

POLICY REGARDING GROUP HOUSING OF SOCIAL SPECIES

PURPOSE:

Liberty University, in its commitment to comply with all applicable federal and state laws regarding animal care, has developed the following policy regarding the housing of social species.

POLICY:

Unless otherwise justified, social housing shall be the default method of housing at Liberty University. Circumstances in which social housing may be suspended include: social incompatibility, inappropriate behavior, approved husbandry practices, justified veterinary concerns, or scientific necessity that has been previously approved by the IACUC.

Wherever possible, animals shall be housed in pairs or groups of individuals deemed to be compatible. If a circumstance arises in which an animal is not placed into a pair or group, it must only be for the minimum period of time necessary for the activity unless scientifically justified. In the absence of other animals (single housing), enrichment shall be offered to the animal, such as human interaction, periodic exposure to larger enclosures, supplementation, or the addition of a companion animal.

In certain cases, exceptions to the group housing policy may be warranted. Below are common types of exceptions:

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND MANAGEMENT

Liberty University IACUC permits single housing of social species for standard husbandry practices, or in cases where animal well-being may be jeopardized. If animals are housed singly on an infrequent basis for justifiable reasons, IACUC approval is not required. However, for cases where single housing will occur on a frequent basis, approval of the IACUC will be required based on scientific justification from the submitted protocol.

CLINICAL REASONS

Due to certain medical concerns, it may be appropriate at times to separate animals for appropriate veterinary treatment. For instances such as this, the IACUC does not need to give approval. The veterinarian who is in care of the animal will record the time spent in single housing in the animal's medical record, and will re-house the animal when it is deemed appropriate to do so. Cases such as this will be reported to the IACUC per the discretion of the University Veterinarian.

EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS

Certain experimental factors may require the single housing of certain animal species. In cases such as this, IACUC approval will be necessary, along with scientific justification. The single housing cannot take place until approval is given by the IACUC for the specific protocol.