

OPINION

about an application submitted in competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Technical University of Varna in the field of higher education "**1. Pedagogical Science**", professional field: "**1.3. Pedagogy of training in...**", announced in State Gazette no. No.38 dated 28.04.2023.

Candidate: **Dr. Elena Koleva Kovacheva**

Member of the scientific panel: **Prof. Todor Dimitrov Ganchev, PhD**

1. General characteristics of the applicant's research and applied activities

Dr. Elena Koleva Kovacheva participates in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with a habilitation thesis – a monograph entitled "*The Teacher and Computer Modeling in School*" to meet the minimum national requirements under Indicator 3 (group "B") and 34 scientific publications and 14 handbooks for schoolteachers to meet the minimum national requirements under the group of indicators "G". Specifically, three lists were presented under the group of indicators "G": the first one contains 2 coauthored publications that are indexed in renowned scientific literature databases (Indicator "G.6") and are currently visible in WoS; the second one includes 32 publications in non-refereed journals with a scientific review or in edited collective volumes (Indicator "G.7"), among which 7 are authored alone; and the third one - 14 handbooks for schoolteachers presented under Indicator "G.9. Studies published in non-refereed journals with a scientific review or published in edited collective volumes", among which 12 are co-authored and 2 authored by the candidate. For all publications, Dr. E. Kovacheva is listed as the first author, indicating her significant contribution to the implementation of research.

In accordance with the national requirements for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor", Dr. E. Kovacheva has provided information about publications used in previous competitions -- a list of 5 publications used for acquiring her Ph.D. There is no duplication of the lists provided in the present competition.

To meet the minimum national requirements for the group of indicators "D", Dr. E. Kovacheva has presented two lists with a total of 14 citations, including a list of 2 citations in the category "D.12. Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review" and a list of 12 citations falling under category "D.13 Citations or reviews in non-refereed journals with scientific review". Currently, the publications of Dr. E. Kovacheva have Google Scholar H-index = 1.

According to the Rules for the Development of Academic Staff at the Technical University of Varna, Indicator "Zh" requires teaching at least 30 hours of lectures in the last 3 years. The documentation provided by the candidate shows that Dr. E. Kovacheva has held over 3000 hours of classes for 2019-2022. Of these, I consider 380 hours of lectures with students from the Technical University of Varna held at the Department of Social and Legal Sciences during the academic years 2020/2021, 2021/2022, and 2022/2023.

A comparison of the application package submitted by Dr. E. Kovacheva with the minimum national and institutional requirements for the candidate "Associate Professor" (Table 1) shows fulfillment or over-fulfillment of the minimum requirements for all groups of indicators.

Table 1. Reference for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the acquisition of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education "1. Pedagogical Sciences"

Group of indicators	Content by indicators	Minimum requirements for "Associate Professor"	Points Dr. Elena Kovacheva
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 3	100	100
G	The sum of indicators from 4 to 10	200	282,6
D	The sum of indicators from 11 to 13	50	80

The work of Dr. E. Kovacheva with the undergraduate students from the Technical University of Varna and the postgraduate students and schoolteachers at the Center for Continuing Education at the DEPOS of TU-Varna is commendable. Furthermore, in recent years, Dr. E. Kovacheva authored/co-authored 14 handbooks for schoolteachers who teach Informatics and Computer Modeling classes. In addition, I have excellent impressions of the organizational skills of Dr. E. Kovacheva in the context of her work on the preparation and implementation of specializations and courses for improving the qualification of teachers and acquiring professional qualification degrees.

2. Evaluation of the candidate's pedagogical training and activity

The pedagogical activity of Dr. E. Kovacheva began in 1997. It covered 25 years – since her appointment as a teacher of Mathematics and Informatics at the secondary school “St. St. Cyril and Methodius” in Plovdiv. Her academic career began in the year 2000 when she was appointed an “Assistant Professor” at the Institute for Improving the Qualification of Teachers “Dr. Petar Beron”, Varna, later renamed as the “Department for Information, Qualification, and Continuing Education” (DIKPO) – Varna, division of the Shumen University “Ep. Konstantin Preslavski”, where she successively held positions “Senior Assistant Professor” (2002–2011) and “Ch. Assistant Professor” (2011–2018).

Since the year 2018, she has gained considerable teaching experience at the Technical University of Varna as a part-time Assistant Professor and trained undergraduate students at the Department of Social and Legal Science and the Department of Information and Communication Technology, as well as postgraduate students and specialists at the Center for Continuing Education at the DEPOS of TU-Varna. According to the presented documentation, for the past 3 academic years, she has conducted over 3000 academic hours, which is an excellent attestation of her high working capacity as a teacher and organizer of academic work.

3. Scientific and applied research contributions

Based on the provided abstracts, I consider most of the contributions in the publications of Dr. E. Kovacheva as applied research. I recognize that the publications presented in the competition reflect applied research activities for implementing new educational technologies in informatics and computer modeling to train teachers and students. Considering the order of the authors and the author lists for the co-authored publications, I conclude that the candidate has largely achieved the contributions requested. Furthermore, about a fifth of the publications submitted to the competition are authored by Dr. E. Kovacheva as the sole author.

4. Significance of contributions to science and practice

Regarding the significance of the contributions in the publications of Dr. E. Kovacheva, I judge indirectly by the citations made in publications of independent authors and the large number of teaching handbooks for schoolteachers of Informatics and Computer Modeling. The contributions in

the scientific publications of the candidate are related to solving tasks of high social and social importance associated with the training of teachers and students.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no substantive comments about the research and publication activities of the candidate. The documentation presented in the competition is comprehensive and well-structured.

CONCLUSION

The application package submitted in the competition allows for an objective and multifaceted assessment of the qualification of Dr. E. Kovacheva. A formal comparison of the presented assets with the national requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor" and the relevant regulations of TU-Varna shows that the minimum requirements are met or overfulfilled.

This gives me a reason to support the candidate Dr. E. Kovacheva in the competition for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Technical University of Varna in the higher education field "1. Pedagogical Science", professional field: "1.3. Pedagogy of training in...".

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/Prof. Todor Ganchev, PhD/