on physical education, as an expression of the Bulgarian state policy regarding the prevention and preservation of the health of young people and the creation of beliefs, knowledge, skills, and habits for a future healthy lifestyle. The current state of physical fitness and activity and the health status of young Bulgarians is also examined. The problems related to the actual status of the PES subject in the curricula of Bulgarian universities are highlighted. It is concluded that it does not fulfill its main purpose and does not express the State policy.

The monograph was published by the "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Publishing House " in a volume of 160 pages. The text is divided into an introduction, four chapters, a summary, two annexes, and a bibliography. It was reviewed by two scientific reviewers.

Articles № 2, 4, 13, and 15 also find their place on this topic. To the question of "Purpose of the subject Physical Education and Sport in the Higher Education System in the Republic of Bulgaria (№ 2) the author points out problems provoked by the alarming reports of scientists around the world that the immobilization of humanity is the main cause of the emergence of many chronic diseases. The European Union takes the problem extremely seriously and recognizes the indispensable role of physical education and sport in health, economic and social terms. Establishes the status of the PES subject in the curricula of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and concludes that most faculties and programmes do not comply with the requirement of the Law for 60 compulsory classes per academic year for the entire course of study and how this affects the students' physical activity. To the question about "Physical activity of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" staff and lecturers (№ 4) is studied their lifestyle and level of physical activity. The opinion of the surveyed persons shows that the sedentary lifestyle is widespread among all age groups. The author recommends that the management of the university adopt and lead an active educational policy aimed at raising awareness of the importance and benefits of physical activity among its employees and providing them with facilities to exercise while at work. The article "Students' activity in the subject Physical Education and Sports in quarantine conditions. Preferred Sports by Students" (№ 13) focuses on the activity of students enlisted in aerobics and callanetics classes in the subject "Sport" in the conditions of online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The candidate confirms his persistent interest in the topic of increasing physical activity with his article "Physical activity of students from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (№ 15), recommending measures that the university and faculties management can take to improve health status, increase students' awareness and knowledge of the importance and benefits of health-enhancing physical activity. From the analysis it could be summarized the imperative introduction of lecture courses as part of the teaching in the subject "Physical Education and Sport" and its introduction as a mandatory subject in the curricula of all majors of the Bachelor's and Master's Degree.

Regarding the second group of publications with a focus on researching the potential of the subject "Physical Education and Sport", as an expression of the European and Bulgarian State policies regarding the prevention and preservation of health, I consider the presented materials № 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 14.

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The contribution point here is with an emphasis on tracking the policy of the European Union, concerning physical education and sports and summarizing the main documents, strategies, and programs in which their significance and potential are highlighted, as well as the possibilities of their use for improving the efficiency of the academic subject PES in the higher education system. In the publications (№ 5, 9, 14) “The educational potential of the subject Physical Education and Sports”, “Annual Determination of the Physical Development and Fitness of University Students as an Expression of the Bulgarian Health Strategy”, and “Physical education and sports through the eyes of the European Union” are studied contemporary health policies and point out that university age is the best time to purposefully educate young people about the benefits of health-enhancing physical activity and increase their health culture, and that there are no systematic studies on the effect of applied strategies on physical activity levels in this age group. The author emphasizes that all PES professors in universities have the status of scientists and conduct numerous scientific types of research. A huge database has been accumulated, which is not used due to a lack of organization for its collection and processing. The material in the article “Necessity for Inclusion of Bad Posture Corrective Exercises Sets in Physical Education and Sports Classes at Bulgarian Universities” (№ 3), notes the increasing frequency of posture disorders and spinal distortions in adolescents, both globally and in Bulgaria. In the publication "The Experience of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Students in volunteering and opportunities for its promotion" (№ 10) is emphasized the importance of volunteering and underlined the importance of volunteering in creating a more democratic, caring, and responsible society, and what personal benefits can be derived from it. The results show that young people in our country do not have much experience in volunteering and are not well informed about all the opportunities it offers.

A third group of publications (№ 6, 7, 8, 12) brings together topics related to the following ideas: on determining the level of physical fitness of students “State of physical fitness of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” students practicing aerobics” (№ 6); the efficiency of fitness disciplines “Effectiveness of aerobic complexes with different focus in sport classes at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (№ 7); clarifying the nature of the study groups in the sports classes at the universities and what difficulties the professors face in assessing students “A look at some problems in aerobics classes at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (№ 8); comparing the two extremely different models of physical exercise - one to manage health and fitness in the most scientific way possible through technologies and applications, sensors and cables and the other familiar, such as the philosophy of calisthenics, which proposes that people merge with nature again, move naturally, practice basic movement skills to develop a movement culture, which is useful in real life “The Culture calisthenics” (№ 12).

To the question of the contribution of the Sports Department of SU “St. Kliment Ohridski” to the inclusion of the new sport of cheerleading in the sports calendar of the Bulgarian Association for University Sports “Akademik”, I refer the article “Cheerleading from the beginning to an Olympic sport. The contribution of the Sports Department of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for the inclusion of cheerleading in the sports calendar of the Association for University Sports in Bulgaria” (№ 11). The article presents the key moments in history and the contribution of professors from the Sports Department of SU to the new sport of cheerleading.

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Assessment of candidate contributions

The results obtained from all the studies have been comprehensively analyzed and correct conclusions and recommendations for theory and practice have been made. The style in which the works are written is readable and at the same time precise from a scientific point of view. Summarizing their review, I can conclude that Petya Hristova makes a successful attempt to analyze the characteristics of pedagogy and methodology of teaching in the subject “Physical Education and Sports” in the higher education system, to identify the factors that affect health-enhancing physical activity, physical culture as part of the general human culture, health culture, prevention and preservation of health, current problems related to the challenges of modern times.

The contributions contained in the publications of Chief Assis. Prof. Petya Hristova, Ph.D., presented in the competition for the academic position of “associate professor” are in the field of Pedagogy of training in Physical Education. They have a theoretical, methodical, and practical-applied character. The theoretical and methodical character is expressed in the resulting specific goals of Physical Education. Theoretical and practical propositions based on the peculiarities of physical activity have been systematized and derived. The essence and potential of "Physical education and sport" as a study discipline and in particular the fitness disciplines and the new type of sport cheerleading, as an opportunity to develop physical abilities, have been investigated. The practical-applied contribution is also proven by the examined aspects of Physical Education as a study subject and the strategies for its popularization among young people, enrichment of methodological knowledge in the direction of improving the methods for developing correct posture, creation of a theoretical model for the assessment of physical abilities, etc.

Conclusion

The scientific contributions of Chief Assis. Prof. Petya Stoyanova Hristova, Ph.D. are presented in her publications, which are in the scope of the Pedagogy of training in Physical Education and Sports. The ongoing process of changing the focus in education to the innovative methods of modern technologies and the alarming immobilization of the population necessitates the need for scientific research and evidence to balance the attitude of young people to the dimensions of physical activity. A base on which Hristova steps and methodically develops. All this speaks of a high level of theoretical, teaching, and research experience. The submitted production for review does not duplicate the work of other authors and there is no plagiarism.

Considering all of the above, and in my capacity as a reviewer and member of the scientific jury, I confidently suggest to the members of the respected scientific jury to vote for Petya Stoyanova Hristova to be awarded the academic position of “associate professor” in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Physical Education and Sports - Fitness disciplines).

06.06.2023

Prof. Boryana Tumanova, Ph.D.