

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: Engineering Industry

Turn experiences into impact using the SAR method

What do employers look for in this industry?

Effective resumes in this industry highlight measurable results such as improved system performance, enhanced reliability, increased safety, or successful project delivery. Overall, this handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for engineering roles.

Tip: Remember to [customize your resume](#) by incorporating keywords from the job description. For additional guidance on formatting and structure, review our [Resume/CV templates](#).

SAR Method: Core Framework

- ✓ Your resume must contain concise bullet points to describe your experiences
- ✓ SAR statements effectively outline your accomplishments in a simple, informative way

What is SAR?

S = Situation: What was the context? (e.g., problems you encountered or tasks you took on)

A = Action: What did you specifically do? (e.g., use a strong past-tense [action verb](#))

R = Result: What changed because of your actions? (e.g., improvements or outcomes)

Note: When formatting a resume bullet point, the sequence should be Action + Situation + Result. Also, try to incorporate numbers, percentages, or dollar amounts to further demonstrate your impact.

A weak example for a summer internship could be:

- Assisted engineers with design and testing activities

A strong example for a summer internship using the SAR method could be:

- Designed a 3D aircraft bracket in SolidWorks, producing a prototype that contributed to a 15% reduction in production time while meeting structural requirements

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Designed

SITUATION: a 3D aircraft bracket in SolidWorks,

RESULT: producing a prototype that contributed to a 15% reduction in production time while meeting structural requirements

Note: This statement includes industry-specific context and skills, clearly communicates the result or intent of the action, and incorporates numbers to strengthen its impact.

Tip: For current students, review the [Carleton Career Competencies](#) to identify the knowledge, skills, and attributes developed through your academic journey. These reflections can help articulate your employability and write stronger SAR statements.



Impact Levels: Early Experience vs Advanced Experience

This section will help you brainstorm the context of your work (Situation) and the impact of your contributions (Result), with sample examples tailored to your level of experience.

Early Experience (e.g., co-ops, placements, internships, projects, clubs, and entry-level roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Carleton Career Competencies (e.g., Innovation & Collaboration, Leadership, or Communication) • Engineering activities (e.g., types of designs, testing, inspections, analyses) • Tools or software applied (e.g., AutoCAD, SolidWorks, MATLAB, PLCs, GIS software)	• What outputs were completed? (e.g., # of prototypes, technical drawings, presentations, proposals) • What recommendations were made? (e.g., materials, control logic, layouts) • What measurable impacts resulted? (e.g., reduced errors, better functionality)

Biomedical Engineering Capstone: Led 6 students to develop a prosthetic hand prototype, generating 8 recommendations related to material selection, ergonomics, and grip performance

Civil Engineering Co-Op: Assessed bridge inspection results for a local municipality, developing 10 recommendations for concrete repairs and drainage improvements

Advanced Experience (e.g., professional experience and leadership roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Engineering initiatives led (e.g., infrastructure upgrades, manufacturing systems, product development) • Technical requirements considered (e.g., safety standards, environmental regulations) • Stakeholders & project resources (e.g., architects, city officials, teams, budgets)	• What deliverables or milestones were achieved? (e.g., project phase completed, prototype validated, construction finalized) • What technical improvements resulted? (e.g., load capacity, reliability, safety) • What organizational value emerged? (e.g., reduced costs, accelerated timelines)

Senior Mechanical Engineer: Applied root-cause analysis to a conveyor system with recurring failures, reducing unplanned downtime by 25% and improving reliability

Project Manager: Managed a \$25M roadway and water main capital portfolio, directing projects from design through construction while delivering annual programs within budget

Other ways to show impact if you do not know exact numbers

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of testing activities, software modules): Tested a prototype biosensor using 100+ patient samples, improving earlier disease identification
- **Scale** (e.g., geographic reach, operation size): Developed robotic control software deployed across manufacturing facilities in Europe, improving production consistency
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., enhanced safety): Refined hazardous materials handling protocols for field investigations, reducing accidents and strengthening compliance

Tip: Begin [tracking data](#) to incorporate stronger metrics into future SAR statements.

