



Curtin University Standard Operating Procedure

ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

Number: HUS 07

Version: 2.1

Date: 01/10/08

Date of Approval: 01/10/08

Reviewed:

DATE	2009-2013	15/4/14	14/9/16		
REVIEWER	Reviewed Annually by Dr Beng Hooi Chua	Dr Tara Pike	Dr Tara Pike		

Aim/Purpose: To describe the methods and practices for providing environmental enrichment for laboratory animals. A general practice of environmental enrichment should be routinely implemented. Enrichment has been shown to reduce circulating levels of stress hormones, the incidence of stereotypic behaviour and the chance of aggressive interactions between animals.

1. Unless justification is given to the AEC all animals should receive some form of environmental enrichment/social housing. All animals are housed within the same species and are group housed to the greatest extent possible. Different species should not be housed within the same room except under exceptional circumstances (predator-prey relationships exist even amongst rodents).
2. Small animals (rodents/rabbits) should be provided with enrichment devices. These can include nestlets, play tunnels, the “mouse house”, forage mix, wooden chew blocks, foodballs etc. A number of enrichment devices are commercially available for this use or can be created from household items.
3. Social enrichment is also important. Rodents should be group housed except under exceptional circumstances and interaction with humans is also valuable in providing benefits to the animal in terms of socialisation, and human in terms of reduced aggressiveness and consequently easier handling.
4. Habituation to enrichment methods can occur so it is useful to rotate types of enrichment device or have an enrichment free period of a few days every fortnight to prevent this. In our facility, there is a 2 week rotation of enrichment to minimise this.