

OPINION

By Prof. Petya Tsvetkova, MD

Faculty of Medicine, University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov", Burgas

REGARDING: Participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Cell Biology" of the field of higher education
4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional field
4.3 Biological Sciences

General presentation of the procedure

Pursuant to Art. 57(2) of PPZRASRB (Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria) and Art. 70(2) of PURPNSZAD (Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Occupying Academic Positions) in University "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov", Burgas, according to report 1888/12.07.2022, a competition has been announced to fill the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Cell Biology", of the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional field 4.3 Biological sciences, and by Order RD-270/15.09.22 a scientific jury for the competition was approved. In the current competition, documents were submitted and only one candidate was admitted to the subsequent procedure - Assistant Professor Dr. Vesselina Stoyanova Merhar.

The presented set of materials on an electronic medium is in accordance with Art. 70 (1) of I. Section of PURPNSZAD. Additionally, at the insistence of the chairman of the scientific jury, information is presented on the IF of the journals in which the scientific works cited for participation in the competition were published.

Scientific subject, scientific-metric indicators and scientific-organizational asset of the candidate

Scientific theme

The long-standing scientific interests of Asst. Prof. Dr. Vesselina Merhar are directed in two scientific directions. On the one hand - to microscopic studies of the structure of the cell, primarily studies on the cyto- and nucleoskeleton.

The second direction is on cellular changes as a result of stress, mainly caused by infectious agents.

Early research was concerned with studying changes in host cells as a result of the plant-pathogen interaction, and at a later stage the accumulated research experience and developed methods, combined with state-of-the-art microscopic techniques, were applied to placentas from patients with pre-eclampsia, infected with HIV.

Scientific metrics

The candidate participating in the competition presents: publications in journals with IF - 12 (total IF 9.750, individual IF 2.852; SJR total - 5.945, individual - 2.62); 6 publications in peer-reviewed proceedings and journals from international scientific forums; 1 monograph; published book chapter or collective monograph – 2, as well as reports and posters presented at 16 international forums, and 4 at national ones.

Total CI – 60, cited in journals with IF.

Dr. Merhar participated in a total of 5 international projects, one of which she was the leader of.

According to the minimum requirements specified in the PURPSZAD at the University "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov", Asst. Prof. Merhar according to indicator "D" is presented with 244 points with a required minimum of 200. The indicators under "D" and "E" also exceed the required minimum.

Scientific - organizational asset

The applicant was a member of an Organizing Committee of a scientific congress on medicine; organizer and leader of 5 international Workshops in South Africa and moderator of 2 plenary meetings in a national scientific forum.

Teaching and learning activity

Dr. Merhar has a permanent employment contract at the Department of "Biology, Medical Genetics and Microbiology at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov" since 2020 and during the entire period leads courses in "Cytology, general histology and human embryology" - 1st year, specialty "Medicine"; "Human Biology" - 1st year, specialty "medicine" and bachelor program - FOZZG; "Human Anatomy and Histology"; "Microscopic anatomy" - I and II course, specialty "Medicine", incl. lectures and practicals.

She had 4 participations as a supervisor in students' scientific sessions.

CONCLUSION

The candidate in the current competition, Dr. Vesselina Stoyanova Merhar, participates with scientific and scientifically-applied results, which represent an original contribution in the specialty "Cell Biology" of the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.3 Biological sciences and meets all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB.

The teaching and scientific experience of Asst. Prof. Merhar convincingly demonstrates that she possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty.

On the basis of the above, I confidently give my positive assessment and propose to the honorable scientific jury to award her the academic position "associate professor" in the scientific specialty "Cell Biology" of the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional field 4.3 Biological sciences.

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