

OPINION

On the materials for participation in competition for academic degree "Docent" (Associate Professor) in the field of higher education 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, professional direction 6.4. Veterinary medicine, scientific specialty "Animal Pathology", in the discipline "Pathology (General pathomorphology)", for the purposes of the University of Forestry, announced in the State Gazette issue 18/01.03.2024 and procedure code: VM-AsP-0224-126.

Candidate for participation in the competition is:

1. DVM Georgi Stoychev Popov, PhD

Estimator: Prof. DVM Emil Ivanov Sapundzhiev, PhD, DSc, awarded in professional field 6.4. Veterinary Medicine, by the University of Forestry, according to an Order of the Rector of the UF No. 3ПЦ-202/10.04.2024 for the composition of the Scientific Jury and protocol of its second meeting on 08 May 2024.

1. Brief biographical data about the candidate:

The candidate for the competition, Dr. Georgi Stoychev Popov, PhD, was born on 03.08.1990 in the town of Gotse Delchev, where he completed his secondary education at the "Yane Sandanski" School in 2009. The same year he was accepted as a student of "Veterinary Medicine" at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry, where he completed higher education with honors in 2015, and acquired a master's degree in veterinary medicine, evident from Diploma №18055/28.04.2015. For almost a year, he worked as a veterinarian in private practice in the company AMI VET 2010 OOD, Sofia, where he also acquired a basic clinical veterinary experience. After winning a competition in 2016, he was appointed as an assistant at the Department of "Internal Nonfectious Diseases, Pathology and Pharmacology" of the Faculty of Medicine at LTU, and is included in the teaching processes of the disciplines Pathology (General Pathomorphology) and Pathology (Special Pathological Anatomy). In the period 2018-2020, he was enrolled as a postdoctoral student in the form of independent preparation and defended with a huge evidentiary contribution and ahead of schedule in 2019 a doctoral thesis on the topic: "Pathomorphological and pharmacological studies on the protective effect of biologically active substances from medicinal plants", under the scientific guidance of Associate Professor, Dr. V. Manov and Associate Professor, Dr M. Kondeva-Burdina, and he was awarded the third-level educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) with Diploma No. LTU-ONS-2019-117. He rose to the title of Principal Assistant in 2020 in the same department where his current position is and for almost 9 years now. In 2023, he acquired a professional qualification in the field of protection and humane treatment of experimental animals used for scientific or educational purposes, being responsible for the vivarium of the FVM.

2. Compliance of applicant's materials and documents to the requirements listed in the Statute for Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Forestry:

During the inspection of the documents submitted for the competition, full compliance with the required normative prescriptions, according to the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at University of Forestry, is established, and some of them are accompanied by additional supporting data. The materials are presented on paper and electronic media, with 22 document attachments. It is striking that they are diligently and very accurately assembled, according to the established and characteristic order for such scientific concepts. All previous

steps in the course of the revealed procedure have passed without objections and obstructions, and there are no registered replicas of the applicant's data.

3. Assessment of the teaching activity of the applicant:

Dr. Georgi Popov has presented a report, which shows that for the last 3 years there has been a full annual workload (over 360 hours) for the two taught pathological disciplines of the Bulgarian students, as well as around 250-300 hours for the foreign students with English language teaching. After the defense of the PhD thesis, he also performs an additional hourly workload for a habilitated teacher, such as extra-auditory engagement in delivering lectures and participating in exams. He also collaborated with four other FVM doctoral students, with whom he summarized the pathoanatomical and pathohistological results and the interpretation of the obtained experimental data. The collaboration with two students in the development of publications on student creative forums is also reported. He supported the training program at the Center for Continuing Education of UF of an individual specialist and a group of specialists (total of 8 people) in their thematic focus. I have information that he is a valued and respected teacher by students, as well as a sought-after specialist pathologist by practicing veterinarians.

4. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific, applied scientific and publication activity:

4.1. Participation in scientific, scientific-applied and educational projects:

Dr. Georgi Popov presents himself for the competition by participating in four university scientific projects, in which he performs duties, as a pathologist, that are in the plans of the projects. I accept that the results of these projects have been presented at scientific events for the last few years and they are related to the relevant publications, and also are included in the presented normative and scientometric documents, which is a professional and very high certification.

4.2. Characteristics of the published scientific results:

The total number of publications of Dr. Georgi Popov, according to the presented list, is 25, and in the competition for "associate professor" he participated with 16 publications, of which 1 monograph, 1 book and 14 articles from scientific journals, all of which fall into the category: Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, and are in English. The other 9 articles are presented for the acquisition of PhD degree and they have an informative nature only. From the total number of published articles, 7 have an impact factor, or a total IF=24.115, with the individual impact factor amounting to 3.40. In three of the articles he is the first author, and in two of them he is the only author. In two of the articles he is the second author, in another five he is the third author, and in the rest he is in subsequent positions with more co-authors.

Also presented are 18 pcs. publications in the form of abstracts, in collections of participation in national and international scientific forums during oral presentations, or poster sessions, which provide additional awareness of the candidate's scientific activity and competence, as pathologist.

The scientific publications in the competition package are grouped in the main scientific specialty "Pathology", presenting the author with proven competence in the field of pathomorphology, in particular macroscopic pathoanatomy and microscopic pathohistology. A purposeful and comprehensive analysis of the pathomorphological processes and changes in the examined samples and materials from the examined animals included in the experiments was carried out.

The published scientific works can be divided into four directions:

- I. Pathological-anatomical changes in the animal organism caused by the intake of toxic and inert substances, papers 1, 2.
- II. Patho-anatomical and pharmacological studies of the effects of products of plant origin, publications 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12.
- III. Clinical and pathological assessment of domestic and captive animals resulting from acquired infectious and non-infectious diseases, publications 5, 6, 13, 14.
- IV. Pathologomorphological studies of a general scientific-applied nature, publications 9 and a selective part of the total number.

In a generalized aspect (given the limited volume of the opinion), it can be specified that the main part of the publications are in the field of pathology, alterations caused by toxic substances, and neoplasias and changes in the structures of the organs. The studies, through modern and routine morphological methods and analysis, are aimed at clarifying the pathogenesis and morphogenesis, the systematization of the pathoanatomical and pathohistological findings and the diagnosis of certain intoxications that are relevant for domestic animals. Studies have also been conducted and the results of the tracked pharmacological activity of certain medicinal plants have been published, and their antioxidant, hepatoprotective, neuroprotective, nephroprotective, antitumor and antiosteoporotic activity has been tracked through saponin fractions and secondary metabolites obtained from them. The data on the protective effect of medicinal plants are the basis for the development of phytoproducts for the purpose of their application in human and veterinary medical practice. Publications of a scientific-applied nature, which are in the field of in silico protocol development, concerning the prediction of the pharmacological activity of certain products, the development of a differential-diagnostic scheme of certain diseases related to endocrinological, neurological and other changes, also have a certain profile. Basic studies have been carried out with the aim of putting into operation cytological methods for the diagnosis of reproductive malformations in productive animals.

4.3. Reflection of the candidate's scientific activity in the literature (citation):

The reference for the competition presents the citations found in the world databases of the scientific works with the participation of Dr. Georgi Popov according to the scientometric requirements. They are for 9 scientific publications, being cited a total of 19 times, of which 15 are in articles printed in journals with an impact factor or in journals with a Scopus rank, and according to the indexation for them, 265 items were obtained in the tabular calculation for minimum national requirements. These data speak of purposeful research work in the field of pathoanatomy and pathohistology, as a result of which the author has realization and recognition in the scientific community as a pathologist. I accept the reference as credible, having checked their data according to their availability in the Internet for scientific exchange data, and I think that they bring him a real scientometric point asset.

4.4. Contributions in the works of the candidate (scientific, scientific & applied, applied):

The scientific contributions of the individual publications are diverse, but synthesized they are targeted in the field of veterinary pathomorphology, they are also mentioned in the characterization of the scientific results of the "Pathology" specialty. They rest on studies on the changes in the animal organism caused by the intake of toxic substances, patho-anatomical and pharmacological studies on the effects of substances of plant origin, the clinical and pathomorphological picture in some infectious and non-infectious diseases of animals, and a general scientific-applied pathomorphological nature. There are 12 original scientific

contributions in the individual scientific publications, and 2 contributions with confirmatory value, and no less significant contributions of an applied nature are outlined, which are 5 in the specific scientific research developments of the scientific studies and their accompanying scientific publications. All noted contributions I accept and share in essence, only due to the limited possibility of coverage in this review I do not describe in detail. I believe that original contributions are substantial with a certain significance and accuracy and correspond to scientific results that are new to the scientific community. They are clearly defined and outline the achievements of scientific research and the deciphering of the pathomorphological changes of the animal organism subjected to the specific impacts and have sufficient pathomorphological potential, character and validity.

5. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate:

The assessment of the implemented scientometric indicators and the corresponding scoring based on them is a reason to report a high general over-fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, which is presented in the table. Of these, publication activity and citation data stand out particularly clearly, and together with the various other groups of metrics, almost 60% overperformance is collected. I have verified the reliability of the data filled in the table and I accept them as a real report of the educational and research activities of Dr. Georgi Popov.

Table 1. Scoring according National minimal requirements indicators.

Group of indicators	Content	For Assistant Professor	Competing candidate – Dr Georgi Popov
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	104,89
D	Sum of indicators from 5 to 12	200	216
E	Sum of indicators from 13 to 15	50	265
F	Sum of indicators from 16 to the end	-	-
	Total	400 /minimum/	635.89

In addition, a reference is presented for participation in 18 scientific forums, in connection with the competition, at which he has representation and participation with scientific appearances in the form of reports, presentations and posters, and in 5 of the participations there are awards and certificates for scientific contribution and appearance.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations:

In the general assessment of the overall teaching and research activity of Dr. Georgi Popov, I allow myself to recommend, to make efforts and to elaborate of teaching manual for the direct training of students.

7. Personal impressions:

I have known Dr. Georgi Popov since the first year of his studies at the FVM of LTU, as his teacher, and I can characterize him as an inquisitive, studious, hardworking and diligent student, who subsequently developed in a scientific direction with his skills in handling computer programs, laboratory equipment, modern morphological approaches and linguistic knowledge. Coincidentally, we worked together to organize the prestigious of FVM Annual Scientific Conference, and as a member of the organizing committee, he provided highly effective assistance and contributed to its success. With his qualities of developed collegial ethics and ability to work in a team, he won the trust of the academic staff of the FVM and was elected as a Member of the Faculty Council of the FVM at LTU, as well as a member of the commission at the FVM on "Organization and Conduct of Practices and internships". He is also a Member of the Academic Council of University of Forestry. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the FVM International Scientific Conference "Tradition and Modernity in Veterinary Medicine". He also successfully manages with the responsible and engaging position of materially responsible person at the Department of "Internal Non-Invasive Diseases, Pathology and Pharmacology" of the FVM. Dr. Georgi Popov is a wanted specialist and consultant on a national scale, as an expert in one of the rare specialties of pathology, and in particular pathoanatomy and pathohistology. I also acknowledge his personal contribution to the establishment of the pathohistology laboratory to the clinical sector of the FVM, and I highly appreciate those efforts and skills.

8. Conclusion:

Based on the general description of the presented materials and the exceedingly covered by groups and overall minimum national requirements, as well as the generally obtained high scientometric data, and on the basis of the scientific contributions and scientific results shown, I give a positive opinion, and I think that the candidate DVM Georgi Stoychev Popov, PhD, covers point by point according to the individual groups of indicators and comprehensively the requirements for occupying the academic position of "DOCENT" (ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR), and therefore, according procedure VM-AsP-0224-126, I propose that he to be voted in the scientific field 6. "Agrarian sciences and veterinary medicine", professional direction 6.4. "Veterinary medicine ", in the scientific specialty "Animal Pathology", in the discipline of Pathology (general pathomorphology) for the needs of University of Forestry, in particular the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, in the department "Internal noninfectious diseases, pathology and pharmacology".

Estimator's signature

(Prof. DVM E. Sapundzhiev, PhD, DSc)

The review was submitted on: 20 May 2024