

IVAR Autumn 2026 Internship – Q&A

This document brings together questions we have received from people interested in IVAR's Autumn 2026 Internship, along with our responses. We have grouped similar questions together to make the information easier to read and to avoid repetition. The answers are intended to give a clearer sense of what the internship involves, what we are looking for in applications, and how the opportunity would work in practice.

Please read this alongside the [internship application pack](#), which includes the full role description, eligibility criteria and details of how to apply. If you have a question that is not covered here, please do reach out.

Question(s)	Response
1. About IVAR's research and approach	
• What are IVAR's main research focuses? • What methodologies does IVAR use in its research and how might I contribute to these as an intern? • Are peer spaces important alongside funding? Is there evidence that they are worthwhile?	• IVAR exists to support charities, especially smaller charities and those whose experiences are often less heard. Our research focuses on what charities, communities and people closest to the issues are experiencing: what they know, what pressures they are facing, what gets in their way, and what might help. • This includes work on how small charities are experiencing pressure, uncertainty and funding relationships; how funders can work in more open and trusting ways; how voluntary organisations, funders and public bodies can collaborate more effectively; and what can be learned from communities and people closest to the issues. • We are guided by principles of action research. This means working with people to understand an issue, build evidence together, and use that learning to shape what happens next. Our approach includes evaluation and learning (helping organisations understand what is changing, what is working and what could be improved), peer learning (creating spaces where people facing similar challenges can share experience and learn from each other) and convening (bringing different people together to discuss a shared issue and explore possible responses). • For example, through Open and Trusting, we work alongside funders to understand what practices may be holding them back and how they can make funding relationships more open, trusting and flexible. • We know relationships and peer support are key. We would not see these as a replacement for funding, as financial support is often the most important foundation. But we also hear from people that trusted relationships and opportunities to learn with

	others can help them feel less isolated, build confidence and navigate uncertainty. Our Leading in Uncertainty programme is one way we try to support charities through creating spaces for charity leaders to hear from each other.
2. Projects and what the intern might do	
• What projects are likely to be running in the autumn that the intern might get involved in? • What kinds of projects is the intern most likely to support between September and November?	• We try to tailor the internship around both live projects and the intern's interests. If successful, you will have an initial discussion about your interests and which projects might be the best fit. • Our portfolio of research projects includes both long-term programmes which run over multiple years, such as Connecting Health Communities, a place-based project helping to tackle health inequalities. It also includes smaller, more focused pieces of work, such as evaluations for charities, funders or partnerships. This means the intern is likely to work across more than one project during the internship. • Activities may include helping prepare interview or focus group materials; supporting or conducting interviews where appropriate; taking notes and pulling out themes; helping with analysis or synthesis of data; co-facilitating webinars or workshops; and contributing to written outputs such as reports and notes. • Some examples of work interns have done in the past include working on a desk review of trusts and foundations' values, interviewing researchers about their experience of the Jane Hatfield Programme, and helping to facilitate an event with communities in Somerset. • Interns may also support IVAR's communications work through producing social media content and writing blogs for the IVAR website. Past blogs from former interns include: • Communities are amazing: An internship with IVAR • An intern's eye view of action research • Beyond the Buzzword: Systems Change in Language, Planning and Practice
3. What we are looking for in applications	
• For applicants whose experience is mainly through youth voice, volunteering, lived experience work or community involvement rather than formal	• We are not looking for a perfect research CV or a particular academic route into this internship. We are looking for clear examples that show how you think, learn, listen, communicate, organise yourself and work with others. • Your experience might come from volunteering, caring responsibilities, community organising, campaigning, education, youth voice work, part-time work, personal experience where you are comfortable sharing it, group projects or informal leadership.

academic research, what would you most like to see in the supporting statement? • What qualities and experiences make an applicant stand out for this internship? • Is it worth applying if we have a master's degree or is the internship more for people with less experience? • Should we include references in our application?	These are all valid forms of experience if you can explain what you did, what you learned, and how it connects to this role. • In your supporting statement, it would be helpful to show: • Why you are interested in IVAR's work — for example, what draws you to research, charities, communities, funders or social change. • How you listen and communicate — including how you build trust, hear different perspectives and express your ideas clearly. • How you approach uncertainty or problem-solving — for example, working through something complex, adapting when plans changed, or helping others think through an issue. • How you organise yourself and work with others — including managing your time, prioritising tasks, asking for help when needed, and contributing to a team. • How your values connect with IVAR's ways of working — being curious, grounded in lived experience and practice, human, empathetic and hopeful. • Having a Master's degree does not rule you out. We know research experience can come through different routes. The internship is mainly aimed at people who are earlier in their applied research career, so we will be looking at how well applicants meet the criteria rather than whether they have followed a particular academic path. • References are not required at application stage. IVAR wants to minimise barriers, so instead of formal references, we rely on the CV, supporting statement and interview conversation about your experiences. References may be relevant later, but they are not part of the initial submission.
4. Practical arrangements	
• How does the part-time 10-week option usually work in practice, particularly for people balancing the internship with work, study or other commitments? • For the part-time option starting on the 14th, can I	• Working pattern, hours and office days: The full-time internship is 35 hours per week. The part-time 10-week option is expected to be around 17.5 hours per week. • We would work with the successful intern to understand their commitments and agree a working pattern before they start. For the part-time option, this is likely to be around 2.5 days a week, including Thursdays where possible. • We ask interns to come into the office on most Thursdays because this is when the team is usually together. It helps people stay connected and collaborative, and gives the intern a fuller experience of IVAR's working culture. Office days are usually 9:00–17:00.

start later, or do the first week online?

- What time do people usually arrive and leave the office on office days, and is that flexible?
- Will applicants commuting in from outside London be considered?
- Can applicants on a student visa apply?
- Would this opportunity be open to 17-year-olds?

- Working hours have some flexibility but should usually fall within 8:00–18:00. There may be some days where times are more fixed, for example if the intern is supporting an external event, workshop or project activity.
- If you have specific commitments or questions about your circumstances, please explain this in your supporting statement or contact us before applying, and we can discuss what may be possible.
- **Start date and flexibility:** Starting a few days later, or doing the first week online, is likely to be possible. The main practical consideration is equipment: IVAR provides a laptop, so you would need access to a computer for the first week if you were working remotely. Please note your actual available start date clearly in your supporting statement.
- **Location and travel:** This is primarily a London-based opportunity because of the expectation to attend office days. IVAR covers travel in and around London, and interns are given a pre-loaded Oyster card. We are not able to cover regular commute costs from outside London.
- Applicants who live just outside London are still welcome to apply if it would be realistic for them to travel in regularly, but they would need to cover any travel costs outside London themselves. If this applies to you, please mention it in your application.
- Depending on the projects the intern is involved in, there may also be some travel within the UK. Any project-related travel would be discussed in advance and covered by IVAR.
- **Right to work and age eligibility:** We cannot sponsor visas for this internship. Applicants must already have the right to work in the UK and be able to provide evidence of this. If you are on a student visa, please check your visa conditions carefully, including any restrictions on the number of hours you can work during term time or outside term time.
- Unfortunately, we are unable to accept applications from people under 18. The internship is a formal employment arrangement, and our contracts and working policies are currently designed for employing adults. We do not currently have the additional processes in place that would be needed for a young worker role.
- We would still really encourage anyone who is interested but not yet eligible to consider applying in a future year.

5. Support during and after the internship

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the previous intern find most useful, challenging or surprising about the experience? • How do you support the intern's progression afterwards? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support during the internship: The intern will have regular support from their line manager throughout the internship, including check-ins to help build confidence, manage priorities, discuss workload and identify any support needs. Interns will also work with different project managers and team members, so there will be opportunities to ask questions, get feedback and understand different approaches to research and facilitation. • The intern will also receive tech equipment and access to IVAR's digital systems throughout the duration of the programme to enable participation within projects and collaboration with IVAR colleagues. • We know it can take time to step into existing projects and understand IVAR's ways of working, such as taking notes, analysing material or contributing to reports. We encourage interns to ask for help, request useful background materials, and talk through priorities with their line manager or project leads. • The internship is designed to give meaningful involvement in the work from the start, while also making sure the intern has support around them. • What a previous intern found useful, challenging or surprising: A previous intern described the level of immersion and involvement as both useful and surprising, saying that they felt involved in the work from day one. They also noted that, in meetings, people asked for their thoughts and input, and that their contributions felt genuinely heard and considered. • They found it challenging at times to step into existing work and research projects without all the background context, and to get used to IVAR's ways of doing things. They found it helpful to ask for resources, use line manager check-ins to manage priorities, and ask colleagues for help when needed. • Support with next steps: Throughout the internship, there will be regular opportunities to reflect on what you are learning, what you are enjoying, and where you might want more support. IVAR staff have come into research through different routes and are happy to share their experiences openly. • Towards the end of the internship, we can have a conversation about possible next steps, routes into research, and how to describe the experience in future applications. A completion conversation will take place, and IVAR can provide a certificate of completion or references for future opportunities. |
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