



# Finding OER in Japan: A Guide to the OER Repository

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*DOUG STRABLE*



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This English edition was developed from the 2024 Japanese GitBook version of the **OER Repository Guideline**, created by contributors affiliated with the National Institute of Informatics, Hokkaido University / Open Education Japan, and Kwansei Gakuin University. The original Japanese guide is made available under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)** license.

This book was produced with Pressbooks (<https://pressbooks.com>) and rendered with Prince.



# Contents

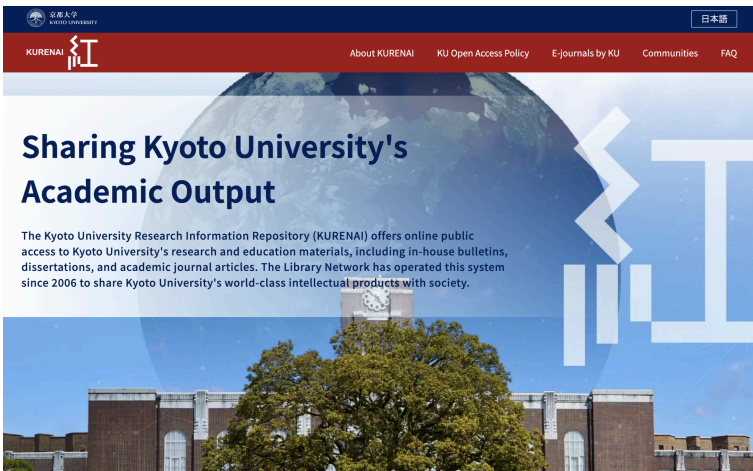
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# About This Guide

When you search for open educational resources (OER) in Japan, you may find that they are scattered across different university websites and institutional repositories. This can make it difficult to find relevant materials quickly and easily.

The **OER Repository** helps solve this problem by bringing metadata from these sources together in a single searchable platform. This guide shows you how to use the OER Repository to search across university repositories and find OER more efficiently.

Access the OER Repository here: <https://oer.nii.ac.jp>



*Figure 1. Screenshot of the Kyoto University Research Information Repository website, by author, 2026.*

# How to Use This Guide

This textbook is available in the following formats:

- **Online webbook.** You can read this textbook online on a computer or mobile device in one of the following browsers: Chrome, Firefox.
- **PDF.** You can download this book as a PDF to read on a computer (Digital PDF) or print it out (Print PDF).
- **Mobile.** If you want to read this textbook on your phone or tablet, you can use the EPUB (eReader) or MOBI (Kindle) files.

## Navigate the textbook.

This textbook has a table of contents to help you navigate through the book more easily. If using the online webbook, you can find the full table of contents on the book's homepage or by selecting "Contents" from the top menu when you are in a chapter. Inside a chapter, you can use the keyboard arrows to go to the previous or next chapter.

## Technical requirements:

This eBook (or webbook) works best in the most recent versions of **Chrome or Firefox**. If you experience difficulties, check your browser version and update. Internet Explorer and other legacy browsers may not display properly.

On this page, you'll find a quick overview of the tools and features built into the book: what they are, how they work, and how they can help you succeed. Whether you're reading on a laptop, tablet, or phone, these features are here to make your learning experience smoother, more engaging, and more effective.

## Searching

If using the online webbook, you can use the search bar in the top right corner to search the entire book for a key word or phrase. To search a specific chapter, open that chapter and use your browser's search feature by hitting **[Ctrl] + [F]** on your keyboard if using a Windows computer or **[Command] + [F]** if using a Mac computer.

The **[Ctrl] + [F]** and **[Command] + [F]** keys will also allow you to search a PDF, HTML, EPUB, and MOBI files if you are reading them on a computer.

If using an eBook app to read this textbook, the app should have a built-in search tool

## Alternative Formats

In addition to the web version, this book is available in as a PDF, or EPUB (for eReaders) through a download on the front page. If you decide to use a PDF or a print copy to access the guide, you can access the webbook and download any other formats at any time.

## Print options

### Regular Print PDF Export

This book links to a number of external website. For those using a print copy of this resource, the full URL will appear in brackets after each link,

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Adapted from For Students: How to Access and Use this Text-

book by Chad Flinn and Mark Overgaard, licensed under CC-BY.

# Acknowledgements

This guide brings together background information on OER in Japan and abroad, as well as practical guidance on how to use the OER Repository. The original guide in Japanese was developed by the following contributors:

Chikako Nagaoka, Masako Furukawa, Sun Yuan, Masaharu Hayashi, Makoto Asaoka, Tomoko Serita, and Kazutsuna Yamaji (National Institute of Informatics); Katsusuke Shigeta (Hokkaido University / Open Education Japan); and Toshiyuki Takeda (Kwansei Gakuin University).

The English translation of the Japanese Gitbook was done with the cooperation of Chikako Nagaoka using ChatGPT 4.0. Doug Strable then reviewed and edited the translation for this edition with the help of ChatGPT 5.3, while also manually checking the operation of the OER Repository and adding further relevant information.

PART I  
INTRODUCTION

# OER Internationally

**Open Educational Resources (OER)** are “learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others” (UNESCO, 2019). OER can include open textbooks, videos, images, lesson plans, modules, course materials, games, and software.

OER are based on the idea that **sharing knowledge openly can broaden access to learning and help create new knowledge** (OECD, 2007). In some cases, the focus has been on bringing resources together in one place to make them easier to discover. In others, the emphasis has been on creating complete open textbooks or sharing materials that other instructors can adapt and build on to immediately in their courses. Alongside these practical developments, international organizations have also helped shape the policy environment that supports OER.

A good example of the first approach is **OER Commons**, provided by **ISKME (the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education)** in the United States. OER Commons brings together more than 50,000 resources from around the world. Rather than harvesting content automatically, the platform allows creators to submit OER with metadata, and shared resources are reviewed by librarians. It also supports thematic and institutional groupings through **OER Hubs**, making it easier for organizations to organize and share collections of OER. Its **built-in Open Author** tool allows users to create OER directly on the platform. Resources created in **Pressbooks** can also be included when providers submit them by URL.



**Figure 2.** Screenshot of OER Commons, by National Institute of Informatics, 2024, CC BY.

A different model can be seen in **BCcampus** in British Columbia, Canada, where the focus has been on open textbooks. Through educational grants to instructors, BCcampus has developed a growing collection of freely available textbooks for higher education. This work has also helped advance **Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) programs**, which allow students to complete courses or credentials without textbook costs by using OER and other freely available materials. This approach shows how OER can reduce costs for students while also giving educators access to adaptable, real-time digital teaching materials.

**PRESSBOOKS**

**BCcampus**  
**Open Education**

Explore the range of resources developed by BC post-secondary faculty, staff, and students. These resources were published by BCcampus in Pressbooks.

For more open textbooks, check out the BC Open Collection at: <https://collection.bccampus.ca/>

**SUBJECT**

- Adult Basic Education
- Biology/Physical Science
- Business
- Computer Science
- Chem/Algea/Calculus
- Earth and Ocean Science
- Education
- Engineering
- English
- Fine Arts
- Health and Medical
- History
- Hospitality/ Tourism
- Mathematics
- Indigenization
- Language
- Math/Stats
- Sciences
- Philosophy
- Pressbooks
- Professional Cook
- Psychology
- Social Sciences
- Support Resources
- Teaching
- Use OER

**RESOURCE TYPE**

- Ancillary Resource
- Directory
- Guide or Toolkit
- Textbook

Catalogue

The image shows a grid of nine open textbook covers. Each cover includes the BCcampus Open Education logo, the title, author information, and a small image representing the book's content. The books are arranged in three rows and three columns.

- Row 1:
  - A Guide to Numeracy in Nursing** by Julia Langham
  - Access to Practical Nursing Program** by B.C. Provincial Curriculum 2023
  - Accessibility Toolkit - 2nd Edition** by Heidi Casledge, Sue Dower, Tara Robertson
- Row 2:
  - Adaptation Guide** by Lisa M. Marshall
  - Adoption Guide** by Lisa M. Marshall
  - Adult Literacy Fundamental Mathematics Book 1 - 2nd Edition** by Heidi Tugwell
- Row 3:
  - Adult Literacy Fundamental Mathematics Book 2** by Heidi Tugwell
  - Adult Literacy Fundamental Mathematics Book 3** by Heidi Tugwell
  - Adult Literacy Fundamental Mathematics Book 3** by Heidi Tugwell

Figure 3. Screenshot of the BCcampus Open Textbooks page, by the author, 2026.

Another popular platform is **Pressbooks**, which is widely used by educators and institutions to create, publish, and share open textbooks and other OER. Alongside the publishing platform itself, the **Pressbooks Directory** provides a free searchable catalog of open access books and educational resources created on Pressbooks networks. This makes Pressbooks useful not only for publishing OER, but also for discovering existing materials that can be reviewed, adopted, or adapted for new contexts.

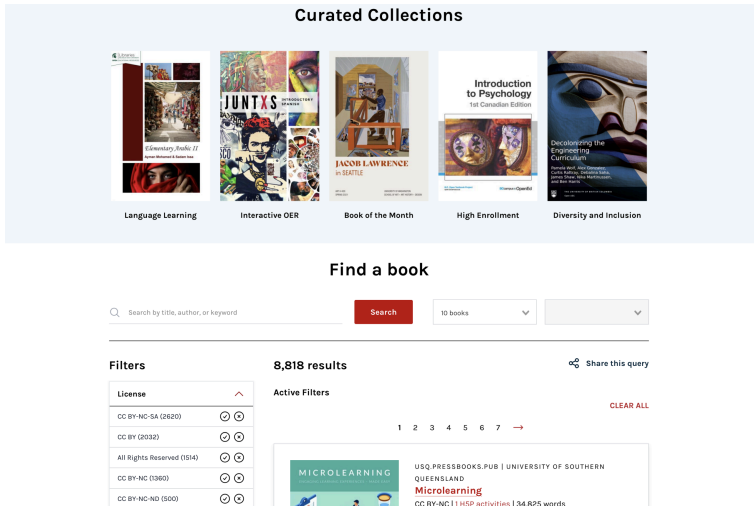


Figure 4. Screenshot of the Pressbooks Directory, by the author, 2026.

A further resources is **OpenStax**, which has focused on creating openly licensed textbooks and learning materials that can be used directly in teaching. Its resources are designed with classroom use in mind, and in some cases can be paired with quizzes and other tools that work well in learning management systems. This points to another important direction in OER: not only making materials open, but also making them easy to adopt in practice.

Other well-known collections, such as **MERLOT** and **Project Gutenberg**, show the breadth of the wider OER ecosystem. Together, these platforms illustrate that open resources can be organized and shared in many different ways depending on educational purpose, audience, and context.

At the international level, UNESCO has also played an important role in promoting OER. The **2012 Paris OER Declaration** encouraged the open licensing of educational materials developed with public funding, while the **2019 UNESCO Recommendation on OER** called for stronger support through policy

development, capacity building, and wider adoption. These initiatives help show that OER is not only a matter of technology or access, but also part of a broader effort to expand educational opportunity.

As you read this guide, these international examples may help place Japan's OER activity in a wider context. They show that OER can be supported through platforms, publishing initiatives, and policy frameworks, and that each of these approaches offers useful ideas for the future development of OER in Japan.

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Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2007), *Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational Resources*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264032125-en>

UNESCO. (2019). *Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER)*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-open-educational-resources-oer>

# OER in Japan

The development of OER in Japan has been shaped largely through **OpenCourseWare (OCW)**. Many universities, including **Hokkaido University** and **Nagoya University**, have made lecture materials freely available through their OCW initiatives. These resources include a wide range of academic content, from lectures by Nobel Prize-winning faculty members to highly specialized university courses. In Japan, OCW has played an important role in making higher education materials more openly accessible online.



*Figure 5. Screenshot of the Hokkaido University OpenCourseWare website, by National Institute of Informatics, 2024, CC BY.*

At the same time, OER in Japan is not limited to OCW alone. A number of other initiatives show how open educational resources are also being developed and shared in different forms. These include projects such as the **Japanese Language Education Content and Learning Support System** developed by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the **STEAM Library** provided by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the

**Quantum Technology Education Hub.** Taken together, these examples suggest that OER in Japan is gradually expanding beyond lecture-based content into a wider range of educational materials and subject areas.

Another important part of the Japanese OER landscape is the role played by organizations that support awareness, collaboration, and shared practice. **Open Education Japan (OE Japan)** is one such organization. Through events and related activities, it promotes understanding of open education and encourages the wider use and development of OER in Japan. In a similar way, the **Japan Open Textbook Publishing Consortium (日本オープン教科書出版コンソーシアム)** supports this work by providing a shared open access publishing platform where members in Japan can publish independently or collaborate on cross-institutional projects.

As you read this guide, it may be helpful to see Japan's OER activity as both established and still evolving. OCW has provided a strong foundation, while newer initiatives point to broader possibilities for how OER can be created, shared, and reused in the future.

PART II  
USING THE OER  
REPOSITORY

# Overview of the OER Repository

The bilingual OER Repository brings together metadata from multiple institutions and services, allowing users to search for OER across organizations through a single portal. The repository does not host files, videos, or other educational content directly. Instead, each record includes a Content URI that links to the original source.

Launched in **May 2024** as a pilot initiative, the repository serves as a central access point for discovering OER available through Japanese higher education institutions and related repository services.

As of May 2024, the repository includes metadata for:

- 1. OpenCourseWare (OCW):** provided by higher education institutions in Japan

- 2. Teaching materials registered in institutional repositories through JAIRO Cloud.**

**JAIRO Cloud** is a shared institutional repository service operated jointly by the **Japan Consortium for Open Access Repositories (JPCOAR)** and the **National Institute of Informatics (NII)**.

Press release in Japanese with English translation.

# Information Sources

## OpenCourseWare (OCW)

The repository collects and displays metadata for open educational resources (OER) from OpenCourseWare (OCW) websites operated by higher education institutions across Japan. Current metadata sources include the following institutions:

- Nagoya University: NUOCW
- Kyoto University: Kyoto University OpenCourseWare
- Kyushu University: QOCW
- Sophia University: Sophia University OpenCourseWare
- University of Tsukuba: University of Tsukuba OpenCourseWare
- Hokkaido University: Hokkaido University OpenCourseWare
- International Christian University: ICU OpenCourseWare
- The Open University of Japan: The Open University of Japan OpenCourseWare
- Tokyo Institute of Technology: Tokyo Tech OCW
- The University of Tokyo: UTokyo OpenCourseWare

All of the institutions listed above are members of Open Education Japan (OE Japan), an organization that supports the advancement of open education in Japan. Metadata is provided through a formal partnership between OE Japan and the National Institute of Informatics (NII).

### **2. Teaching and Learning Materials Registered in Institutional Repositories**

The repository also collects and displays metadata for teaching and learning materials registered in institutional repositories through **Institutional Repositories DataBase (IRDB)**, a

cross-institutional discovery service provided by the National Institute of Informatics (NII). IRDB aggregates metadata from institutional repositories across Japan.

# Getting Started

## The Dashboard

When you access the **OER Repository** website, you will arrive at the dashboard. In the top-right corner, there is a drop-down menu where you can select either **English** or **Japanese**.

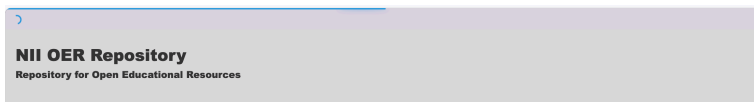


# Searching for OER

## (1) Keyword Search

At the centre of the screen is a search bar with an **Advanced Search** option. Enter keywords related to the learning materials you are looking for, such as “artificial intelligence” or “French,” and the system will display a list of matching resources. This option is useful for quick and simple searches.

**Please note:** Search results can take up to a few seconds to load depending on the request. This does not mean the search has stopped. While the system is processing your request, look for the (faint) blue rotating activity icon in the top-right corner and a progress bar at the top of the screen.



*Exercises*

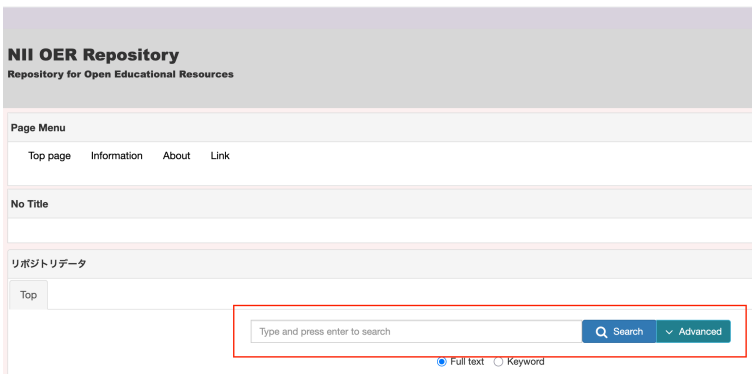
**Try searching for** Kyoto University's Programming Python OER, available in English or Japanese.

Try to find it in the OER Repository using the keywords, python, programming python, and program-

ming python Kyoto. This is the direct link which will also show up in the search information : <http://hdl.handle.net/2433/285599>

## (2) Advanced Search

Use the **Advanced Search** when you want to narrow your results. You can search by fields such as title, creator, description, publisher, date, language, and resource type.



The screenshot shows the NII OER Repository search page. At the top, it says "NII OER Repository" and "Repository for Open Educational Resources". Below that is a "Page Menu" with links for "Top page", "Information", "About", and "Link". There is a "No Title" section. The main search area is titled "リポジトリデータ" (Repository Data) and has a "Top" link. The search bar contains the text "Type and press enter to search" and has a "Search" button and an "Advanced" button. The "Advanced" button is highlighted with a red box. Below the search bar, there are radio buttons for "Full text" (selected) and "Keyword".

## Advance Search

Selecting the advanced search will display a larger selection of text fields for search words and limiting filters such as languages, and databases,

Type and press enter to search

Search

Close

Full text  Keyword

Title

Enter Input Value

Author Name

Enter Input Value



Description

Enter Input Value



Publisher

Enter Input Value



Contents Created D.

yyyymmdd

To

yyyymmdd



- Accepted
- Available
- Collected
- Copyrighted
- Created
- Issued
- Submitted
- Updated
- Valid

Language

- Japanese
- English
- French
- Italian
- German
- Spanish
- Chinese
- Russian
- Latin
- Malay
- Esperanto
- Arabic
- Greek
- Korean
- Other



# Search Fields and Filters

The index is organized using metadata collected from **Open-CourseWare (OCW)** sites and institutional repositories. For OCW content, users can also search by the institution providing the resource. The table below shows the input formats used in the advanced search fields.

Item	Display Format	Description
<b>Title (title)</b>	Text	Title of the OER (for example, <i>Information Basics, Artificial Intelligence</i> )
<b>Creator</b>	Text	Creator of the OER
<b>Access Rights</b>	Open Access / Restricted Access	Access status of the OER
<b>Publisher</b>	Text	Name of the institution publishing the OER
<b>Date</b>	yyyy-mm-dd	Date the OER was registered in the repository
<b>Description</b>	Text	Description of the OER, such as a course overview
<b>Resource Type</b>	conference paper / data paper / learning object, etc.	Type of registered content.
<b>Learning Objective</b>	Text	Learning objectives of the OER
<b>Educational Use</b>	Curriculum / Instruction / Assessment / Professional Development / Informal Education / Other	Intended educational use of the OER
<b>Primary User</b>	Student / Teacher / Administrator / Parent / Librarian / Other	Intended audience for the OER
<b>Education Level</b>	High School / Undergraduate / Graduate Student / Adult Learner	Intended learner level
<b>Accessibility</b>	Visual / Auditory / Textual / Audio Description / Caption / Verbatim Captions / Long Description / Transcript	Accessibility information provided for the OER
<b>Keywords</b>	Text	Keywords associated with the OER

**Activities & Assignment**

Activity

Learning activities, assessment, homework, or assignments

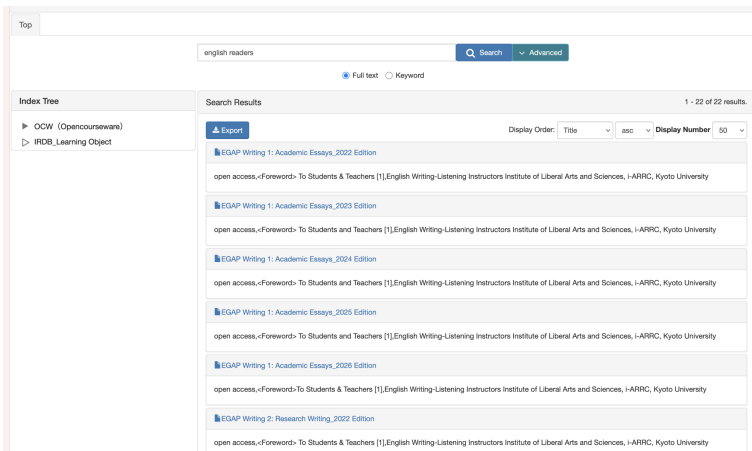
**Learning Evidence**

Certificate / Digital Badge

Type of credential or recognition issued on completion

# Understanding the Results

After entering the keyword “english readers”, the search results will display as a list. In this case the system found 22 results. Scroll down and select the materials that are of interest.



**Figure 6.** Keyword search results screen

Selecting the OER will display the specific details of this OER material. Scroll to the bottom to find the url address link to access the material directly.

OCW (OpenCourseWare)  
IRDB\_Learning Object

IRDB\_Learning Object  
**EGAP Writing 2: Research Writing\_2026 Edition**

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/297984>

Item type	Multiplex(1)
PubDate	2026-02-23
Title	
Title	EGAP Writing 2: Research Writing_2026 Edition
Language	en
Creator	
Creator Name	English Writing-Listening Instructors Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences, I-ARRC, Kyoto University
Language	en
Access Rights	open access
Access Rights URI	<a href="http://purl.org/coar/access_right/c_abf2">http://purl.org/coar/access_right/c_abf2</a>
Rights	
Rights	© Kyoto University, I-ARRC
Language	en
Rights	
Rights	CC-BY-NC-ND: Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives. Anyone is free to share the work for any non-commercial use, as long as they give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made to the original material. Any derivative works may not be distributed.
Language	en
Rights Resource	<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/</a>
Subject	
Subject	836
Subject Scheme	NDC
Description	
Description	[Foreword] To Students and Teachers [1]
Language	en
Description Type	TableOfContents

0

Views

total

See details

---


**Versions**

Ver.1 2026-03-02 00:02:11 000343

Show All versions

---

**Share**



**Cite as**

English Writing-Listening Instructor  
s Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences,  
I-ARRC, Kyoto University, 2026  
EGAP Writing 2: Research Writing  
\_2026 Edition: 京都大学国際高等教育  
院列読国際学術言語教育センター  
--, 120- p.

Start typing a citation style...

Figure 7. Details of the selected OER

Publisher	English Writing-Listening Instructors Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences, I-ARRC, Kyoto University
Publisher	京都大学国際高等教育院列読国際学術言語教育センター
Date	2026/02
Date Type	Issued
Language	
Language	eng
Resource Type	
Type	learning object
Resource	<a href="http://purl.org/coar/resource_type/c_4059">http://purl.org/coar/resource_type/c_4059</a>
Version Type	
Version Type	VR
Page Start	
Page Start	1
Page Start	
Page Start	120
File	
URI	<a href="https://repository.kulb.kyoto-u.ac.jp/bitstreams/db74c689-3612-41ad-adac-5a8b09947dca/download">https://repository.kulb.kyoto-u.ac.jp/bitstreams/db74c689-3612-41ad-adac-5a8b09947dca/download</a>
URI Object Type	Fulltext
URI Label	EGAP Writing 2_2026 Edition.pdf
Format	application/pdf

Figure 8. URL link to the resource. Select the active link or cut and paste to your browser.

# Guidelines for OER Providers

There are two ways to make your OER available through the OER Repository. If you would like to provide an OER, please email the **Center for Open Science Infrastructure Research, National Institute of Informatics** at [rcos\\_oe-test@nii.ac.jp](mailto:rcos_oe-test@nii.ac.jp) in English or Japanese, and advise which of the following methods you would like to use:

- (1) OER registration through an institutional repository
- (2) OER registration through web scraping from an independently managed website

For other inquiries about this guide book, please fill in the Contact Us form on the front page of this site.

# Additional Resources

If you would like to find OER

- **OER Commons:** <https://oercommons.org/>
- **MERLOT:** <https://merlot.org/merlot/>
- **Pressbooks Directory** <https://pressbooks.directory/>
- **Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japanese Language Division: Japanese Language Education Content and Learning Support System:** <https://www.nihongo-ews.mext.go.jp/>
- **Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI): STEAM Library:** <https://steam-library-gov.note.jp/>
- **Quantum Technology Education Hub:** <https://qacademy.jp/>

If you would like to learn more about teaching with OER

- **The Open Scholarship Primer** <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/openscholarship/>
- **Guidelines for open educational resources (OER) in higher education** <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/guidelines-open-educational-resources-oer-higher-education>
- **Open Education Conference:** <https://openeducationconference.org/>

If you would like to learn more about OER policy and international framework

- **UNESCO: Recommendation on using OER** <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-open-educational-resources-oer>
- **SPARC:** <https://sparcopen.org/open-education/>
- **SPARC Europe:** <https://sparceurope.org/what-we-do/open->

education/

Links were checked in April 2026

# Versioning History

We are always seeking to improve our open publications. Please submit your suggestions, recommendations, and/or corrections on the front page Contact Us form.

This page lists major changes to this book with major changes marked with a 1.0 increase in the version number and minor changes marked with a 0.1 increase.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Change</b>
1.0	April 2026	English eBook version published