

EXAMINER'S ASSESSMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Irina Nikolova Ivanova, PhD, a lecturer at the Department of English Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, regarding the selection procedure for the academic position of **Professor** in the area of: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in..., speciality "Pedagogy of Teaching Specialized German for Medical Purposes (and Electronic Education)"

Candidate: Assoc. prof. Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov, PhD

1. The selection procedure

The present assessment has been carried out in connection with the selection procedure for the academic position of "professor" in Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in..., speciality "Pedagogy of Teaching Specialized German for Medical Purposes (and Electronic Education)", announced in State Gazette No. 62 / 06.08.2019. The only candidate for the position is Assoc. Prof. Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov from the Medical University in Varna, Department of Foreign Language Training, Communication and Sports. The selection procedure (announcement, submission of documents, appointment of a scientific jury) was carried out according to the requirements of the Terms and conditions for earning academic degrees and occupation of academic positions at the Medical University - Varna. The applicant meets the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "professor" under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of ZRASRB for academic degrees and positions.

2. The candidate

The only candidate for the position is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Stoyanov Merdzhanov, who is currently the head of the Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Communications and Sports, and a lecturer in German for medical purposes. Dr. Merdzhanov graduated from St. Cyril and Methodius

University in Veliko Turnovo in German Philology, where he also obtained a teaching qualification. He worked as a German language teacher at the Academy of Economics - Svishtov. Starting from 1992 up to the present, he has been working as a teacher and senior lecturer in specialized German for medical purposes at the Medical University in Varna. He has specialized in Salzburg and Krems, Austria, as well as in Dusseldorf and Munich, Germany. In 2013, the candidate obtained a doctorate with a dissertation on the didactic and methodological aspects of the development and the application of an Internet-based learning environment for specialized (German) medical students' education, and since 2014 has occupied the academic position of associate professor at Varna Medical University. The monograph of Dr. Merdzhanov is dedicated to some modern forms of e-learning in academic contexts, and his major research contributions are in the field of the methodology of foreign language teaching and the application of digital media in teaching foreign language for specific purposes. By the time of applying for the position, Assoc. Prof. Merdzhanov has had more than 30 years of experience in the specialty, which is a prerequisite for a thorough knowledge of the specifics and problems of the research field, and the traditions and perspectives of its development. The active participation and the key role of Dr. Merdzhanov in scientific forums and projects is noteworthy. After his habilitation, he has participated in 17 national and international conferences in the field of foreign language education, modern higher education and e-learning. He took part in 2 national and 4 international projects, and in 3 of the international projects he was the institutional coordinator for MU-Varna. The projects under the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Erasmus EC programs were in the field of intercultural medical communication and e-learning.

3. Publications submitted for assessment

For the purposes of the selection procedure the candidate has submitted 2 monographs - one entitled *Dimensions of e-exams. Electronic Testing in the Context of Digitalization of Higher Education*, and another one: *Challenges in medical higher education*, with Marinela Grudeva as a co-author. There is 1 article (together with Ilina Doykova) in a peer-reviewed indexed scientific journal and 2 articles in edited collective volumes. Dr. Merdzhanov has also submitted a book on e-learning and using electronic platforms in teaching specialized German, published on the basis of his doctoral dissertation. In addition, he is the author of 3 textbooks for students in German, aimed at meeting their needs and dedicated in particular to communication in the clinic and training in dental medicine and pharmacy . The textbooks are published after the date of his

habilitation.

4. Contribution to research in the area and citations

The contribution of Dr. Merdzhanov's work to the research in the area of teaching German for medical purposes and e-learning can be summarized in the following main thematic areas:

A. Specifics of electronic testing in the context of foreign language didactics

The monograph "Dimensions of the e-exam. Electronic testing in the context of digitalisation of higher education." is the main work in this area. Published in 2019 and consisting of 168 pages of text organised into 4 chapters, the book discusses some current issues related to the increasing influence of digitalisation in education, and electronic testing as a form of assessment. The author demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the latest theories and research in the field both abroad and in our country, and offers a balanced assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of this form of education from the perspective of students, professors and exam administration. The design of electronic tests at the construct level, the objectives of testing and indicators for learner achievement, and the selection of tasks have been extensively discussed. A typology of test tools used in various electronic test platforms is offered, depending on the purposes of assessment - diagnostic, formative, summative and integrative. Innovative didactic approaches which take into account the degree of mastery of students' productive skills were used in the development of the tasks. The benefits of e-testing are convincingly justified with regard to their role in ensuring the reliability, validity and optimal design of the examination procedure. The argumentation is related to the need to train teachers how to work and assess learners' knowledge and skills in a digital environment.

B. Current Challenges to Higher Medical Education

The title of the monograph of the same name, published in 2018, successfully summarizes the focus of the author's contributions to this field. The monograph examines the status and quality aspects of e-learning and distance learning in the context of the profound changes in 21st century education, linked to the increased dynamics of innovation and the need to bridge generation differences in attitudes and ways of learning and teaching. The part written by Dr. Merdzhanov is characterised by an appropriate combination of theoretical postulates, analysis of

existing forms of electronic and distance learning, and practical recommendations for organizing and conducting the teaching process in German for medical purposes.

The book based on the doctoral dissertation of the author, which was published in 2019 is dedicated to the electronic education in the context of teaching German for specific purposes.

The article accepted for publication in the refereed and indexed Journal of IMAB examines the didactics of electronic testing in the context of preclinical disciplines taught at MU-Varna.

The author's publications in refereed collections of articles are dedicated to various aspects of electronic assessment of German language skills for medical purposes. Another focus of his interest are MOOCs - massive open online courses and their benefits for teachers and learners.

The author has also submitted a number of publications that exceed the minimum requirements for the academic position of "professor", which mark various stages in his research development and his lasting interest in e-learning and various aspects of teaching German for medical purposes.

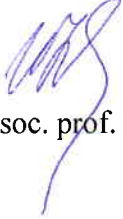
Ivan Merdzhanov is a recognised researcher with original contributions to academic debate, a fact which is supported by the large number of citations - 16 in the table with minimum requirements (21 in total), of his individual publications and works co-authored, in Bulgaria and abroad. The works of the author are characterized by excellent mastery of academic discourse and precise use of scientific terminology.

Conclusion

In view of Professor Merdzhanov's contributions to academic debate and research, and his professional qualities as a researcher, university lecturer and administrator, I strongly believe that he should be awarded the academic position of "professor" in higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of education in... (Pedagogy of Teaching Specialized German for Medical Purposes).

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Prepared by:


(Asoc. prof. Irina Ivanova, PhD)