



MISSION BIOSECURITY COMPETITION

Official Terms and Conditions

Competition Year: 2026-2027

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 29, 2026

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1. Competition Overview

Operation Outbreak, Inc. (“Operation Outbreak,” “Sponsor,” “we,” or “us”), a nonprofit organization, sponsors the Mission Biosecurity Competition (the “Competition”). The Competition is a multi-phase, team-based academic challenge designed to engage high school and undergraduate students in real-world health security and outbreak preparedness concepts.

Participation in the Competition constitutes each participant’s full and unconditional agreement to these Official Terms and Conditions (“Terms”). These Terms are binding on all participants, their faculty sponsors, and – for participants who are minors – their parent or legal guardian.

2. Sponsor Information

Sponsor: Operation Outbreak, Inc.

Website: <https://operationoutbreak.org>

Contact Email: welcome@operationoutbreak.org

Questions: Please contact us via email only. Submissions by postal mail are not accepted.

3. Competition Structure

The Competition consists of three sequential phases (“Operations”). Each Operation has its own submission window, mission deliverables, judging period, and prize award. Teams must successfully complete each Operation to unlock and participate in the next.

OPERATION	SUBMISSION WINDOW	JUDGING PERIOD	PRIZE
Operation Constellation (Phase 1)	September 1 – October 31, 2026	November 3 – 14, 2026; winner notified ~Nov 15	\$3,000
Operation Lumen (Phase 2)	November 17 – December 22, 2026	December 23, 2026 – January 5, 2027; winner notified ~Jan 5	\$2,000
Operation Sentinel (Phase 3)	January 12 – March 13, 2027	March 15 – 26, 2027; winner notified ~Mar 26	\$5,000 (Grand Prize)

3.1 Operation Constellation – Phase 1

Operation Constellation challenges teams to map their local outbreak response network. Teams identify key individuals and organizations in their community who would be involved in responding to an outbreak – such as public health officials, hospital administrators, emergency managers, and community leaders – and use network visualization techniques to document and analyze the connections among them. Teams document their findings, analyze the strength and structure of at least five connections, and submit a network visualization image together with a comprehensive written description addressing all five mission directives.

3.2 Operation Lumen – Phase 2

Operation Lumen builds on the network map created in Operation Constellation. Teams conduct in-depth interviews with local leaders and experts identified in their network to explore how their community would respond to a real outbreak and how resilient that response would be. Teams who earned competitive designation in Operation Constellation are eligible to compete for a prize in Operation Lumen; teams who completed Operation Constellation (non-competitive) may continue participating but are not prize-eligible for this phase.

3.3 Operation Sentinel – Phase 3

Operation Sentinel is the capstone challenge. Teams run an Enhanced Simulation Exercise with representatives from their local outbreak response network, applying the knowledge and relationships built across the prior two Operations. This phase tests the team's ability to convene stakeholders, facilitate a realistic outbreak response scenario, and document lessons learned. Completion of Operations Constellation and Lumen is required to participate.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Student Eligibility

To be eligible to participate, each student team member must meet ALL of the following criteria at the time of registration and throughout the Competition:

- Be enrolled as a high school student (ages 14–18)* OR as an undergraduate student (ages 18–24) at an accredited educational institution;
- Remain enrolled through all phases they choose to participate in;
- Be participating as part of a team of three (3) or more students;
- Have a faculty sponsor affiliated with an accredited educational institution; and
- Not be located in, or a national or resident of, a Restricted Jurisdiction (as defined below).

Teams may not contain both high school and undergraduate students. High school students under the age of 18 need written permission (including via email) to from their parent or legal guardian.

RESTRICTED JURISDICTIONS

Participants and faculty sponsors who are nationals of, or who are located in, any of the following countries are not eligible to participate in the Competition: Iran, China, North Korea, Cuba, Russia, Syria, Belarus, Venezuela, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, or Yemen (collectively, "Restricted Jurisdictions"). This restriction applies regardless of the participant's citizenship or the institution's location, and is required by applicable U.S. export control laws and regulations, including those administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

4.2 Faculty Sponsor Eligibility

Each team must have at least one (1) designated Faculty Sponsor who:

- Is a current faculty member, teacher, or academic staff member at an accredited educational institution;
- Agrees to supervise one or more team's participation and take responsibility for ensuring student compliance with these Terms; and
- Takes responsibility for ensuring that all required parental or guardian consents are obtained for team members who are minors.

4.3 Minor Participants

Participants who are under the age of eighteen (18) must have written parental or legal guardian consent to participate. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Sponsor and/or the minor participant's parent or guardian to ensure that all required consents are obtained and retained for the duration of the Competition.

4.4 Ineligibility

The following individuals are NOT eligible to participate:

- Employees, officers, directors, agents, or contractors of Operation Outbreak, Inc.;
- Employees of NJI Media;
- Immediate family members (spouse, parent, child, sibling) or members of the same household as any of the above;
- Members of the Competition judging committee or review panel; and
- Participants in the contest pilot for Phase I (but they may participate in Phases II and III)

5. Registration

5.1 How to Register

To register for the Competition, a faculty sponsor must submit their information through the official Competition website at operationoutbreak.org/competition/. Upon registration, the Sponsor will receive updates regarding Competition openings and deadlines.

5.2 Registration Fees

There are no registration or participation fees for any phase of the Competition. The Competition is free to enter for all eligible teams.

5.3 One Registration Per Team

Each team may only register once. Duplicate or fraudulent registrations will be disqualified. A student may participate on only one (1) team per Operation. However, a Faculty Sponsor may oversee more than one team.

6. Mission Deliverables and Submission Requirements

6.1 Operation Briefings

Specific mission deliverables ("Deliverables") for each Operation are described in the mission briefing released at the start of each phase. Teams must review and comply with all requirements set forth in the applicable mission briefing, which is incorporated into these Terms by reference.

6.2 Submission Deadlines

All Deliverables must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on the final date of each Operation's submission window, as listed in Section 3. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

6.3 Submission Requirements

Teams must submit the required information in the appropriate format as detailed in the Mission Briefings. Omission of required information may make a team ineligible for awards.

6.4 Completing an Operation

A team is considered to have "completed" an Operation when it makes a timely submission of all required Deliverables by the Operation's submission deadline. Completion (timely submission) is the threshold that unlocks eligibility to participate in the subsequent Operation; it does not guarantee prize eligibility in the next phase. Competitive submissions — those that meet the quality standards established by the Judging Committee — will be evaluated for prizes as described in Section 7.

6.5 Originality and Academic Integrity

All submitted work must be the original work of the participating team members. Teams must properly attribute any third-party sources, data, or content used in their Deliverables. Plagiarism, fabrication of data, or submission of work produced by persons outside the team will result in immediate disqualification.

Regarding use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools:

- AI tools may be used as a tool to assist with research, data organization, and graphic design;

- AI-generated writing is strictly prohibited. All written components of the submission must be authored by the student team members; and
- Teams must include an explicit disclosure of any AI tool use in the submission form at the time of submission. Failure to disclose AI use may result in disqualification.

7. Judging

7.1 Judging Committee

Submissions will be reviewed by the Sponsor's Reviewing Committee (the "Judging Committee"), which is composed of a professional outbreak responder, an educator, and an outbreak scientist selected by Operation Outbreak at its sole discretion. The internal scoring rubrics used by the Judging Committee will not be disclosed to participants.

7.2 Judging Criteria

Eligible submissions will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Accuracy & Depth – scientific correctness and thoroughness of the network analysis;
- Clarity & Design – quality and legibility of the network visualization and written report;
- Community Engagement – relevance to the team's actual local community; and
- Creativity – originality and innovation in approach and presentation.

7.3 Separate Award Categories

Prizes are awarded separately for each age category. For each Operation, one award will be given to:

- The top High School (secondary) team submission; and
- The top College (postsecondary) team submission.

7.4 Judging Decisions

All decisions of the Judging Committee are final and binding. No correspondence regarding judging decisions will be entered into. Operation Outbreak reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to withhold an award for any phase if it determines that no submission meets the competition's quality standards.

8. Prizes

8.1 Prize Summary

Subject to these Terms, the following cash prizes are available per age category, per Operation:

- Operation Constellation (Phase 1): \$3,000 USD – one award for the top High School team and one award for the top College team;
- Operation Lumen (Phase 2): \$2,000 USD – one award for the top High School team and one award for the top College team; and
- Operation Sentinel – Grand Prize (Phase 3): \$5,000 USD – one award for the top High School team and one award for the top College team.

8.2 Prize Distribution

All prize funds will be delivered to the accredited educational institution (“Institution”) that employs the winning team’s Faculty Sponsor, by check or online payment. The Institution must deliver one hundred percent (100%) of the award amount to the Faculty Sponsor. It is then the sole responsibility of the Faculty Sponsor to allocate and disburse the funds to individual student team members in accordance with applicable institutional policies and law. Operation Outbreak assumes no responsibility for the internal distribution of prize funds once payment has been made to the Institution.

Prior to disbursement, the Faculty Sponsor will be asked to provide the Institution’s banking/wire information and a W-9 or equivalent tax identification information. Payment method will be by ACH for institutions based in the United States and by wire transfer for all others.

8.3 Prize Acceptance and Notification

Award notices will go to the Faculty Sponsor via email provided at registration. Winning teams will be notified via the Faculty Sponsor.

Prize winners may be required to execute an eligibility affidavit, liability release, and publicity release as a condition of receiving the prize. Failure to return completed documents within the specified time may result in forfeiture of the prize.

8.4 Taxes

All prizes are subject to applicable federal, state, provincial, and local taxes. Each prize recipient is solely responsible for reporting and paying all applicable taxes on prizes received. Operation Outbreak will comply with applicable tax reporting requirements, which may include issuing IRS Form 1099 or equivalent documentation to prize recipients. For international winners, depending on your country of residence, there may be tax withholdings and reporting requirements.

8.5 Additional Recognition and Completion Benefits

In addition to cash prizes, teams that complete an Operation receive the following recognition:

- Operation Constellation (Phase 1): Teams that make a timely and complete submission to Operation Constellation will earn either Operation Outbreak Club or Operation Outbreak Embassy status, which may be used for recognition within the team’s school or community.

- Operation Lumen (Phase 2): Teams that complete Operation Lumen will receive priority registration for the next Operation Outbreak convening event.
- Operation Sentinel (Phase 3): Teams that complete Operation Sentinel will receive priority registration for the next Operation Outbreak convening event.

8.6 No Cash Alternatives

Prizes are non-transferable and may not be redeemed for cash alternatives, except at the sole discretion of Operation Outbreak. Operation Outbreak reserves the right to substitute a prize of equal or greater value if a stated prize becomes unavailable.

9. Intellectual Property

9.1 Ownership

Participants retain ownership of all intellectual property rights in their submitted Deliverables. Submission of a Deliverable to the Competition does not transfer any ownership rights to Operation Outbreak. Operation Outbreak's rights with respect to submitted Deliverables are limited to the license described in Section 9.2.

9.2 License to Operation Outbreak

By submitting a Deliverable, each participant and their faculty sponsor grant Operation Outbreak, Inc. a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable, sublicenseable, transferable license to use, copy, publish, modify, perform or display the submitted materials for educational, research, and promotional purposes in any media now known or hereafter devised, with attribution to the submitting team where practicable.

9.3 Participant Warranties

Each participant warrants that:

- Their submitted work is original and does not infringe any third-party intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or any other rights;
- They have the authority to grant the license described in Section 9.2; and
- The submission does not contain any confidential, proprietary, or sensitive information belonging to a third party that has not been authorized for disclosure.

10. Privacy and Data Protection

10.1 Faculty Sponsor as Point of Contact

Operation Outbreak does not collect, store, or process any personal information about individual student team members. The Faculty Sponsor serves as the sole point of contact and communication conduit between the team and Operation Outbreak for all purposes related to the Competition, including registration, submission, prize notification, and any follow-up activities.

All communications from Operation Outbreak will be directed to the Faculty Sponsor. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Sponsor to share relevant information with their student team members, obtain any necessary consents from students or their parents or guardians, and ensure that student participants are aware of and comply with these Terms.

10.2 Faculty Sponsor Data

Operation Outbreak collects and stores only the personal information provided by the Faculty Sponsor at registration (name, email address, and institution). This information is used solely to administer the Competition and send Competition-related updates. Operation Outbreak will not share Faculty Sponsor information with third parties except as required by law.

11. Publicity and Use of Name and Likeness

Except where prohibited by law, Operation Outbreak may recognize winning teams publicly by referencing the team name and the name of the Faculty Sponsor's institution. Operation Outbreak will not use individual student names, photographs, or likenesses for publicity purposes without first obtaining written consent through the Faculty Sponsor.

The Faculty Sponsor, by accepting a prize on behalf of the team, consents to Operation Outbreak's use of the institution name, Faculty Sponsor name, and a general description of the team's work for promotional and educational purposes related to the Competition, without additional compensation.

12. Disqualification

Operation Outbreak reserves the right to disqualify any team or participant at any time if it determines, in its sole discretion, that the participant has:

- Failed to meet the eligibility requirements set out in Section 4;
- Violated any provision of these Terms;
- Submitted work that is plagiarized, falsified, or not the original work of the team;

- Engaged in conduct that is disruptive, fraudulent, or harmful to the integrity of the Competition;
- Attempted to tamper with or undermine the Competition's registration system, submission platform, or judging process

13. Limitation of Liability and Disclaimer

TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW, OPERATION OUTBREAK, INC., ITS OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS, AND PARTNERS (COLLECTIVELY, "RELEASED PARTIES") MAKE NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, WITH RESPECT TO THE COMPETITION, ANY PRIZE, OR ANY MATERIALS PROVIDED IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

1211. LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY. OPERATION OUTBREAK IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR: (1) INCORRECT OR INACCURATE TRANSCRIPTION OF ENTRY INFORMATION OR LATE, LOST, STOLEN, ILLEGIBLE, INCOMPLETE, MISDIRECTED OR POSTAGE DUE ENTRIES OR ENTRIES RECEIVED THROUGH IMPERMISSIBLE OR ILLEGITIMATE CHANNELS, ALL OF WHICH WILL BE DISQUALIFIED; (2) TECHNICAL FAILURES OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE MALFUNCTIONING OF ANY TELEPHONE, COMPUTER, NETWORK, HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE, OR THE INSTAGRAM, TIKTOK, OR FACEBOOK SERVICE, AS APPLICABLE; (3) THE UNAVAILABILITY OR INACCESSIBILITY OF ANY WEB SITE OR SERVICE; (4) UNAUTHORIZED HUMAN INTERVENTION IN ANY PART OF THE ENTRY PROCESS OR THE CONTEST; (5) ELECTRONIC OR HUMAN ERROR WHICH MAY OCCUR IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONTEST OR THE PROCESSING OF ENTRIES; OR (6) ANY INJURY OR DAMAGE TO PERSONS OR PROPERTY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ENTRANT'S COMPUTER, WHICH MAY BE CAUSED, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, FROM ENTRANT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEST OR FROM DOWNLOADING ANY MATERIAL FROM OPERATION OUTBREAK'S WEB SITE(S).

BY PARTICIPATING IN THE COMPETITION, EACH PARTICIPANT, FACULTY SPONSOR, AND – FOR MINOR PARTICIPANTS – THEIR PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, RELEASES AND HOLDS HARMLESS THE RELEASED PARTIES FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL CLAIMS, ACTIONS, DAMAGES, LOSSES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES (INCLUDING REASONABLE ATTORNEYS' FEES) ARISING OUT OF OR RELATED TO: (A) PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPETITION; (B) ACCEPTANCE, USE, OR MISUSE OF ANY PRIZE; OR (C) ANY ERRORS, OMISSIONS, OR INTERRUPTIONS IN THE COMPETITION.

14. General Provisions

14.1 Governing Law and Dispute Resolution

These Terms shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, without regard to its conflict of law principles. Any dispute arising out of or relating to these Terms or the Competition that cannot be resolved informally shall be submitted to the exclusive jurisdiction of

the appropriate state or federal courts located in Suffolk County, Massachusetts. By participating in the Competition, all participants and faculty sponsors consent to personal jurisdiction in such courts.

14.2 Modification and Cancellation

Operation Outbreak reserves the right to modify, suspend, or cancel the Competition or any Operation at any time, for any reason, including technical failures, administrative errors, or circumstances beyond its reasonable control. In the event of cancellation, Operation Outbreak will use reasonable efforts to notify registered teams and may, at its discretion, award prizes from among eligible entries received prior to cancellation.

14.3 Severability

If any provision of these Terms is found to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable under applicable law, that provision will be modified to the minimum extent necessary to make it enforceable, and all other provisions will remain in full force and effect.

14.4 No Waiver

Failure by Operation Outbreak to enforce any provision of these Terms will not constitute a waiver of its right to enforce that provision in the future.

14.5 Entire Agreement

These Terms, together with any Operation-specific mission briefings and the Operation Outbreak Privacy Policy, constitute the entire agreement between the participants and Operation Outbreak with respect to the Competition and supersede all prior agreements, understandings, and representations.

14.6 Contact

For questions regarding these Terms or the Competition, please contact: welcome@operationoutbreak.org

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