SUMMER 2026

Medical Ethics, Health, & Society Outset Program

Outset

Dates: July 12-17, 2026

Campus: Vanderbilt University

Overview

Explore the intersection of medicine, ethics, and society at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN

This week invites you to step into the shoes of a future clinician or public health researcher and explore the big questions shaping healthcare today.

From understanding how social factors influence patient care to exploring health disparities and historical structures, you'll tackle real-world issues that doctors, researchers, and policymakers face every day. Expect lively discussions, interactive case studies, and hands-on exercises that put you at the center of the learning experience.

Students will investigate topics like medical ethics, reproductive health policy, disability activism, and the evolution of U.S. healthcare. You'll collaborate in small groups, debate ethical dilemmas, and see how medicine intersects with society, history, and policy in ways that impact people's lives.

By the end of the week, you'll gain practical insights into medicine and public health, sharpen your critical thinking, and leave inspired — ready to explore your future in healthcare with confidence, curiosity, and a fresh perspective on the world around you.

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What to Expect in a Week of Outset Medical Ethics

Expert-Guided Course in Medical Ethics, Health, & Society at Vanderbilt

Guided by a Vanderbilt PhD graduate student, you will explore medicine and public health through lectures, projects, and collaborative activities. Examples of activities may include*:

Ethical Case Studies: Analyze real-world dilemmas in clinical and public health contexts.

Sociological Exploration: Investigate how laws, insurance, and regulations shape healthcare delivery.

Collaborative Projects: Work in small groups to explore historical and social factors influencing health outcomes.

Hands-on Medicine at Belmont Medical Simulation Center

Students gain a behind-the-scenes look at healthcare in practice through visits to a medical simulation lab. These experiences allow students to see how concepts from classroom discussions are applied in real-world settings. They'll get hands-on workshops and practice patient interviews.

These visits are designed to be interactive, with opportunities for students to ask questions, explore problem-solving approaches, and engage with staff and researchers. Students can expect at least one on-site visit during the week, and possibly two.

On-campus life, friendships, and inspiration for your future

Outset students don't just learn together — they build friendships and make memories that last beyond the week. Evenings and downtime on campus are designed to help students connect and experience what college life feels like.

Past evening activities have included things like bowling nights, movie nights, quad hangouts, and group outings around campus and Nashville. Life in the dorms — late-night conversations, small group hangouts, activities led by our residential staff — is often where the strongest friendships form.

All activities are supervised by trained, 24/7 residential staff, giving students a safe and supportive environment to explore campus and a future medical career.

***Note: activities may vary.** Students receive final schedules closer to their program date.

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Example Day

Here's an example of a day in the Medical Ethics, Health, & Society program at Outset. Each day is packed with classroom sessions, workshops, and off-campus activities. We try to have both academics and fun!

8:00 – 8:45 AM	Grab breakfast in dining hall with other students.
9:00 – 10:45 AM	Classroom lectures and discussions on medicine, ethics, and healthcare systems.
11:00 – 11:45 AM	Case studies and small-group projects exploring ethical and societal healthcare challenges
12:00 – 2:00 PM	Enjoy lVanderbilth at the dining halls, then free time or staff-led activities around campus
2:00 – 5:00 PM	Afternoon hands-on activities: case studies, policy analysis, and small-group projects exploring ethical and societal healthcare challenges
5:00 – 6:00 PM	Grab dinner at a campus dining hall or nearby restaurant with friends
6:00 – 9:00 PM	Enjoy a staff-coordinated evening activity in Nashville
9:30 – 11:00 PM	Relax in the student dorm with friends, shower, and wind down before lights out

Program FAQs

What kind of student is a good fit for Medical Ethics?

Students who are curious, motivated, and excited to explore medicine, public health, and healthcare systems through hands-on activities. We look for applicants who demonstrate dedication, creativity, and a willingness to engage in challenging discussions and collaborative learning experiences.

How competitive is the Medical Ethics, Health, & Society program?

Medical Ethics is one of our more selective programs due to its rigorous academic and interactive curriculum. If you're unsure about your fit, we encourage you to speak with your Admissions Representative for guidance.

Are there grade requirements for Medical Ethics?

Yes, the Medical Ethics program is for current 9th-12th graders.

Can I switch program specialty later?

You can switch programs up to 2 months before your start date if there are still spots available in other programs on your campus. We cannot guarantee this, so please contact our Admissions team for more info.

Can I do back to back programs in different specialties?

Yes. Back to back programs are a great way to meet more peers, explore other specialties, and reinforce core learning. Note that if you stay on the same campus, activities may repeat and you will be participating in the "Path to Pre-Med" course again along with your new week's student cohort.

What if I'm not sure this is the right program for me?

See our overview of other program specialties on the next page. You can also visit our website to explore other programs.

Contact Us

FAQs Cont'd

Admissions deadline & process?

There is no deadline! We have rolling Admissions. We have a simple 4-step Admissions process. You can learn more how it works by **clicking here**.

What is the cost?

Tuition and housing for our programs is $2,950, including 24/7 staff, dorms, meals, 20+ hours of academics, speakers, evening activities, and activity transport. Travel to and from campus is not included.

Is there financial aid?

Yes, if you need financial aid please indicate this on your application and fill out the aid request information. We are not able to guarantee aid but we do take every aid request seriously.

How do I apply? How competitive?

Applying online is easy: **click here**. You'll hear from us within 2 business days. Outset is competitive and we look for motivated students with strong grades and a genuine interest in medicine or healthcare.

Are students monitored 24 hours a day?

Outset maintains a 7:1 student-to-staff ratio, with ACA-trained staff providing 24/7 supervision. Our programs meet strict safety standards, and campuses are monitored to ensure students are safe at all times.

What is accommodation like?

Outset partners with student residence halls. Rooms are shared by 1–2 students of the same gender, with shared bathrooms. Single rooms are available ($300–400). Dorms usually have common areas to socialize.

More Info

Hear from our alumni

What to expect in a week with Outset:

Have fun as you grow

Perfect balance of fun and education. My daughter made some great friends here, and it really solidified her passion for and decision to go into medicine.

~Outset Parent, 2025

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Trustpilot

TrustScore 4.7 | 105 reviews

Trustpilot checks reviews

The trusted leader for teen career exploration.

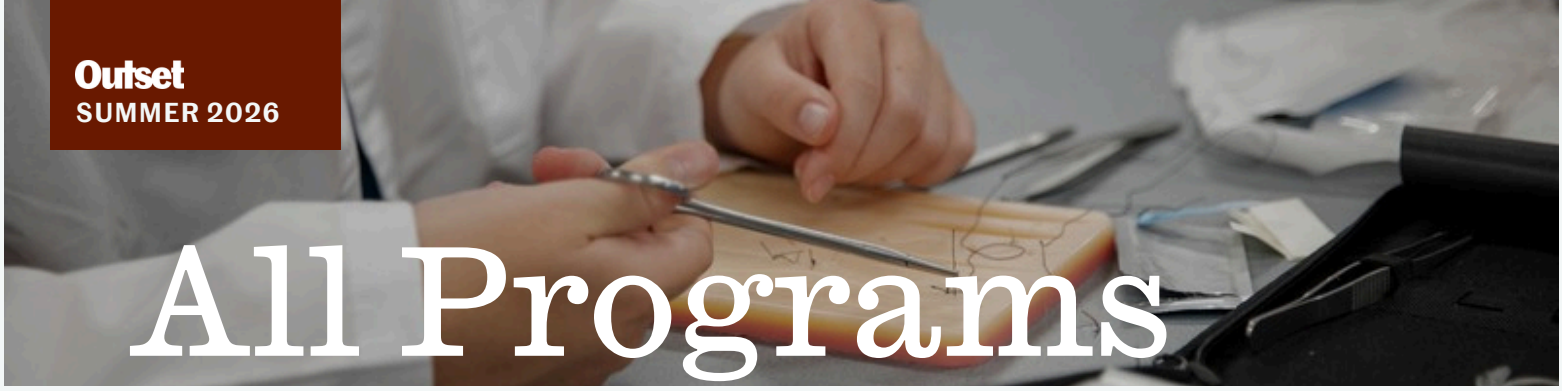
Outset is trusted by 1,000+ families each summer for high-quality teen summer programs. Read our reviews and see why we're the leading brand for summer education.

hosa future health professionals

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

NCHSE National Consortium for Health Science Education

Read Reviews



All Programs

**Not sure if Biomedical Research is the right program for you?
Check out some of our other MD path specialties:**

Orthopedic Surgery	Study musculoskeletal system care, bones, joints, and injuries.
General Medicine	Explore the fundamentals of care, diagnosis, and treatment.
Cardiology	Explore surgical care for the brain, spine, and nervous system.
Psychiatry	Focus on mental health assessment and treatment.
Anesthesiology	Learn how anesthesia supports surgeries and patient safety.
Pediatrics	Focus on healthcare of children from infancy to adolescence.
Dentistry	Study oral health, dental procedures, and patient care.
General Surgery	Explore surgical principles and patient care for procedures.
Emergency Medicine	Understand fast-paced care for urgent and acute conditions.
Dermatology	Study skin health, conditions, and treatments.
AI in Medicine	Explore AI applications in healthcare and medicine.

See All Programs

Ready for your week at Outset?

Apply Now

Have questions or need to follow-up on your admissions process? Schedule time with our Admissions Team

Schedule Call