



ACADEMIC REVIEW

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Review of the procedure

Competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty "Neurosurgery", for the needs of the Department of Anesthesiology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Surgery, Orthopedics, Traumatology, Urology, Neurosurgery, Emergency and Intensive Care Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov", announced in the State Gazette, issue 42/23.05.2025.

General provisions:

On the basis of Order No. RD-265/23.07.2025, Art. 57, paragraph 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and Art. 70, paragraph 2 of the Rules of Procedure of Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov", I hereby present the current review.

All materials submitted by the candidate have been prepared precisely, fully complying with the requirements of the legal framework and the rules of the academic institution within the procedure for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor.

Education, qualifications, and specializations:

Dr. Deyan Dimitrov Handzhiev, PhD, was born in 1973. In 1999 he graduated in Medicine at the Medical University – Varna.

He acquired specialization in Neurosurgery in 2008.

He has attended qualification courses in:

- “Emergency Medical Aid” under PHARE Program – 2000,
- “Techniques for High-Speed Drilling and Electrical and Pneumatic Instrumentation” at Medtronic, USA – 2010,
- “Competency for Performing Diagnostic and Therapeutic Activities under X-ray Control” – 2011,
- “Cranial Neuroendoscopy” – Istanbul, Turkey – 2012,
- “Percutaneous Nucleolysis and Vertebroplasty” – Striker, USA – Bucharest, Romania – 2012,
- “Surgical and Endovascular Treatment of Cerebral Aneurysms and Arterio-Venous Malformations” – Pirogov, Sofia – 2013,
- “Percutaneous Techniques in Spinal Surgery” – Alphatec Spine Anatomy, University of Vienna, Austria – 2014,
- “Percutaneous Laser Discectomy” – National Institute of Neuroscience, Budapest, Hungary – 2015,
- “Spinal Surgery System – NEOphytos” – Nicosia, Cyprus – 2016,
- “Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery System – Neo Pedicle Screw System” – NEO Medical, Switzerland – Koblenz, Germany – 2018.

In 2015 he defended his dissertation for the educational and scientific degree Doctor on the topic: “Angiogenesis in Glial Brain Tumors.”

In 2013 he completed a Master’s degree in Health Management.

Professional career:

Dr. Deyan Handzhiev has consecutively worked as:

- Physician-Epidemiologist at the Regional Health Inspectorate, Dobrich (1999),
- Resident Physician – Emergency Medical Aid Center, Dobrich (2000),
- Resident Physician – Department of Neurosurgery, MBAL Dobrich (2000–2002),
- Resident Physician – Clinic of Neurosurgery, University Hospital “St. Anna”, Varna (2002–2012),
- Neurosurgeon at the Clinic of Neurosurgery, University Hospital “St. Marina”, Varna (2012–2015),
- Neurosurgeon at the Clinic of Neurosurgery, MBAL “St. Anna” – Varna (2015–present).

Since 2015, he has been a Republican Consultant in Neurosurgery for Northeastern Bulgaria.

He has a total medical experience of 25 years, of which 24 years as a neurosurgeon.

Memberships in scientific societies:

Dr. Deyan Dimitrov Handzhiev is a member of the Bulgarian Neurosurgical Society.

Scientific and research activity:

Scientific publications:

Dr. Handzhiev has submitted a list of 63 full-text publications. According to the Rules for Academic Staff Development at Burgas State University “Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov”, he participates with a habilitation work of 10 independent publications corresponding to the competition profile (listed under publications No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 62). All publications are in refereed journals, totaling B-164 points.

Three of the publications are in journals with impact factor – total IF = 4.733

The remaining 53 publications after the defense of his doctoral dissertation are distributed as follows:

- 14 publications in refereed journals – 209 points,
- 38 publications in non-refereed journals – 265 points.

Total for publications: 474 points.

Dr. Handzhiev is first author in 21 of the listed publications, second and last author in 27, and last author in 14 publications.

A report from NACID shows:

- Total Impact Factor/SJR: 18.319
- Publikations IF/ SJR- 7.117
- Citations IF/SJR: 11.202
- H-index: 3

He has also submitted 2 collective monographs in "Neurosurgery", with a total of 80 points.

Dr. Handzhiev has participated in 35 scientific forums, of which 26 were national and 7 international.

Citations:

A report as of 19.01.2024 shows a total of 31 citations of Dr. Deyan Handzhiev's publications. Of them, 20 are in refereed and indexed journals, and 11 in non-refereed journals.

The citations are predominantly in reputable journals in the field of neurosurgery, surgery, and neuroscience, such as:

World Neurosurgery, Radiology Case Reports, Lesions of the Scalp and Cranial Vault, Springer Cham, Asian Journal of Neurosurgery, Journal of Neuro-Oncology, Journal of IMAB, Journal of Medical and Allied Sciences, Bangladesh Journal of Neurosurgery, Malang Neurology Journal, Journal of Dhaka Medical College, International Journal of Health Sciences, International Journal of Research in Orthopaedics, Medical Journal of Zambia, Journal of Ayub Medical College, Folia Medica, World Neurosurgery.

Research topics of scientific work:

1. Neuro-oncology

Dr. Handzhiev has significant scientific and clinical experience in neuro-oncology, with a focus on diagnosis and surgical treatment of brain tumors. He has published multiple articles on angiogenesis in brain gliomas, the role of growth factors in disease progression and outcome, and survival prognosis in patients with glioblastoma multiforme.

2. Neurotraumatology

He has major contributions in traumatic injuries of the nervous system. His publications include algorithms for the treatment of spinal fractures and traumatic brain

injuries. He has also published extensively on severe craniocerebral trauma, based on long-term experience and rich clinical practice.

3. Surgical treatment of intracerebral hematomas

He has published studies on minimally invasive neurosurgical methods, including single-access evacuations of non-traumatic hematomas.

Participation in research projects:

Dr. Handzhiev has participated and won first place in the project "Medical Science Fund" at MU-Varna (2004/2005).

Teaching activity:

Dr. Deyan Handzhiev trains neurosurgery residents. He is also a lecturer in the course "Student Practices Project" under the Ministry of Education program.

Conclusion:

The educational and professional development and qualifications of Dr. Deyan Dimitrov Handzhiev, PhD, his scientific and research activity, publication record, and teaching engagement, as well as his personal qualities, demonstrate that the candidate fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and exceeds both national and institutional criteria of Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov" for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor in Neurosurgery.

I hereby give my confident positive evaluation and strongly recommend to the Scientific Jury to vote positively for awarding Dr. Deyan Dimitrov Handzhiev, PhD, the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty Neurosurgery, for the needs of the Department of Anesthesiology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Surgery, Orthopedics, Traumatology, Urology, Neurosurgery, Emergency and Intensive Care Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov."

Varna, 30.09.2025

Prof. Yavor Enchev, MD, PhD, DSc