

Perth Modern School

Subiaco, Australia



Founded in 1911 as WA's first government high school, this Subiaco campus admits students solely through a competitive entrance exam.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	76/100
Academic outcomes	82/100
University placement	78/100
Prestige & heritage	72/100
Alumni network	71/100
Facilities	68/100
Transparency	75/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Perth Modern School occupies a singular position in Western Australia: the state’s only fully academically selective public school, founded in ****1911**** and still operating as a day school in Subiaco. That matters. Selective schools are common enough in parts of Asia and the UK; in WA, this one stands alone. Parents looking for a government school with a clear academic filter, a long institutional memory and a student body built around examination entry will find Perth Modern hard to ignore. It carries the weight of history, but its real distinction is structural: admission is competitive, the peer group is strong, and the academic culture is not diluted by a comprehensive intake. **This is a serious academic environment**.

The appeal is plain. Students enter a school where high attainment is normal, not exceptional, and where intellectual pace is set by a selective cohort rather than dragged into compromise. The published ****14:1**** student-teacher ratio and average class size of ****28**** give a mixed picture: staffing is respectable, but classes are not small by private-school standards. This is not an intimate boutique setting. It is a public school with scale, pressure and expectations. For many families, that is the point. Perth Modern offers **academic concentration without private-school fees**, **a rare public-sector pathway for ambitious students**, and **a peer group that values attainment**.

It belongs on a shortlist for students who actively want competition, structure and a campus culture shaped by exam success. The best fit is a child who enjoys being stretched, tolerates comparison well and does not need heavy pastoral cushioning to stay steady. A bright student who has felt under-challenged elsewhere will find more traction here. A child who wants broadability without academic urgency will not. Nor is this the right choice for families chasing tiny classes, a soft landing or a school that treats selectivity as a light touch. Perth Modern's central promise is sharper than that: **high expectations, earned entry, and an unapologetically academic peer culture**.

Its market position is therefore exact. Perth Modern sits between the private college sector and the standard state system, offering **prestige without gilded excess** and **merit-driven access in a public setting**. That makes it unusual, and for the right student, compelling. If your child wants to be surrounded by other high performers and is motivated by standards rather than protected from them, Perth Modern merits close attention. If your child needs a gentler, more flexible or more personalised school experience, keep looking.

STRENGTHS

- Western Australia's only fully academically selective public high school, drawing top performers statewide via a merit-based entrance test.
- Consistently ranks first or near the top of WA's WACE academic league tables, with dozens of students achieving ATARs of 99 or above in recent years.
- As a government school it charges no tuition fees, only capped voluntary contributions, making elite academic selection accessible regardless of family income.
- Long, well-documented history dating to 1911 as WA's first government high school, with heritage-listed buildings and a large, active alumni network including a former Prime Minister.
- Compact inner-city Subiaco campus close to the University of Western Australia and central Perth, useful for families wanting proximity to the city.

TRADE-OFFS

- Entry depends entirely on a single competitive test (GATE/ASET) typically sat in Year 6, with far more applicants than places across the state's selective schools.
- As a fully selective cohort, the academic and social environment is intensely competitive, which can be stressful for students without established study habits.
- The school does not publish a median ATAR despite its results, which limits like-for-like comparison with other schools that do disclose this figure.
- Being a day school with no boarding option, it is not a fit for relocating families who need residential accommodation for their child.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is by academic merit only, through Western Australia's Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) selective test, mainly sat in Year 6 for Year 7 entry, with limited additional intakes at Years 9-11 subject to vacancies. Competition is intense: thousands of students sit GATE tests annually for a fixed, limited number of places across all WA selective schools, and Perth Modern draws from the highest scorers. As a government school it charges no tuition fees, only standard voluntary contributions and charges published annually.

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_95e4c154d3.