



**THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO  
INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: Social Housing and Enrichment Guideline

DATE: June 16, 2021

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The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, the *Guide*, states that, “Appropriate social interactions among members of the same species (conspecifics) are essential to normal development and well-being”. Social housing of social research animals is the default housing environment at the University of Toledo. Single housing of social species must be justified based on experimental requirements. DLAR veterinary staff may also require individual housing of animals due to medical concerns.

The IACUC considers demonstrated incompatibility within social groups, a pregnant female or female with a litter, short term (less than 1 week) recovery from surgical manipulation, metabolic studies, or food/water consumption management/monitoring to be grounds for separation for protection of animals or experimental procedures. Such circumstantial conditions do not require a formal variance in the IACUC protocol. Justification for a variance from communal housing for reasons other than those noted above must be submitted for review and approval by the IACUC as part of a new or continuing application or via an amendment. Individuals from species that are not socially housed should be provided with additional enrichment. If single housing is required, it should be limited to the minimum period necessary.

The *Guide* states: “The primary aim of environmental enrichment is to enhance animals’ well-being... according to species-specific characteristics”. The availability of suitable enrichment devices and practices within the primary enclosure aids in achieving this goal. All research animals at the University of Toledo will receive environmental enrichment unless an exception has been approved in writing by the IACUC. Enrichment materials or practices must be designed and applied in accordance with The Guide, in order to enhance the opportunities for the animals to express species specific behavior.