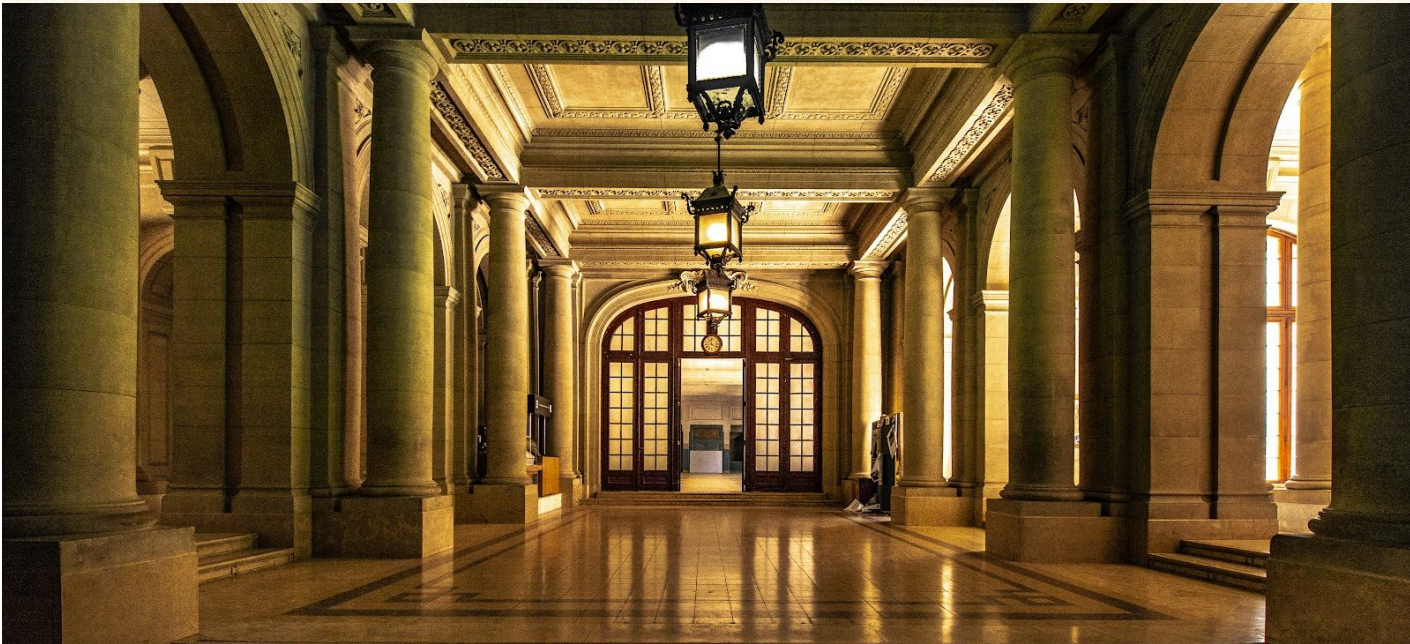


Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires, Argentina



Founded in 1661 as a Jesuit college, this UBA-run school still teaches Latin and Greek en route to Nobel laureates and four presidents.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	72/100
Academic outcomes	80/100
University placement	72/100
Prestige & heritage	88/100
Alumni network	10/100
Facilities	74/100
Transparency	80/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires occupies a rare position in the market: a state secondary school with the intellectual habits of an old European gymnasium and the institutional backing of the University of Buenos Aires. It is a day school for ages 13-18, run as a pre-university college within UBA, and that matters. Students are not buying a polished international-school package; they are entering a serious academic institution with a long public tradition and high cultural expectations. The school’s distinctiveness rests on three things: its university link, its classical core, and its place in Argentina’s civic elite. Latin is still taught, Greek sits within the school’s stated tradition, and the academic life extends well beyond the timetable into philosophy competitions, theatre, languages and public-history work. This

is a school with *intellectual weight*, *old-world academic seriousness* and a *strong sense of civic memory*.

What puts it on a shortlist is not comfort or international branding, but substance. The school is public and free, and its alumni record carries real national significance: **2** Nobel laureates and **4** presidents of Argentina. That fact does not guarantee anything for current pupils, but it does signal the level of ambition and influence associated with the institution. The UBA connection adds a practical advantage too: the university has established automatic recognition of certain Ciclo Básico Común subjects for graduates of its pre-university schools. For families targeting deep academic formation in Spanish, with English, Latin and French in the mix, this is one of the clearest choices in Buenos Aires. It offers *scholarly prestige* rather than pastoral gloss.

The trade-off is plain. This is not a soft landing for children who need heavy hand-holding, expansive extracurricular packaging or an English-medium route to overseas universities. The school's public-facing life centres on academic departments, lectures, visits, competitions, administrative notices and institutional routines. That gives a clear read on culture: rigorous, bureaucratic, adult. Accessibility improvements and student support structures exist, but the school does not trade on wellbeing language or boutique care. Families need to want the substance of the place, not the theatre of support. Founded in **1863** in its current institutional form, it still carries *the pressure of history*.

The right student for Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires is bright, self-directed, resilient and at ease in a demanding Spanish-speaking environment. They will enjoy languages, argument, reading, history and formal intellectual discipline. They do not need constant affirmation; they need challenge, standards and peers who take study seriously. For that child, CNBA offers something few schools can match: *a formidable academic inheritance* inside a public institution that still treats scholarship as a public good.

STRENGTHS

- Founded by Bartolome Mitre in 1863, the school has been administered by the University of Buenos Aires since 1911, giving it a direct academic lineage to Argentina's leading public university.
- Students pay no fees since the school is public and therefore free, making it a rare tuition-free option among high-prestige secondary schools.
- Students from the school rank among the best in most science Olympiads, such as the IPhO, IChO and IBO, indicating strong performance in competitive academic testing.
- Alumni include many personalities, including two Nobel laureates and four Presidents of Argentina, reflecting a long track record of producing high-achieving graduates.
- In the tradition of the European gymnasium it provides an education that includes classical languages such as Latin and Greek, giving the curriculum an unusually classical academic breadth for a public school.

TRADE-OFFS

- Every year 1,200 candidates apply but only around 400 gain admission, making entry highly selective regardless of a family's willingness to pay fees.
- Admission requires a one-year preparatory course involving multiple exams on Mathematics, History, Language and Geography, all conducted in Spanish, which is a significant barrier for newly arrived non-Spanish-speaking families.
- The 1863 heritage building has documented maintenance problems: detected issues include fallen and uneven ceilings and panels dislodged by wind in the air chamber, 'representing a danger for students and teachers', and in 2022 students reported that 'a fan and a window fell on a student's head, there is a risk of collapse in one classroom, and pieces of ceiling fell in the geography and chemistry departments'.
- As a school following only the Argentinian national curriculum, it does not offer internationally transferable qualifications such

as the IB or A-levels, which may complicate onward university applications outside Argentina.

ADMISSIONS

Entry to the six-year secondary programme is via a competitive process run under University of Buenos Aires rules rather than a simple application. Candidates typically complete a year-long preparatory course and sit exams in Spanish language, mathematics, history and geography, with places awarded strictly by merit ranking of scores. Roughly 1,200 candidates compete annually for about 400 places, making selection demanding. Tuition is free since the school is public, but families should budget for preparatory tutoring, and functional Spanish is effectively required, as exams and instruction are conducted entirely in that language.

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_dc0f1f41cf.