

## Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov "

### REVIEWS

of the submitted papers for participation in the competition for the academic position PROFESSOR, announced by the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov " in SG, issue. 62 of 08/08/2019

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Natalia Ivanova Vitanova-Marinova

Candidate: Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov

#### *I. A Brief CVs of the applicant*

Ivan Merdzhanov was born in Varna. In 1981 he graduated from the First Language School in Varna. In 1987 he graduated from the University of Veliko Turnovo, St. Cyril and Methodius, majoring in German Philology. He has a professional qualification as a teacher. In 2013 he received his PhD in Pedagogy of Instruction in... (German Language Teaching Methodology). In 2014, he habilitated and acquired the academic position of Assistant Professor in the field of higher education. 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (German language teaching methodology). He began his professional career in 1987 as a teacher at Ivan Vazov Primary School, Provadiya. From 1990 to 1992 he worked as a lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages of the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" in Svishtov. As a lecturer at MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" Varna he has been working since 1992.

He is fluent in German (C2) and uses English (B1) and Russian (B2), which is a prerequisite for his scientific knowledge. Ivan Merdzhanov is distinguished for his professionalism, he demonstrates scientific competence, precision and conscientiousness. As a proof of his competence, he has participated in numerous international and national conferences as well as in international and national projects.

## ***II. Characteristics of the candidate's scientific and applied production***

The scientific production, with which Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Merdzhanov participates in the announced competition, corresponds to the scientific specialty and its specificity. It covers a total of 22 publications, of which 2 are monographs (1 in co-authorship); 3 textbooks in a foreign language, 17 articles - 1 of which is co-authored and indexed in world-famous scientific information databases (Web of Science Core Collection and Scopus), 5 in a foreign language, 5 in co-authorship. These publications meet the minimum national requirements and national scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position of "Professor". They are indicators of the applicant's activity and interests.

Most of Ivan Merdzhanov's publications are concentrated in the following areas: distance/e-learning, doctimology, methodology. This thematic concentration makes a very good impression, which guarantees the completeness and scope of the studied perimeter and protects the author from fragmentation and divergence in his research quests.

The other publications presented are socially determined and up-to-date. They respond to specific socio-practical orders and solve certain private problems in various scientific fields. Some of these works have been operationalized and can be successfully implemented in practical practice.

The monograph "Dimensions of the E-exam. Electronic testing in the context of the digitalisation of higher education" is up-to-date, modern and future-oriented. Modern education, like the whole world, is moving towards digitalisation and following the path from unification to individualization and personalization of the learning process. Today, the time that young people (and not just them) spend in front of the screens of computers, tablets and mobile phones, which are an integral part of the life of the digital society, is constantly increasing. Digitization is turning the world into a "global village" that goes beyond geographical, national and cultural boundaries. In it "wander" "digital



natives" ("digital natives", "digital by birth" - those who grew up in the digital age from their birth) and "digital immigrants" (acquire digital knowledge about digital devices as adults). Assessment of students' knowledge and skills in the context of education 4.0 (generated by globalization 4.0, which is currently taking shape) will undergo significant transformations. It will be performed on complex parameters: personal progress, volume and depth of the material learned, assessment of communication skills, collaboration, creative thinking, critical thinking, ability to behave in the digital environment. The tools on the basis of which the evaluation will be implemented are **personal portfolio**, games, **interactive audio-visual tests**, using machines. In this context, electronic testing with the tools proposed in the monograph (some of which will be dominant in the future) is relevant and consistent with the parameters of education in the flat world, given that Bulgarian education (in all degrees) is far behind these parameters. E-examination and E-tests are the apex of education of the future.

One of the positives of the monograph is the fact that the author is very knowledgeable about digital instruments and their capabilities related to electronic testing, a conventional (still for many universities), though not so new, way of testing.

The author is well familiar with the literature on the subject. His theoretical reasoning is the result of a study of 156 sources, of which 11 are in Cyrillic and 145 in Latin; 20 are web-based, the rest are paper-based. Ivan Merdzhanov is well familiar not only with the research in Bulgarian, but has consulted with original works by foreign authors, which gives him the opportunity to substantiate his basic theses correctly enough. This representative scientific argumentation of the text convincingly gains the consumer's trust in this kind of information and supports the conclusions in the monograph. What leaves good impression is Ivan Merdzhanov's in-depth knowledge of didactic knowledge (correct use of the didactic theory thesaurus), which allows him to

defend his theses more reasonably. And his expertise in digital technology reinforces that argument.

The monograph „Contemporary Challenges to Medical Higher Education“ is co-authored with Marinela Grudeva. Of the total 256 standard pages, 106 are by Ivan Merdzhanov. This monograph also looks to the future as it presents the challenges of medical education in the context of computerization. Challenges that create difficulties in the educational process and for which sufficient tools have not yet been found to overcome, or if such have been identified, they have not been developed and adapted to the educational field.

The monograph addresses several important issues that correlate with the parameters that shape the vision of future education.

- The person-centered approach to education is directly related to the supposed paradigm of future-oriented education. It is not unfamiliar to the scientific community, but in terms of education 3.0 very few of its elements find practical implementation. In the future, the potential of this paradigm will be expanded and fully realized.
- The competence approach is related to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a person of the digital age must possess. In the information society, knowledge loses its former power and its place is occupied by information. In the existing technological cycles, it is not the knowledge but the competence that matters. In today's world, the most valuable is not knowledge but skills.
- Problem-based approach - enables the transition to a model where students learn to design creative solutions to complex problems, form groups to explore a particular issue, explore it from different perspectives, and finally formulate a joint solution. Instead of abstract knowledge, they work on real problems that are relevant to them. "Active" or "problem-based" training not only provides information but excites students' natural curiosity.



- Distance learning/eLearning – according to educational prognosis there will be no textbooks in future education, they will be replaced by transparent tablets with photovoltaic displays. The textbooks will cease to be books and will become a digital educational environment where it will be possible to acquire knowledge in the form of tests, videos, simulators, animations and other mass media formats typical of digital media. For the training needs, "smart tables" and multifunctional interactive learning tables will be used, complete with useful applications. The development of technology, the Internet, social networks are a prerequisite for distance learning to become a norm in the future.

These arguments are proof of the relevance and significance of the problems presented in the monograph. It outlines some of the directions of transformation that should occur not only in higher medical education, but in education in general.

As a strength in Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Merdzhanov's work can be considered teaching aids that are intended for a wide range of users – students, doctors, pharmacists, dentists and other specialists in the field of medicine. The teaching aids are in a foreign language and are tailored to the needs of the target groups listed.

The following positive aspects can be noted in Assoc. Prof. Ivan Merdzhanov's scientific production of:

- research-based research in the field of professional direction;
- supporting modern paradigms, concepts and perspectives in the field of pedagogy;
- analytical approach;
- great practical applicability;
- very good scientific style;
- Joint publications are an indicator of engagement with the scientific community and successful communication with colleagues.

There is a reason to emphasize that the works with which Assoc. Prof. Ivan Merdzhanov participates in the competition are the result of his personal research and achievements. The substantive analysis made in them of modern theories, practices in the field of digital technologies, distance learning, e-learning, e-testing and their characterization and comparison, reveals and proves the possibilities for a positive change in the educational context. My assessment of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Merdzhanov's scientific works is positive. They are professionally written, peer-reviewed and meet the requirements for high quality educational and scientific literature. They present him as a systematic and thorough scientist and researcher. Through them he demonstrates a professional sense of discovering and presenting significant problems in the field of pedagogical science and the gradual digitalization of the learning process, respectively the evaluation process. Successfully identifying, presenting, and interpreting them are part of the author's distinguished contributions.

The quotations related to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Merdzhanov's publications are 16 (traditionally reported). Of these, 15 are in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and 1 is in non-referred journals with scientific review. The quotations are by persons outside the copyright teams in which the applicant participates.

### ***III. Major contributions to the applicant's scientific, applied and teaching activities***

I accept the scientific contributions made through Ivan Merdzhanov's self-assessment. They are objective and sufficiently detailed. In theory, the study of the lexical, syntactic, and semantic features of the German medical records is presented; a classification of texts in the field of medicine is proposed that can be used in an electronic course in specialized German; a concept has been developed to create an online course in Medical German for Clinical Communication (MOE's's-Massive Open Online Courses format); exercises and tasks are classified based on the electronic platforms offered (Moodle,



Blackboard, ILIAS, etc.), the training goals of specialized German language training in medicine have been revised and reformed and the correlation between the learning objectives is based on this and the learning styles and the opportunities offered by the electronic platforms for diversification of learning; the concept of E-didactics and criteria for guaranteeing the quality of the virtual learning environment are defined, the opportunities, functions and the benefits of e-Learning in an academic context are analyzed.

An online practical training course in specialized German for medical practitioners was developed and put into practice, as well as didactic and methodological techniques for using the resources of the global network in the regular classes in specialized German for medical purposes.

#### ***IV. Critical notes and recommendations***

The texts of the publications would improve their quality if

- are written in the historical present tense and the use of 1 person singular and 1 person plural verb forms is avoided;
- crutch words use (however, of course, etc.) is avoided that do not provide information but additionally burden the text.
- **Question:** Electronic test - method or form of assessment?

#### ***V. Conclusion***

The analysis of the teaching, research and scientific activity, as well as the presented information on the compliance with the scientific indicators for occupying the academic position of "professor", present Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov as a good professional, purposeful and conscientious researcher with stable scientific interests. The applicant fulfills the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor". I have no doubt about plagiarism in scholarly work and publications. The ideas developed in the presented publications, the contributions of the author in the field of teaching specialized German for medical purposes, the distance and e-learning, the academic and research activities of Assoc. Prof. Ivan Merdzhanov give me

reason to give my positive conclusion and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report proposal to the Academic Council for the selection of Assoc. Prof. Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov for the academic position of "Professor" at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" in higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3 Pedagogy of instruction in..., specialty "Pedagogy of teaching specialized German for medical purposes (and e-learning)".

Date: 26.11.2019

Reviewer:

(Prof. Natalia Vitanova, PhD)