

STATEMENT

for a competition for the academic position of ‘**Associate Professor**’
subject 3.8 Economics, research subject „“ (Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility in
Bulgarian and English), published in SG, issue No. 30. dated 15/04/2022 with candidate Head
Assistant Marina Stefanova

Member of the research committee: Prof. Albena Hristova Vutsova,
Sofia University - Sofia

General overview of the candidate’s work in the field of scientific research and applied research

The candidate, Head Assistant Marina Stefanova, has presented the following for review
and evaluation:

1. Two monographs as follows:
 - ‘Corporate and Social Responsibility of Bulgarian SMEs’, Publisher – SU- Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, 2001, ISBN 978-954-9399-60-8
 - Reporting the sustainability of enterprises, environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspect of their activity, Publisher – SU- Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, ISBN 978-954-9399-73-8
2. A chapter from a collective monograph under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Radostina Bakardzhieva“, pages 99 – 117 Publisher: Non-profit Association ‘Innovations and Sustainability Academy’, 2017.
3. Chapter from the book ‘Human capital in Business’. The Case of Overgas Cases on Corporate Social Responsibility and Contemporary Issues in Organizations pages 183-200, 2019
4. 22 publications in scientific journals and 26 publications in popular scientific journals were submitted, for the competition for docent, 11 were presented. 7 articles are in English and 4 in Bulgarian 7 articles:
5. Based on the general check performed for meeting the quantitative requirements, there are 2 publications referenced and indexed in world databases, in **co-authorship ; 5 in non-refereed journals** (three of which in the 2013-2016 period)
6. There are three citations visible in the Scopus platform, all articles are in co-authorship.
7. The candidate has also indicated her membership in different organisations relevant to her professional development.
8. The candidate’s teaching hours have been correctly indicated.

The national minimum requirements and the requirements for meeting the minimum national requirements under art. 2b of the Law on Academic Staff Development, in accordance with the references provided by the author (Annex 9 and Annex 32) are met for the position of ‘Assoc. Prof.’ for subject field 3.Social, Business and Legal Sciences, 3.8 Economics

1. Evaluation of the candidate’s pedagogical preparedness and work

The arguments relating to the teaching and pedagogical activity are in line with the regulated requirements and there is a positive development in the candidate’s teaching skills and professional portfolio. Head Assistant Marina Stefanova has the necessary number of teaching hours which correspond to the annual norm adopted by ‘St. Kliment Ohridski’ Sofia University - Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

Main contributions

The candidate’s research contributions can be outlined as follows:

The candidate has aligned the focus of her academic work with the profile of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at ‘St. Kliment Ohridski’ Sofia University. The main research contributions are categorised in two groups - theoretical contributions and practice-oriented contributions.

Among the theoretical contributions are the following:

- Specifics of research in the field of reporting environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects of the activity of business organisations have been outlined and substantiated, including the impact of factors such as size of the organisation, line of business and field of activity, expectations and attitudes of internal and external stakeholders.
- An overview of theories and concepts which offer a definition of the non-financial reporting of organisations as a phenomenon in the social and organisational life in the context of the existing business processes. An analytical model is outlined which provides basic elements of the sustainability reports as an element of the organisations’ transparent behaviour.●●
- An overview of national and international research in the field of sustainability reporting has been developed with a reflection on the structure, contents and form of presenting the information reported, including its verification.
- A methodology and set of tools for researching the sustainability reports of the legally-bound legal entities in Bulgaria have been adapted and approved. The use of the model creates opportunities for comparing the results received with other results generated using this methodology. The re-application of the research for a subsequent

time period (2017, 2018) establishes the methodology as a working one and creates prerequisites for the development of a model for researching the transparency of business organisations in the Bulgarian legal field.

- The need to conduct future research of corporate transparency has been outlined, including a research on the impact of sustainability reporting on the strategic governance of organisations.

I only accept one contribution.

Among the practice-oriented contributions are the following:

- New knowledge has been acquired regarding the orientation of strategic business managers in Bulgaria towards a specific governing behaviour oriented towards increasing the responsibility, sustainability and transparency of organisations.
- Over the course of the research, arguments have been presented which confirm or correct popular theoretical methodologies for content evaluation (qualitative and quantitative reporting of non-financial information) of sustainability reports and increasing the transparency of organisations in the context of the comprehensive sustainable governance.
- The conclusions and analyses are a tool for acquiring knowledge/self-knowledge for managers and employees in business organisations and can serve as a starting point for building and developing successful organisational ESG strategies, including training of managers and development of competences.
- For researchers of non-financial reporting of organisations and sustainable governance - the conclusions, analyses and results can be used as a basis for justifying new research projects, and for teachers in these areas - as an up-to-date knowledge on the basis of which the content can be enriched and the quality of academic and other courses can be improved.
- Training materials, teaching and methodological tools, as well as case-based practices have been created and approved in relation to the following disciplines: systematisation and standardisation of corporate social responsibility, sustainability reporting, good corporate governance, sustainable leadership through: participation in the discussion and adoption of teaching programmes ‘Sustainable leadership’, ‘Responsible communications’, ‘Social change and impact management’ in the ‘Responsible and sustainable governance’ master’s programme at the ‘Sectoral Economics and Management’ department, subject 3.7 ‘Business management’: and in the discussion and adoption of teaching programmes for the master’s programme (‘Responsible and sustainable governance’) at the ‘Sectoral Economics and Management’ department’, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, ‘St.Kliment Ohridski’ Sofia University.
- Developing and initiating the following courses included in the teaching plan: ‘Ethics in governance’, master’s programme, course, in cooperation with Prof. Alexandra White (the course was initiated in the 2021/2022 academic year), ‘Systems and standards for managing corporate sustainability and responsibility’, master’s programme, course, (the course was initiated in the 2021/2022 academic year), ‘Sustainable management and development’, master’s programme, course (the course was initiated in the 2021/2022 academic year)

- Updating the content of the following lectures (for the past three academic years):
'Good management and corporate social responsibility' (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, undergraduate programme, courses - experts and non-experts, in Bulgarian and in English, subject field 3.7. Business management): 2019/2020 academic year, 'Corporate development, merging and acquisitions' in cooperation with Assoc. Prof. Aneta Antonova (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, master's programme, courses - experts and non-experts, in Bulgarian, in subject field 3.8 Economics): 2019/2020 academic year

I can accept 2.

The criteria for holding the academic position have been met.

2. Critical remarks and recommendations

The candidate has prepared her research papers from a formal point of view. Her participation as an independent author or as a co-author, however, is not balanced enough. The co-authorship for all articles should be presented according to the requirements by providing a distribution protocol or a similar document which outlines sufficient information about the contribution of each author (a distribution protocol has been provided for some of them). Part of the research publications presented relate to the topic but, to a certain extent, are very remote in terms of the time period and the dynamic economic environment of the past few years. Part of them are also included in journals which are not scientific. The candidate has incorrectly listed chapters of books as publications. In the National Centre for Information and Documentation they exist as chapters of book, which is what they are, but in the annex for the minimum requirements they are listed as publications with citations.

I would recommend to the candidate, moving forward, to publish in journals with a high level of visibility in the databases which are defined in the Bulgarian law - SCOPUS and Web of S.

Having considered the efficiency demonstrated by the candidate, I hope that the documents presented, which declare the originality of the papers provided, are based on the usability of the tools applicable for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

The research papers presented have contributions in the field of research as well as practical and methodological applications. The candidate has also presented textbooks which, without a doubt, are very useful and suitable for the teaching process. The national minimum requirements have been met.

Based on my familiarisation with the research papers presented, the research, practical and methodological contributions contained therein, as well as the candidate's teaching activity and the materials used for that purpose, I find it reasonable to propose Head Assistant Marina

Stefanova for the position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.8 Economics, p. 3 Social, Business and Legal Sciences.

12/08/2022

Member of the committee:

/Prof. Al.Vutsova/