Purpose:
In agreement with the Public Health Service *Guide for The Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, this IACUC procedure addresses the requirement to house animals with the primary aim of enhancing “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 exercise, manipulative activities, and cognitive challenges according to species-specific characteristics.”

Scope:
Each animal facility (central vivaria and satellite facility) should have an enrichment program for the animals housed in that facility. The program should be described in the corresponding (by species) animal husbandry standard operating procedure (SOP) for that facility. The enrichment program(s) should be reviewed and updated by the IACUC, Principal Investigator (PI), and Attending Veterinarian on a regular basis to ensure that it is beneficial to the animal well-being, consistent with the goals of animal use, and reflects current knowledge. Personnel responsible for animal care and husbandry should be familiar with the animal enrichment program and receive training in the behavioral biology of the species they work with to appropriately monitor the effects of enrichment as well as identify the development of adverse or abnormal behaviors.

At a minimum, each SOP should describe social housing as the default method of housing unless otherwise justified based on social incompatibility resulting from inappropriate behavior, veterinary concerns regarding animal well-being, or scientific necessity approved by the IACUC. Further, each SOP should include provisions for providing animals with an environmentally enhanced cage environment (structure and substrate, etc.), which benefits the animal’s well-being. If the PI believes that providing an environmentally enhanced cage environment is not compatible with study design or beneficial to the animal’s well-being, then the PI must receive an exemption from the IACUC by way of an approved IACUC protocol or protocol amendment. Exemptions from social housing or environmental enrichment program provisions should be documented in the
“Supplemental Information” section of the protocol application form, specifically under “Animal Housing Information.”