



# Basic Employee Relations Course

## Introduction

Medical issues have long been a problem for supervisors, managers, and Employee Relations Specialists. An accommodation in the workplace is a reasonable adjustment to a job or work environment that makes it possible for an individual with a disability to perform job duties. Put another way, an accommodation is an investment an employer makes in his or her business in order to make the business more efficient or profitable. For example, when word processing systems were proven to be much more efficient than typewriters, businesses invested in personal computers for their employees. Similarly, employers send employees to staff training classes and seminars to upgrade their skills. Decisions about making worksite accommodations for people with disabilities should be made in the same light as decisions about staff training or buying new office equipment. Successful accommodations are beneficial both to the employee and the employer.

When an employee with a disability requests an accommodation, the employer and employee should discuss the job duties, how the accommodation will assist the individual in performing his or her job, and possible alternative solutions. Among the issues that may be considered are:

- What are the functional limitations of the individual seeking the accommodation?
- What specific job tasks are affected by the individual's functional limitations?
- What types of equipment are used/needed to perform the job?
- Are there work place policies or procedures that affect the individual's ability to perform the job?
- Are all the necessary areas of the work environment accessible for this individual?