

# OPINION

**by Professor Georgi Vladimirov Ignatov, PhD,**  
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**Regarding: reviewed scientific works and academic activity  
of Assoc. Prof. Veselina Georgieva Ivanova, PhD,**

the only applicant for participation in a procedure for filling the academic position Professor, announced by the Trakia University – Stara Zagora in State Gazette, Issue 30 of 15 April 2022, on Physical Education Teaching Methodology in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... at the „Preschool and primary school pedagogy“ Division at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Trakia University – Stara Zagora.

## **I.Procedure details**

The competition was announced for the needs of the Division of Preschool and primary school pedagogy at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Trakia University – Stara Zagora, according to the Decision of the Faculty Council under protocol №31 / 17 May 2022. I participate in the scientific jury of the competition according to Order № 1483 / 20 May 2022 of the Rector of Trakia University – Stara Zagora.

## **II.Applicant details**

Veselina Ivanova was born on February 4, 1962 in Stara Zagora. He earned the title of „Master of Sports“ in swimming in 1977. In 1980, he graduated from the Secondary Sports School in the city of Stara Zagora with specialized sports training – swimming. In 1984, he graduated from the Higher Institute of Physical Education „G. Dimitrov“ with two specialties – „Physical Education Teacher“ and „Swimming Coach“. During his studies at the Higher Institute of Physical Education, he acquired an additional specialty „Sports Journalism“. He worked as a teacher in 1984-1985 at the Student Sports School – Stara Zagora. She also worked at Samara Primary School, Stara Zagora and Nov Vek Private Primary School, Kirilovo village, Stara Zagora municipality, as a physical education and sports teacher. She was a children's swimming coach. She headed the Beroe swimming sports club. From 2001 to 2005, he was a doctoral student at the Division of Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Trakia University. In 2006, he acquired the educational and scientific degree „PhD“ in a scientific specialty 07.05.05. Theory and methodology of physical education and sports training (incl. Methodology of physical therapy). From 1988 to 2001 he was a teacher, and from 2001 to 2008 he was a senior teacher of physical education and sports at the Faculty of Medicine of Trakia University. Until 2008, he led the educational

and training process with the representative swimming team of Trakia University. From 2008 to 2011, he was a senior lecturer in physical education and sports at the Faculty of Education. Since 2011, he has been an associate professor.

Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD leads and participates in a significant number of socially beneficial activities and initiatives such as: Head of the Division of Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy from 2016 to today. Member of the Control Board of Thrace University from 2019 to today. Deputy Chairman of the General Assembly of Thrace University (term 2015 – 2019). He is a member of the Scientific Board of the journal Research in Kinesiology. There are 46 participations in conferences, congresses and symposiums in Bulgaria and abroad. There are also 9 participations as a member of Scientific Juries in the pedagogical fields 1.3. and 7.6. of them 1 as reviewer.

### **III. Summarized quantitative and qualitative data for the pedagogical and research activity of the candidate**

The scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD fulfills the criteria for science such as truthfulness, reliability, innovation, contribution to science and practice and other features specific to scientific knowledge. The evaluation of the scientific results of the candidate, which he presents as scientometric data, written by National Center for Information and Documentation are as follows:

- Indicators in group A: a total of 50 points.
- Indicators in group B: total 100 points.
- Indicators in group G: total 233 points.
- Indicators in group D: total 360 points.
- Indicators in group E: total 125 points.

As can be seen, the scientometric indicators of the scientific activity of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD in all three groups (G, D and E) significantly exceed the values of the required minimum requirements, according to Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

As a result of her many years of training, Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD, has acquired specialized scientific knowledge and specific professional skills and competencies, which she successfully applies in academic and professional terms, in research and project activities. The candidate participated in 7 university and 2 national scientific and educational projects („Student practices“ and „Updating and developing new curricula...“) in the field of physical education and sports. There are also 5 participations under the Erasmus program for teaching mobility. Evidence of the high level of professionalism of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD can also be found in the citation of her 43 scientific works, in a total of 63 publications, magazines and monographs, which is undoubtedly valuable for all specialists.

### **IV. Description of the scientific works**

For his participation in the competition Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD presents for review in theoretical, scientific-applied and practical aspects a total

of 31 scientific papers in the field of Physical Education and Sports, of which by type:

1. Monograph – 1 pc.
2. Textbooks – 4 pc.
3. Chapter of a collective monograph – 2 pcs.
4. Articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases – 3 pcs.
5. Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review – 24 pcs.

The author's share of scientific publications is: independent author – 14 works and co-authored – 17 works.

The presented scientific production can be distributed thematically as follows:

- Competences and innovations in the educational process (habilitation work – B.3, textbook – E.20, publications with №7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.11, 7.14, 7.23, 7.24 and a published chapter of a collective monograph with №10.2 from the list of scientific works and publications);
- Psychological-pedagogical dimensions of pedagogical activity (publications with №6.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.12, 7.13 and 7.15 from the list of scientific works and publications);
- Physical education in kindergarten and school (publications with №6.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.10, 7.18, 7.21 and 7.22 from the list of scientific works and publications);
- Biological regularities and social functions of motor activity (publications with №7.5, 7.17, 7.20 and a published chapter of a collective monograph with №10.1 from a list of scientific works and publications);
- Motivation and satisfaction with the teacher's work (publications with №6.3, 7.16 and 7.19 from the list of scientific works and publications).

### **V. Scientific contributions**

Of significant interest is the monograph „CHILDREN'S MOBILE GAMES in a targeted, meaningful and diagnostic context“, published in 2022, which is a work of high theoretical value. The paper focuses on children's mobile play. The range of questions and problems affect its significance of approach, means, method, form and criteria for achieving the goals of modern preschool education – the development and well-being of every child in its preparation and realization in the changing conditions of the present and the future.

The textbook „Theory and methodology of physical education in preschool age“ is a continuation of this issue. It includes basic questions from the theory and methodology of physical education. The basics of motor culture, theoretical and methodological approaches to the educational process in kindergarten are examined. The content has been developed in accordance with the current guidelines for the education of children of preschool age, reflected in the normative documents.

Regarding competences and innovations in the educational process, the author's vision of the main prerequisites affecting the optimization of preschool physical education is presented. The significance of the competence approach to the educational content and its goal-resultative effect is brought out. A study of the attitudes and evaluations of teachers-mentors regarding the pedagogical practice of graduate students was conducted, as well as a study of the attitudes towards the formation of professional competence and readiness for professional work in the field of physical education of students. The author presents criteria for assessing children's motor skills through mobile games and conducts one of the first studies in Bulgaria regarding online training in physical education.

An important area in the scientific researches of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD, are the psychological and pedagogical dimensions of pedagogical activity. The author systematizes and derives theoretical and practical statements based on the peculiarities of developmental learning through the process of solving tasks, and on which basis a methodological system of work is built with the aim of forming divergent thinking with a tendency for transferability across ages and activities. An in-depth study was made on the essence of the ability to solve motor tasks, and the influence of metacognitive processes on the performance characteristics of the perception with understanding of scientific information in the field of the theory and methodology of physical education among student teachers was also investigated.

An important field in the research of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD is the research presented by her on physical education in kindergarten and school. It has been established that mobile games, applied in a system during the pedagogical interaction in other educational directions in the kindergarten, ensure the targeted orientation towards the complex development of the child's personality. In the author's publications on the subject, the peculiarities of the application of mobile games in the mixed age group are discussed – an issue that is not addressed in the specialized literature. Attention is paid to the educational potential that mobile play brings. In this regard, pedagogical technology has been studied and tested for children's mobile games to stimulate positive education and optimize physical culture in kindergarten conditions.

Also of interest are the author's works on the biological regularities and social functions of motor activity. The effect of applying isometric training and swimming in children with spinal curvatures to create a strong muscular corset has been studied, tracked and theoretically summarized. The effects of hippotherapy on motor function in 19 children between the ages of 7 and 15 with a diagnosis of multiple disorders were monitored after a 5-month therapeutic activity.

Another part of the candidate's research is related to the study of motivational attitudes and satisfaction with teaching work. The author conducted a study on the satisfaction of elementary teachers and physical education teachers with their professional activity and the factors that influence satisfaction. It successfully outlines the changed profile of primary teachers in

the country with a predominant part of older teachers, with longer work experience and at the same time with higher qualification and professional qualification degree. It identifies the factors that positively influence teacher satisfaction.

The presented scientific production in a wide spectrum, its content, results and conclusions give me the reason to define the author as a leader in the problems of physical education and sports in preschool age in our country. From the analysis of the scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD impresses the high competence and interpretation of scientific research.

The scientific production proposed by Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD, meets the requirements for the academic position „Professor“.

#### **VI. Academic and scientific research activities**

The announced competition has a full study load with the respective compulsory and elective courses.

Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD, is a main teacher at the Division of Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Trakia University – Stara Zagora. She is a teacher of students specializing in preschool, elementary and special pedagogy in nine compulsory disciplines in bachelor's and master's degrees. As such, he is the author of a number of innovative programs for the needs of academic work with students. This fact testifies that she is excellently prepared to create, present and continuously update the content of the lecture courses she leads. In terms of content, the created courses and programs reveal the classic aspect of sports science, but also its modern achievements, additionally illustrated with numerous examples from practice. All this makes them not only theoretically-applied oriented, but also particularly useful and attractive for the wide audience of students, doctoral students, athletes and specialists.

Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD, is the scientific supervisor of 12 graduate students who have successfully created and defended their theses under her expert scientific guidance. She is also the scientific supervisor of two PhD students, whose dissertation topics are a kind of continuation of scientific research and long-term research experience. In this way, she practically shares with them her effective ways and practices of how to teach and how to achieve high quality research and publication activity. All this testifies that she invests long-term, consistent and purposeful efforts in her academic studies and in achieving high professionalism.

The submitted production for review does not duplicate the work of other authors and is free of plagiarism.

Assoc. Prof. Ivanova, PhD and I have no publications in common.

No violations were found during the competition.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

On the basis of the overall analysis of the presented scientific production, of my long-term personal impressions, I believe that the candidate for the academic position „Professor“, Assoc. Prof. Veselina Georgieva Ivanova, PhD,

has the necessary professional-pedagogical and scientific training. Veselina Ivanova, is a respected teacher with extremely rich practical and excellent theoretical training. She successfully combines the research activity with the specific teaching work and performed activity. He is respected among his students and colleagues.

Based on the above and the qualities of the candidate, I strongly suggest to the Honorable Members of the Scientific Jury to award Assoc. Prof. Veselina Georgieva Ivanova, PhD, the academic position of „Professor“ in professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... at the Division of Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Trakia University – Stara Zagora.

01 September 2022  
Sofia

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