Writing systems as cultural tools

16th International Workshop on Writing Systems and Literacy

1-3 March 2027

School of Global Studies, Tama University, Fujisawa, Japan

Second call for papers (revised)

Extending the Association of Written Language and Literacy's (AWLL) tradition of international conferences devoted to writing systems, AWLL16 brings together researchers from diverse backgrounds to examine writing systems as cultural tools. In that spirit, this call invites abstract submissions that address relevant research questions, including (but not limited to) the following:

- To what extent do writing systems conform to language-universal or language-specific principles when graphematically representing particular languages?
- Are all writing systems equivalent in their potential for semantic expression?
- What are the key aspects of learning needed to use (in both reading and writing) different writing systems around the world?
- To what extent do writing systems embody cultural values (i.e., as badges of cultural identity or as paragons of prescriptive regulation)?
- How have different writing systems evolved in response to technological innovations?

The 3-day program will feature a keynote talk, oral sessions and a poster session, AWLL's business meeting and conclude with a panel discussion. In addition to an open reception on the first evening and an optional conference dinner on second evening, there will also be an optional excursion to Kamakura on the following day.

Keynote speaker: Heather Winskel (James Cook University, Singapore)

Local organizer: Terry Joyce (Tama University, Japan)

Program committee: Terry Joyce (Tama University, Japan), Lynne Cahill (University of Sussex, UK), Dorit Ravid (University of Tel Aviv, Israel)

Important dates:

First call for papers: 1 July 2026
Second call for papers: 1 September 2026
~~Submission deadline: 1 November 2026~~
Extended submissions deadline: 22 November 2026
Notification of acceptance: 1 January 2027

Submission guidelines:
Applicants for both oral and poster presentations should submit **anonymized** abstracts of **no more than 300 words** and an indication of presentation preference as a Word file. You may include up to three references in addition to the abstract. Oral presentations will be for 30 minutes (inclusive of time for questions and discussion).

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AWLL website: http://faculty.tama.ac.jp/joyce/awll/index.html