

Nada High School

Kobe, Japan



Founded by Kobe sake brewers with judo's creator as an advisor, this uniform-free campus channels students straight into Tokyo and Kyoto University.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	74/100
Academic outcomes	89/100
University placement	85/100
Prestige & heritage	81/100
Alumni network	17/100
Facilities	75/100
Transparency	75/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

A school founded in 1927 by Kobe sake brewers, with a website still dominated by entrance examinations, university admissions counts and its 80th cultural festival, does not waste time pretending to be progressive in the soft, western sense. Nada is a *hard-edged academic machine*. It runs as a private day school in Kobe, non-religious, with English and Japanese as languages of instruction, a declared IB and American curriculum, and accreditations from the IBO and CIS. The published staffing metrics are strong: a **10:1** student-teacher ratio and an average class size of **18**. Fees are strikingly low by

international-school standards, at an average annual day fee of ****\$4,818**** across ages 3 to 18.

What puts Nada on a shortlist is not glossy campus theatre but intellectual yield. The school’s own site foregrounds annual university acceptance figures; the editorial context is blunter still, describing a pipeline into Tokyo and Kyoto University. Wikipedia goes further and calls it a boys’ college-preparatory school whose graduates often dominate admissions to Japan’s most prestigious universities. The alumni floor is already formidable: 40 notable alumni catalogued on Wikidata, including 16 scientists and scholars, 9 politicians or statesmen, 8 writers or journalists and 6 business or finance leaders. That profile points to a school with **serious scholarly gravity**, not a lifestyle campus designed to flatter average students into feeling exceptional.

This is not a school for children who need hand-holding, wide curricular meandering or a heavy emphasis on pastoral branding. It suits students who are **competitive, self-propelled and academically ambitious**; who can handle a culture where admissions, exams and outcomes sit in plain view; and who want peers who treat intellectual work as the main event. Parents who want warmth, individual curation and a broad church of talents need to ask harder questions, because the public face here is more institutional than intimate. Parents who want a **ruthlessly effective route** into Japan’s top universities, at a price that undercuts most international schools, will find Nada difficult to ignore.

STRENGTHS

- Nada is frequently cited and ranked as the best high school in all of Japan, and graduates often make up the majority of admissions to Japan's most prestigious universities, like the University of Tokyo and Kyoto University.
- Alumni include Nobel Chemistry laureate Ryoji Noyori, novelist Shusaku Endo, and politician Yasutoshi Nishimura.
- The school excels especially in mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology, and students often receive gold medals at international science olympiads, with 8 gold medals won in total.
- Day-school tuition is modest by international-school standards: annual tuition was set at 480,000 yen (2024), plus entrance and facility fees of 250,000 yen each, well below typical Western-curriculum private school fees.
- School regulations are minimal, with no compulsory uniform, reflecting a long-standing liberal campus culture rather than a heavily regimented environment.

TRADE-OFFS

- Nada is a boys-only school, so it is not an option for families with daughters.
- Despite being listed under IB/American curricula in some directories, public sources describe only a Japanese national-curriculum program: the entrance exam is a multi-subject assessment covering Japanese language, mathematics, science, and English, indicating instruction is Japanese-medium and geared to Japanese university entrance, not an internationally accredited diploma track.
- There is no boarding facility, so pupils and their families must live within daily commuting distance of Kobe rather than relocating short-term for a residential placement.
- Nada High School receives over 140 applications for around 40 class positions each year, making the external entry route into a Japanese-medium boys' school extremely selective for newcomers without established local schooling.

ADMISSIONS

Entry occurs at two points: automatic progression from the affiliated Nada Junior High School fills roughly 180 of the about 220 places per year group, while a separate boys-only entrance exam covers the remaining places, typically around 40. The exam is held in February and tests Japanese, mathematics, science and English; it draws applicants from well beyond Hyogo Prefecture, including Tokyo and Kyushu, making the external route highly competitive. There is no boarding facility, so day pupils must live within commuting distance. Tuition was about 480,000 yen per year (2024), with additional entrance, facility and association fees.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (40)

DRAMA: Shūsaku Endō, Ramo Nakajima

VISUAL_ARTS: Masahiko Katsuya, Yūgo Nakamura

LETTERS: Shūsaku Endō, Genichiro Takahashi, Masahiko Katsuya, Ramo Nakajima, Sūgen Takeda, Yōichi Funabashi, Tehu, Akira Aomatsu

POLITICS: Kamon Iizumi, Kan Suzuki, Yōichi Otabe, Masahito Moriyama, Teru Fukui, Yasuhiro Tsuji, Yasutoshi Nishimura, Jun Nakahara

SCIENCE: Ryōji Noyori, Shūsaku Endō, Genichiro Takahashi, Toshiyuki Kobayashi, Yūgo Nakamura, Kazuhiko Yamamoto, Sūgen Takeda, Yukishige Ito

BUSINESS: Masashi Miyamoto, Yoshiaki Murakami, Sūgen Takeda, Tehu, Masaji Santō, Fuminori Kobuki

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_99438e090d.