Please note: in the first stage of the review process, Criterion 1 and 3 will be reviewed by the Committee for Research Support (Ausschuss für Forschungsförderung, AFF). In the second stage of the application process Criterion 1 and 2 will be reviewed by at least two external reviewers per candidate. For each question a max. score of 5 points can be awarded. The numerical assessment is as follows: 5 – Exceptional; 4 – Excellent; 3 – Very Good; 2 – Good; 1 – average and beyond. The max. total score in stage 1 is 70 points; max. total score in stage 2 is 95 points. Times of special burdens, as indicated in the respective form, will be taken into consideration for the assessment of the candidates.

1. Criterion 1: Qualifications and independence of the candidate (max. 50 points)

Qualifications (max. 5 points):
- Is the candidate’s academic, clinical (if relevant), and research record of high quality? (For instance, outstanding PhD or M.D)

Independence and achievements (max. 20 points):
- Has the candidate demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- Does the candidate have a promising track record of early achievements appropriate to their respective research field and career stage, including:
  - significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals? And/or
  - a record of invited presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.?
- Does the candidate have the required scientific expertise/training and capacity to successfully execute a scientific project?

International research experience (max. 5 points):
- Does the Candidate have substantial international research experience?
  - For example I) research stays abroad; II) international research collaborations or III) international working environment during PhD or postdoc phase in Germany (e.g. EMBL; MPI etc.).

Potential and career development (max. 20 points):
- Does the candidate have the potential and ability to (further) develop as an independent and productive researcher?
- Is there evidence of the candidate’s commitment to become an independent investigator? If so, which?
- How do you rate the potential of the fellowship and the proposed research project to contribute to the applicant’s research career development and independence?
- How do you rate the chances of appointment after completing the High Potential Grants fellowship?
2. **Criterion 2: Project (max. 45 points)**

**Quality, objectives and aims of the proposed project (max. 20 points):**

- How do you rate the quality of the project, especially in terms of originality and the expected gain in knowledge?
- Does the proposed research address important challenges? If yes, which?
- Are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?
- Is there a high risk that the research project does not entirely fulfil its aims (e.g. is the risk too high) and has the candidate addressed alternative plans?

**Scientific approach and research plan of the proposed project (max. 25 points):**

- Are the proposed research questions, design, and methodology of significant scientific and technical merit?
- Are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
  - E.g. robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed.
- Are the goals and work program convincing in terms of the clarity of the working hypotheses?
- Are the proposed timescales of the work plan feasible and properly justified?
- Has the candidate included plans to address weaknesses?
  - E.g. relevant biological variables, such as sex, for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects

3. **Criterion 3: Host institution, mentor and benefit for the University Medical Center Mainz (max. 20 points)**

- Are host institution and mentor suited to carry out the proposed project and provide the necessary environment, both scientifically as well as methodically?
- How do you rate the relevance of the described benefit for the UMC?
- How do you rate the potential of the candidate and the proposed project to lead to (further) and significant advancements in the respective research field?
- How do you rate the potential of the candidate and the proposed project to attract more funding from national and international funding sources for the UMC in the future?