

## **REVIEW**

**by Professor Eleonora Mihailova Mileva, DSc,**

**member of the scientific jury according to**

**order № RD 38-168 /19.04.2023**

**of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"**

**on a procedure for the academic position "Associate Professor" in  
the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional Field**

**1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ...**

**(Physical Education and Sports - Fitness Disciplines)**

### **I. Details of the competition procedure**

The competition was announced in the State Gazette No 24 of 17.03.2023, in the professional field. 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Physical Education and Sport - Fitness Disciplines), for the needs of the Department of Sport at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". There were no violations in the procedures on the announcement and conducting of the competition. It followed all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff and of the Regulations for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Holding of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Only one candidate participated in the competition for Associate Professor - Chief Assistant Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD.

### **II. Data about the candidate**

Chief Assistant Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD, graduated from the four-year course of studies at the NSA "Vassil Levski" in 1996 in the specialties "Physical Education" and "Sports Management". At the same time she acquired a specialty in Sports Journalism at the National Sports Academy.

In 2017 she defended her dissertation thesis "Model for increasing the effectiveness of aerobics training in higher education institutions" for the educational and scientific PhD degree in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in... (Physical Education and Sport - Aerobics) at the Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski".

In the period 1995 - 1999 and 2014 - 2015 the candidate for Associate Professor worked as a visiting lecturer at the Department of Sport of the Sofia University (subject "Sport").

In 2015 Petya Hristova was appointed as a full-time Assistant Professor at the Department of Sport of Sofia University. Since 2017, after a competition, she holds the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor" in the academic discipline "Sport" at the Department of Sport, Section of Individual Sports and Recreation.

Petya Hristova has worked as a gymnastics teacher at the Student Sports School - Sofia and as an aerobics, calanetics and fitness instructor at a sports center.

The candidate has numerous additional qualifications as an aerobics and calanetics instructor, sports aerobics judge, cheerleading coach, English language - C1 level and others. For all specializations the relevant certificates are presented.

The acquired education, professional biography and sports pedagogical activity of Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD, are a natural basis for participation in the current competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Department of Sport of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski".

### **III. Research activity of the candidate**

For participation in the competition for Associate Professor, Chief Assistant Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD has submitted a report on her scientific research activity and production according to scientific metrics. It is in accordance with the indicators of the national requirements under Article 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria for Professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of education in ...

The minimum requirements for points in the individual groups of indicators for the acquisition of the academic position "Associate Professor" have been fulfilled by the Chief Assistant Petya Hristova - a total of 405 points with a national minimum for the respective professional field of 400 points.

The candidate participated in the competition for associate professor with the following scientific production: 1 monograph, 3 articles in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information and 11 articles and reports in non-refereed journals with scientific peer-review and edited collective volumes.

The scientific works in terms of quantity and quality meet the regulatory requirements and are entirely on the subject of the competition. A list of all the candidate's scientific publications - 30 in total - is attached separately.

It should be noted that 5 citations of the candidate's scientific works were submitted for the competition, of which 2 were in Web of Science publications, 2 - in monographs and 1 - in peer-reviewed scientific articles and reports.

Among the publications subject to review for participation in the current competition, of particular importance for the declared scientific field is the monograph "Purpose and potential of the study discipline "Physical education and sport" in the system of higher education in Bulgaria" (Sofia, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski" ", 2021, ISBN 978-954-07-5353-9, 160 pages) (№ 1).

The work meets the requirements for a monograph in terms of volume and content. It presents actual problems of physical education and sport in the system of higher education, analyzes modern ideas, theses and models of sport-pedagogical science. The presented monographic work focuses on the following more important and significant educational aspects:

- the serious contemporary problem of mass immobilization of people and the related adverse health, social and economic consequences for Bulgaria and globally are examined;

- the contemporary relevance of physical education and sport and the policy on the topic in global, European and national perspective is highlighted through content analysis of numerous official documents;

- the current state of physical activity and health status of Bulgarian youth is revealed;

- the contemporary purpose of the discipline of Physical Education and Sport in the system of higher education in Bulgaria is substantiated by presenting a detailed analysis of its various components. Through an in-depth literature review and targeted author research, the actual status of physical education and sport in the curricula of Bulgarian universities is shown;

- an author's model for improving the efficiency of the Physical Education and Sport curriculum in the higher education system in the Republic of Bulgaria is developed. The author presents a model of Physical Education and Sport in the paper. The model includes the content, the formation of the assessment, the means and methods for reporting the efficiency and results of the discipline, as well as the relationship with the state policy.

The monograph is a legitimate result of the teaching, sports practical and research work of the candidate. The greatest merit of this work is its orientation to sport practice and to setting future directions for the functioning of physical education and sport in higher education institutions in the country.

The candidate has a lasting interest in the topic about the place and importance of the discipline "Physical Education and Sport" in the system of higher education in Bulgaria, on which several publications have been presented (№ 2, 4, 13, 15). Petya Hristova contributes to tracing the European Union's policy towards physical education and sport and summarising the main strategies, programmes and documents (№ 14). In this context, the educational potential of the discipline of Physical Education and Sport as an expression of European and Bulgarian state policy on prevention and preservation of health is revealed (№ 3, 5, 9, 10).

A separate area of scientific interest on the part of Chief Assistant Petya Hristova, PhD, are the sports and fitness disciplines, presented in 4 publications (№ 6, 7, 8, 12). In them the level of physical fitness of female students practicing fitness disciplines is analysed. For the first time in university conditions the effectiveness of fitness disciplines in developing physical qualities and functional capabilities of the organism is proved (№ 6, 7).

The analysis of some major problems in sports-profiled aerobics groups is a positive contribution to the theory and practice of university sports (№ 7).

The author turns to the philosophy of calisthenics, suggesting that people should go back to nature and practice basic motor skills and natural movements (№ 12).

I would like to make special mention of the interesting and informative article on the inclusion of the new sport of cheerleading in the sports calendar of the Bulgarian Association for University Sports "Academic" and the contribution of the Department of Sport in this regard (№ 11).

The research skills and competences of Chief Assistant Petya Hristova are evidenced by the certificates proving her participation in a number of scientific forums, symposia, conferences in the field of student sports, physical education and sport.

It should separately be noted, that the candidate for Associate Professor participated in 5 research and educational projects, acting as the leader in 2 of them and as a participant in the other 3. One of the projects is an international project under the Erasmus+ programme of the EU.

#### **IV. Scientific contributions**

The contributions contained in the candidate's publications and presented in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor are in the field of pedagogy of physical education.

The following contributions can be specified in the main aspects of the scientific theoretical, methodological and practical application of the scientific works of Chief Assist. Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD:

1. The knowledge of the actual status of the academic discipline "Physical Education and Sport" in the system of higher education in Bulgaria is enriched.

2. The thesis on the necessity of higher education institutions as educational institutions to conduct a targeted policy for the protection and improvement of health of both students and employees, aimed at increasing their health culture in the context of national and European requirements and recommendations is substantiated.

3. A comprehensive model has been developed to exploit the potential of the discipline of Physical Education and Sport, which includes health education as part of the educational content, monitoring overweight and obesity, introduction of mandatory testing of students with a uniform test battery, inclusion of exercises for correct posture and increasing the knowledge and competence of teachers in this area.

4. The potential of specialized-sport fitness classes is studied, and their specific aspects, problems and effectiveness in developing the motor qualities and determining the level of physical fitness of students is proved.

5. Curricula for training students related to different fitness disciplines have been developed, which validate new didactic approaches and teaching content.

#### **V. Teaching, expert and sports activities of the candidate**

Chief Assistant Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD, is an established lecturer with many years of academic experience. She has been conducting a lecture course on the academic discipline "Management of Tourism and Sports Activity" in the Master's programme "Physical Education and Sport" at the FNOI at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" since 2021. Separately, she has been lecturing on "Theory and Methodology of Physical Education" at the DIUU since the present year.

She conducts seminars on the discipline of "Sport" (aerobics, calanetics, low-intensity interval training, gymnastics for correct posture, high-intensity interval training, stretching) in the "Bachelor" and "Master" degree programs of all faculties and specialties in Sofia University. She also conducts sport performance classes in the discipline of "Sport" - aerobics and cheerleading, as a compulsory, elective and optional subject for all faculties and specialties at Sofia University.

The candidate has participated in the winter and summer study practices organized by the Department of Sport for students of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" in the period 2016 - 2023.

Petya Hristova has independently developed and implemented a total of 8 curricula in various fitness disciplines for the students of SU.

The candidate actively participates in the academic community of Sofia University. Since 2022, she has been an authorized representative of the Department of Sport at NACID. Since 2021 she has been the Head of the Section of Individual Sports and Recreation, and since 2016 she has been responsible for the discipline of Sport at the Faculty of Philosophy of SU. She was a member of the Attestation Committee of the Department of Sport.

Since 2022 Petya Hristova participates in the editorial board of the Macedonian journal Research in Kinesiology (RIK), UDC: 796, ISSN 1857-7679 - editor of the section "Physical Education".

Currently she is the Editor-in-Chief of the Annual of the Department of Sport at the University.

Petya Hristova is also a sports coach in the Academic Sports Club – Sofia University, member of the Technical Committees of the National University Championship of Aerobics and Cheerleading. She has a number of awards and prizes in the national university championships (as a coach of the representative teams in aerobics and cheerleading sports of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski) in the period from 2016 to 2023.

## **VI. Conclusion**

On these grounds, I have good reasons to state that Chief Assistant Professor Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD, meets the requirements of the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor on the basis of Article 4 and Article 25 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 57 paragraph (1) and paragraph (2) of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the

Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 108 paragraph (1) and paragraph (3) of the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Holding of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The overall scientific production of the candidate, the scientific contributions, the teaching, coaching and expert activities give me grounds to confidently propose to the members of the scientific jury to vote for Chief Assistant Petya Stoyanova Hristova, PhD, to be awarded the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in ... (Physical Education and Sport - Fitness Disciplines), for the needs of the Department of Sport at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski".

Reviewer:

Professor Eleonora Mileva, DSc

10 June 2023  
Sofia