# arm

# **Arm® Cortex®-X1 Core**

Revision: r1p2

# **Software Optimization Guide**

Non-Confidential

**Issue 4.0**

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### Arm® Cortex®-X1 Core **Software Optimization Guide**

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#### Document history



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# **Contents**





# <span id="page-5-0"></span>**1 Introduction**

### <span id="page-5-1"></span>**Product revision status**

The r*x*p*y* identifier indicates the revision status of the product described in this book, for example, r1p2, where:

rx

Identifies the major revision of the product, for example, r1.

py

Identifies the minor revision or modification status of the product, for example, p2.

## <span id="page-5-2"></span>**1.2 Intended audience**

This document is for system designers, system integrators, and programmers who are designing or programming a System-on-Chip (SoC) that uses an Arm core.

# <span id="page-5-3"></span>1.3 Scope

This document describes aspects of the Cortex-X1 core micro-architecture that influence software performance. Micro-architectural detail is limited to that which is useful for software optimization.

Documentation extends only to software visible behavior of the Cortex-X1 core and not to the hardware rationale behind the behavior.

### <span id="page-5-4"></span>**1.4 Conventions**

The following subsections describe conventions used in Arm documents.

### <span id="page-5-5"></span>**1.4.1 Glossary**

The Arm Glossary is a list of terms used in Arm documentation, together with definitions for those terms. The Arm Glossary does not contain terms that are industry standard unless the Arm meaning differs from the generally accepted meaning.

See the Arm Glossary for more information: **<https://developer.arm.com/glossary>**.

### **1.4.1.1 Terms and Abbreviations**



This document uses the following terms and abbreviations.

<span id="page-7-0"></span>



## <span id="page-8-0"></span>**1.5 Additional reading**

This document contains information that is specific to this product. See the following documents for other relevant information:

#### **Table 1-1 Arm publications**



# <span id="page-9-0"></span>**Feedback**

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### <span id="page-9-1"></span>**1.6.1 Feedback on this product**

If you have any comments or suggestions about this product, contact your supplier and give:

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- The product revision or version.
- An explanation with as much information as you can provide. Include symptoms and diagnostic procedures if appropriate.

### <span id="page-9-2"></span>**1.6.2 Feedback on content**

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# <span id="page-10-0"></span>**2 Overview**

The Cortex-X1 core is a high-performance, low-power core that implements the Armv8-A architecture with support for the Armv8.1-A extension, Armv8.2-A extension, including the RAS extension, the Load acquire (LDAPR) instructions introduced in the Armv8.3-A extension, and the Dot Product instructions introduced in the Armv8.4-A extension.

This document describes elements of the Cortex-X1 core micro-architecture that influence software performance so that software and compilers can be optimized accordingly.

### <span id="page-10-1"></span>**Pipeline overview**

The following figure describes the high-level Cortex-X1 instruction processing pipeline. Instructions are first fetched and then decoded into internal Macro-OPerations (MOPs). From there, the MOPs proceed through register renaming and dispatch stages. A MOP can be split into two Micro-OPerations (µOPs) further down the pipeline after the decode stage. Once dispatched, µOPs wait for their operands and issue out-of-order to one of fifteen issue pipelines. Each issue pipeline can accept one µOP per cycle.

### **Figure 2-1 Cortex-X1 core pipeline**



The execution pipelines support different types of operations, as follows:



#### **Table 2-1 Cortex-X1 core operations**

# <span id="page-13-0"></span>**3 Instruction characteristics**

### <span id="page-13-1"></span>**Instruction tables**

This chapter describes high-level performance characteristics for most Armv8.2-A A32, T32, and A64 instructions. A series of tables summarize the effective execution latency and throughput (instruction bandwidth per cycle), pipelines utilized, and special behaviours associated with each group of instructions. Utilized pipelines correspond to the execution pipelines described in chapter 2.

In the tables below, Execution Latency is defined as the minimum latency seen by an operation dependent on an instruction in the described group.

In the tables below, Execution Throughput is defined as the maximum throughput (in instructions per cycle) of the specified instruction group that can be achieved in the entirety of the Cortex-X1 microarchitecture.

### <span id="page-13-2"></span>**Legend for reading the utilized pipelines**



#### **Table 3-1 Cortex-X1 core pipeline names and symbols**

### <span id="page-14-0"></span>**Branch instructions**



### **Table 3-2 AArch64 Branch instructions**

### **Table 3-3 AAarch32 Branch instructions**



## <span id="page-14-1"></span>**Arithmetic and logical instructions**



#### **Table 3-4 AArch64 Arithmetic and logical instructions**



#### **Table 3-5 AArch32 Arithmetic and logical instructions**





1. Branch forms are possible when the instruction destination register is the PC. For those cases, an additional branch µOP is required. This adds 1 cycle to the latency.

### <span id="page-16-0"></span>**Move and shift instructions**



#### **Table 3-6 AArch32 Move and shift instructions**

### <span id="page-17-0"></span>**Divide and multiply instructions**



#### **Table 3-7 AArch64 Divide and multiply instructions**

#### **Table 3-8 AArch32 Divide and multiply instructions**





1. Integer divides are performed using an iterative algorithm and block any subsequent divide operations until complete. Early termination is possible, depending upon the data values.

2. Multiply-accumulate pipelines support late-forwarding of accumulate operands from similar µOPs, allowing a typical sequence of multiply-accumulate µOPs to issue one every N cycles (accumulate latency N shown in parentheses). Accumulator forwarding is not supported for consumers of 64 bit multiply high operations.

### <span id="page-19-0"></span>**Saturating and parallel arithmetic instructions**

<b>Instruction Group</b>	AArch32 <b>Instructions</b>	<b>Execution</b> Latency	<b>Execution</b> <b>Throughput</b>	<b>Utilized</b> <b>Pipelines</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Parallel arith, unconditional	SADD16, SADD8, SSUB16, SSUB8, UADD16, UADD8, USUB16, USUB8	$\overline{2}$	$\mathbf 1$	$\overline{M}$	
Parallel arith, conditional	SADD16, SADD8, SSUB16, SSUB8, UADD16, UADD8, USUB16, USUB8	2(4)	$\mathbf 1$	MO, I	$\mathbf 1$
Parallel arith with exchange, unconditional	SASX, SSAX, UASX, <b>USAX</b>	3	$\overline{2}$	I, M	
Parallel arith with exchange, conditional	SASX, SSAX, UASX, <b>USAX</b>	3(5)	$\mathbf{1}$	I, MO	$\mathbf 1$
Parallel halving arith, unconditional	SHADD16, SHADD8, SHSUB16, SHSUB8, UHADD16, UHADD8, UHSUB16, UHSUB8	$\overline{2}$	$\overline{2}$	M	
Parallel halving arith, conditional	SHADD16, SHADD8, SHSUB16, SHSUB8, UHADD16, UHADD8, UHSUB16, UHSUB8	$\overline{2}$	$\mathbf 1$	MO	
Parallel halving arith with exchange	SHASX, SHSAX, UHASX, UHSAX	3	1	I, MO	
Parallel saturating arith, unconditional	QADD16, QADD8, QSUB16, QSUB8, UQADD16, UQADD8, UQSUB16, UQSUB8	$\overline{2}$	$\overline{2}$	$\overline{M}$	
Parallel saturating arith, conditional	QADD16, QADD8, QSUB16, QSUB8, UQADD16, UQADD8, UQSUB16, UQSUB8	$\overline{2}$	1	MO	
Parallel saturating arith with exchange, unconditional	QASX, QSAX, UQASX, UQSAX	3	$\overline{2}$	I, M	
Parallel saturating arith with exchange, conditional	QASX, QSAX, UQASX, UQSAX	3	1	I, MO	

**Table 3-9 AArch32 Saturating and parallel arithmetic instructions**



1. Conditional GE-setting instructions require three extra µOPs and two additional cycles to conditionally update the GE field (GE latency shown in parentheses).

### <span id="page-20-0"></span>**Miscellaneous data-processing instructions**



#### **Table 3-10 AArch64 Miscellaneous data-processing instructions**

#### Notes:

1. One reg form is when Rn==Rm or imm==0, all other forms are considered two regs.





### <span id="page-22-0"></span>**Load instructions**

The latencies shown assume the memory access hits in the Level 1 Data Cache and represent the maximum latency to load all the registers written by the instruction.







#### **Table 3-13 AArch32 Load instructions**





1. Conditional loads have extra µOP(s) which goes down pipeline 'I' and have 1 cycle extra latency compared to their unconditional counterparts.

- 2. Conditional loads go down L01 pipe and have an execution throughput of 2, whereas unconditional versions have a throughput of 3.
- 3. The address update op goes down pipeline 'I' if the load is unconditional.
- 4. N is floor  $\lceil$  (num reg+5)/6].
- 5. R is floor  $[(num_reg + 1)/2]$ .
- 6. Branch forms are possible when the instruction destination register is the PC. For those cases, an additional branch µOP is required. This adds 1 cycle to the latency.

### <span id="page-24-0"></span>**Store instructions**

The following table describes performance characteristics for standard store instructions. Stores µOPs are split into address and data µOPs. Once executed, stores are buffered and committed in the background.







#### **Table 3-15 AArch32 Store instructions**





- 1. The address update op goes down pipeline 'I' if the store is unconditional.
- 2. The address update op goes down pipeline 'M' if the store is unconditional.
- 3. For store multiple instructions, N=floor((num\_regs+3)/4).

### <span id="page-26-0"></span>**FP data processing instructions**



#### **Table 3-16 AArch64 FP data processing instructions**



#### **Table 3-17 AArch32 FP data processing instructions**





- 1. FP divide and square root operations are performed using an iterative algorithm and block subsequent similar operations to the same pipeline until complete.
- 2. FP multiply-accumulate pipelines support late-forwarding of the result from FP multiply µOPs to the accumulate operands of an FP multiply-accumulate µOP. The latter can potentially be issued 1 cycle after the FP multiply µOP has been issued.
- 3. FP multiply-accumulate pipelines support late-forwarding of accumulate operands from similar µOPs, allowing a typical sequence of multiply-accumulate µOPs to issue one every N cycles (accumulate latency N shown in parentheses).

### <span id="page-28-0"></span>**FP miscellaneous instructions**



#### **Table 3-18 AArch64 FP miscellaneous instructions**

#### **Table 3-19 AArch32 FP miscellaneous instructions**





# <span id="page-29-0"></span>**FP load instructions**

The latencies shown assume the memory access hits in the Level 1 Data Cache and represent the maximum latency to load all the vector registers written by the instruction. Compared to standard loads, an extra cycle is required to forward results to FP/ASIMD pipelines.



#### **Table 3-20 AArch64 FP load instructions**



#### **Table 3-21 AArch32 FP load instructions**



#### Notes:

- 1. Condition loads have an extra uop which goes down pipeline 'V' and have 2 cycle extra latency compared to their unconditional counterparts.
- 2. N is (num\_reg)/6 + 5.
- 3.  $N^*$  is (num\_reg)/4 + 5.
- 4. R is num\_reg/2.
- 5. Writeback forms of load instructions require an extra µOP to update the base address. This update is typically performed in parallel with or prior to the load µOP (update latency shown in parentheses).
- 6. The number in parenthesis represents the latency and throughput of conditional loads.
- 7. Conditional loads go down L01 pipe.

### <span id="page-31-0"></span>**FP store instructions**

Stores MOPs are split into store address and store data µOPs at dispatch time. Once executed, stores are buffered and committed in the background.



### **Table 3-22 AArch64 FP store instructions**



#### **Table 3-23 AArch32 FP store instructions**



#### Notes:

1. For store multiple instructions,  $N = (num\_regs/2)$ .

2. R is num\_regs.

3. Writeback forms of store instructions require an extra µOP to update the base address. This update is typically performed in parallel with or prior to the store µOP.

## <span id="page-33-0"></span>**3.15 ASIMD integer instructions**



#### **Table 3-24 AArch64 ASIMD integer instructions**





#### **Table 3-25 AArch32 ASIMD integer instructions**





- 1. Multiply-accumulate pipelines support late-forwarding of accumulate operands from similar µOPs, allowing a typical sequence of integer multiply-accumulate µOPs to issue one every cycle or one every other cycle (accumulate latency shown in parentheses).
- 2. Other accumulate pipelines also support late-forwarding of accumulate operands from similar µOPs, allowing a typical sequence of such µOPs to issue one every cycle (accumulate latency shown in parentheses).
- 3. This category includes instructions of the form "PMULL Vd.8H, Vn.8B, Vm.8B" and "PMULL2 Vd.8H, Vn.16B, Vm.16B".

### <span id="page-37-0"></span>**ASIMD floating-point instructions**



#### **Table 3-26 AArch64 ASIMD integer instructions**



#### **Table 3-27 AArch32 ASIMD integer instructions**





- 1. ASIMD multiply-accumulate pipelines support late-forwarding of accumulate operands from similar µOPs, allowing a typical sequence of floating-point multiply-accumulate µOPs to issue one every N cycles (accumulate latency N shown in parentheses).
- 2. ASIMD multiply-accumulate pipelines support late forwarding of the result from ASIMD FP multiply µOPs to the accumulate operands of an ASIMD FP multiply-accumulate µOP. The latter can potentially be issued 1 cycle after the ASIMD FP multiply µOP has been issued.
- 3. ASIMD divide and square root operations are performed using an iterative algorithm and block subsequent similar operations to the same pipeline until complete.

### <span id="page-40-0"></span>**ASIMD miscellaneous instructions**



#### **Table 3-28 AArch64 ASIMD miscellaneous instructions**

### Arm® Cortex®-X1 Core Software Optimization Guide PJDOC-466751330-12804



### **Table 3-29 AArch32 ASIMD miscellaneous instructions**





## <span id="page-42-0"></span>**ASIMD load instructions**

The latencies shown assume the memory access hits in the Level 1 Data Cache and represent the maximum latency to load all the vector registers written by the instruction. Compared to standard loads, an extra cycle is required to forward results to FP/ASIMD pipelines.



### **Table 3-30 AArch64 ASIMD load instructions**





#### **Table 3-31 AArch32 ASIMD load instructions**





1. Writeback forms of load instructions require an extra µOP to update the base address. This update is typically performed in parallel with the load µOP.

2. Conditional loads go down L01 pipe and the number in parenthesis represents their throughput when different from the unconditional forms.

### <span id="page-46-0"></span>**ASIMD store instructions**

Stores MOPs are split into store address and store data µOPs at dispatch time. Once executed, stores are buffered and committed in the background.



#### **Table 3-32 AArch64 ASIMD store instructions**



#### **Table 3-33 AArch32 ASIMD store instructions**





1. Writeback forms of store instructions require an extra µOP to update the base address. This update is typically performed in parallel with the store µOP.

### <span id="page-48-0"></span>**Cryptography extensions**



#### **Table 3-34 AArch64 Cryptography extensions**

#### **Table 3-35 AArch32 Cryptography extensions**





1. Adjacent AESE/AESMC instruction pairs and adjacent AESD/AESIMC instruction pairs will exhibit the performance characteristics described in Section 4.6.

### <span id="page-49-0"></span>**3.21 CRC**

#### **Table 3-36 AArch64 CRC**



#### **Table 3-37 AArch32 CRC**



Notes:

1. CRC execution supports late-forwarding of the result from a producer µOP to a consumer µOP. This results in a 1 cycle reduction in latency as seen by the consumer.

# <span id="page-50-0"></span>**4 Special considerations**

## <span id="page-50-1"></span>**Dispatch constraints**

Dispatch of µOPs from the in-order portion to the out-of-order portion of the microarchitecture includes several constraints. It is important to consider these constraints during code generation to maximize the effective dispatch bandwidth and subsequent execution bandwidth of Cortex-X1.

The dispatch stage can process up to 8 MOPs per cycle and dispatch up to 16 µOPs per cycle, with the following limitations on the number of  $\mu$ OPs of each type that may be simultaneously dispatched.

- Up to 4 µ OPs utilizing the S or B pipelines
- Up to 4 µOPs utilizing the M pipelines
- Up to 2 µOPs utilizing the M0 pipelines
- Up to 2 µOPs utilizing the V0 pipeline
- Up to 2 µOPs utilizing the V1 pipeline
- Up to 6 µOPs utilizing the L pipelines

In the event there are more µOPs available to be dispatched in a given cycle than can be supported by the constraints above, µOPs will be dispatched in oldest to youngest age-order to the extent allowed by the above.

## <span id="page-50-2"></span>**4.2 Dispatch stall**

In the event of a V-pipeline µOP containing more than 1 quad-word register source, a portion or all of which was previously written as one or multiple single words, that  $\mu$ OP will stall in dispatch for three cycles. This stall occurs only on the first such instance, and subsequent consumers of the same register will not experience this stall.

### <span id="page-50-3"></span>**Optimizing general-purpose register spills and fills**

Register transfers between general-purpose registers (GPR) and ASIMD registers (VPR) are lower latency than reads and writes to the cache hierarchy, thus it is recommended that GPR registers be filled/spilled to the VPR rather to memory, when possible.

### <span id="page-50-4"></span>**Optimizing memory routines**

To achieve maximum throughput for memory copy (or similar loops), one should do the following:

• Unroll the loop to include multiple load and store operations per iteration, minimizing the overheads of looping.

• Use non-writeback forms of LDP and STP instructions interleaving them like shown in the example below:



A recommended copy routine for AArch32 would look like the sequence above but would use LDRD/STRD instructions. Avoid load-/store-multiple instruction encodings (such as LDM and STM).

To achieve maximum throughput on memset, it is recommended that one do the following:

• Unroll the loop to include multiple load and store operations per iteration, minimizing the overheads of looping.



To achieve maximum performance on memset to zero, it is recommended that one use DC ZVA instead of STP. An optimal routine might look something like the following:



### <span id="page-52-0"></span>**Load/Store alignment**

The Armv8.2-A architecture allows many types of load and store accesses to be arbitrarily aligned. The Cortex-X1 core handles most unaligned accesses without performance penalties. However, there are cases which could reduce bandwidth or incur additional latency, as described below:

- Load operations that cross a cache-line (64-byte) boundary
- Quad-word load operations that are not 4B aligned
- <span id="page-52-1"></span>• Store operations that cross a 32B boundary

### **4.6 Store to Load Forwarding**

The Cortex-X1 core allows data to be forwarded from store instructions to a load instruction with the restrictions mentioned below:

- Load start address should align with the start or middle address of the older store. This does not apply to LDPs that load 2 32b registers or LDRDs
- Loads of size greater than 8 bytes can get the data forwarded from a maximum of 2 stores. If there are 2 stores, then each store should forward to either first or second half of the load
- <span id="page-52-2"></span>• Loads of size less than or equal to 8 bytes can get their data forwarded from only 1 store

## **AES encryption/decryption**

Cortex-X1 can issue two AESE/AESMC/AESD/AESIMC instruction every cycle (fully pipelined) with an execution latency of two cycles. This means encryption or decryption for at least four data chunks should be interleaved for maximum performance:

AESE data0, key0 AESMC data0, data0 AESE data1, key0 AESMC data1, data1 AESE data2, key0 AESMC data2, data2 AESE data3, key1 AESMC data3, data3 AESE data0, key0 ...

Pairs of dependent AESE/AESMC and AESD/AESIMC instructions exhibit higher performance when they are adjacent in the program code and both instructions use the same destination register.

### <span id="page-53-0"></span>**4.8 Region based fast forwarding**

The forwarding logic in the V pipelines is optimized to provide optimal latency for instructions which are expected to commonly forward to one another. The effective latency of FP and ASIMD instructions as described in section 3 is increased by one cycle if the producer and consumer instructions are not part of the same forwarding region. These optimized forwarding regions are defined in the following table.

### **Table 4-1 Optimized forwarding regions**



#### Notes:

- 1. Reciprocal step and estimate instructions are excluded from this region.
- 2. ASIMD extract narrow, saturating instructions are excluded from this region.
- 3. ASIMD miscellaneous instructions can only be consumers of this region.

The following instructions are not a part of any region:

- FP/ASIMD floating-point div/sqrt
- FP/ASIMD convert and rounding instructions that do not write to general purpose registers
- ASIMD integer mul/mac
- ASIMD integer reduction

In addition to the regions mentioned in the table above, all instructions in regions 1 and 2 can fast forward to FP/ASIMD stores, FP/ASIMD vector to integer register transfers and ASIMD converts that write to general purpose registers.

More special notes about the forwarding region in table 4-1:

- Fast forwarding will not occur in AArch32 mode if the consuming register's width is greater than that of the producer.
- Element sources (the non-vector operand in "by element" multiplies) used by ASIMD floatingpoint multiply and multiply-accumulate operations cannot be consumers.
- Complex shift by immediate/register and shift accumulate instructions cannot be producers (see section 3.15) in region 1.
- Extract narrow, saturating instructions cannot be producers (see section 3.17) in region 1.

- Absolute difference accumulate and pairwise add and accumulate instructions cannot be producers (see section 3.15) in region 1.
- For floating-point producer-consumer pairs, the precision of the instructions should match (single, double or half) in region 2.
- Pair-wise floating-point instructions cannot be producers or consumers in region 2.

It is not advisable to interleave instructions belonging to different regions. Also, certain instructions can only be producers or consumers in a particular region but not both (see footnote 3 for table 4-1). For example, the code below interleaves producers and consumers from regions 1 and 2. This will result in and additional latency of 1 cycle as seen by FMUL.

FSUB v27.2s, v28.2s, v20.2s – Region 2 FADD v20.2s, v28.2s, v20.2s – Region 2 MOV v27.s[1], v20.s[1] - Region 2 producer but not a region 2 consumer FMUL v26.2s, v27.2s, v6.2s – Region 2

### <span id="page-54-0"></span>**4.9 Branch instruction alignment**

Branch instruction and branch target instruction alignment and density can affect performance.



For best case performance, avoid placing more than four branch instructions within an aligned 32 byte instruction memory region.

### <span id="page-54-1"></span>**FPCR self-synchronization**

Programmers and compiler writers should note that writes to the FPCR register are selfsynchronizing, i.e. its effect on subsequent instructions can be relied upon without an intervening context synchronizing operation.

### <span id="page-54-2"></span>**Special register access**

The Cortex-X1 core performs register renaming for general purpose registers to enable speculative and out-of-order instruction execution. But most special-purpose registers are not renamed. Instructions that read or write non-renamed registers are subjected to one or more of the following additional execution constraints.

- Non-Speculative Execution Instructions may only execute non-speculatively.
- In-Order Execution Instructions must execute in-order with respect to other similar instructions or in some cases all instructions.
- Flush Side-Effects Instructions trigger a flush side-effect after executing for synchronization.

The table below summarizes various special-purpose register read accesses and the associated execution constraints or side-effects.



#### **Table 4-2 Special-purpose register read accesses**

#### Notes:

- 1. The NZCV and SP registers are fully renamed.
- 2. FPSR/FPSCR reads must wait for all prior instructions that may update the status flags to execute and retire.
- 3. APSR reads must wait for all prior instructions that may set the Q bit to execute and retire.

The table below summarizes various special-purpose register write accesses and the associated execution constraints or side-effects.

#### **Table 4-3 Special-purpose register write accesses**





- 1. The NZCV and SP registers are fully renamed.
- 2. If the FPCR/FPSCR write is predicted to change the control field values, it will introduce a barrier which prevents subsequent instructions from executing. If the FPCR/FPSCR write is predicted to not change the control field values, it will execute without a barrier but trigger a flush if the values change.
- 3. FPSR/FPSCR writes must stall at dispatch if another FPSR/FPSCR write is still pending.
- 4. APSR writes that set the Q bit will introduce a barrier which prevents subsequent instructions from executing until the write completes.

### <span id="page-56-0"></span>**Register forwarding hazards**

The Armv8-A architecture allows FP/ASIMD instructions to read and write 32-bit S-registers. In AArch32, each S-register corresponds to one half (upper or lower) of an overlaid 64-bit D-register. A Q-register in turn consists of two overlaid D-register. Register forwarding hazards may occur when one µOP reads a Q-register operand that has recently been written with one or more S-register result. Consider the following scenario:



The first instruction writes S0, which corresponds to the lowest part of Q0. The second instruction then requires Q0 as an input operand. In this scenario, there is a RAW dependency between the first and the second instructions. In most cases, Cortex-X1 performs slightly worse in such situations.

Cortex-X1 is able to avoid this register-hazard condition for certain cases. The following rules describe the conditions under which a register-hazard can occur:

- The producer writes an S-register (not a  $D[x]$  scalar)
- The consumer reads an overlapping Q-register (not as a  $D[x]$  scalar)
- The consumer is a FP/ASIMD µOP (not a store or MOV µOP)

To avoid unnecessary hazards, it is recommended that the programmer use D[x] scalar writes when populating registers prior to ASIMD operations. For example, either of the following instruction forms would safely prevent a subsequent hazard.



# <span id="page-57-0"></span>**4.13 IT blocks**

The Armv8-A architecture performance deprecates some uses of the IT instruction in such a way that software may be written using multiple naïve single instruction IT blocks. It is preferred that software instead generate multi instruction IT blocks rather than single instruction blocks.

### <span id="page-57-1"></span>**Instruction fusion**

Cortex-X1 can accelerate certain instruction pairs in an operation called fusion. Specific Aarch64 instruction pairs that can be fused are as follows:

- 1. CMP/CMN (immediate) + B.cond
- 2. CMP/CMN (register) + B.cond
- 3. TST (immediate) + B.cond
- 4. TST (register) + B.cond
- 5. BICS (register) + B.cond
- 6. NOP + Any instruction

The following instruction pairs are fused in both Aarch32 and Aarch64 modes:

- 1. AESE + AESMC (see Section 4.6 on AES Encryption/Decryption)
- 2. AESD + AESIMC (see Section 4.6 on AES Encryption/Decryption)

<span id="page-57-2"></span>These instruction pairs must be adjacent to each other in program code.

### **4.15 Zero Latency MOVs**

A subset of register-to-register move operations and move immediate operations are executed with zero latency. These instructions do not utilize the scheduling and execution resources of the machine. These are as follows:

MOV Xd, #0 MOV Xd, XZR MOV Wd, #0 MOV Wd, WZR MOV Rd, #0 (AArch32) MOV Wd, Wn MOV Xd, Xn MOV Rd, Rn (AArch32) <span id="page-58-0"></span>The last 3 instructions may not be executed with zero latency under certain conditions.

### **Mixing Arm and Thumb state**

Mixing Arm and Thumb instructions in the same cache-line should be avoided. In particular, old-style interworking veneers to switch from Thumb to Arm state using BX pc may be very slow. This overhead can be reduced by inserting a direct branch or return between indirect branches in one state and code in the other state. For example:

```
BX pc // Thumb to Arm veneer
B.-2 // never executed
… Arm code
```
However, it is preferable to remove the indirect branch by using only Thumb-2 or Arm code for each veneer.

### <span id="page-58-1"></span>**Cache maintenance operations**

While using set way invalidation operations on L1 cache, it is recommended that software be written to traverse the sets in the inner loop and ways in the out loop.

### <span id="page-58-2"></span>**Complex ASIMD instructions**

The bandwidth of the following ASIMD instructions is limited by decode constraints and it is advisable to avoid them when high performing code is desired.

- 1. LD4R, post-indexed addressing, element size = 64b.
- 2. LD4, single 4-element structure, post indexed addressing mode, element size = 64b.
- 3. LD4, multiple 4-element structures, quad form.
- 4. LD4, multiple structures, double word form.
- 5. ST4, multiple 4-element structures, quad form, element size less than 64b.
- 6. ST4, multiple 4-element structures, quad form, element size = 64b, post indexed addressing mode.