HSCEP OP: 77.12, Student Absences Related to Religious Holy Day Observance

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Operating Policy/Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to create a standardized approach to handling student absence for observance of a religious holy day(s).

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed by November 15 of every odd-numbered year (ONY) by the assistant vice president for student services, the senior associate general counsel, and the vice president for academic affairs or their designees, with recommendations for revision forwarded to the President by December 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Per Texas Education Code § 51.911 TTUHSC El Paso shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

2. “Religious Holy Day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Texas Tax Code.

3. A student who intends to observe a Religious Holy Day should provide written notice, as soon as possible prior to the absence, to the following: (1) the instructor of each affected class; and (2) the senior designated officer for student affairs for his/her school (or as otherwise designated by the school per its student handbook). A student will be excused from attending classes, examinations, or other required activities for the observance of a Religious Holy Day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this section will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence, and the allowance of reasonable time will be determined in consultation with the instructor of record and/or the senior designated officer for student affairs before the absence whenever possible (or as otherwise designated by the school per its student handbook).

4. A student who is excused under Section 1 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may take appropriate action if the student fails to satisfactorily and timely complete the missed assignment or examination.

5. Any disputes regarding this policy should be submitted in writing to the TTUHSC El Paso President or his/her designee (see HSCEP OP 10.11, Section IV). Any decision by the President or his/her designee regarding the dispute shall be final.

6. This policy does not apply to any student absence for a Religious Holy Day which may interfere with patient care responsibilities.