

## STATEMENT OF OPINION

**Prepared by Assoc. Prof. Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov, PhD,**  
Director of the Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Communications and Sport  
at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov, Varna,  
Member of the Academic Jury determined by Order No. P-109-326/7 October 2019  
of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna

**Regarding: A competition for holding the academic position “Professor”** within the higher education field of 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional subfield 1.2 Pedagogy, with the scientific speciality of “Theory of Education and Didactics” (Teaching of Medical Specialists) for the needs of the Healthcare Department, Educational Sector “Healthcare Management and Speech Therapy”, at the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University – Varna, which was announced in Issue 62/6 August 2019 of the State Gazette.

Assoc. Prof. Marinela Ivanova Grudeva, PhD, from the Healthcare Department at the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov, Varna, participated in the competition as a single applicant. The presented documents were prepared in compliance with the requirements of The Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Application of the aforementioned Act, as well as in compliance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Medical University – Varna dated 29 October 2018.

### **1. Professional development of the applicant**

In 1982, Assoc. Prof. Marinela Ivanova Grudeva, PhD, graduated from the University of Veliko Tarnovo “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” with a higher education Master’s Degree in Bulgarian Philology. In 1996, she completed a one-year post-graduate specialisation in “Social Pedagogy” at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. In 2001, she acquired the academic degree of Doctor of Science in 05.07.01. Theory of Education and Didactics, with the dissertation topic: “Humanisation of the Relationships in the Contemporary School”. Assoc. Prof. Grudeva has completed a number of qualifying courses in project management, management skills, pedagogy and psychology of the higher education institution, interactive teaching methods, German language, etc. She has worked as a teacher, a school principal, an inspector at the Ministry of Education and Science, and she has held the position of Head of the Department of Youth Activities at the Municipality of Varna, as well as the position of Chief Specialist at the Youth Centre – Varna. In 2006, she was elected to hold the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the scientific speciality 05.07.01. Theory of Education and Didactics at the Technical University of Varna. Since 2008, she has been an associate professor in Pedagogy and the scientific speciality 05.07.01. Theory of Education and Didactics at the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov, Varna, where she is currently employed at the Healthcare Department at the Faculty of Public Health. Assoc. Prof. Grudeva is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Association of Professors of Slavonic Countries and she has been awarded a number of prizes by the Bulgarian Red Cross and by the Municipality of Varna for her scientific and public activity.

## **2. Characterization of the scientific and methodological activity of the applicant**

### **2.1. General description of the presented materials**

As per Article 138 (1), Item 4 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Medical University – Varna, Assoc. Prof. Marinela Ivanova Grudeva, PhD, has submitted both paper and electronic copies of a filled-in standardized electronic reference, providing proof of fulfilment of the minimal requirements for holding the academic position “Professor”. The applicant has also submitted a monograph and a total list of more than 74 full-text publications in scientific journals and anthologies besides the ones constituting the materials of proof of fulfilment of the minimal requirements – 37 publications in Bulgarian scientific editions and 37 publications in foreign journals and anthologies, 4 textbooks, 3 study aid books, 12 participations in national and 50 in international scientific forums. Her citations are 84 in total – 50 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific reviewing and 34 in unreferenced journals with scientific reviewing.

### **2.2. Evaluation of the scientific contributions**

The scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Marinela Ivanova Grudeva, PhD, encompass the following main directions: 1) Andragogy, Applicability of the Andragogical Approach to the Academic and Clinical Environment and Andragogical Preparation of Students and Teachers at the Medical Higher Education Institution and the Medical College; 2) Pedagogy, Social Pedagogy, Pedagogy in Health Education, Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education; 3) Theory and Methodology of Teaching at the Medical Higher Education Institution 4) Shaping of Professional, Pedagogical and Other Types of Competencies in Students and Teachers at the Medical Higher Education Institution and the Medical College; 5) Contemporary Guidelines for Modernization and Development of the Medical Higher Education in the Context of the Concept of Lifelong Learning.

The presented **monograph entitled “Conceptual Modelling of the Pedagogical and Andragogical Preparation in the Medical Higher Education Institution” (2019)** stands out as the greatest scientific contribution of the applicant. The work includes 4 parts: 174 pages, which have been illustrated with 4 tables and 6 diagrams and which include 7 appendices and a reference list of 137 sources. The monograph has been identified with the international standard number ISBN 978-619-221-218-6 and it has been published in Bulgarian by the publishing house of the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov, Varna. The format complies with the standards for a habilitation thesis. The monograph has been structured well and consistently, and it contains the necessary theoretical formulations and empirical evidence, while the drawn conclusions present a serious scientific contribution.

The object of study in the monograph is the problem concerning the essence and the state of the pedagogical and andragogical preparation in the medical higher education institution, the significance of which increases constantly within the European Education Area. It has been established that this topic has been repeatedly discussed with the state institutions and the academic management representatives, and that it has been studied and analysed in depth, but a global and lasting solution to it is yet to be found. At the turn of the 21st century, mankind sought a rescue stronghold in education, which was seen as the key to progress and a foundation of the European policy for achievement of an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. According to the author, the “Empowerment of Mobile Youth in the EU” European Union initiative stands out as particularly valuable. Its purpose is associated namely with improving the achievements of the

educational systems and facilitating the entry of young people into the labour market. This interpretation of the problem concerning the improvement of the educational systems outlines the obligations of the European Union member states, which stem from the European Qualifications Framework and the concept of lifelong learning. The logic of tracing the processes of change presupposes an in-depth review of main strategic documents outlining the guidelines for higher education development and an analysis of a number of regulatory documents settling the mechanisms for acquisition of a pedagogical and andragogical preparation in the conditions of the medical higher education, as well as the accessible informational-methodical sources. Based on an in-depth analysis of the problem, the author reaches the conclusion that it is necessary to undertake more global action steps towards its solution, even though only at the university level. The two models presented by the author in the monograph suggest steps of the aforementioned type. The first model presents the development of a Centre for Complex Pedagogical and Andragogical Preparation at the Medical University – Varna, whereas the other presents the development of a distance learning course. Both models have been put into practice, and the monograph presents their updated versions, which have been tailored to the social development stage and the needs of the real users. The text is intended for a wider range of specialists who are not indifferent to the problem and/or who perform teaching activities at the medical higher education institutions, as well as for specialists who functionally perform the role of teachers.

The **textbooks** presented to the attention of the academic jury reveal and analyse the new global problems and challenges, which mankind faces in the 21st century within the fields of ecology, economy, health, the consumption of natural resources, the achievement of energy balance, orientation within the informational space, etc., as well as present the main principles of distance and electronic learning (“Contemporary Challenges to the Medical Higher Education (Distance and Electronic Learning)”; the textbooks aid the shaping of the general theoretical and special preparation of the future “Head of Healthcare and Practice Teacher” (“Theory of the Education of the Students with the Professional Subfields of “Healthcare” and “Methodology of the Practical Education of the Students with the Professional Subfield of “Healthcare”) and the shaping of the general theoretical and special preparation of the students studying the “Nurse” speciality, with the discipline of “Child Pedagogy” (“Prenatal Development and Early Childhood”).

**The full-text publications**, which were presented for review, comprise an integral part of the applicant’s scientific production. The andragogical approach in the academic and clinical environment and the issues of social pedagogy, pedagogy of health education and pedagogy in early childhood education, as well as the theory and methodology of teaching at the medical higher education institution, and the shaping of professional and pedagogical competencies in the students and teachers at the medical higher education institution and the medical college occupy a significant place in it.

The applicant’s contributions achieved beyond the subject scope of her habilitation thesis cover a wide range of pedagogical work with the following several fields standing out:

- 1) Investigation and adaptation of the theoretical and practical-applied aspects of pedagogy and andragogy to the specificity of the professional preparation at the medical higher education

institution and investigation of the effectiveness of applying the andragogical approach to the education of students and patients.

- 2) Elaboration of theoretical, methodical and methodological problems of the teaching process in the medical education system and realisation of a more comprehensive investigation of the state of the pedagogical and andragogical preparation of the students acquiring the professional qualifications of “Practice Teacher” and “Medical Specialist Teacher” that is the first of its kind.
- 3) Elaboration of the structure and content of the author’s conceptual model of a centre for complex pedagogical and andragogical preparation of students, PhD students, post-doctoral researchers, and teachers including both medical and non-medical specialists.
- 4) Elaboration and adaptation of the author’s model of a course for pedagogical and andragogical teacher preparation that has been approbated at the affiliate of the Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov, Varna, in the city of Veliko Tarnovo.
- 5) Investigation and estimation of the pedagogical preparation level of the healthcare specialists for work in a nursery school and outlining of the guidelines for their additional qualification.

### **3. Educational activity/participation in applied scientific and research projects.**

According to the appended documents, Assoc. Prof. Grudeva has over 13 years of teaching experience and a full academic workload of 171 to 477 hours as annual teaching workload, which exceeds the existing standard significantly. Assoc. Prof. Grudeva has been the scientific supervisor of three PhD students who have defended their dissertations successfully. She is participating in several national scientific projects. Her scientometric indicators are evidence of a high-level scientific research and teaching activity.

### **4. Conclusion**

The scientific contributions and the serious research work and teaching activity presented in this statement of opinion provide me with the grounds to vote for the election of Assoc. Prof. Marinela Ivanova Grudeva, PhD, to hold the academic position “**Professor**” at the Healthcare Department, Educational Sector “Healthcare Management and Speech Therapy”, at the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University – Varna within the higher education field of 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional subfield 1.2 Pedagogy, with the scientific speciality of “Theory of Education and Didactics” (Teaching of Medical Specialists).



**18 November 2019**

**Statement of opinion prepared by:  
Assoc. Prof. Ivan Merdzhanov, PhD**