

16.482 / 16.561: Computer Architecture and Design

Spring 2015

Lecture 6: Key Questions February 26, 2015

1. What do we mean by “speculation?”
2. Why must we separate instruction completion from instruction commit in a processor that allows speculative execution?
3. What is a reorder buffer (ROB), and what is its purpose?
4. Describe the fields in each ROB entry.

5. Describe the differences in Tomasulo's Algorithm when speculation is added.

Example: Follow the execution of the code below through all cycles, showing the appropriate state for each piece of hardware in Tomasulo’s Algorithm with speculation. Fill in the tables provided. Assume 2 cycle latency (1 EX, 1 MEM) for loads/stores, 6 cycles for multiply, 2 cycles for integer addition, and 1 cycle for the branch.

Cycle	1	2	3																
L.D F0, 0(R1)	IF	IS	EX																
MUL.D F4, F0, F2		IF	IS																
S.D F4, 0(R1)			IF																
DADDIU R1, R1, #-8																			
BNE R1, R2, Loop																			
L.D F0, 0(R1)																			
MUL.D F4, F0, F2																			
S.D F4, 0(R1)																			
DADDIU R1, R1, #-8																			
BNE R1, R2, Loop																			

6. How does the reorder buffer help us avoid memory hazards?

7. How do we handle exceptions in a speculative machine?