

What is VESSA?	VESSA is the State of Illinois Victims Economic Security and Safety Act that grants employees who are victims of domestic or sexual violence up to 12 workweeks of leave to maintain financial independence necessary to leave abusive situations and to protect the civil and economic rights of employees who are victims of domestic or sexual violence and employees with a family or household member who is a victim.
What constitutes “domestic or sexual violence?”	Domestic violence includes acts or threats of violence, not including acts of self defense, as defined in subdivision (3) of Section 103 of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986, sexual assault, or death to the person, or the person’s family or household member, if the conduct causes the specific person to have such distress or fear. Sexual assault means any conduct proscribed by the Criminal Code of 1961 in Sections 12-13, 12-14, 12-14.1, 12-15, and 12-16. Stalking means any conduct proscribed by the Criminal Code of 1961 in Sections 12-7.3 and 12-7.4.
What are the three events that qualify as an approved VESSA leave?	<p>The three events that qualify as an eligible VESSA event are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To seek medical help and recover from physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or employee’s family or household member. ▪ To obtain victim’s services, psychological or other counseling, and legal assistance or remedies, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic or sexual violence. ▪ Participate in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, or taking other actions to increase health and safety, or to ensure economic safety of covered persons.
How do you define “household member?”	Household member is defined as any person(s) jointly residing in the same household.
I have an employee that has been off work intermittently for a VESSA related incident since September 2003. When should I start counting her time against the 12-week VESSA entitlement?	Since the Act was effective August 25, 2003, you should count any eligible VESSA leave time taken as of that date as part of the 12-week entitlement.
How is the VESSA year begin date determined?	The VESSA year begin date is the date of the first VESSA qualifying event in the previous 12 month period for that employee. Each employee will have their own VESSA year begin date based on their qualifying event(s).
How is the VESSA year end date determined?	The VESSA year end date is the same day and month as the VESSA year begin date, one year later.
How does intermittent leave work for VESSA?	Intermittent leave is leave that is taken in separate blocks of time for a single qualifying event. The intermittent leave can be planned or unplanned, and the shortest leave increment is the shortest period of time designated in the payroll system.
Which types of paid leaves can be used to continue in pay status while on VESSA leave?	<p>In order to continue in pay status while on VESSA leave, employees may use the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vacation Leave ▪ Sick Leave ▪ Holiday ▪ Floating Holiday

May the employer designate a leave as VESSA leave?	Yes, if the employer has reason to believe that an absence may be due to a VESSA qualifying reason, the employer may designate the leave as VESSA leave. Before doing so, the unit should consult with the campus HR office to ensure proper designation and compliance with the law.
If an employee is on disability due to a VESSA related incident, is this counted toward the 12-week VESSA entitlement?	Yes, when an employee files for disability related to a VESSA event, the unit should immediately designate the absence as VESSA leave.
Who has the authority to approve or deny a VESSA Leave?	The Unit designee (typically the supervisor or manager) has the authority to approve or deny a VESSA leave. Assistance is sought from the central HR offices when needed.
Are there additional forms or paperwork required by employees or departments to request a VESSA Leave?	Yes, employees are required to submit a VESSA Application to their supervisor when requesting VESSA leave. Certification issued by the employee's or family members health care provider shall be required to support a request for unpaid VESSA leave for a serious health condition as outlined in University Family and Medical Leave policies. For application and eligibility information, go to the Leave section of NESSIE at https://nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu/cf/leave/index.cfm?Item_id=1288&mlink=1194 .
Does VESSA leave run concurrently with FMLA leave, or is it in addition to the 12-week FMLA entitlement?	VESSA leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave when the reason for VESSA leave also qualifies as an FMLA event, such as a serious health condition. If the VESSA leave is taken for reasons other than an FMLA qualifying event, the 12-week VESSA leave entitlement is in addition to the 12-week FMLA entitlement.
If I am eligible for VESSA leave, does that mean I am also eligible for FMLA leave?	No, VESSA leave and FMLA leave have two different eligibility criteria. The only requirement to be eligible for VESSA leave is that you must be a University employee receiving compensation. Based on eligibility criteria, Extra Help employees, students, and Academic Hourlies are eligible for VESSA leave. To be eligible for FMLA leave, you must have worked 1250 hours in the last 12 months and have worked at the University for one year.
What types of documentation are acceptable to verify VESSA eligibility?	<p>Employees may use any of the following forms of documentation when applying for VESSA leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A sworn statement of the employee (completion of the VESSA application with the employee's signature satisfies this requirement); and, ▪ Documentation from the employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim services organization, an attorney, a member of the clergy, or a medical or other professional from whom the employee or the employee's family or household member has sought assistance in addressing domestic or sexual violence and the effects of the violence; or ▪ A police or court record; or ▪ Other corroborating evidence.
How do I know when to count VESSA leave time as also FMLA leave?	<p>If the VESSA leave is for a serious health condition of the employee or employee's immediate family member as defined in the Family and Medical Leave policies, then the leave time should be counted towards both VESSA and FMLA leave. The leave should be tracked on both the PZAELOA and PEAFMLA forms in Banner and the VESSA/FMLA earnings codes should be used. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday (rdg)

How much notice in advance must an employer give the employer when requesting VESSA leave?	The employee shall provide the supervisor with 48 hours notice in advance, unless providing such notice is not practicable. Certification should be provided within a reasonable period of time after the unscheduled absence occurs.
Which Banner forms are used to track VESSA?	The PZAELOA form will be used to track all relevant dates, leave reasons, and other information related to the leave itself. Actual VESSA hours used will be tracked through the use of Earnings Codes in payroll.
Who enters information about VESSA into Banner?	The Home Department/Unit will track and enter VESSA information on the PZAELOA form in Banner.
How is approval or denial of a VESSA leave reflected in Banner?	There is no way of indicating approval or denial status in Banner for VESSA leave. Units should maintain their own records for these purposes.
If sick leave used is charged toward VESSA, how should data be entered into the system?	Since sick leave can only be used for illness or injury, the use of sick leave for VESSA leave would mean the employee's leave also qualifies as an FMLA event. When entering the sick leave or vacation time used toward FMLA, the <i>FMLA/VESSA Sick</i> or <i>FMLA/VESSA Vacation</i> earnings codes will be selected to designate the leave as FMLA. This allows the time to be appropriately charged to the employee's vacation and/or sick leave balances.
How do I designate VESSA leave in payroll for Civil Service employees?	<p>The following earnings codes are used in payroll to designate a leave as VESSA for Civil Service employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VESSA Leave Vacation ▪ VESSA Leave Vacation (rdg) ▪ VESSA Leave Sick ▪ VESSA Leave Sick (rdg) ▪ VESSA Leave Unpaid ▪ VESSA Leave Unpaid (rdg) ▪ VESSA Leave Holiday ▪ VESSA Leave Holiday (rdg) ▪ VESSA Leave Floating Holiday ▪ VESSA Leave Floating Holiday (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday (rdg)
How do I designate VESSA leave in payroll for Academic Professional employees?	VESSA leave is not recorded in payroll for Academics at this time, it is only recorded in Banner on the PZAELOA form.