



## POLICY

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Environmental Enrichment</b>
<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>2014-029</b>
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	<b>Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee</b>
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<b>Approval Date:</b>	<b>9/10/14</b>
<b>Reviewed:</b>	<b>8/9/17; 4/8/2020 (Added: scientific justification must be provided for withholding EE; swine included for EE)</b>
<b>Revised:</b>	<b>8/14/17 (Modified language on requirement for EE; added reference to a social housing policy TBD)</b>

**Purpose of Policy:** To enhance the physical and psychological well-being of animals used in teaching and research.

**Policy Information:** The [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#) states that “The primary aim of environmental enrichment (EE) is to enhance animal well-being by providing animals with sensory and motor stimulation through structures and resources that facilitate the expression of species-typical behaviors and promote psychological well-being through physical exercise, manipulative activities and cognitive challenges according to species-specific characteristics.”

It is, therefore, the policy of WesternU’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) that, unless otherwise specified, for their physical and psychological well-being, the living environment of laboratory animals housed at WesternU, or any facility leased by WesternU, shall allow for expression of species-typical activities according to the needs or requirements of the study. Scientific justification for withholding environmental enrichment must be provided where requested in the Institutional Animal Care and Use Protocol Application form.

Animals must also be housed in a manner conducive to their social needs (in pairs or groups) unless the conspecifics prevent such housing or such housing would interfere with the experimental objectives. If so, single housing must be limited to the minimum time necessary to accomplish the experimental objectives. Please refer to IACUC [Policy 2016-052](#) - Housing of Social Animals.

A new Nestlet®, or similar product, may be placed in each mouse cage each time the bedding material and cages are changed. Singly-housed rats may receive a Nylabone® or similar chew toy. A variety of enrichments, such as plastic balls, forage boards and hiding places, will be provided to USDA-covered species, such as guinea pigs, swine and hamsters, in consultation with the investigator and the Attending Veterinarian.

Environmental enrichment is strongly recommended, with due consideration for the potential research interference that it may cause. The provision or withholding of environmental enrichment may be study-specific.