

# STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Petya Alexandrova Alexandrova, D.Sc., Department of Mass Communications, NBU, associate professor in professional field 3.5. Public communications and Information Sciences, on the academic output for participation in a competition for the academic position of “associate professor” in professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in ... (English language), announced in the State Gazette No. 62/06.08.2019, with candidate Chief Assist. Prof. Mariya Todorova Neykova, PhD

## I. Evaluation of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University.

It is evident from the submitted self-evaluation form that Chief Assist. Prof. Mariya Neykova, PhD, meets the minimum national requirements and the requirements of NBU, and that by indicators “G”, “D” and “I” she exceeds twice the requirements. It is important to mention that these requirements were formulated by the end of the evaluated period, which means that the candidate could not have been prepared for the new formats in advance.

## II. Research (creative) work and results.

*The monograph “An Action-oriented Approach to Foreign Language Acquisition in the Context of Blended Learning” by Dr. Mariya Neykova* consists of 148 pages. It is a research work that presents the theoretical and practical aspects of blended learning with a focus on adults (Chapter One), the methodological foundations of action-oriented foreign language teaching (Chapter Two), action-oriented blended learning (Chapter Three) and its organizational and pedagogical forms.

The leading theme in the monograph is how the change of the environment considerably increases the ways for presenting the material. Emphasis is laid on online interaction and the use of the electronic learning platform Moodle – the working environment in which we, the lectures at NBU, immerse ourselves every day.

A quality of the monographic work *“An Action-oriented Approach to Foreign Language Acquisition in the Context of Blended Learning”*, for which I would recommend it to both colleagues and students, is the presentation of the Action-oriented Approach as originating from the Communicative Approach in foreign language teaching. Mariya Neykova designs a structural model of this approach in blended learning. As a basis, she uses her experience and concrete practice at NBU but the model as a framework and samples can be implemented in other educational institutions as well.

### ***Other publications:***

Apart from her main monographic work, Mariya Neykova also has publications in collections of scientific articles, annual journals and electronic publications, all of which are related to the forms of teaching in English in the broadest sense.

It should be noted that the sphere of her research interests is interdisciplinary – between philology, methodology, pedagogy, which often creates a problem for the author to be recognised by the corresponding scientific communities, which is successfully avoided by Mariya Neykova. The result is obvious – fruitful scientific cooperation with other universities and other programmes. Mariya Neykova, for example, has conducted a seminar on “Methodology of Foreign Language Teaching” in Kazakhstan.

The solid list of her research activities shows not only her permanent interests in the field of pedagogy but also her constant search for new sub-topics and concrete examples.

### ***Other activities:***

Dr. Mariya Neykova’s activities are various, but they are always open for the inclusion of young participants in them. Whether these are travelling seminars to Pernik and Gabrovo or a Literary Competition for students at high school studying English, the candidate supports the development of current and future professionals.

### **III. Educational and teaching activities.**

Dr. Mariya Neykova has fulfilled and exceeded the academic workload requirements. The average grade regarding the level of satisfaction on the part of Dr. Mariya Neykova’s students is excellent 4.74. In the platform Moodle NBU, for every course there is presentation material with detailed content, links, tests, supplementary materials.

The choice of the monograph’s topic and the interest in the implementation of digital technologies in teaching demonstrate a modern understanding of the profession of a “pedagogue”. As an example, I would like to point out her concept (co-authored) for the quite original minor programme “Theatre in English”.

### **IV. Administrative and public activities.**

Since her appointment as a lecturer, Mariya Neykova has been a member of Department Councils, a director of the basic programme “Applied Linguistics”, a programme consultant for the Department of English Studies, the Department of Romance and Germanic Studies, and now – for Applied Foreign Languages for Administration and Management. In addition, she has often been a member of exam committees for Bachelor’s and Master’s diploma theses, as is evident from the self-evaluation form.

The fact that the candidate has occupied several administrative positions makes Mariya Neykova a competent consultant on matters related to programmes, courses and students.

#### **V. Personal impressions of the candidate.**

My first personal impressions are of a calm, kind and smiling colleague who does not create panic or tension but carefully looks into every issue, no matter whether it concerns a student or a lecturer, and finds ways to help.

I am probably the only one among the members of the Scientific Jury who has impressions of Chief Assist. Prof. Mariya Neykova also as her student in the “English Studies” programme. I would like to point out a number of her qualities that make her a preferred and favourite lecturer. Clear explanations with understandable examples. Ability to present complex linguistic matters in a simple and synthesized form. Leniency with the sometimes immature reasoning of students. Patience with those who have difficulties in mastering the material. Curiosity towards different thinking. Desire to help with the solution of concrete problems. Lack of irritability or condescension in case of modest results of her students.

Based on the aforementioned, I can express my opinion that **Chief Assist. Prof. Mariya Neykova, PhD, possesses the necessary qualities to be awarded the academic position of “associate professor” and I vote “Yes”.**

Sofia,

November 21, 2019

Signature:

(Assoc. Prof. Petya Alexandrova, D.Sc.)