

REVIEW

From

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Regarding the procedure for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in 7. Healthcare and sports – higher education area, 7.1. Medicine – professional field; Pathology speciality opened for the needs of the Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology at Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov – Burgas, published in the State Gazette No. 43/17.05.2024.

I have been appointed a member of the Scientific Jury at a meeting of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine. I was tasked to present a review regarding the procedure for electing an Associate Professor.

A single candidate was admitted to the competition –Nedyalka Todorova Zgurova, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor at the Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology.

The candidate's paperwork and digital content fully comply with the requirements outlined in the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Rules and Regulations of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas, for academic staff development.

I. Brief biographical data and academic profile of the candidate

Dr. Nedyalka Todorova Zgurova was born on January 11th, 1987, in Smolyan. In 2005 she graduated with honours from the Natural Sciences and Mathematics High School with special subjects in Biology, Chemistry and Intensive English Language Studies.

In 2011 she graduated with a Master's degree in Medicine at MU "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" – Varna. Later she acquired a Master's degree in Health Management at the same university.

In 2017, after a competition, she was elected as a regular faculty member – assistant professor. In 2021, following a competition, she became a senior assistant professor at the Department of General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology at the Medical University – Varna.

She successfully defended her doctoral thesis in 2020 on the subject of "Comparative morphological and immunohistochemical analysis of benign and malignant epithelial tumours of the colon".

From 2012 to 2022, she successively worked as a trainee specialist, a resident physician, and, after acquiring her CCST, an assistant physician at the Clinic of General and Clinical Pathology at St. Marina University Hospital—Varna.

She obtained her Certificate of completion of special training in General and Clinical Pathology in December 2017.

From 2014 to 2022, she worked on a second contract as a physician in the resuscitation and medical teams of the Emergency Medical Centre – Varna. She has been a consultant physician in General and Clinical Pathology in hospitals in Razgrad and Tutrakan.

Since 2022, she has been a senior assistant professor at the Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology at Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

Dr. Zgurova's main areas of expertise and academic pursuits are predominantly in the field of tumour pathology, molecular biology and pathology of the skin, colon and bone marrow. She has presented and published research papers, reports and posters in various domestic and international scientific forums such as: IX National Conference on Anthropology, Sofia, 2012; X National Conference on Haematology, Golden Sands, Varna, 2013; XI National Congress of Pathology, Shumen 2013, etc. She also holds certificates for participation in two qualification courses. Dr. Zgurova attended the Black Sea Symposium for Young Scientists in Biomedicine, in 2014, Varna, and the European School of Pathology (EScoP), in 2016.

She is the author of a monographic work "Colorectal cancer – risk and prognostic factors" published by the Central Medical Library, Medical University—Sofia, 2024.

She is fluent in English and has computer skills in Windows Vista 7, MS Word, MS Excel, etc.

Dr. Nedyalka Zgurova is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association and the Bulgarian Society of Pathology.

II. Research activity

For this competition, Dr. Nedyalka Zgurova has submitted a list of scientific publications as follows:

- A doctoral thesis (without a thesis summary);
- A monographic work “Colorectal cancer – risk and prognostic factors” published by the Central Medical Library, Medical University—Sofia, 2024;
- Papers published in scientific journals refereed and indexed in world databases housing scientific information (5 pcs.); Publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes (10 pcs.). She is the single author of 4 research papers.
- Participation in research projects: Stochastic simulation models in the field of medicine, social sciences and dynamic systems (06/12/2019 – 06/06/2021) – a Project of the Scientific Research Fund under the Ministry of Education and Sciences.;
- Academic Citations Reference (prepared by the Central Medical Library, Medical University – Sofia) showing 33 citations in Bulgarian and international sources.

Analysis of the scientometric indicators of Dr. Zgurova’s research activity shows compliance with the requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor according to the requirements of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, and the Rules and Regulations of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas, for academic staff development. It is evident that the candidate's research efforts are mainly in the field of colon tumour research, and colon adenocarcinomas in particular. A comprehensive analysis of the incidence, severity and clinical-morphological characteristics of colorectal carcinomas has been carried out as well.

Her contributions to the field of science and practical application are especially notable in the field of prognostic factors in colon carcinoma and relevant immunohistochemical markers. These markers display potential for being employed in a new diagnostic algorithm.

Dr. Zgurova's work also includes a considerable number of publications on morphological studies of basal cell carcinoma with its epidemiology, risk factors and morphological features.

Dr. Zgurova's wide-ranging scientific interests are reflected in the publications with theoretical and applied contributions related to detailed clinical and morphological descriptions of cases with rare tumour and non-tumour diseases in the fields of paediatrics, gastroenterology and cardiology.

The candidate's research output reflects a comprehensive understanding, precise selection, and skilful application of the methods of classical pathology and the latest diagnostic procedures.

It is important to mention that specific scientific advancements were made by a collaborative effort of specialists from different medical disciplines. A proficient application of an interdisciplinary approach has been made to analyse the issues. It is essential to point out that in most publications Dr. Zgurova is the only pathologist among the authors.

The comparison of the scientometric indicators in the documentation presented by the candidate and the Academic Reference data (prepared by the Central Medical Library, Medical University – Sofia) with the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor can be illustrated in the following Comparative Table:

Group of indicators	Associate Professor (points required)	Dr. Zgurova (points)
A	50	50
B	0	0
C	100	100
D	220	245,35
E	60	235
F	20	55

The Comparative Table shows that the evidence of the candidate's research activity meets, and in some parts significantly exceeds, the requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor.

III. Teaching and academic activities

The documentation submitted for the competition shows that Dr. Nedyalka Zgurova has more than 11 years of teaching experience, which exceeds these specific requirements. As a member of the relevant faculty staff, Dr. Zgurova has been involved in teaching General and

Clinical Pathology curricula to students in the Master's programmes in Medicine and Dentistry and to Bachelor's students – nurses, laboratory technicians and midwives.

Over the years, she has established herself as a university lecturer with extensive experience, which is evident in her current teaching activity at the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

IV. Medical and diagnostic activity

Dr. Zgurova is a well-known expert in General and Clinical Pathology, possessing vast diagnostic expertise. As the head of the Laboratory of Histopathology, she executes the tasks outlined in the relevant medical regulations for tumour and non-tumour pathology with proficiency and precision.

V. CONCLUSION

Considering all the above, and the analysis of the documentation submitted for the competition, I am thoroughly convinced that Dr. Zgurova's career profile, research and teaching activities go beyond some of the regulatory standards and criteria for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. They are meeting all the necessary requirements of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Rules and Regulations of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas, for academic staff development. Therefore, I confidently cast my positive vote. I recommend to the distinguished members of the Scientific Jury to vote in the affirmative for Nedyalka Todorova Zgurova, MD, PhD, to take the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific speciality Pathology for the needs of the Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology, Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

Date: 16/09/2024

Reviewer:

(Prof. Hristo Bozov, MD, PhD)