

## REVIEW

**By Prof. Dr. Dimitar Hristov Tenchev,**

University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy - Sofia, 3.8 Economics and Management, appointed a member of the Scientific Jury by order of the Rector of NBU Z-RK-151 / 01.03.2022, on scientific papers on participation in a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in a professional field

3.7. Administration and management, announced in SG No. 08 / 28.01.2022,  
**with candidate ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova**

### **I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University**

For participation in the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" Chief Assistant Dr. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova presents self-assessment and evidence that are in full compliance with the provisions of national legislation and regulations of the NBU.

With her activity Dr. Maria Ivanova has fulfilled the minimum requirements to the scientific and teaching activity for district 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and management, determined by the Regulations for implementation of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the requirements of the Ordinance for the development of the academic staff of NBU, which must meet the candidates for the academic position "Associate Professor". The points on all indicators significantly exceed the minimum number of points, and on some groups of indicators they are significantly above the required ones.

#### **Group A (collected 50 points from the required minimum number of 50 points)**

*Indicator 1 (Dissertation work):*

Acquired the scientific degree "Doctor" in 2012 with the defense of a dissertation on "Higher education in Bulgaria and the European educational space - institutional and financial aspects", with Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matthew Matev. Reviewers: Prof. Rositsa Rangelova Pavlova, Ph.D., Prof. Dr. Margarita Nikolova Atanasova. Scientific jury: Chairman: Prof. Rositsa Rangelova Pavlova, Ph.D. Members: Prof. Vasil Georgiev Todorov, Ph.D., Prof. Dr. Margarita Nikolova Atanasova, Prof. Dr. Katya Ivanova Vladimirova, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matyu Valchev Matev. Place of defense: Institute for Economic Research - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Volume: 273 (pages)

#### **Group B (collected 100 points from the required minimum number of 100 points)**

*Indicator 3 (Habilitation thesis - Monograph):*

Ivanova, M. "MANAGEMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT BRAND IN THE XXI CENTURY - OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS", Volume: 232 pages, NBU Publishing House, 2020, Reviewers: Prof. Dr. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, Assoc. Scientific editor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sonya Aleksieva, ISBN 978-619-233-135-1

#### **Group D (collected 717.5 points from the required minimum number of 200 points)**

*Indicator 5 (Published book based on defensive dissertation):*

"Higher education in Bulgaria - institutional and financial aspects in the context of the European educational space", Volume: 282, Reviewers: Prof. Rositsa Rangelova Pavlova, Ph.D., Prof. Dr. Margarita Nikolova Atanasova. Scientific editor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matthew Matev, Press: Fatum Ltd., Ed. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova, S., 2019, ISBN 978-619-91436-0-5

*Indicator 6 (Articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information)*

2 publications are presented.

*Indicator 7 (Articles and reports in non-peer-reviewed publications with scientific peer-reviewed or edited collective volumes)*

48 publications were presented

*Indicator 8 (Studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information)*

Ivanova, M., Dimitrova, A. (2016) "Contemporary Issues and Perspectives on Gender Research in Adult Education, Part 5. GENDER IN ADULT EDUCATION PRACTICE DO OLD WOMEN STUDY IN BULGARIA? Preferred Methods of Training for Men and Women Aged 65+",

*Indicator 9 (Studies in non-peer-reviewed publications with scientific review)*

4 publications are presented.

*Indicator 10 (Published chapter of a collective monograph)*

7 publications are presented.

**Group D (collected 100 points from the required minimum number of 50 points)**

**Group E (collected 325 points from 0 points - not required for associate professor)**

**Group G (collected 150 points from the required minimum number of 50 points)**

**Group H (collected 120 points from the required minimum number of 70 points)**

**Group I (collected 90 points from the required minimum number of 50 points)**

I avoid indicating the number of points on each of the indicators from 11 to 49, so as not to repeat data that are publicly available in the self-assessment presented by the candidate.

## **II. Research (creative) activity and results**

### 1. Evaluation of the monographic work, creative performances or other publications, corresponding in volume and integrity of the monographic work, including evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.

The monographic work is developed in nine topics, systematized in three chapters and a volume of 111 pages. It refers to 113 literary and Internet sources in English and Bulgarian. It can be said that it has a scientific and educational orientation.

Its focus is on managing the employer brand in order to effectively "sell" jobs and win the best job candidates. A successful relationship has been made with marketing tools in the context of manipulating the minds of a large audience, but the tolerance of relevant manipulation has been skillfully researched and commented on.

Along with the classical understanding of the employer brand, many modern factors are integrated - globalization, competitiveness, aging, free movement of people, the digital age, attitudes and values of new generations and more. In fact, the research thesis finds answers to questions related to its adequate management, taking into account the new realities, which is the main research goal.

Combining several research approaches, the author achieves a holistic view of the issues related to the employer brand - the evolutionary development of the concept and models for it; identification of the multi-layered connection of the people from the company and the stakeholders outside it; the existing company culture, the value system and their influence on its public image.

The diverse interpretation and understanding of the nature of the employer brand influences the attitudes of the participants in the processes from different organizational levels and is essential for different organizations - large, medium or small; in different countries with different living standards, a phenomenon that is also the subject of research.

As mentioned, the monograph is structured in three chapters, following logically the course of the exposition of the reflections and the formulated goals and objectives and their achievement. In my opinion, the main emphasis is relevant on the relationship between the management of the employer brand and the management of people in the company.

In the context of the above, a comprehensive study should take into account the views of employers, employees and job applicants on the existing employer brand and its adequate management. The author adequately applies a rational approach (structured interviews), focusing on experts from human resources departments, referring to their high expertise and their constant contact, especially with candidates for jobs in relevant organizations.

In my opinion, the monographic work has two significant scientific and applied contributions. One refers to the objective analysis of the labor market in the country, where there are significant differences in the understanding of the nature of the employer brand in different business entities - large, with foreign management; large and medium with Bulgarian management and small, where the remuneration of the staff is considered to be the main influencing the motivation and commitment.

The second contribution is related to the definition and introduction of the term "generalized employer brand". The meaning is to define a set of desired characteristics specific to some organizations and these characteristics are associated with any other company belonging to the relevant category. The use of this phenomenon has a stronger effect among not very highly educated candidates for work with average emotional intelligence.

In my opinion, the development is relevant because the issue of the employer brand is intertwined with the complex set of activities for human resources management and reveals adequate opportunities to influence the motivation and commitment of existing staff, reduce turnover, attract and retain appropriate employees, and why not talent.

## 2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications (creative performances) made after the appointment of the academic position "Chief Assistant" or the academic position "Associate Professor" (for candidates for professor). It also includes an assessment of the peer review requirement.

After the appointment to the academic position "Ch. assistant ", as can be seen from the presented self-assessment, Dr. Maria Ivanova scored 717.5 points, with a required 200 by group of indicators G.

A book on the dissertation "Higher education in Bulgaria - institutional and financial aspects in the context of the European educational space" has been published, Volume: 282 pages, Reviewers: Prof. Rositsa Rangelova Pavlova, Ph.D., Prof. Dr. r Margarita Nikolova Atanasova. Scientific editor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Matthew Matev, Press: Fatum Ltd., Ed. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova, S., 2019, ISBN 978-619-91436-0-5

In addition, they have been published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information, Indicator 6, two articles:

The Social Reality Of The Roma In Bulgaria (from the Value of Differences to Empowered Relationships), Sofia: Published by Economic Research Institute at the BAS, Economic Studies journal (ECONOMIC RESEARCH - Sofia: Institute of Economics of BAS), volume 27, issue 6, pp.75-84, ISSN 0205-3292, 2018 (independent) and

Virtual Classroom and Coaching - Unexpectedly Good Combination (Innovative Practices in the Master's Programs in the Area of Management at New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria)“, No: 160, Pages 1306-1313 from “The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences EpSBS”, e-ISSN: 2357-1330, ©2017 Published by the Future Academy, Edited by: Emanuel Soare & Claudiu Langa, <http://www.futureacademy.org.uk/publication/EpSBS/EduWorld2016PilestiRomania> <http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2017.05.02.160>, Referred to and indexed in the Web of Science WOS Clarivate ISI Conference Proceedings Citation Index (ISI CPCI) and Web of Science ISI Thomson Reuters (co-author)

The general review of the publications of the Chief Assistant Dr. Maria Ivanova after the defense of the doctoral degree (total number 37) allows me to distinguish two large groups of scientific and research interests.

One group is related to Employer Brand Management. In it I would include publications with numbers 9, 10 and 17 (in Bulgarian) from the presented "Reference for publications after the defense of a doctoral degree".

The second group is generally related to "Human Resources Management", №№ 8, 27, 28, 34 (Bulgarian) with several sub-areas:

- Related to Training and Education №№ 4, 20, 30, 31 (Bulgarian) and №№ 19, 35 (English)
- Related to Digitalization №№ 1, 2, 3, 7, 15 (Bulgarian)
- Related to Managing Differences and Social Integration №№ 16, 21, 22, 29 (Bulgarian) and №№ 12, 13, 14, 18, 32, 33, 36, 37 (English).
- Remuneration №№ 25, 26 (English)
- Related to Fluidity Management № 6 (Bulgarian) and № 5 (English)
- Related to Talent Management №№ 23, 24 (English)

Publication № 38 is repeated and coincides with №34

A strong distinction between each sub-area is difficult to make, as training and education topics are integrated as tools with some of the other aspects.

- Consistency in research interests and research is evident, which strengthens the understanding of systematic and consistent development of the candidate in the selected areas. All publications are relevant to the context of the announced competition - 3.7. Administration and Management.
- I would like to draw a few conclusions in connection with the presented scientific production.

In essence, each of the publications addresses current issues and enriches the scientific and practical value of existing knowledge.

- • The critical view and analysis of the author can be seen everywhere, which confirms her consistent development and development as a researcher.
- • Different areas of research build sustainable "bridges" in the network of Administration and Management, which allows for the development of new relationships that complement the understanding and practice in the management of organizations.
- • The works are presented at important and authoritative forums and publications in the country and abroad and are distributed among the scientific guild.
- • Along with the scientific significance of the production, there is a significant practical and applied usefulness of the results.

### 3. Citation from other authors.

- Maria Ivanova's research is disseminated among the specialists of the guild, which is evident from the observed quotes in the self-assessment in indicators 11 and 12 of Group D, a total of 9, as well as others presented in the Library of NBU. This makes the author recognizable, and her works appreciated in these circles.

This gives me reason to confirm once again the relevance and adequacy of the developed materials - books, studies, reports and articles, and to share my positive assessment of them.

### 4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the obtained results in practice.

Indicator E does not concern the details of the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor", but complements the image of Maria Ivanova in a very good light and confirms the impression of a consistent, stable and consistent researcher and researcher. She has participated in 5 national scientific and educational projects, in 3 international ones and has been the Head of an

International Scientific Project. The results of the work on the projects are presented as reports, articles, etc. in her publishing activity.

The presented textbooks and teaching aids are also impressive - 7 in number, in which independently or in co-authorship Mariya Ivanova has integrated part of her knowledge, experience and expertise to help students learn from them.

The candidate is a member of 8 national and international organizations and associations inherent in the professional field - European Society for Research on Adult Education (ESREA) since 2009; ESREA Network on Gender and Adult Learning; ESREA Network on Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development; European Distance and E-learning Network (EDEN) from 2006 until now; Bulgarian Association for People Management and Development (BFSA); Bulgarian Association for Development of Society, Culture and Education (BAROCCO) since 2010; Balkan Association for Regional Initiatives (B.A.R.I.) since 2012; Early Childhood Development Association since 2011.

Allow me to assess this fact as extremely significant. This demonstrates her strong motivation to spread her experience and knowledge, as well as to constantly upgrade them in the world and local scientific space. In addition, it is proof of recognition of her high scientific achievements in these circles.

It is obvious that the Chief Assistant Dr. Maria Ivanova has the potential for future self-development and to continue to contribute to the enrichment of science and practice in the field of people management (human resources) and more. I would like to draw attention to the seriousness of the problems with the integration of minority groups, supporting the processes of optimizing learning among different categories of people - age, gender, social affiliation, the growing penetration of digital technologies in education, etc., which are in focus of the current and future scientific and research intentions of the candidate.

All this is declared in her Research Program and linked to the results achieved so far (submission of documents for participation in the competition).

### **III. Teaching and learning activities**

#### 1. Classroom and extracurricular employment, work in the electronic training module "MOODLE - NBU", providing student internships and internships, working with students and PhD students.

The participation of the candidate in this indicator is impressive. As can be seen, she has developed or participated in the improvement of 93 courses in NBU master's programs: Management and Development of Human Resources (HRM) in Bulgarian and / or English in full-time and distance learning - 75 courses; Management for organizational excellence (Bulgarian) full-time and distance learning - 16 courses; Business administration (Bulgarian) distance form - 2 courses.

At the bachelor's level she participated in the improvement of 1 course in the Bachelor's program "Applied Foreign Languages for Administration and Management" and three in the Bachelor's program "Business Management and Entrepreneurship".

For the needs of students' education the author has developed and / or participated in the development of 5 textbooks in book form: co-authored - "Human Resources Management", Chapter 3 "Human capital and parameters of the" learning organization" - theories, European practices and training programs", textbook for master's program at NBU, 2014, ISBN 978-954-353-831-9; independently, "Information technologies in human resources management", textbook for master's program at NBU Sofia: UM-NBU, 2009, ISBN 978-954-535-560-8; co-authored - "Management of Change", textbook for master's program at NBU, Sofia: UM-NBU, 2009, ISBN 978-954-535-584-4; independently "Communications and Management", Sofia: UM-NBU - resource book for SMBB 402D course "Communication and Management", NBU, 2005 and "Self-study", Sofia: UM-NBU - resource book for SMBB 202D course "Skills for learning", NBU, 2004.

Electronic textbook co-authored - "Learning and development through portfolio", Sofia: UM-NBU - electronic textbook for master's program HRD of NBU, ISBN 978-954-535-452-6, 2006

Author's teaching materials have also been developed in the Moodle space of the courses: MBAM196D Human Capital and Talent Management; MBAM198D Labor Relations Management (Labor Valuation); MHRB117D Business Context and Human Resource Management.

The aspiration of the candidate for self-development in her role as a lecturer and researcher is constant, which is evident from her participation in 18 programs and courses for the development of the academic staff at NBU.

Maria Ivanova also has an active relationship and work with students in research. There are 6 joint studies, followed by public presenting the results in various forums. The involvement of students in the educational process continues through the organization and conduct of at least five internships and internships in business organizations in the country, as well as organizing their participation in ten creative competitions and events at national and international level.

Chief Assistant Dr. Ivanova has led 23 graduates who have successfully defended their dissertations. She has reviewed 53 papers by students in the pre-defense phase. She has participated in 14 commissions for state exams. Its average annual classroom and extracurricular workload far exceeds the minimum required.

All this gives me reason to believe that the candidate has a clear vision and maintains a constant high activity oriented towards students in the context of effective sharing of knowledge and experience with them. Based on the shared feedback from the students and the received average grade (very good 4.35 out of the maximum 5.00) I could conclude that they feel trust, gratitude and appreciation for the efforts made by Maria Ivanova for their training and education.

#### **IV. Administrative and public activities**

##### 1. Participation in collective governing bodies of NBU.

Dr. Maria Ivanova carries out active administrative activity at NBU. For a long time she was Head of the Education Department at the School of Management at NBU 2000 to 2013, as well as Program Director / Program Consultant from 2013 to 2020. She has participated as a member of the Accreditation Commission at FDENO and MoF and as a Program Consultant of the Ministry of Justice "Human Resources Management and Development" - in Bulgarian, "Human Resources Management and Development - in English, Management for Organizational Excellence 2014-2015 , 2019-2020; Program Director / Consultant of BP "Administration and Management" - module "Management and Development of the Organization" and MP "Management for Organizational Excellence" - full-time and distance learning.

##### 2. Social activity.

Maria Ivanova's social activity is rich. She has organized and conducted 19 scientific seminars, discussions, sessions, round tables at NBU in the areas of her research interests - people management, coaching, cross-border cooperation, conflict management through mediation and others. The contribution to the dissemination of experience and knowledge among her colleagues is indisputable. In the line of international cooperation of the New Bulgarian University and the Erasmus program she has given 6 public lectures and presentations in Italy, Finland, Greece, Romania and Poland. In this way, it has contributed to the recognition of the high level of teaching, research and research activities of the NBU in the European educational area.

To the activities of the societies, I would include the participation of Maria Ivanova in teams for the creation and / or accreditation of 4 bachelor's and master's programs at NBU.

I could summarize that with these activities the candidate has significantly helped the university's efforts to continuously improve its performance nationally and internationally.

#### **V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)**

I have known Chief Assistant Dr. Maria Ivanova since she started working at the School of Management at NBU in 1998. My impressions are extremely positive and cover the periods during which programs were created and developed by the School of Management. Open University UK., As well as in the joint work in teaching courses at NBU. She maintained a high level of fulfillment of administrative responsibilities and at the same time contributed to the enrichment of the educational and practical content of the courses. I also have excellent impressions from her participation and presentation in research conferences held by various universities in the country. I dare say that she demonstrates consistency in her performances and marks a positive development in the areas of her scientific interests.

## **VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activities and achievements of the candidate**

I have no critical remarks on her research work. I confirm my positive opinion about the quality of her publishing activity. I dare say that in her role as a lecturer she does an excellent job and contributes to the continuous improvement of the quality of education at the university.

It would be interesting for the candidate to share her opinion on the effectiveness of distance learning for students during the Covid crisis and whether the expectations associated with this overlap with the real results.

I suggest that as future research, Maria Ivanova try to make a comparative study of the effectiveness of distance learning in two directions - typical university education and training in companies. I do not mean the economic benefits of employers, but the degree of staff training and direct benefits for organizations.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above, and as a result of an in-depth review of the parameters of her publishing, scientific, research, teaching, public and administrative activities, I dare to say that the candidate meets the criteria for academic position "Associate Professor", according to ZRASB, regulations for its implementation and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University. In this sense, I give my firmly POSITIVE assessment of the application.

I would like to recommend to the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote positively and to propose to the Academic Council of NBU, to elect Maria Alexandrova Ivanova, Ph.D.

Date: May 2022.

Signature .....