

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: Legal, Criminal Justice, & Compliance 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 better case preparation, access to justice, and adherence to regulatory standards. This handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for roles in legal administration, advocacy, courts, corrections, public safety, procedural compliance, and investigations.

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 community reintegration referrals

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

- Coordinated housing and employment referrals for 30 paroled individuals returning to the community, connecting 85% with at least one reintegration support

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Coordinated

SITUATION: housing and employment referrals for 30 paroled individuals returning to the community,

RESULT: connecting 85% with at least one reintegration support

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, Research & Analysis, or Innovation & Collaboration) • Legal or client support activities (e.g., legal research, file reviews, intakes, referrals) • Legislation or issues explored (e.g., Criminal or Human Rights Codes, recidivism)	• What outputs were produced? (e.g., # of case summaries, briefing notes, recommendations, action plans) • What new insights emerged? (e.g., precedents, criminal trends, local supports) • What skills did you strengthen? (e.g., legal writing, rapport building, confidentiality)

Criminology Assignment: Collaborated with 5 students to analyze sentencing in 50 impaired driving cases, identifying repeat offence factors and proposing 4 prevention recommendations

Legal Aid Placement: Conducted intake interviews with 45 survivors of violence, documenting client histories and legal issues to inform case preparation for lawyers

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

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Programs or initiatives led (e.g., audits, workplace investigations, rehabilitation programs, evidence-based training models) • Legal or safety challenges (e.g., policy violations, misconduct, habitual offenders) • Stakeholders involved (e.g., courts, correctional facilities, NGOs, regulators)	• What operational deliverables were completed? (e.g., # of offender management plans, compliance reports, funding proposals) • What performance improved? (e.g., processing times, compliance, participation) • What broader impacts resulted? (e.g., incidents reduced, audit standards met)

Senior Compliance Officer: Directed a compliance review of procurement practices across 20 departments, implementing corrective measures that reduced policy violations by 28%

Correctional Manager: Oversaw revised rehabilitation programming for 250 inmates, increasing completion rates by 24% while strengthening community reintegration planning

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

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of cases, compliance reviews, incident reports): Reviewed 45-50 court decisions, summarizing relevant precedents for an upcoming hearing
- **Scale** (e.g., level of stakeholder coordination): Coordinated case information across courts, regulatory bodies, and community partners, enhancing interagency collaboration
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., recordkeeping standards): Implemented standardized documentation practices, improving record reliability and legal defensibility

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