# Program Activity Logs

Program activity logs are structured tracking tools used to capture ongoing participation, engagement, and progress throughout a program. They are especially useful for monitoring what's happening between key program touchpoints, and for identifying patterns across time, cohorts, or individuals.

They serve both operational and evaluative purposes — providing real-time data for program improvement, and retrospective data for reporting outcomes.

## Purpose

- Track participation and engagement (e.g., meetings held, time spent, session types).
- Monitor implementation fidelity — ensure that core components are being delivered as intended.
- Document progress toward goals (e.g., milestones completed, skills practiced).
- Spot barriers or drop-offs in real time to enable quick intervention.
- Support outcome interpretation by providing context for results from surveys or assessments.

## When to Use- Options

- **Ongoing Throughout the Program**
  Used weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly to collect information on sessions, participation, or activities completed.
- **Immediately After Key Interactions**
  Log entries completed after mentoring sessions, workshops, group meetings, or check-ins.
- **Program Close-Out**
  A final cumulative log can be used to summarize total activities, lessons learned, and any pending goals.

## What to Capture in Activity Logs

| **Category** | **Examples** |
|---|---|
| Date/Time | When did the activity happen? |
| Type of Activity | 1:1 session, workshop, goal check-in, group meeting |
| Duration | How long was the session? |
| Topics Covered | Skill practiced, content discussed, goal reviewed |
| Participant Engagement | Level of participation, energy, questions asked |
| Progress Towards Goals | Any milestones completed or challenges faced |

| | |
|---|---|
| Reflections/Notes | Observations, action steps, issues to follow up |

## Recommended Tools

| **Category** | **What to Know** |
|---|---|
| Google Forms | • Free, simple, auto-collects to Sheets.<br>• Great for lightweight activity logs.<br>• Lacks advanced tracking/dashboard features. |
| Microsoft Forms | • Clean interface, integrates with Excel + Teams.<br>• Easy if organization already uses Microsoft 365.<br>• More basic analytics. |
| Airtable | • Flexible database with custom fields and views.<br>• Easy filtering/sorting to spot patterns.<br>• More setup required, but scalable for larger programs. |
| Notion / Confluence Tables | • Integrated into collaboration tools.<br>• Logs stay visible to participants + coordinators.<br>• Requires organizational buy-in for adoption. |
| • Trello / Asana (with custom fields) | • Can log activities directly in project/task boards.<br>• Best if mentorship is project-based.<br>• More overhead than needed for simple logs. |

## Best Practices for Activity Logs

1. **Standardize formats.**
   Use a consistent structure (columns or fields) so data is clean, comparable, and easily analyzed.
2. **Make it easy to complete.**
   Design logs to be quick — aim for under 3 minutes per entry. Use dropdowns and checkboxes when possible.
3. **Collect both structured and unstructured data.**
   Mix checkboxes/radio buttons with open notes for flexibility.
4. **Assign responsibility.**
   Clarify who completes logs — mentors, facilitators, participants, or staff. Train them on why it matters.
5. **Align with program goals.**
   Make sure what you're tracking supports your desired outcomes and evaluation questions.
6. **Set a cadence.**
   Whether weekly or event-based, define when logs should be completed and send reminders if needed.

7. **Use data actively.**
   Review log entries regularly — look for drop-offs, pain points, or bright spots.
8. **Protect privacy.**
   If logs include names or sensitive reflections, store them securely and clarify who can access them.
9. **Visualize trends.**
   Use dashboards or charts to highlight engagement levels, session types, or progress over time.
10. **Combine with other data sources.**
    Integrate with surveys, attendance, or performance data to tell a richer story of participant experience.