



**STATEMENT**

for

**evaluation of the candidate in a competition for the academic position of "Associate professor" in Professional direction 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, 3.8. "Economics" (Marketing - Brand Management)**

**Candidate: Ch. assistant professor Dimitar Ivanov Trendafilov, PhD**, Department of Economics, Master studies Faculty, NBU, (*only candidate under the announced competition*).

**Topic of monographic work:** "The mobile consumer".

**Member of the scientific jury: Prof. Dr. Diana Kopeva** - New Bulgarian University, Sofia, 3.0. "Social, economic and legal sciences", 3.8. "Economics".

**Grounds for presenting the review:** Participation in the composition of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of "associate professor", according to Rector's ordinance No. 3-RK-346/26.09.2024. The competition was announced in the Official Government Gazette issue 56/02.07.2024.

*The review was developed in compliance with the requirements of the RASRB, the Regulations for its implementation, the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff of the NBU and in compliance with the scientometric criteria for PN 3.8 "Economics" for occupying the academic position of "Associate professor" (Docent).*

**Brief bio-date about the candidate**

Candidate Dimitar Ivanov Trendafilov has a versatile educational qualification and specialization. He obtained his Master's degree in "Law" (2006) at VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". Then he turned to Marketing, obtaining a Master's degree in "Business Administration" (with a specialized module "Marketing Management") at the New Bulgarian University (2009). In 2021 he obtained a master's degree in "Intellectual Property Management in Business and Industry" at the University of National and World Economy. He obtained the educational and scientific degree "doctor" at the Department of Semiotics of the NBU, he is in the scientific direction 3.1 Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Semiotics), scientific specialty "Theory and History of Culture (Semiotics)", and the candidate presents successfully defends an interdisciplinary work entitled "Semiotic studies of the trademark", which considers trademarks as understood and studied through the lens of cultural studies, the analysis of commercial communication and consumer culture. Since 2007 to date, the professional qualification of Dr. Trendafilov has been further enriched by his activity in the marketing departments of companies (e.g. "Bella Bulgaria", "Carlsberg Bulgaria"), as well as as a



consultant in the field of strategic marketing and brand positioning with projects for companies from different sectors.

From the fall semester of Acad. 2013/14 the candidate is an assistant at the "Southeast European Center for Semiotic Studies" at NBU, having taken courses at BP "Marketing" and MP "Advertising and Brand Management". After a successfully held competition, from the fall of 2015. holds the academic position "chap. assistant" in the Department "Economics" and the position of program consultant (RO of BP "Marketing" and MP "Marketing Management"). Gradually, the number of courses he leads expands to MP "Marketing Management", also MP "Brand Management (in English)", BM "Design", BM "Foreign Languages for Administration and Management", and since 2018. to the joint bachelor's and master's program with U. Sheffield and York. The courses are in Bulgarian and English in the field of marketing and brand management, consumer behavior, market research and knowledge transfer in marketing activities. Between April 2018 and February 2024. Dr. Trendafilov held the position of Vice-Rector for International Activities of the New Bulgarian University and in this role was a member of both the Rector's and Academic Councils, as well as the Committees for the Development of the University's Academic Staff and Recognition of Diplomas for higher education acquired abroad. In this period, with the active efforts of the candidate, NBU developed its strategic international partnerships with the University of York and the European university network "European Reform University Alliance" by winning twice grants under the "European Universities Initiative" program of the European Commission. In addition, since 2015 the candidate participated in several mobilities under the "Erasmus+" program for the purpose of teaching and exchange of administrative experience (Orléans, France; Riga, Latvia; Trento, Italy; Konstanz and Regensburg, Germany), as well as represented the NBU as a coordinator and researcher in various other projects at the European level - "Culture and communication of Food" (2017-2020) - training and research, "Academy for Women Entrepreneurs" (2021-2022 ) - training in cooperation between the US Embassy in Bulgaria and the UPPO of the NBU, "ReERUA" (2021-2024) - development of inter-university cooperation and capacity in the field of research work and "Digitcreshe" (from 2023 ongoing ) – development of training capacity in programs related to the creative and cultural industries in Zap. Balkans.

## **1. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University**

From the documents submitted for the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" of Assis. Prof. Professor Dimitar Trendafilov, Ph.D., I found that they correspond to the scientometric indicators laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRAS), in the Regulations for its implementation, and in the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff of New Bulgarian University and are as follows:

Group of indicators	Min. requirements	Implementation
А	50	50
В	100	100
Г	200	265
Д	50	100
Ж	50	90
З	70	100
И	50	110

*Dr. Trendafilov presents scientific production and materials exceeding the minimum national and additional requirements of the NBU for holding the position of associate professor. It generates 43% above the minimum national and additional NBU requirements for the respective position. From the presented scientific production and materials, it forms a total of 815 points, with a required 570 points*

## 2. Research activities and results

For participation in the current competition for the academic position "docent/associate professor", ch. assistant professor, Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov, presents a total of 14 publications, which do NOT repeat the previously reported scientific works, which served to acquire the degrees/positions "Doctor" and chief assistant. Scientific works submitted for participation in the competition are divided into the following categories: 1) Independent monographic work - "The Mobile User", 2023, NBU Publishing House, 240 pages; 2) Book based on the protected dissertation work for the acquisition of the degree "doctor" - "Semiotic studies of the trademark - tools, analyzes and results", 2017, NBU, 281 pages; 3) Publications other than habilitation work and those submitted for the defense of a doctorate - 2 issues: 1. "Retail marketing and management. Lecture course", 2017, NBU, 155 pages and 2. "Building and enforcing a brand", 2022, NBU , 449 pages; 4) Articles published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - 1 piece; 5) Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 9 issues. The relative share of each of the specified categories in the total number of scientific works submitted for review is as follows: 40% are monographs and educational publications; 60% - studies and articles, and independently prepared scientific works are 100%, and only one is in English. Based on what is indicated in the candidate's CV in the part listing his publications and the number of registered materials in the "Scientific Electronic Archive" system of the NBU library, it is understood that his publication activity is actually richer than the works submitted for review in the current contest. From the analysis of the works presented, it can be concluded that Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov has enough publications that fully correspond to the requirements of the

announced competition for the academic position "docent" in PN 3.8 "Economics" (Marketing - Brand Management).

***2.1. Evaluation of the monographic work or other publications corresponding in volume and completeness to a monographic work, including an evaluation of the author's scientific and scientific-applied contributions.***

The monograph submitted for the competition by Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov, officially presented on June 1, 2023, received two positive scientific reviews from associate professors Nadezhda Dimova (NBU) and Alexander Hristov (UNSS). It covers the topics of the new realities in marketing and developing competitive brands after the digital transformation of the economy, the establishment of a two-way relationship between producers and consumers, the emergence of new business models and the increase of value, the growing role of services, as well as the mobility and flexibility of the workforce strength and expertise. Structurally, the monograph consists of seven chapters, including data and practices from the world and Bulgaria, as well as the author's research on the use of social networks and the behavior of online users in general. Impressive is the long list of sources used and the research question, namely: how mobile are today's consumers with smart devices and internet access in their purchasing behavior and fandom of individual brands, and if so, how different perspectives are presented on how mobile they are them. Finally, however, the authors considered the coming era of artificial intelligence long before the topic became central to business and the future of marketing approaches and specific activities. The evaluation of the contributions of the author of the monographic work can be synthesized in three directions: 1) The theoretical contributions are consistent with the author's overall approach to interdisciplinarity, i.e. the author has sought a broader perspective for the study of consumer behavior, which is the basis of this work. In order to form an adequate and appropriate holistic picture, it is necessary to consider different tools and critical approaches. It is also clear that the work raises the question of whether, instead of reaching first for technology and short-term tactical approaches, there should be more emphasis on knowing the psychology of users and only then developing solutions and strategies to achieve the goals using the marketing mix;

I can summarize the assessment of the contributions of the author of the monographic work in three directions:

1. ***The theoretical contributions*** The theoretical contributions are consistent with the author's overall approach to interdisciplinarity, i.e. the author has sought a broader perspective for the study of consumer behavior, which is the basis of this work. In order to form an adequate and appropriate holistic picture, it is necessary to consider different tools and critical approaches. It is also clear that the work raises the question of whether, instead of reaching first for technology and short-term tactical approaches, there should be more emphasis on knowing the psychology of users and only then developing solutions and strategies to achieve the goals using the marketing mix;

2. ***Methodological contribution*** - Methodological contribution – It focuses on the characteristics of the generation (Generation Z) that was "born" on the Internet, actively participates in social networks, labor markets and creativity, and shapes the future of the world by co-creating value through interaction with brands and companies, as well as on the technological and economic aspects of changing consumer behavior. Interdisciplinary methodologies are applied to study the socio-cultural roots. On the other hand, the processing of statistical data by large research firms and the conclusions of authors with sufficient weight lead to a high degree of confidence in the information presented.
  
3. ***As practical-applied contributions***, As practical-applied contributions, I can point out, This is a step in a positive direction, first, the fact that the discipline "Marketing" itself should make a self-assessment of its subject for a certain period of time and indicate new directions of development and research topics to support academic work and practical application of the new knowledge. Secondly, practitioners should also reflect on what is presented in the monograph and ask whether users have really changed 'dramatically', how exactly to approach the important changes, to what extent technology, if not used correctly, can get in the way and interfere with brand management and interfere, it would be possible to assess whether it interferes. Third, to the extent that the trends outlined in the last chapter point to a certain direction of thinking about the new challenges and opportunities, the role of data and multi-channel communications in an age dominated by technology, all those involved in marketing (regardless of the field of activity or the size of the company) ) to consider and make sense of.

***In summary, Ch. Associate Professor Dimitar Trendafilov, Ph.D., has developed a habilitation thesis at a high scientific level, in which specialized language and stylistics are used, but which is also comprehensible to non-specialists.***

***2.2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications made after the appointment of the academic position "assistant professor". It also includes an assessment of the peer review requirement of the publications.***

It also includes an assessment of the peer review requirement of the publications. The candidate, Dr. Trendafilov, has submitted a reference for original scientific contributions of the publications, outside of the habilitation work, to the evidence in Appendix 2. In the above-mentioned publications, I can single out the following points of contribution:

- Theoretical and scientific-applied contributions in the field of brand management (according to the published publication in Indicator 6 and No. 3, 7 and 9 under Indicator 7) – First of all, the profession itself has been adapted in Bulgaria relatively recently and to compensate for the lack of materials in Bulgarian, more information, results of local research and identification of good practices were needed; secondly, the topic demanded that a systematic and more extensive

approach was needed for its enrichment. In this regard, the candidate is, on the one hand, one of the few authors who focus on the subject, and on the other hand, introduces interdisciplinary research, although not covered only by his means.

- Theoretical and methodological contributions to the field of marketing management (based on most of the publications listed in Indicator 7) – Tracking trends and important changes in marketing management is an important axis in the work of his colleagues, which he describes, comments on and relates to future development of the company. The content it draws from improves the quality of the courses it runs, highlights knowledge and skills that are important and useful to students, and helps guide candidates to further research pursuits.
- Tracking the trends and significant changes in marketing management is an important axis of the colleagues' work, he explains, comments and links them to the future development of the company.\* The content he creates simultaneously increases the quality of the taught courses, focuses on important and useful knowledge and skills of students and encourages the subsequent research search of candidates. This will help you determine the direction of your project.

*The presented contributions are in accordance with the professional direction "Marketing", with the teaching activity of Dr. Trendafilov, with his previous experience as a researcher in and outside the NBU, and represent valuable and significant research for science and practice. All this gives me grounds for high evaluation of his research work and works with which he participated in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor".*

### **2.3. Citation by other authors**

The candidate has submitted **10 citations for review**, of which 2 are publications cited in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases (group D, Indicator 11) by foreign-language authors, 6 are in peer-reviewed monographs (Indicator 12) , and 2 issues are from non-refereed editions (Indicator 13). In total, Dr. Trendafilov receives 100 points for the entire group, with a required 50 of the minimum national requirements and those of the NBU, which, accordingly, ***gives me reason to conclude that the candidate is a researcher with contribution and authority on the scientific scene.***

### **3. Educational and teaching activity**

According to the data, the candidate's total teaching experience before the preparation of the review is more than 10 years. My personal impressions of the practice as a teacher of Dr. Trendafilov are from 2018, therefore my assessment will be based on this period and using the official reference for long-term certification available for the competition.

### **3.1. Educational activity**

The candidate teaches Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral courses at OCS. The applicant's annual average classroom and non-auditory employment has always exceeded the minimum required according to the NBU employment regulation (240 auditory and 60 extra-auditory hours for his position), incl. with annual participation in courses at the Faculty of Distance and Electronic Learning of the NBU (BP "Marketing" and MP "Marketing Management"). Regarding the student evaluation process, he participated in 115 examination committees, was the supervisor of 82 graduates who successfully defended their theses at the master's and bachelor's level, and as a reviewer he registered 44 reviews. The candidate has received high marks from students in recent semesters - between 4.5 and 5.3 in individual courses (according to the Center for Quality and Assessment data), which I would describe as an "excellent" result and take it as a reliable indicator of the positive results that Dr. Trendafilov has achieved as a teacher, complying with the rules and standards for the quality of teaching adopted by the New Bulgarian University.

### **3.2. Study materials published**

Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov has published two textbooks in connection with courses taught by him - "Retail Marketing and Management" (2017) for the course "Retail Management" and "Building and Enforcing a Brand" (2022) for the course "Branding 1". These textbooks are available both to an external audience and in the NBU's learning platform - Moodle. The candidate has published a number of lecture materials in the courses: SEMM420 Brand Management 1, SEMM512 Brand Management 2, BAMB744 Branding (Brand building and management) and BAEB416 Knowledge Management in Marketing.

### **3.3. Curricula developed**

Dr. Trendafilov was directly involved in the creation of the MP "Marketing Management" in Bulgarian, "Brand Management" in English, as well as in the construction of the BP "Business Sciences" and the MP "Marketing, Advertising and PR" as joint programs with In Sheffield/York, in English. On the basis of the available data and the interim estimates set out in item 3, I can indisputably conclude that the candidate shows sufficient and successful involvement in the educational activity and academic development of NBU as a responsible and correct teacher, which is a fully sufficient argument for occupying the position of "associate professor".

*On the basis of the available data and the intermediate evaluations presented in item 3, I can undoubtedly conclude that the candidate shows **sufficient and successful involvement in the educational activity and academic development of the NBU as a responsible and correct teacher, which is a fully sufficient argument for holding the position "associate professor"**.*

#### 4. Administrative and public activity

In the self-assessment for the fulfillment of minimum national requirements and requirements of the NBU for the scientific, teaching and creative activity for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" and in the reference for original scientific contributions to the evidence under Appendix 2 and as mentioned above, Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov presents an administrative/public activity of significant scale and content, which includes:

- Program consultant for regular education programs in the Department of Economics, October 2015 - September 2017;
- Vice-Rector for International Activities, April 2018 – February 2024;
- Chairman of the Commission for recognition of diplomas for higher education acquired abroad, April 2018 - February 2024;
- Representative of the NBU in the Board for the management of joint programs with U. York and City College - Thessaloniki, October 2022 - February 2024;
- Institutional representative of NBU in the international university consortium "ERUA", December 2020 - December 2023.

Dr. Trendafilov made a significant contribution to the development of New Bulgarian University's international relations with its partners in Europe and to the university's participation in the European University Initiative. The initiative aims to promote long-term cooperation in the EU in the field of linguistic diversity, joint research, sharing knowledge and resources, motivating students and PhD students to participate in academic projects and mobility and ultimately strengthening the role of higher education in creating favorable environment and position for EU development. The initiative will promote: in his capacity as coordinator of the NBU, the candidate gave three interviews on the national radio to explain the initiative, organized and participated in meetings with representatives of all Bulgarian universities participating in the initiative from 2020. onwards In 2022-23 the applicant received a grant from the EC for Successfully applied to ERUA for a second grant to expand with five new members.

In his capacity as an adviser on marketing programs, he diligently and precisely performed the tasks related to the accreditation and re-accreditation of courses, the development of individual curricula, the understanding of the regulations of the NBU, the admission and graduation of over 200 students per year, as well as the preparation and maintenance on the program schedule for each semester. He is also responsible for communication with internal and external teachers and for creating the necessary conditions for the graduation process. At one point, he actively participated in changing the program schedule in order to improve the learning process. In addition, with the launch of the master's program "Marketing Management - RO" in 2015. Dr. Trendafilov is actively involved in the interview and admission of students and all administrative procedures related to this, and to date the program enjoys a good reputation and shows a stable intake of students over the years. It is worth noting that the program shows a stable intake of students over the years. Also, after his appointment to the position of "chief assistant" in the





"Economics" Department, the candidate actively participated in the selection and preparation of the NBU student teams that participated in the National Marketing Olympiad. His efforts, together with colleagues Assoc. Dr. N. Dimova and Dr. Stefania Temelkova, led to multiple first places and an equally successful hosting of the Olympics by NBU in 2023. The candidate's role in building the cooperation with the Universities of Sheffield and York begins already with the signing of the contract for building the joint programs. Throughout the entire period since then, he has actively participated both in the management of the programs and the adaptation of the NBU's teaching capacity to them, as well as in the administrative processes regulating the relations with these institutions and their representative for the "City College" - Thessaloniki region, in the candidate student campaigns and various internal seminars. To date, these programs enjoy significant interest and enrich the image of the NBU as offering students in the country a variety of opportunities for quality foreign language learning, and for opportunities to travel and meet many different experts and researchers, which in turn leads to increased opportunities for their subsequent career development.

The candidate's role in establishing collaboration with the Universities of Sheffield and York began with the signing of the agreement to establish a joint programme. Since then, Dr. Trendailov actively participates in the management of the programs and the adaptation of the teaching competencies of the NBU to the programs, as well as in the process of managing relations with these institutions, the representatives of the City College - Thessaloniki region, the application campaign and various workshops on campus. To date, these programs enjoy great interest and improve the image of NBU as a place for quality foreign language education and an opportunity for students in the country to communicate with a wide range of professionals and researchers. According to the above data, the administrative and public activities of Dr. Trendafilov, carried out during the review, contribute to the development and improvement of academic processes at the NBU, both at the department level and throughout the NBU as a whole.

## **5. Personal impressions of the candidate's work**

Together with the data presented in the references, I evaluate my colleague Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov, candidate for associate professor in Marketing (Brand Management) at NBU, as a quality, committed and loyal teacher who meets the standards required by the university. His accumulated experience as a teacher, researcher, consultant and expert in university internationalization is a valuable asset to the university and is yet to yield results.



## 6. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

I would advise the candidate to increase his publication activity in internationally recognized journals indexed in SCOPUS and Web of Science. Also to give wider public publicity to his participation in projects.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the above, with complete conviction I positively assess the teaching, scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate for the academic position "docent" at NBU Dimitar Ivanov Trendafilov. *This assessment is my reason to consider and state without hesitation that he is suitable for the academic position of "associate professor" at the NBU.*

Therefore, I would like to completely categorically and without any doubt propose to the respected **scientific jury to vote positively**, and to the academic bodies of the NBU to choose chief assistant **Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Trendafilov at the academic position "associate professor"** in professional direction 3.8 "Economics" (Marketing - Brand Management) at the Department "Economics", Master's Faculty of New Bulgarian University - Sofia.

**Date: 06/11/2024**

**MEMBER OF THE JURY**

(prof. Diana Kopeva , PhD)