

OPINION

By Prof. Ivanka Daneva, PhD, Professional field 3.8 Economics,

New Bulgarian University, "Economics" Department

**member of the Scientific Jury in the competition for the academic position
"Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3."Social, economic and legal
sciences", professional field 3.8. Economics (Accounting, controlling and auditing),
published in the State Gazette, No. 94/11/10/2023**

with the candidate Senior Assistant Professor Plamen Iliev

By Order of the Rector of the NBU No. 3-PK-77/21.12.2023 I have been designated as a member of the Scientific Jury by procedure for a competition for the academic position of associate professor in a professional field 3.8. Economics (Accounting, controlling and auditing). By decision of the first meeting of the jury on 12.01.2024, I should prepare an opinion on the competition.

The form and content of this opinion are in accordance with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), the Regulations for its implementation, the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the NBU and in accordance with a model for preparing an opinion for occupying an academic position "Associate Professor".

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the NBU for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor".

It is clear from the submitted Self-Assessment Report for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, that Dr. Iliev meets the minimum requirements for the scientific, teaching and research activities for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", specified in the Regulations for DASRBA's implementation and in the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of the NBU, as follows:

Part I. Minimum requirements for the scientific, educational and/or creative activity of candidates for academic positions in professional fields, in accordance with DASRBA (groups of indicators A-D) and a corresponding number of points above the required minimum: Group A-50 of 50 points; Group B-100 of 100 points; Group G-390 of 200 points; Group D- 87.5 out of 50 points; Group E-40 of 0 points (not required for associate professor).

Part II. Fulfillment of criteria and indicators during long-term attestation for the announcement of a competition for a higher academic position, according to the current Ordinance of the NBU - academic work, organizational and public work (groups of indicators G – I): Group G-95 of 50 points; Group H-70 of 70 points; Group I-65 of 50 points.

From the attached table of the minimum required points, resulting from the DASRBA and the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff of the NBU, it is clear that the candidate exceeds them both according to the indicators from DASRBA and the additional, but mandatory for the NBU, indicators.

II. Research activity and results

The presented list of works includes 35 titles, of which 22 publications related to the competition for "Associate Professor" are offered for review. The scientometric characteristics of the publications include the following groups:

- habilitation monographic work (299 pages) and a published monograph that is not presented as a main habilitation work (159 pages) or a total volume of 458 pages (Group B - Indicator 3 and Group G - Indicator 4);
- 29 scientifically reviewed articles and reports in non-refereed journals or published in edited collective volumes (Group G- Indicator 7);

All the presented scientific works are independent publications, and those in English are 7 in number.

The scientific works submitted for review are accepted, since no connections with the candidate's doctoral work have been found, and a careful acquaintance with works with close or matching parts of the names shows a mismatch of content and is rather a development of ideas.

Not reviewed: one article with a topic outside the competition (presented in Indicator Group J, Indicator 24 - Scientific publications, other than those presented at the completion of the doctoral studies; (textbook from 2019, intended for teaching in a school education network (Group E-Indicator 20); two studies developed jointly with NBU students and available in the Scientific Electronic Archive of NBU, indicated in (Group Z-Indicator 37-Joint work with students in research and creative projects).

In general, it can be defined that the candidate's scientific interests cover a wide range of topics, mainly, but not exclusively, in the field of internal control, accounting and auditing. More specifically, his research focuses on: modern control in conditions of digitalization; internal audit in the public and private sector; internal control in banks; fiscal control; the importance of internal control and audit in risk management processes; IT audit; project control; controlling.

1. Evaluation of the monographic work, including evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.

The candidate's habilitation thesis "Modern Control in the Age of Digitalization (2023) is a complex and multifaceted study of control at a time when digital technologies and the new business models associated with them imply a review of accounting and control processes in order to support management. This defines the greater weight of practical applicability in the contributing moments of the monographic study. The main theoretical-methodological directions of the research include interconnected and therefore predetermined thematic areas: a brief presentation of the essential characteristics of control, its forms and varieties; the main aspects of modern digitization and digital transformation in accounting as a prerequisite for digitized control - internal, external (tax control and audit as an evaluation control); characterization of the possible negative consequences of general digitalization.

The scientific-methodological and scientific-applied achievements of the candidate in the monographic research can be grouped in the following areas:

First, it can be reasonably claimed that the study is one of the first on this modern topic - the digitization of accounting and control. Regarding the addition and enrichment of the theoretical-conceptual frameworks in the study of accounting and control, the analysis of the substantive characteristics of control, its significance and the new aspects of the relationship between accounting and control in the modern conditions and processes of

digitalization can be referred to. In this regard, the need for a preliminary digital audit is justified and the question of investing in new technologies, including and new software products. The need and directions of changes in the regulatory framework for accounting and control with a view to achieving better results in the digital transformation in these areas are outlined.

Secondly, based on a general overview of the manifestations of digitization and related transformations, a practical and applied detailed analysis of their impact on accounting and control was carried out with a view to the possibilities of: increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the work processes themselves; facilitating the provision of information at every stage of the accounting and control processes; ensuring the necessary transparency of the processes in the course of accounting and conducting the various types and forms of control activity.

Third, based on the study of the impact of accounting and control models related to the digitalization, the current questions about the significance of control as a management consultant, about cyber security, about the adequacy of the competences of accountants and auditors in conditions of digital transformation are considered. The need to identify problematic aspects of the profession of accountant and auditor from the positions of different generations and the large-scale entry of artificial intelligence into the sphere of accountability, control and management is substantiated.

2. Assessment of the contributions in the other attached publications made after the appointment of the academic position "senior assistant professor".

The scientific contributions in the monograph, which is not presented as a habilitation thesis, the articles and scientific reports of Dr. Plamen Iliev can be summarized in the following:

2.1. Scientific-methodological contributions:

First, study at a methodological level of the existing interrelationship between digitization on the one hand and accounting and control on the other. Contributing moments can be broadly defined as: study of the place of control and audit in the digital transformation (Indicator 7-20 and 27) and of the electronic audit of information technologies (Appendix 7-22); consideration of opportunities for the development of new technologies (Industry 4.0) in accounting and control (Indicator 7-12 and 26); substantiating the need and opportunities for implementing digital technologies in audit and control (Indicator 7-14, 18 and 26); implementation of digital technologies in audit and control (Indicator 7-14, 18 and 26).

Second, study of risk management and prevention of fraud and irregularities: systematization of concepts regarding the importance of internal control and internal audit for risk management and prevention of fraud (Indicator 7-4,16 and 28); summarizing the requirements and conditions for the application of fiscal control on goods with high fiscal risk by the National revenue agency (Indicator 7-9); formulation of rules and requirements for e-commerce especially in conditions of Covid restrictions and the need to control and audit its participants (Indicator 7-5 and 23).

Third, study of financial control, audit and supervision, including of control in the public sector: conceptual and item-by-element examination of financial control, audit and supervision (Indicator Group G-Indicator 4); analysis and summary of internal control requirements and challenges in the public sector (Indicator 7-1 and 5).

Fourth, analysis of problematic aspects of the management and audit of funds under European programs (Indicator 7-8 and 19).

Fifth, analysis of new aspects of requirements for joint financial audit and supervision of independent auditors (Indicator 7-7).

2.2. Practical contributions:

First, the study of accounting, control and auditing at the industry level: analysis and systematization of methodological features of accounting in tourism (Indicator 7-2); concepts regarding control and audit in marketing are systematized (Indicator 7-13 and 21).

Second, a study of accounting and control/auditing at the organization level: examining the challenges of financial auditing in public interest organizations (Indicator 7-10); aspects of the concept of controlling as an enterprise management system in conditions of financial and economic crisis caused by the pandemic (Indicator 7-25 and 29); the place of audit and control in the selection, training and management of personnel in the organization (Indicator 7-15); assessment of the need for internal control and its normative "support" in credit institutions (Indicator 7-3).

The problems investigated by the candidate are distinguished by a clearly formulated thesis and concrete results achieved with summaries, conclusions and recommendations useful mainly for the methodology and its practical application.

3. Citations of the candidate by other authors

For participation in the competition, Dr. Iliev submitted references for 15 citations in number, of which: in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review – 5; in non-refereed journals with scientific review – 10¹.

All citations are in publications in specialized scientific literature - specialized monographs, publications of universities (VTU, NBU, UNWE), reports from scientific conferences. When reviewing the specific cases of references to the monographic work and the other publications of the candidate, it can be seen that they are from Bulgarian scientists working in the scientific field - the subject of the competition for an associate professor. All this shows that in our country Dr. Iliev is recognizable as an author in the scientific field in which he works.

4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the obtained results in practice

In the presented Self-Assessment Report and bibliographic description of the evidentiary material attached to Appendix No. 2 of the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff at the NBU, Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Plamen Iliev has not reported participation in research and creative projects.

III. Learning and teaching activity

Dr. Plamen Iliev delivers lecture courses at the Bachelor's and Master's Colleges of the NBU. Leads courses on "Financial audit", "Controlling", "Controlling in the financial sector", "Internal control", "National accounting standards", "Forensic accounting expertise", "Audit standards", "Fraud and abuse in financial management", "Accounting document flow" and others. *The candidate has an educational workload that exceeds the normative by several times both in terms of classrooms and training courses.*

In his educational activity chief assistant professor Dr. Iliev, actively uses the electronic training system "Moodle". ***In each of the guided courses, he introduces electronic***

¹ Reference "Analysis of citations and publications - NBU Library, January 2023 and Reference for Citing Publications - UNWE Library, 2023.

learning materials and applies modern interactive tools and forms of learning. Actively uses multi-component ongoing on-line assessment.

The report on ***the results of the student opinion surveys on the level of teaching shows an excellent average rating*** for the candidate of 4.50 with a maximum rating of 5.00.²

For the purposes of the educational process, in 2020, Dr. Iliev developed an electronic teaching aid named "Forensic Expertises. Forensic economic expertise", which is available on the Moodle electronic platform. For the courses he leads on controlling, forensic accounting expertise and auditing of financial statements, author's study materials are available for students.

Actively works with the students, supervises graduate students and reviews master's and bachelor's theses. Together with students, 2 studies "Actual problems in the implementation of the audit"/2019/ and "Controlling in the management of the public sector"/2021/ have been developed, which are available in the Scientific electronic archive of the NBU. During the five-year certification period, the candidate was the academic supervisor of 35 graduates, reviewed 93 theses, and participated in numerous commissions for state exams, internship defenses, and others.

In the presented Self-Assessment Report and bibliographic description of the evidentiary material attached to Appendix No. 2 of the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff at the NBU, Chief Assistant. ***Dr. Plamen Iliev did not report work with Erasmus students.***

IV. Administrative and public activity

It is clear from the Self-assessment that ***Dr. Plamen Iliev regularly participated in the meetings of the departmental and program councils, kept an appointment time and regularly held his classes.*** He participated in various teams for the improvement of the training programs at the NBU - bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs "Accounting activity, control and analysis of economic activity /accounting and controlling".

He participated in the training of teachers from NBU on working with Moodle and Playscan.

Dr. Iliev is a licensed appraiser/expert of financial receivables, entire enterprises and agricultural lands, a member of the Chamber of Independent Appraisers in Bulgaria, liquidator, expert appraiser at the Registration Agency, and also an expert at the Sofia City Court and the Sofia Military Court for Forensic-Economic and Forensic-Accounting Expertises. He is also a member of the Association of Economic Fraud Examiners.

Plamen Iliev has actively participated in candidate-student campaigns to attract students to NBU.

V. Personal impressions of the applicant

I have known Dr. Iliev since his appointment at the NBU. My personal impressions are that ***he is responsible and proactive in his work. He enjoys respect among his colleagues and a good reputation among students, maintains good contacts with specialists from practice.***

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

Dr. Iliev's scientific publications submitted for review are developed on a solid

² Reference from Center for Career Development and Learning Resources.

theoretical basis and analysis of rich empirical material. These and practical recommendations contained in them are well argued.

The following recommendations can be made for his future scientific and teaching activities:

- *to expand the theoretical foundations of his research and to articulate his essential contributions more generally;*
- *to continue publishing textbooks and teaching aids on the taught subjects;*
- *to publish in referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases publications;*
- *to participate in research projects.*

Conclusion

The candidate for the academic position "associate professor" fully meets the requirements of DASRBA, the Regulations for its implementation as well as the Ordinance for the Development of Academic Staff of the New Bulgarian University, which gives me the reason to propose the election of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Plamen Kimonov Iliev for the academic position of "associate professor " in professional field 3.8 Economics (Accounting, controlling and auditing), scientific field 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences".

15/02/2024

Professor Ivanka Daneva, PhD

Sofia