

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Boryana Georgieva Tumanova, PhD

Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski',

member of the scientific jury, appointed by Order No. RD-38-215/03.05.2022 of the Rector of Sofia University for the scientific works submitted for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of Education in

... (Physical Education and Sport - Fitness)

Candidate: Senior Assistant Stefan Georgiev Miletiev, PhD

Information about the competition

The competition is for the appointment of Associate Professor of Physical Education and Sport - Fitness. Information on the competition is available on the website of the Department of Sport at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Further information has also been published in State Gazette No 21/15.03.2022 and all relevant legal provisions have been complied with. The only candidate participating in the competition is Senior Assistant, Stefan Miletiev, PhD.

Brief information about the candidate

The candidate Stefan Miletiev, Chief Assistant and PhD, is a lecturer at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the field of Sport - Fitness and Training Methodology in Physical Education and Sports. He completed his higher education at the Vasil Levski NSA and holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees (2007 - 2013) with two specialties: sports management and football coaching. In 2015 he acquired an additional professional qualification – postgraduate certificate for licensed fitness instructor. He commenced his teaching career at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2013, initially as a lecturer in physical education and sport - fitness in the Department of Sport. In 2015, after winning the relevant competition, he was appointed Assistant Professor in Physical Education and Sport - Fitness. In 2018 he defended his dissertation entitled "Methodical system for fitness training of students of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", obtaining a PhD degree. Since 2019 he holds the academic position of "Senior Assistant Professor".

Over the years, he has fulfilled his teaching quota in the Department of Sport with students of all majors. He has classes (lectures and exercises) with students in the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts in the course "Methodology of Bodybuilding Training", as well as with teachers of PE in the Department of Information and Teacher Development.

Along with his professional academic development, Senior Assistant Miletiev has also held leadership positions. He has worked and has experience as an administrative manager of a fitness centre.

General characteristics of the submitted materials

The candidate has submitted a list of 28 publications. Of these, the following documents and publications are included in the competition for the post of Associate Professor: 1 monograph, 1 book based on a defended dissertation, a list of all publications, as well as of the publications for the competition (16 articles in scientific journals, 2 of which are referenced and indexed in the Web of Science, the world-known scientific information database), curriculum vitae, diplomas, certificates of work experience, certificate of fulfilment of the minimum national requirements, reference to citations, contributions, abstracts of peer-reviewed publications, awards, etc. The publications are related to the scientific field. The scientific works authored by the candidate comprise 12 independent publications and 4 written in co-authorship. Fourteen of the articles are written in Bulgarian, 2 in English. The lists of scientific publications, the abstracts and the summary of contributions present, clearly and conveniently, the information in the texts with which Mr. Miletiev, PhD is applying for the academic position of Associate Professor.

It is clear from the tabular summary of the minimum national requirements per group of indicators for the academic post of Associate Professor that the candidate fulfils the required national minimum of 400 points and participates in the competition with a total of 450 points.

The publications submitted by the candidate serve as evidence for the personal development of Senior Assistant Miletiev as a teacher, researcher, active participant in forums related to physical education, sports, for the importance of fitness for different age groups, university sports, etc.

Scientific and applied achievements of the candidate

The main contributions of the candidate are presented in the monograph "Sport and Valeological Education". The monograph has a logical structure, there is a balance in presenting knowledge from two areas: physical education and methodology of fitness education in higher education. It is here that the author's contribution and innovation lie, to create a specific fitness curriculum that is tailored to practitioners, their academic engagements, their health status and the aims of higher education. There is sufficient evidence in the text of the monograph to conclude on the author's excellent theoretical and methodological background. In this work, the author attempts to analyse the characteristics of fitness, determining its popularisation among people of different ages. Miletiev has rightfully reached the conclusion that a reconsideration is required of the possibilities offered by existing methods of fitness training as well as their optimal adaptation to the modern environment, conceptualisation of fitness as a sport, fully accessible to all age groups, possessing functions that can be realized within the system of secondary and higher education. In theoretical terms, the influence of sports not only on physical health, but also on emotions and the development of a person's value system is also emphasized. The monograph examines issues related to the innovative aspects of the methodological system. Models of exercises for fitness training of different age groups are proposed. The large range of people and the wide age range determine the need to define several age groups to which the implementation of physical exercises should be oriented. This issue is further discussed in Article No. 9: *On the Subject of Valeological Education and Physical Education of Young People* (2019), in which the author points out some problems of the physical education of young people, perspectives for the solution of which are found in the ideas of Valeological Education. The author's research experience in fitness centres allows him to distinguish between three main groups of fitness service users according to their age and ability to perform physical exercises. The focus falls in individuals lacking continuous sport experience – i.e., beginners and slightly advanced: 16-20-year olds; 21-35-year olds and 36-55-

year olds. The monograph was published by “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press in 2021 and comprises 227 pages. The text is divided into an introduction, five section, conclusion and list of references used - 100 sources and four appendices. It is reviewed by two scientific reviewers.

The book “Fitness training of students at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (2019) represents research aiming to create a modern model of fitness training for students of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in order to improve their physical fitness and increase their interest in sports. The book is the result of the author's teaching and research interests and contains theoretical, methodological and practical-applied contributions. The practical contribution is evidenced by the multiplying effect of thematic minimum and the training programs for fitness training of beginners and advanced students. The book is structured in three main sections - fitness as a type of sport, fitness training system for students and effectiveness of the fitness training system. The first part is devoted to issues related to social, psychological, physiological, pedagogical, and educational aspects. The second part contains information about the role of fitness and optimisation of students' exercise regimen. In this part, a teaching syllabus on fitness is proposed. The means, stages and methods of training are discussed in detail. The third part describes the research methods, the organisation of the study, the results and the analysis of the resulting values. The practical applicability of the developed methodology is evident, supported by the requisite means for its implementation. The results obtained from the studies have been processed with appropriate mathematical and statistical methods, a comprehensive analysis has been made on them and correct conclusions and recommendations for both theory and practice have been drawn. The style of the monograph and the book is readable and at the same time scientifically rigorous. Following their review, I can conclude that Miletiev had made a successful attempt to analyse the characteristics of fitness which may be used for its promotion among students and people of different ages.

Senior Assistant Stefan Miletiev, PhD, has presented thematically diverse scientific articles and reports for his participation in the competition.

One group of publications relates to the place of fitness, as a study discipline, within the educational system. The candidate's interest in the issues of fitness education is persistent, presented in the articles (4, 6; 7; 8; 11, 17): Fitness training as part of the Sport Discipline in Higher schools (2019); On the Subject of the Sport Curriculum at St. Kliment Ohridski University (2019); Training Methods for the Sport Discipline in Higher Schools (2019); System of fitness exercises for all students (2020); Fitness Training for Students in the Sport Discipline (2019, co-authored); Study of some Indicators of Physical Fitness in Students Training Fitness at Sofia University (2021, co-authored). In these articles, the author focuses on particular aspects of the methodology of fitness training. In practical terms, reserves in leisure time are found to advance fitness training by alternating training sessions in the gym with additional sports activities during free days. Miletiev directs his knowledge and skills towards the development of methodological guidelines in the field of practical fitness training. The idea of fitness as a core sport discipline for non-sport students is proposed, which stimulates in students such values as physical, mental and social well-being and serves to improve the quality of human resources for life. The theoretical framework outlines principles for selecting and structuring curriculum content, recommends methods of instruction and a system of exercises that is tailored to the individual abilities of young people.

The second group of publications is related to physical education and sport within the educational system. In them, the author brings together up-to-date information, allowing conclusions to be drawn that will serve as a basis for the development of a more comprehensive study of the impact of sports on the mental and physical development of students in modern conditions. This group includes the following publications: On the Issue of Physical Education

and Sport in Higher Education in Bulgaria (2019, co-authored); Developing Motor Abilities in Pupils and Students in the Context of Contemporary Education (2019); Fitness Training in the Context of Strategic Principles for the Development of Physical Education and Sport (2021); Nurturing Values through Sport in Secondary School (2020); Investigating the Impact of Track and Field Workouts on the Development of Motor Abilities (2021, co-authored), (Nos. 3, 5, 15, 16, 18). The author provides a detailed and thorough presentation of the theoretical foundations of the researched problems and opportunities of physical education and sport in secondary and higher education. Miletiev formulates ideas aiming to fully take into account the individual characteristics of pupils and students in the process of physical training, highlighting the possibilities for implementing changes in the process of physical education and sport also in secondary education.

The third group of publications is related to the problems of fitness training in the electronic environment. This group includes the following publications (12, 13): Skills Developed in the Fitness Training of Students in a Pandemic Settings (2021); Fitness Training in the Environment of Distance University Education (2020). The focus here is on the issues of fitness training in an e-environment and a pandemic setting. Training in a virtual environment poses particular difficulties. The results of the work, which have a certain practical value, show that greater effectiveness of distance learning is achieved in beginners. More difficulties are encountered in advanced training. The conclusion is reached that fitness training, carried out remotely through digital means, has its importance in conditions of isolation, to overcome certain stressful situations, to maintain a healthy lifestyle, but only when it is impossible or difficult to visit the gym.

The fourth group of publications brings together issues related to the continuing qualification in physical education and sport teachers. The articles (Nos. 10, 14): *On the attitudes of PE Teachers towards joining Qualification Programmes* (2020); *Sport as a factor for Overcoming Stress and Fatigue in the Teaching Profession* (2021) address the issues of teachers' willingness to participate in training courses, their attitude towards joining professional growth programmes. In periods of crisis, when tension and anxiety arise, data have also been collected by exploring the attitudes of different teaching professionals towards overcoming stress and fatigue through sport. The author concludes that in order to make full use of the possibilities provided by sports to counteract professional stress, it is necessary to create conditions in educational institutions by organising designated halls where teachers can play sports. Summarizing everything said so far, I can conclude that the candidate's publications demonstrate a symbiosis between research, teaching and methodological work.

Teaching activities

The candidate for associate professor, Senior Assistant Stefan Miletiev, PhD, has 7 years of teaching experience (lecture courses, seminars and practical sessions) at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" at the Chair of Individual Sports and Recreation with the Department of Sport at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts with the Chair of Primary School Education, specialty Physical Education and Sports and at the Department for Information and In-Service Training of Teachers. He teaches undergraduate and graduate students in the following disciplines:

- "Sport – Fitness" course in the Department of Sport - compulsory, elective and optional for all majors.
- "Sport - Fitness for Advanced" course in the Department of Sport for all faculties pursuing Bachelor and Master degrees.

- “Methodology of Bodybuilding Training” in the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts – specialty Physical Education and Sports, Bachelor Programme.
- Teacher training courses: “Theory and Methodology of Sports Training”; “Recovery in Sport (Optimisation of the Educational Process in PE); “Organization of the Educational Process” in the Department for Information and In-Service Training of Teachers.
- “Sport - Sport Improvement” to students of all disciplines of Sofia University.

Scientific, project, editorial and public activities

Mr. Miletiev, PhD has presented his scientific searches and developments to the academic circles, as a participant in 14 international scientific conferences - 1 of them abroad and 13 at home.

He has participated in three scientific research projects, two of which are internal university projects and one under the Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Fellows National Program - 2021.

Evaluation of the candidate's contributions

The contributions of Senior Assistant Miletiev, PhD are theoretical, methodological and practical in nature and fall into the following areas:

The first group of contributions are the models of exercises for fitness training of different age groups. Three main groups of users of fitness services lacking continuous sports experience - beginners and slightly advanced - have been identified: 16-20-year-olds; 21-35-year-olds and 36-55-year-olds. Through their development, a specific methodology is proposed, for lifelong sports participation as a pathway for the development of a Valeological culture.

The practical-applied character is expressed in the curricula developed for the training of students and active teachers, based on the interaction of sport with valeological education. Exercises are proposed to increase physical activity as an element of a healthy lifestyle.

The results achieved contribute towards modernisation of the theory, practice and methodology of physical education and sport, in particular fitness. The results of the research can also be used in further studies on the possibilities of developing valeological competences through sport in secondary and higher education.

I would recommend to Senior Assistant Stefan Miletiev, PhD, to continue with his research in the field of teaching pedagogy by expanding his research to include and develop curricula for training students and current teachers in other fitness disciplines.

Conclusion

The scientific contributions of Senior Assistant Stefan Georgiev Miletiev, PhD are presented in his publications, which fall within the scope of pedagogy of physical education and sport. According to the candidate, sports education is an important social factor for building the modern model for a healthy lifestyle. A base on which he steps and methodically develops his knowledge and teaching methods. All this speaks for a high level of theoretical, teaching and research training.

Taking into account all of the above, and as a reviewer and member of the scientific jury, I confidently propose to the members of the esteemed scientific jury to vote to award Stefan

Georgiev Miletiev the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 1.3
Pedagogy of Education in ... (Physical Education and Sport - Fitness).

09.06.2022

Prof. Boryana Tumanova, PhD