**2-9 Conditional Formatting**

Excel lets you apply formatting that appears only when the value in a cell meets conditions that you specify. This type of formatting is called conditional formatting. You can apply conditional formatting to a cell, a range of cells, the entire worksheet, or the entire workbook. Usually, you apply conditional formatting to a range of cells that contains values you want to highlight, if conditions warrant. For example, you can instruct Excel to change the color of the background of a cell if the value in the cell meets a condition, such as being less than 0.

A condition, which is made up of two values and a relational operator, is true or false for each cell in the range. If the condition is true, then Excel applies the formatting. If the condition is false, then Excel suppresses the formatting. What makes conditional formatting so powerful is that the cell’s appearance can change as you enter new values in the worksheet.

To apply conditional formatting:

* Click the conditional formatting button on the ribbon to display the conditional formatting gallery.
* Click new rule in the conditional formatting gallery to display the new formatting rule dialog box.
* Click ‘Format only cells that contain’ in the Select a Rule type area.
* In the Edit the Rule Description area, click the box arrow in the relational operator box, and then select what you want to do.
* Enter a second value in the Edit the Rule Description area.
* Click the format button to format the cells that meet the criteria.

Conditional Formatting Operators

The rule dialog box which is described in the 4th bullet above gives you the following choices to choose from:

