

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: Government and Public Affairs Industries

Turn experiences into impact using the SAR method

What do employers look for in these industries?

Effective resumes in these industries highlight measurable results such as evidence-informed policy recommendations, stronger stakeholder engagement, improved program delivery, or contributions to legislative and regulatory decision-making. Overall, this handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for roles in government and public affairs.

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 with policy research and briefing materials

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

- Conducted an environmental scan on housing affordability across 12 Canadian municipalities, delivering a presentation identifying 6 emerging trends and 4 policy risks

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Conducted

SITUATION: an environmental scan on housing affordability across 12 Canadian municipalities,

RESULT: delivering a presentation identifying 6 emerging trends and 4 policy risks

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., Communication, Leadership, or Research & Analysis) • Research activities (e.g., environmental scans, policy reviews, program evaluations) • Public issues addressed (e.g., healthcare, housing, climate adaptation, public safety)	• What outputs resulted from your work? (e.g., # of briefing notes, memos, survey reports, data summaries, presentations) • What findings were identified? (e.g., emerging trends, service gaps, risks) • What skills did you strengthen? (e.g., legislative research, public consultations)

Health Policy Assignment: Evaluated provincial healthcare reform policies, developing 5 recommendations to improve emergency care access in underserved communities

VP of Political Science Student Society: Coordinated advocacy initiatives for a 300-member student society, securing a 20% funding increase to expand experiential learning partnerships

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

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Strategic initiatives led (e.g., legislative reviews, funding programs, regulatory frameworks) • Organizational priorities supported (e.g., service modernization, compliance, safety) • Cross-sectoral partnerships coordinated (e.g., municipalities, Indigenous communities)	• What key deliverables were completed? (e.g., executive briefing, implementation plan, evaluation report) • What actions resulted? (e.g., resources reallocated, policy adopted, funding secured) • What measurable outcomes resulted? (e.g., cost reduced or service standards met)

Policy Analyst: Developed a strategic workforce policy addressing skilled labour shortages, increasing employer participation in provincially funded apprenticeship programs by 15%

Evaluation Manager: Managed an evaluation of a provincial energy retrofit program, identifying awareness barriers and informing changes that increased household adoption by 22%

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

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of reports, policy files, evaluations): Completed 10-15 policy reviews per quarter, informing the modernization of a consumer protection framework
- **Scale** (e.g., size of jurisdictions): Organized consultations across municipal and provincial jurisdictions, strengthening stakeholder alignment on public safety policies
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., efficiency, consistency, compliance): Updated key performance indicators, improving the reliability of program evaluation results

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