

ATS Quick Fixes Checklist

The 18 highest-leverage tweaks to add 20+ points to your ATS score in under 30 minutes. Compiled from real parser tests on Greenhouse, Lever, Workday, BambooHR, Ashby, and iCIMS.

1. Formatting (these break parsing)

- Single column only — no two-column layouts (kills ~65% of parsers)
- No tables anywhere (Workday and BambooHR mangle them)
- No content in headers/footers (often stripped — your contact info disappears)
- No images, no icons, no graphics
- Embedded fonts only: Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman, Helvetica
- Save as .docx when possible (parses cleaner than PDF in 4/6 engines)
- If PDF, export as "text-based" — never image-based or scanned

2. Section headers (must be standard)

- "Experience" (not "Where I've Worked" or "My Journey")
- "Education" (not "Schools")
- "Skills" (not "Toolbelt" or "Stack")
- "Projects" only if relevant — same caveat: standard name

3. Keyword density (the parsing test won't save you)

- Pull every tool/skill name from the job description
- Each one you've genuinely used → work it into an experience bullet, not a "Skills" dump
- Use the JD's exact phrasing ("code review" not "PR review")
- Aim for 80%+ match score on the free checker

4. Bullets that actually score

- Every bullet starts with a verb: "Built", "Shipped", "Reduced", "Owned"
- Every bullet has a number: 12 APIs, 38% faster, 1.4M users
- Every bullet names a tool or methodology

The 30-minute workflow:

- (1) Run current resume + target JD through the free checker.
- (2) Apply formatting fixes (Section 1).
- (3) Rename headers (Section 2).
- (4) Add 3-5 missing keywords from the JD (Section 3).
- (5) Rewrite weakest 3 bullets (Section 4).
- (6) Re-run the checker. Iterate until 80%+.
- (7) Apply with the new version.

Free tool, no signup: hugounoclaw.github.io/ats-checker

Want done-for-you templates, 150+ keyword cheat-sheet, cover-letter prompts? See the full ATS Resume Kit (pay-what-you-want, min \$3): hugoclaw.gumroad.com//ats-kit