

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Bagryana Rashkova Ilieva, PhD, from the University of Ruse "A. Kanchev " of materials of Assoc. Prof. Maya Lyubenova Cholakova, PhD, Lecturer in the Department of Medical and Social Sciences at the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski", candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor"

Contest information:

Field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences;

Professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Social pedagogy);

For the needs of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski " at the Faculty of Science, Education and Arts.

Contest details:

In the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor", announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ", in the State Gazette, issue 21 / 15.03.2022, Assoc. Prof. Maya Lyubenova Cholakova, PhD, is the only candidate. There are no violations in the procedure for announcing the competition. The requirements of ZRASRB and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Brief biographical data about the candidate

Education and qualifications

The basic education of Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, is a Master of Special Education, specialization in Pedagogy for Children with Mental Retardation, acquired in 1988. in SWU "N. Rilski ". Then (from the presented information) follow periods of educational and training growth. The candidate participates in courses and trainings of different duration and subject matter; study visits, including abroad: in 2006 participates in training for professional development: Modern management skills (IPAIEI); in 2007 in training for trainers for representatives of minorities and vulnerable groups (IPAIEI) and in training at the British Council: Public Speaking and Presentation Skills. It is noteworthy that the candidate in 2008. is a part-time lecturer in a series of lectures "Ethnic aspects of special education" at the Master's Faculty of NBU (in English), and in 2012. is a lecturer in the master's program in Special Pedagogy at the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "(in English).

Data on the professional development, academic and expert activity of the candidate

In the biographical reference presented by Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, I find rich professional experience as a researcher and as a practitioner. Her professional career started as an educator at Otets Paisiy University of Blagoevgrad, but also with experience in various sectors of coordination, administration and teaching at SWU "N. Rilski " and Sofia University " St. Cl.

Ohridski ". Passes through consulting and expert activity in pedagogy for children with mental retardation and activities related to the implementation of state policy on ethnic and demographic issues.

The academic career of Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, started in 1992. as a senior assistant at SWU "N. Rilski ". In 2004 successfully defended a dissertation on "Socio-pedagogical dimensions of learning potential in children from ethnic minorities", as a result of which she was awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the specialty Theory of Education and Didactics.

Since 2009 Until now he is an associate professor in the Department of Medical and Social Sciences at SWU "Neofit Rilski" in Blagoevgrad.

The participation of Assoc. Prof. Cholakova, PhD, in the academic activity of the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" is impressive. I will mention some of them, where the candidate in 2017 is chairman of a student scientific conference, and in 2021. at a section of the Jubilee Scientific and Practical Conference with International Participation "Social Work - Past, Present, Future". Her creative autobiography is enriched as an expert, coordinator and leader of project activities and initiatives of national and international importance, including her active participation in project work at the academic level: in 2011. is the leader of the research project "Anti-oppressive aspects of social work"; coordinator in the ERASMUS educational project for academic mentoring of incoming and outgoing students; as an academic mentor, supports the practical training of selected and confirmed participants in the project BG05M2OP001-2.013-0001 "Student Internships - Phase 2".

In summary, the entire educational and professional path of the candidate, described in the curriculum vitae over 30 participations in national and international projects, as well as her membership in the Board of the Bulgarian Association for Social Work Education, Academic Council for Refugees at the High Commissioner of the UN Refugee, as well as in the NGO "Family Zone", are proof of her great professional commitment, responsibility and dedication to her students and PhD students, as well as to professionals from the professional communities and organizations in which she is a member

Analysis of the publishing activity

A list is presented for the competition, which contains above all author's and expert scientific production of the candidate:

- One monograph - habilitation thesis.
- One published book based on a defended dissertation.
- Two studies published in non-peer-reviewed peer-reviewed journals.
- 13 articles and reports, of which 4 have been published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information and 9 published in non-refereed journals with scientific review

The documents submitted in connection with the competition show compliance with the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor".

The scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, is focused on specific values and ethical changes of social and socio-pedagogical work, but also on the basis of researched perceptions and attitudes of helping specialists outlines recommendations for effective social work in social services, i.e. areas in which the competition was announced.

Scientific publications, including the concept of humility and its presentation in various concretizations - such as spiritual, intellectual and cultural humility. The author has a significant number of publications in this field (№1, №3, №7, №12 and №16 from the List of scientific publications submitted for participation in the competition for associate professor of Pedagogy are proposed). In the monographic work "Cultural Humility" the author focuses on humility, finding his projections in various professional fields, including medical services, nursing, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, counseling, supervision, education, leadership in organizations, etc. Assoc. Prof. Cholakova, PhD, offers an in-depth analysis of all possible areas of social and socio-pedagogical work, where humility as a quality, model of behavior and ethical attitude would play a significant role in improving relationships and interactions between individuals. Her contribution to the presented own research is that humility in its concretizations is applicable not only in child protection and work with traumatic experiences, but also in many other contexts, such as alternative care for children, personalized care for the elderly and the elderly, in the work with children with disabilities and their families, in the work with refugees and migrants, including unaccompanied children, with people with mental illness, etc.

I can not fail to note that the author is actively working on this topic and has proposed a significant amount of material. The author's merit is that he offers modern views on humility in a pedagogical context, which (according to the author) are relevant to Western cultural and educational realities.

The author shows his specific style in his in-depth research to improve social work by supporting the families of children at risk and elderly people with disabilities in social services. The proposed recommendations for achieving the effectiveness of social work are of particular interest to the applicant, and developments at the practical and applied level with answers to research questions have been observed since 2016 and are related to the empowering dimensions of social work; respect for personal autonomy and self-determination as the highest values and principles in helping activities; tendencies towards development, understanding of the essence and principles of the family-oriented approach in social work, etc. (№8, №14, №16, №17)

My general impression of the overall publishing activity of Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, is that there is a steady research interest aimed at finding and researching modern theoretical and applied ideas and concepts of cultural humility in certain aspects of training and practical implementation of trainers. in the socio-pedagogical sphere, and in terms of language it is characterized by conceptual correctness, rich literary and practical research awareness and criticism.

Scientific contributions

The contributions presented by the candidate are in accordance with the content of her publishing activity and reveal her profile as a scientist and professional. I accept the formulated contributions and their differentiation in theoretical, research and applied aspects.

Among the main merits of the author's scientific production are the analyzes and conclusions made in social theory and practice, and in particular her skills to:

- Analyzes and integrates classical and modern interpretations of humility and its conceptualization in teaching / learning through analytical, but also through synthetic / transpersonal sense;
- Seeks and finds approaches for introducing the concept of cultural humility in the Bulgarian specialized discourse in social pedagogy and social activities;
- Integrates theory and practice for conceptualization of empowerment as a concept, process and result, and creates practically specific descriptions of empowerment in specialists from helping professions;
- Separates ideological connections of cultural humility as a component of training for multicultural practice, and cultural humility as an independent framework for training;
- Analyzes to a large extent conceptual diversity in the understanding of: integrated care, integrated service and cross-sectoral approach at all levels and structures;
- Steps in and uses theoretical and practical arguments and conclusions of analysts and scientists to set out their priorities, such as the family-oriented approach.

Assessment of teaching and learning activities of the candidate

From the presented report it is evident that the teaching commitment of Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, fully covers the profile of the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Social pedagogy). The candidate has sufficient experience as a teacher, as evidenced by the creative autobiographical information and information about the lectures.

The teaching work of the candidate has a significant annual workload. From the presented information it is evident that Assoc. Prof. Cholakova, PhD, teaches over 10 lecture courses in the Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and in the doctoral program "Organization and Management of Social Activities".

I do not know the candidate directly, but I built impressions of certain qualities of Assoc. Prof. Cholakova, PhD, from the presented materials as a researcher and lecturer, from the developed curricula, published articles / reports, research and practical activities. I can definitely say that this is a professionally committed person, responsible for his teaching duties, in which he shows a strong creative approach to work, including collaboration with students and PhD students in research and artistic projects. Since 2015 so far he is leading 5 doctoral students, 2 of whom have successfully defended, and only for the academic year 2020/2021. there are 3 graduates who have successfully defended.

Conclusion

The analysis of the overall scientific creativity and professional development of Assoc. Prof. Maya Cholakova, PhD, show that she has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the Professional field: 1. 2. "Pedagogy (Social pedagogy), demonstrating qualities and skills for self-conduct research and development of scientific papers - from articles, through studies to monographic research.

All the above findings, assessments and conclusions give me reason to express a positive opinion on the election of Assoc. Prof. Maya Lyubenova Cholakova, PhD, as Associate Professor in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Social pedagogy).

19.06.2022

Ruse

Prepared the opinion:



(Assoc. Prof. Bagryana Ilieva, PhD.)