

UBC ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE
POLICY 027
Husbandry and Environmental Enrichment

Date Approved: November 17, 2025

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the minimum standards of husbandry and environmental enrichment for all species of animals in the University of British Columbia's Animal Care and Use Program. The goal is to reduce negative affective states and enhance long-term positive affective states of the animal by promoting conditions (environment, resources, husbandry) that are appropriate for the individual animal.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all animals used in Research, Teaching or Breeding within the UBC Animal Care and Use Program (ACUP), which falls under the review of UBC's Animal Care Committee (ACC).

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Abnormal behaviour: actions performed by an animal that are not part of the natural behavioural repertoire of that species in the wild. Abnormal behaviours are behaviours that are maladaptive or malfunctional.

Natural Behavioural Repertoire: behavioural activity that can normally be seen (and described) for a particular species of animal in their natural environments. These behaviours will encompass every aspect of the animal's life from breeding behaviours, to food acquisition and social interactions.

Environmental enrichment: enhancements to an animal's environment that go beyond meeting its basic species-specific needs and further improve overall quality of life.

Husbandry: all aspects of the care and management of captive animals in facilities: laboratory, farm and aquatic.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

1. All species of animals that are housed within the ACUP must be handled under conditions that minimize negative welfare impacts and enhance positive animal welfare states.
2. Species-appropriate environmental enrichment must be provided as part of standard husbandry programs
3. Husbandry and environmental enrichment programs must consider the different life stages of the animal, and animal welfare must be assessed over their entire lifetime.

4. Husbandry and environmental enrichment programs must be based on the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) species-specific guidelines. For species that are not covered by those guidelines, a program must be developed in consultation with UBC clinical veterinarians and/or designate and approved in a UBC Animal Use Protocol (AUP).
5. Housing for research animals must meet the physical, psychological and behavioural needs of the animals.
6. Sufficient good quality food must be provided for all animals, and be suited to the species, age of the animals, and research requirements.
7. Appropriate water sources must be supplied in a manner that makes it available to all animals at all times.
8. Handling must consider species and individual animal differences and be conducted in a manner that minimizes stress for the animals and risks to the animals and personnel.
9. Each housing room must maintain a single species unless special arrangements have been made for compatible species.
10. Each housing room must consider the following living conditions for the animals: Air quality, temperature, humidity; physical structure of cage or enclosure; objects within space (shelter, nest boxes, substrate, objects for manipulation); sanitation and biosecurity, environmental enrichment; human interactions (contact, handling, restraint and training).

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It is the responsibility of any person involved in the care and use of animals to follow this policy.
2. The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring all study team members are listed on and comply with their approved AUP;
 - b. Ensuring that deviations from the facility husbandry and environmental enrichment procedures are approved in the AUP.
3. Study Team members are responsible for:
 - a. Adhering to this policy, related facility procedures, and ACUP training for husbandry and enrichment.
4. Facility Manager(s) are responsible for:
 - a. Carrying out husbandry that meets the requirements set out in this policy to all species housed within their UBC Animal Facility
 - b. Providing environmental enrichment that meets the requirements set out in this policy to all species housed in their UBC Animal Facility
 - c. Ensuring that their staff are appropriately trained to implement this policy.
5. UBC Clinical Veterinarians are responsible for:
 - a. Assisting Facility Managers and Researchers with creating programs for husbandry

and environmental enrichment.

6. The UBC ACC is responsible for:
 - a. Ensuring species-appropriate husbandry and environmental enrichment are provided to all animals under their purview.

6.0. REFERENCES

1. CCAC Guidelines: Animal Welfare Assessment, 2021:
https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_guidelines-Animal_welfare_assessment.pdf
2. CCAC Species-Specific Guidelines:
<https://ccac.ca/en/guidelines-and-policies/the-guidelines/types-of-animal-guidelines.html>
3. CCAC Guidelines: Husbandry of Animals in Science:
<https://ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC-guidelines-on-husbandry-of-animals-in-science.pdf>