



## RA0 - Cortex-A5 implementation

*This course covers the ARM Cortex-A5 CPU*

### OBJECTIVES

- This course is split into 3 important parts:
  - Cortex-A5 architecture
  - Cortex-A5 software implementation and debug
  - Cortex-A5 hardware implementation.
- MMU operation under Linux is described.
- Interaction between level 1 caches, level 2 cache and main memory is studied through sequences.
- The exception mechanism is detailed, indicating how virtualization enables the support of several operating systems.
- The course also details the hardware implementation and provides some guidelines to design a SoC based on Cortex-A5.
- An overview of the Coresight specification is provided prior to describing the debug related units.
- The course explains the mechanisms dedicated to SMP implementation, exclusive resource management, snooping, software generated interrupt.

A more detailed course description is available on request at [formation@ac6-formation.com](mailto:formation@ac6-formation.com)

### PREREQUISITES

- Knowledge of ARM7/9 or having attended our course ARM fundamentals.
- This course does not include chapters on low level programming.
  - ACSYS offers a large set of tutorials to become familiar with RVDS, assembly level programming, compiler hints and tips.
- More than 12 correct answers to our Cortex-A5 prerequisites questionnaire.

### Course Environment

- Theoretical course
  - PDF course material (in English) supplemented by a printed version for face-to-face courses.
  - Online courses are dispensed using the Teams video-conferencing system.
  - The trainer answers trainees' questions during the training and provide technical and pedagogical assistance.
- At the start of each session the trainer will interact with the trainees to ensure the course fits their expectations and correct if needed

### Target Audience

- Any embedded systems engineer or technician with the above prerequisites.

# Course Outline

## First day

### INTRODUCTION TO CORTEX-A5

- Cortex-A5 variants: single core vs multicore
- The 4 instruction sets
- Configurable options

### ARM BASICS

- States and modes
- Exception mechanism
- Instruction sets

### INSTRUCTION PIPELINE

- In-order pipeline operation
- Branch prediction mechanism
- Return stack

### TRUSTZONE

- TrustZone conceptual view
- Secure to non secure permitted transitions
- Memory partitioning
- Interrupt management
- Boot sequence

### INTRODUCTION TO MULTI-CORE SYSTEMS

- AMP vs SMP
- Boot sequence
- Exclusive access monitor
- Global monitor
- Spin-lock implementation
- Using events
- Basic concepts of RTOS supporting A5 SMP architecture

## Second day

### THUMB-2 INSTRUCTION SET (V7-A)

- General points on syntax
- Branch and control flow instructions
- Memory access instructions
- Exception generating instructions
- If&then conditional blocks
- Stack in operation
- Interworking ARM and Thumb states
  - Demonstration of assembly sequences aimed to understand this new instruction set

## MEMORY MANAGEMENT UNIT

- MMU objectives
- Address translation
- Page access permission, domain and page protection
- Utilization of memory barrier instructions
- Format of the external page descriptor table
- Tablewalk
- TLB organization
- Utilization of microTLBs
- Abort exception, on-demand page mechanism
- MMU maintenance operations
- Maintaining coherency of multiple TLBs

## LEVEL 1 MEMORY SYSTEM

- Cache organization
- Supported maintenance operations
- Memory hint instructions
- Describing transient cache related transactions: line fills and line eviction
- 64-bit merging store buffer
- PMU related events

## HARDWARE COHERENCY

- Snooping basics
- Snoop Control Unit: cache-to-cache transfers
- MOESI state machine
- Address filtering
- Understanding through sequences how data coherency is maintained between L2 memory and L1 caches
- Accelerator Coherency Port
- Enabling coherency mode

## Third day

## AMBA 3

- AXI
  - Topology
  - PL301 AXI interconnect
  - AXI channels, channel handshake
  - Support for unaligned data transfers
  - Transaction ordering, out of order transaction completion
  - Cortex-A5 external memory interface, ID encoding
- APB 3

## HARDWARE IMPLEMENTATION

- Clock domains
- Reset domains
- Power control, dynamic power management
- Wait For Interrupt architecture
- Level 2 memory interface
- Exclusive L2 cache

## PL310 LEVEL 2 CACHE

- Cache configurability
- Understanding through sequences how cacheable information is copied from memory to level 1 and level 2 caches
- Transient operations, utilization of line buffers LFBs, LRBs, EBs and STBs
- Cache event monitoring
- Describing each maintenance operation
- Cache lockdown
- Initialization sequence

## PERFORMANCE MONITOR

- Event counting
- Debugging a multi-core system with the assistance of the PMU

## Fourth day

## INTERRUPT CONTROLLER

- Cortex-A5 exception management
- Interrupt virtualization
- Integrated timer and watchdog unit in MPCore
- Interrupt groups: SGI, PPI, SPI, LSPI
- Prioritization of the interrupt sources
- Distribution of the interrupts to the Cortex-A5 cores
- Generation of interrupts by software
- Detailing the interrupt sequence, purpose of Interrupt Acknowledge register and End-Of-Interrupt register

## LOW POWER MODES

- Voltage domains
- Communication to the power management controller
- Standby and wait for event signals
- SCU power status register

## CORESIGHT DEBUG UNITS

- Benefits of CoreSight
- Invasive debug, non-invasive debug, taking into account the secure attribute
- Connection to the Debug Access Port
- Debug facilities offered by Cortex-A5
- Event catching
- Debug Communication Channel
- ETM interface
- Cross-Trigger Interface, debugging a multi-core SoC