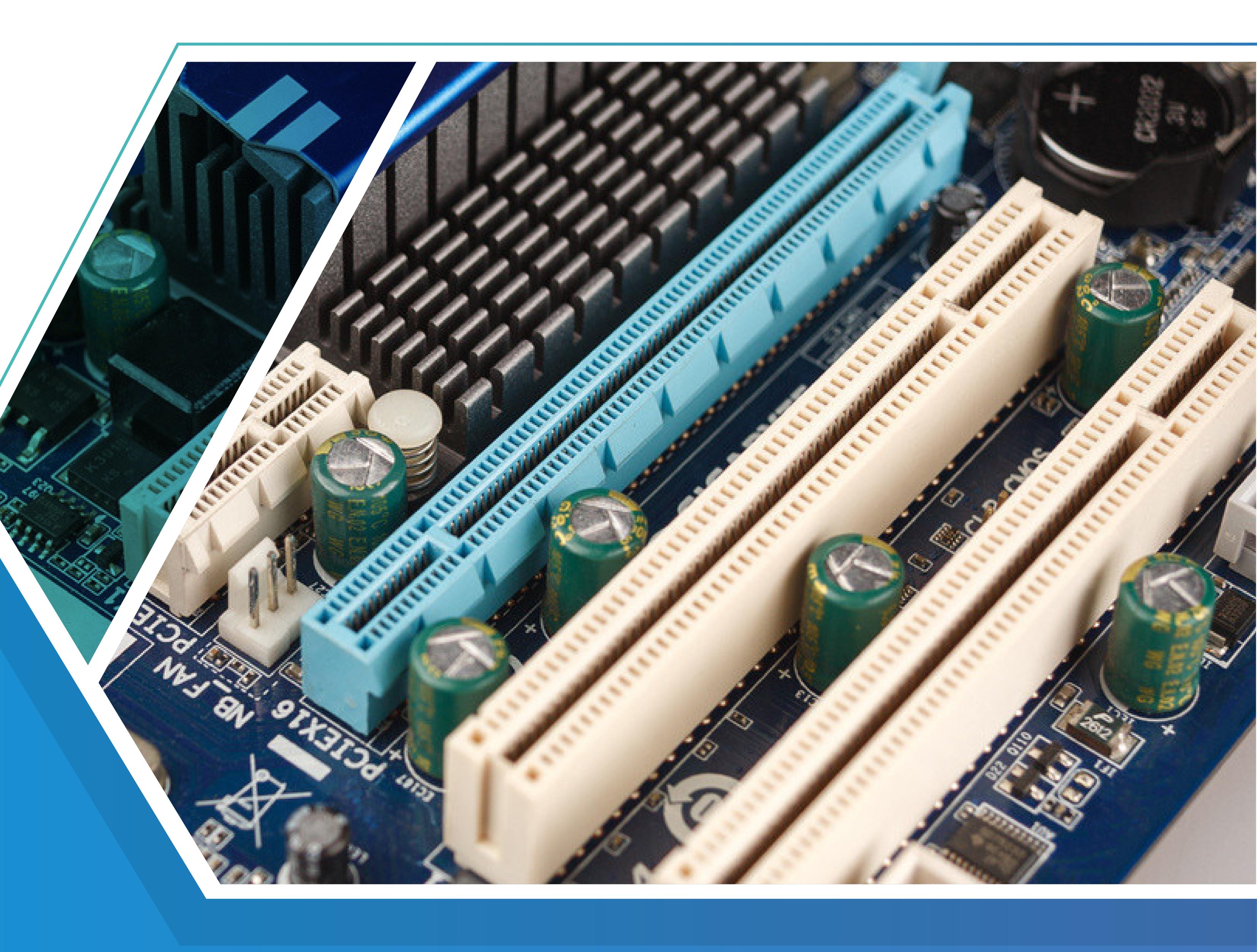


PCIE Gen 6

Equalization Unraveled



By -P Shanmuga Srinivas

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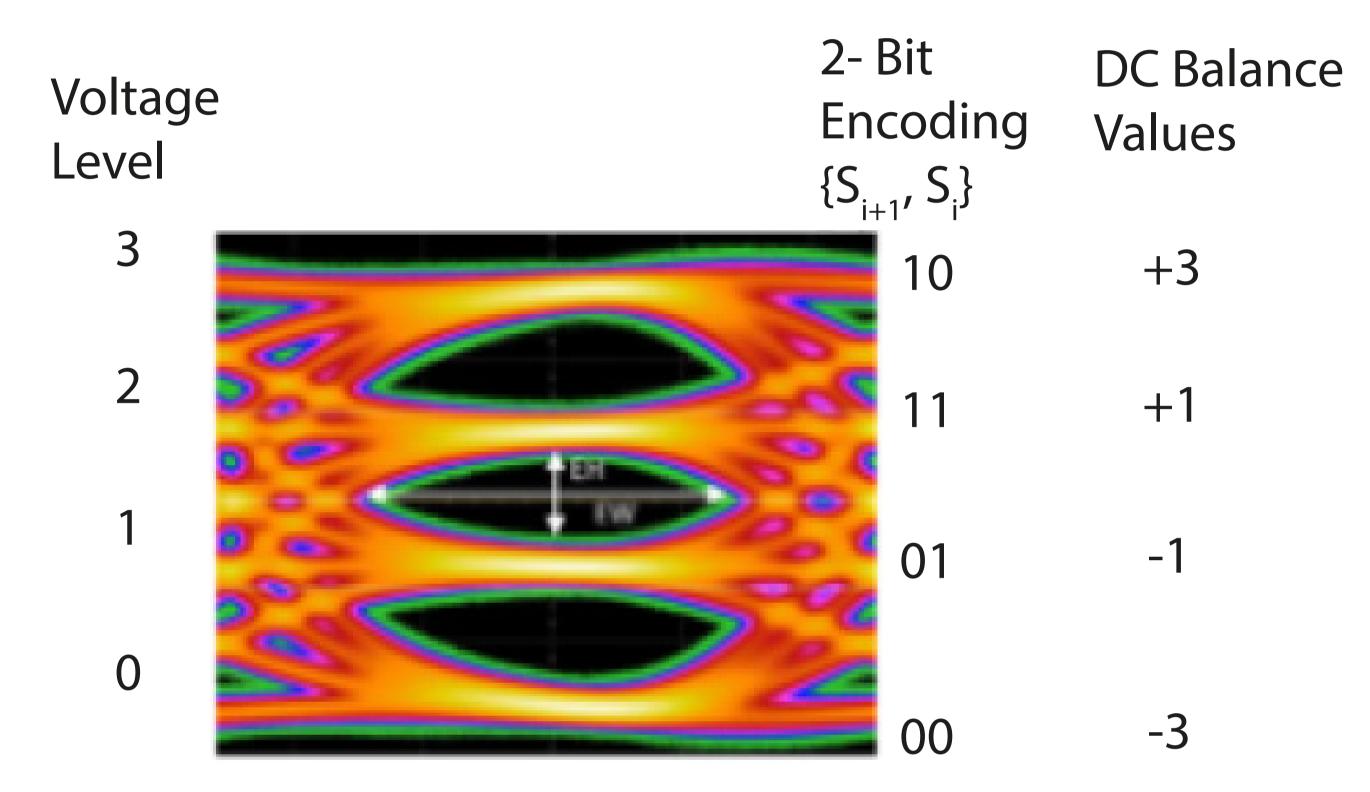




PCI Express Gen 6 Equalization

Introduction:

Equalization is the process of compensating the distortion introduced by the channel. After passing through a band-limited channel, the high frequency components of the signal are heavily attenuated which distorts the signal and spreads it into subsequent symbol periods. This is visible as a closed eye in the eye diagram. The process of equalization produces a sufficiently open eye as in Figure 1, and reduces Inter Symbol Interference (ISI). This facilitates easier recovery of transmitted symbols, ultimately reducing the Bit Error Rate (BER).



Equalization may be implemented on either Rx or Tx side. Since received signal has channel noise mixed to it, equalization on the Rx side may enhance the noise leading to a poor Signal to Noise Ratio (SNR). Thus, equalization on the Tx side is preferred where the signal is free from noise.

Figure 1: PAM4 signaling at UI level

PCIe Gen6 Physical level changes:

PAM4 is used in-place of NRZ in Gen 6 in order to achieve transfer speed of 64 GT/s, which significantly increases the expected BER from 10⁻¹² in previous generations to 10⁻⁶. To deal with the high BER, Forward Error Correction (FEC) is used. Since, FEC works only on fixed-sized codes, gen 6 introduces Flit (Flow Control Unit) which would be used for sending/receiving TLPs and DLLPs in a data stream. To keep the latency low, a low-overhead FEC is used, and a strong flit level CRC for high reliability. Link level retry is used at flit level, and ordered sets are replicated to further compensate for the high BER.

Implementation of Equalization in PCIe Gen 6:

While equalization was implemented on the Tx side with a 3-tap FIR filter in PCIe Gen 3 through 5, it is implemented with a 4-tap FIR filter in PCIe Gen 6 as shown in Figure 2. Four consecutive pulses are multiplied with their respective coefficients and added to generate the filter output.

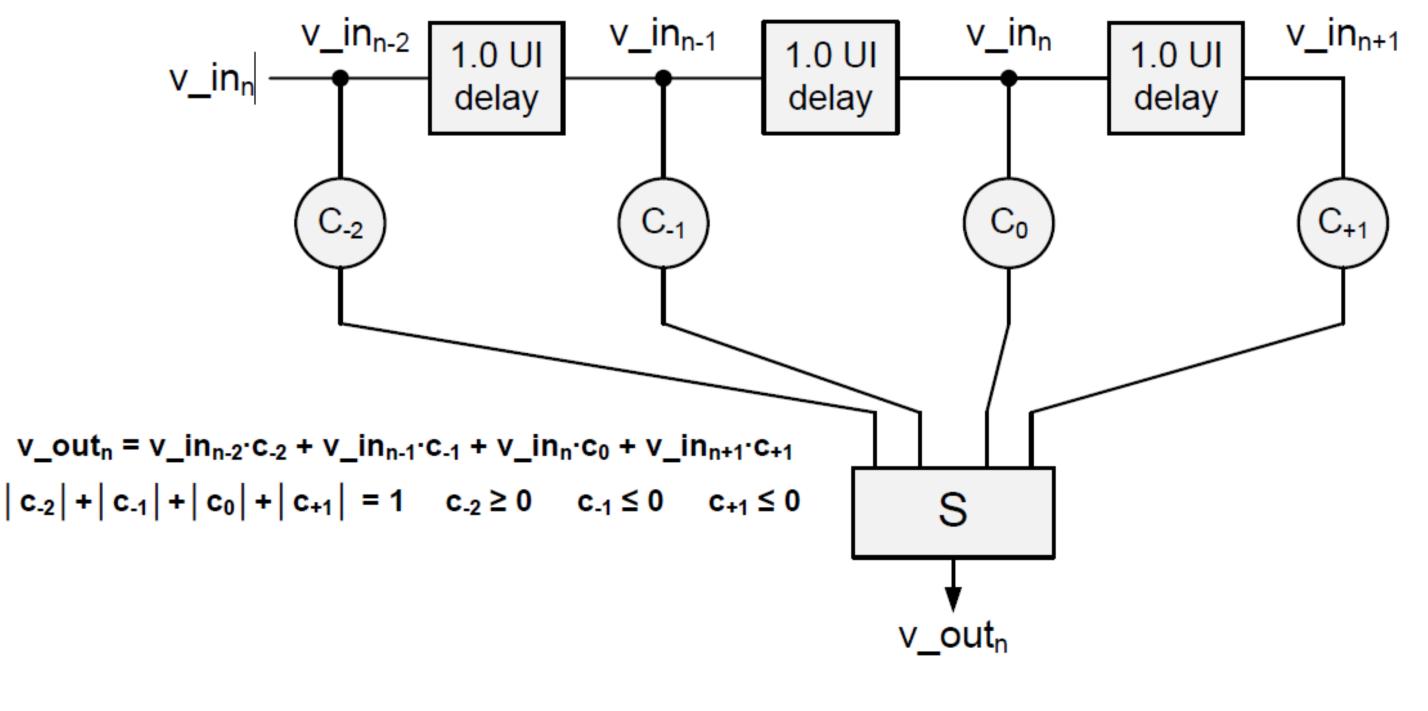


Figure 2: FIR filter

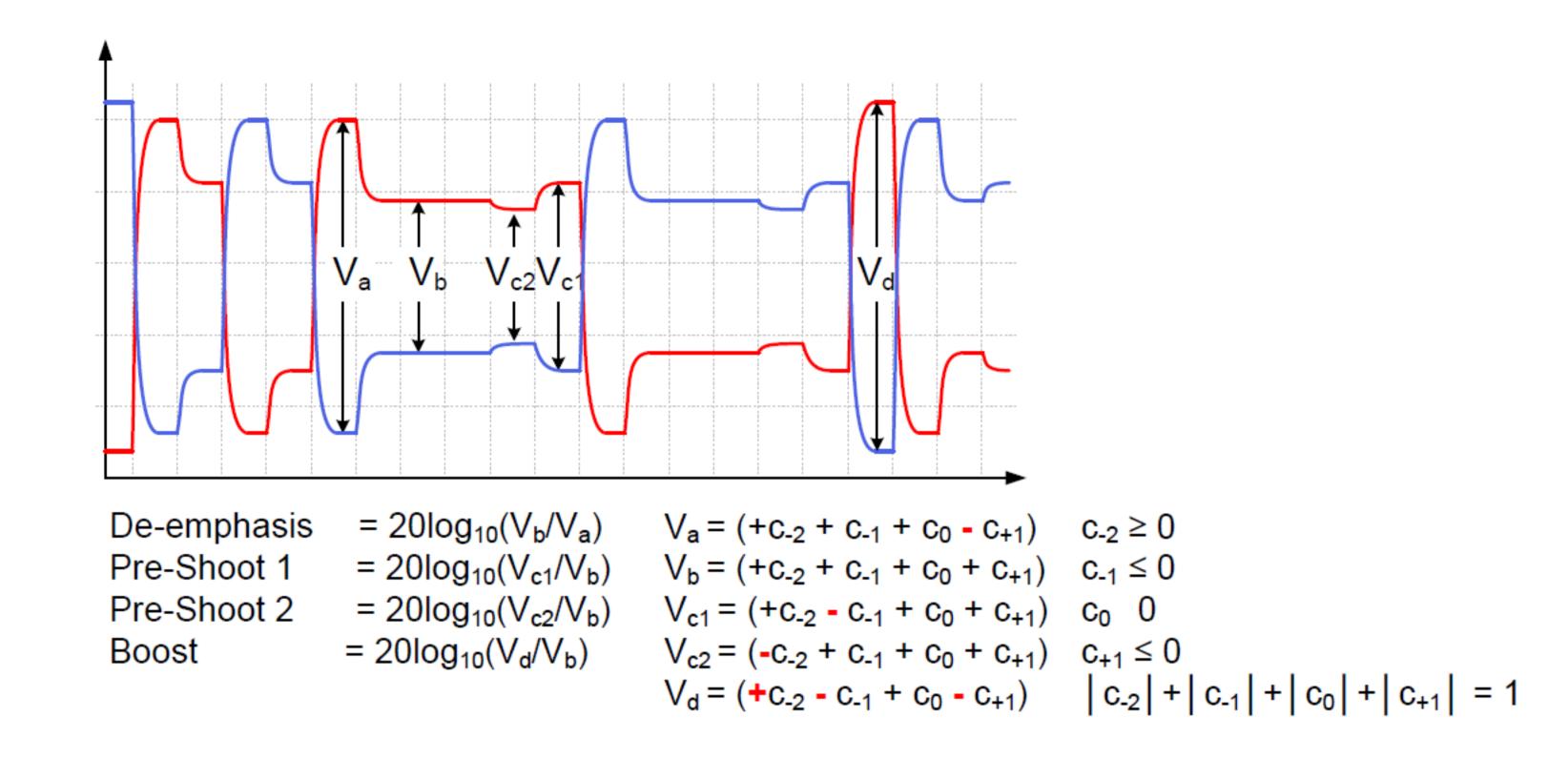




The coefficients C_{-2} , C_{-1} , C_{0} , and C_{+1} are called 2nd precursor, precursor, cursor and postcursor. The coefficients are required to satisfy the following rules:

◇ $|C-1| \le Floor (FS/4)$ ◇ |C-1| + |C-2| + C0 + |C+1| = FS◇ $C0 - |C-1| + |C-2| - |C+1| \ge LF$ ◇ $|C-2| \le Floor (FS/8)$

Here, LF and FS stand for Low Frequency and Full Swing.



Voltage levels possible in the output of the FIR filter with binary signal as input, and their relation with the coefficients are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Tx Voltage levels

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Gen 6 introduces new set of presets Q0 through Q10 for 64 GT/s. Though 8 of the 11 presets overlap, it is possible the same presets might be encoded as different. Figure 4 shows the coefficient values and voltage levels for the presets.

Preset #	Preshoot 2 (dB)	Preshoot 1 (dB)	De-emphasis (dB)	С.2	с.1	C +1	Va/Vd	Vb/Vd	Vc1/Vd	Vc2/Vd
Q0	0.0 ±0.5 dB	b.0 ±0.5 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Q1	0.0 ±0.5 dB	1.6 ±0.5 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.000	-0.083	0.000	0.834	0.834	1.000	0.834
Q2	0.0 ±0.5 dB	3.5 ±0.5 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.000	-0.167	0.000	0.666	0.666	1.000	0.666
Q3	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	-1.6 ±0.5 dB	0.000	0.000	-0.083	1.000	0.834	0.834	0.834
Q4	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	-3.5 ±0.5 dB	0.000	0.000	-0.167	1.000	0.666	0.666	0.666
Q5	-1.3 ±0.5 dB	4.7 ±1.0 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.042	-0.208	0.000	0.584	0.584	1.000	0.500
Q6	-1.6 ±0.5 dB	3.5 ±0.5 dB	-3.5 ±0.5 dB	0.042	-0.125	-0.125	0.750	0.500	0.750	0.416
Q7	-2.9 ±0.5 dB	4.7 ±1.0 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.083	-0.208	0.000	0.584	0.584	1.000	0.418
Q 8	-3.5 ±0.5 dB	6.0 ±1.0 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.083	-0.250	0.000	0.500	0.500	1.000	0.334
Q9	-4.4 ±1.0 dB	6.9 ±1.0 dB	-1.6 ±0.5 dB	0.083	-0.250	-0.042	0.500	0.416	0.916	0.250
Q10	0.0 ±0.5 dB	0.0 ±0.5 dB	Note 2	0.000	0.000	Note 2	1.000	Note 2	Note 2	Note 2

Notes:

1. Reduced swing signaling must implement presets Q0, Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q5. Full swing signaling must implement all the above presets.

2. Q10 boost limits are not fixed, since its de-emphasis level is a function of the LF level that the Tx advertises duringtraining. Q10 is used for testing the boost limit of Transmitter at full swing. Q5 is used for testing the boost limit of Transmitter at reduced swing.

Figure 4: Preset Ratios and Corresponding Coefficient Values



Equalization Procedure for PCIe Gen 6:

The process of equalization in gen 6 remains the same as previous generations, with the exception of ordered sets exchanged in each of the phases. PCIe gen 6 introduces a new ordered set TSO with functionality similar to that of TS1, and changes the definition of TS1 and TS2 ordered sets to incorporate replication of data. TSO has alternate bits set to 0, to enable its representation using only two voltage levels (0 and 3) in PAM4, which is essentially equivalent to NRZ. This allows for easy detection in the initial stages of equalization when the link is not fully trained. Figure 5 specifies which phases of

Current Data Rate / Port	Phase 0/ Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
8.0 GT/s, 16.0 GT/s, or 32.0 GT/s; Upstream/Downstream Lanes	TS1	TS1	TS1
64.0 GT/s Downstream Lanes	TS0	TS0 followed by TS1	TS1
64.0 GT/s Upstream Lanes	TS0	TS0	TS0 followed by TS1

Figure 5: Use of TS0 vs TS1 in different phases

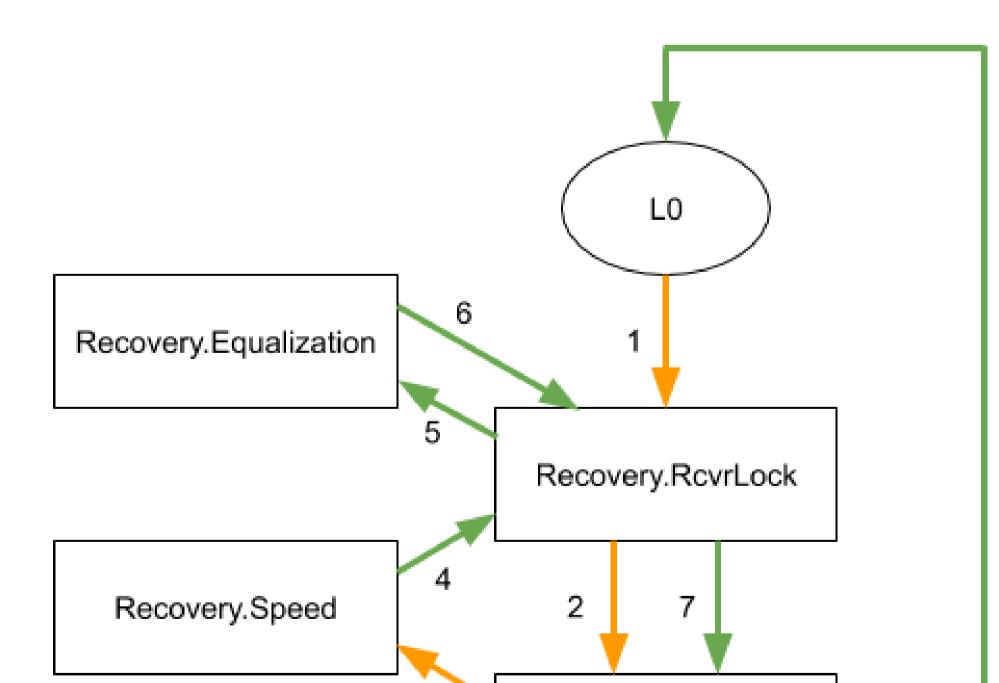
All the Lanes that are associated with the LTSSM must participate in the equalization procedure. Components must not require that the equalization procedure be repeated at any data rate for reliable operation, although there is provision to repeat the procedure. Components must store the Transmitter

setups that were agreed to during the equalization procedures and use them for future operation at 8.0 GT/s and higher data rates. Components are permitted to fine-tune their Receiver setup even after the equalization procedure is complete as long as doing so does not cause the Link to be unreliable or go to Recovery.

Transition to 64 GT/s data rate is only allowed from 32 GT/s, and

thus it is required that the link be operational at 32 GT/s.

Lo is the normal operating state of the link where Data Link Level Packets (DLLPs) and Transaction Level Packets (TLPs) are exchanged.



Path 1

In order to transition to 64 GT/s speed from 32 GT/s, the downstream port initiates a state transition from L0 to Recovery. RcvrLock by setting the variable "directed_speed_change" to 1b, and starts transmitting TS1 with data rate identifier indicating support for 64 GT/s data rate and speed_change bit set to "directed_speed_change" which is equal to 1b.

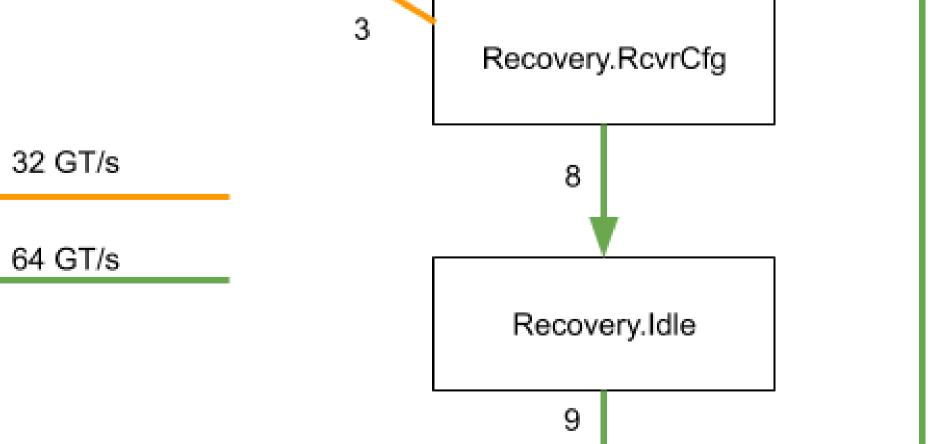


Figure 6: State Transitions for Gen 6 Equalization





The upstream port transitions from L0 to Recovery.RcvrLock after receiving these TS1 with speed_change=1b, and also sets the variable "directed_speed_change" to 1b.

Path 2

Both devices move to Recovery.RcvrCfg upon receiving 8 consecutive TS1 or TS2 with link and lane numbers that match with what is being transmitted, the speed_change bit equal to the "directed_- speed_change" variable and the EC field is 00b.

Transmitters send TS2 Ordered Sets on all configured Lanes using the same Link and Lane numbers that were set after leaving Configuration and the speed_change bit (bit 7 of data rate identifier Symbol in TS2 Ordered Set) set to 1b since the directed_speed_change variable is already set to 1b.

The Downstream Port must transmit 128b/130b EQ TS2 Ordered Sets (TS2 Ordered Sets with Symbol 7 bit 7 set to 1b) on each configured Lane with the Transmitter Preset bits set to the values specified by the "64.0 GT/s Upstream Port Transmitter Preset bits" from the corresponding "64.0 GT/s Lane Equalization Control Register Entry".

The Upstream Port is permitted to transmit 128b/130b EQ TS2 Ordered Sets with the 64.0 GT/s Transmitter Preset bits set to implementation specific values.

The Upstream Port sets the "start_equalization_w_preset" variable to 1b and updates the "Upstream Port 64 GT/s Transmitter Preset field" of the "64 GT/s Lane Equalization Control Register Entry" with the values received in the eight consecutive 128b/130b EQ TS2 Ordered Sets.

The Downstream Port sets the "start_equalization_w_preset" variable equal to 1b since the variable "equalization_done_64GT_data_rate" is still ob.

Path 3

Both ports transition to Recovery.Speed after eight consecutive EQ TS2 or receiving 128b/130b EQ TS2 Ordered Sets on all configured Lanes with identical data rate identifiers, identical value in Symbol 6, and the speed_change bit set to 1b. The Transmitter enters Electrical Idle after sending an EIOS and stays there until the Receiver Lanes have entered Electrical Idle, and then additionally remains there for at least

800 ns on a successful speed negotiation (i.e., successful_speed_negotiation = 1b), following which frequency of operation is changed to the new data rate of 64 GT/s.

Path 4

The "directed_speed_change" variable will be reset to 0b, and changed_speed_recovery to 1b, following which the components transition to Recovery.RcvrLock.





The Upstream port uses the presets it registered in Recovery.RcvrCfg and the Downstream port uses the presets set in "Downstream Port 64.0 GT/s Transmitter Preset field" of the "64.0 GT/s Lane Equalization Control Register Entry".

Path 5

After attaining block alignment, both ports transition to Recovery.Equalization. The "equalization_done_64GT_data_rate" variable is set to 1b.

Phase 0: The Upstream Port sends TSO with EC=00b, and preset values it received in Recovery.RcvrCfg and the Pre-cursor Coefficient, Cursor Coefficient, and Post-cursor Coefficient fields set to values corresponding to the Transmitter Preset bits. The Downstream Port skips Phase 0 and directly enters Phase 1. Next phase for the Upstream port is Phase 1 if all the configured Lanes receive two consecutive TSO/TS1 Ordered Sets with EC = 01b or if all the configured Lanes receive two consecutive TS0 Ordered Sets with EC = 01b or if all the configured Lanes receive two consecutive TS0 Ordered Sets with EC = 01b and Retimer Equalization Extend bit set to ob.

Phase 1: The Downstream Port first enters Phase 1, and begins transmission of TSO with EC=01b, and preset field set to the preset value it is currently using. The Upstream Port, after adjusting its receiver enough to progress with the equalization process, receives these TSO ordered sets and transitions to Phase 1, where it also transmits TSO with EC=01b, and preset field set to the current preset value. Both ports exchange LF and FS values which would be necessary to generate coefficient requests satisfying the coefficient rules in Phase 2 and 3. It is expected that the Link will operate at a BER of less than 10⁻⁴ before the component is ready to move on to the next Phase.

Phase 2: The Downstream Port initiates transition to Phase 2 by transmitting TSO with EC=10b, if all lanes have not received two consecutive TSO Ordered Sets with EC =10b since entering this phase, else it sends TS1 with EC =10b. The Upstream Port follows after receiving two consecutive TS1 with EC = 10b. In this phase the Upstream Port helps the downstream port fine tune its transmitter setting along with its own receiver setting until a BER of less than 10^{-6} is achieved. The Upstream port requests the Downstream port to either apply presets or coefficients by indicating it in the use_preset field (Symbol 1,9: Bit 7) in TSO:

If use_preset = 1, the current request is for a preset change and the requested preset is set in the appropriate field (Symbol 5,13).

✓ If use_preset = 0, the current request is for a coefficient change and the requested coefficients are set in the appropriate fields.

The Downstream port after receiving two consecutive TSO ordered sets with the same request, chooses to either accept or reject the requested settings. If it chooses to accept the requested settings, it applies them on the transmitter and starts sending TS1 with the requested settings and the reject_coefficient bit (Symbol 3,11 Bit 7) set to 0.





If it chooses to reject the requested settings it starts sending TS1 with the requested settings and the reject_coefficient bit (Symbol 3,11 Bit 7) set to 1. In case the requests are accepted, the Upstream port evaluates the settings and requests new settings if required. This continues until the required BER is achieved, after which the Upstream port makes the transition to Phase 3 after sending TS0 with EC=11b.

Phase 3: The Downstream Port also makes the transition to Phase 3 after receiving two consecutive TS1 with EC=11b. In this phase the Downstream Port helps the upstream port fine tune its transmitter setting along with its own receiver setting until a BER of less than 10⁻⁶ is achieved after following a method similar to Phase 2. The Downstream Port sends TS1 with EC=00b to indicate that it is satisfied with the BER and thus the end of equalization procedure.

Path 6

Following this, the Downstream Port sets Equalization 64.0 GT/s Phase 3 Successful and Equalization 64.0 GT/s Complete bits of the 64.0 GT/s Status Register to 1b, and transitions to Recovery.RcvrLock.

The Upstream Port enters Recovery.RcvrLock after receiving two consecutive TS1 with EC=00b, and sets the Equalization 64.0 GT/s Phase 3 Successful and Equalization 64.0 GT/s Complete bits of the 64.0 GT/s Status Register to 1b.

In Recovery.RcvrLock, both ports must set the Coefficient fields in the transmitted TS1 Ordered Sets to the

current Transmitter settings. The downstream port must additionally set its preset field if the last accepted request in Phase 2 was a preset. The Upstream Port must evaluate the equalization coefficients or preset received by all Lanes that receive eight TS1 Ordered Sets and note whether they are different from the final set of coefficients or preset that was accepted in Phase 2 of the equalization process. Mismatches are reported in Recovery.RcvrCfg by setting the Request Equalization bit of TS2 Ordered Sets.

Path 7

Both devices move to Recovery.RcvrCfg upon receiving 8 consecutive TS1 or TS2 with link and lane numbers that match with what is being transmitted, the speed_change bit is equal to the directed_- speed_change variable and the EC field is 00b in all the consecutive TS1 Ordered Sets.

Path 8

Transition to Recovery.Idle takes place for both devices either or both of the following conditions are true:

- ✓ if eight consecutive TS2 Ordered Sets are received on all configured Lanes with the same Link and Lane number that match what is being transmitted on those same Lanes, identical data rate identifiers within each Lane, and the speed_change bit is ob.
- ✓ 16 TS2 Ordered Sets are sent after receiving one TS2 Ordered Set without being interrupted by any intervening EIEOS.





The changed_speed_recovery variable is reset to ob on entry to Recovery.Idle.

Path 9

Transmitter sends one SDS Ordered Set sequence followed by a Control SKP Ordered Set on all configured Lanes followed by IDLE Flits to start a Data Stream. The transition to L0 takes place upon receiving eight consecutive IDLE Flits and sending 32 IDLE Flits after receiving one IDLE Flit.

Additional Mechanisms for Equalization:

Autonomous vs Software Based Equalization

The equalization procedure can be initiated either autonomously or by software. It is strongly recommended that components use the autonomous mechanism. However, a component that chooses not to participate in the autonomous mechanism must have its associated software ensure that the software based mechanism is applied prior to operating at that data rate.

Skipping Equalization in lower data rates

There is providence to skip equalization for lower data rates and begin with equalization for 32 GT/s (which is also the highest NRZ supported data rate) if both components support data rates of 32 GT/s or

higher, and the mechanism as advertised in TS1/TS2 or modified TS1/TS2 ordered sets. After making the link operational in 32 GT/s (by performing equalization at 32 GT/s if necessary), the transition to 64 GT/s can be made. The link can be trained to be operational at 64 GT/s speed by performing 64 GT/s equalization.

Skipping Equalization

Equalization process can be entirely skipped and the link can operate in the highest data rate available if all components support data rates of 32 GT/s or higher and "No Equalization Needed" mechanism. This mechanism is advertised if the component is capable of retrieving settings from a prior equalization or it is sure that it doesn't require equalization in all data rates above 5.0 GT/s.

Redo Equalization

If the Downstream Port detects equalization problems or the Upstream Port made an equalization redo request, the Downstream Port may redo equalization prior to proceeding to operate at the data rate where the equalization failed or performing equalization at a higher data rate. It is possible to attempt to redo equalization at 64 GT/s only from the data rate of 32 GT/s.





Ordered Sets:

The following are the new definitions of ordered sets in gen 6:

1b/1b Encoding: When operating at 64GT/s, FLIT-Mode operation uses unencoded data – referred to as "1b1b encoded" in contrast to the 128/130 encoding used for link speeds of 8GT/s through 32GT/s, and the classic 8b10b encoding used for link speeds of 2.5GT/s and 5GT/s.

EIOS: Electrical Idle Ordered Set

Before a Transmitter enters Electrical Idle, it must always send an Electrical Idle Ordered Set unless

otherwise specified for 32.0 GT/s and 64.0 GT/s Data Rate.

For 128b/130b encoding, EIOS has all 16 symbols set to 66h, while for 1b/1b encoding it has even symbols set to 0Fh and odd symbols set to Foh.

EIEOS: Electrical Idle Exit Ordered Set

It is a low frequency pattern transmitted periodically to help ensure that receiver Electrical Idle exit circuitry can detect an exit from Electrical Idle. It is also periodically sent in between TS ordered sets.

Symbol No.	Value	Description
0 - 7	ooh	Voltage level 0 for 32 UI

18 - 15	FFH	Voltage level 3 for 32 UI

SKP: Skip Ordered Set

Symbol No.	Value	Description
0,2,4,,22	Foh	SKP symbol
1,3,5,,23	oFh	SKP symbol
24-27,28-31	FFF000F0h	SKP_END

32-39	Foh if previous OS is a TSO. Else Phy Payload	PHY Payload

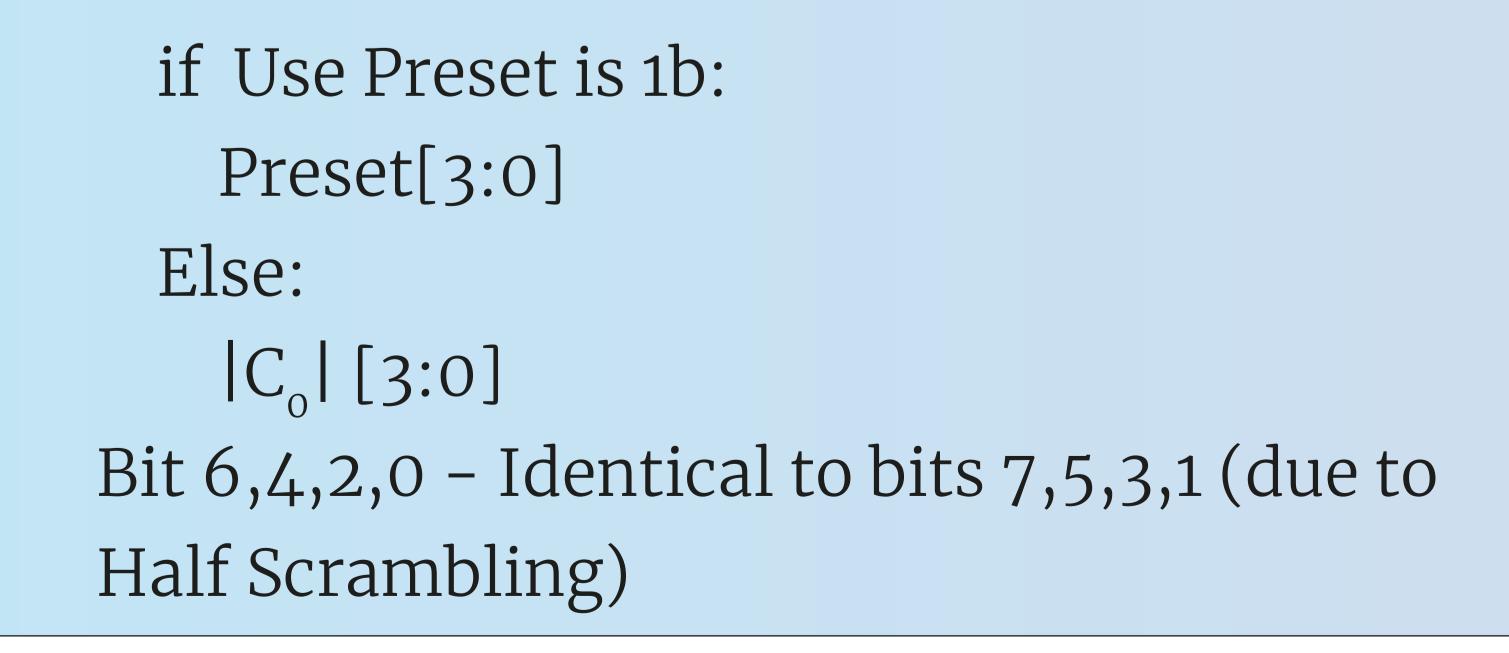
SKP OS are used to compensate for the small differences in the frequencies of transmitter and receiver clocks by having the receiver add or remove symbols from received SKP OS to keep the elastic buffer from under-flowing and overflowing. When using Flit Mode, only Control SKP Ordered Sets are transmitted. A transmitted SKP Ordered Set is 40 symbols (40B), and a received SKP Ordered Set can be 24, 32, 40, 48 or 56 symbols.





TSO: Training Sequence 0

Symbol	Description	
0,8	33h – TS0 identifier	
1,9	Bit 3,1 – Equalization Control (EC) Bit 5 – Reset EIEOS Interval Count Bit 7 – Use Preset Bit 6,4,2,0 – Identical to bits 7,5,3,1 (due to Half Scrambling)	
2,10	Bit 7,5,3,1 – Phase 0,1: FS[3:0] Phase 2: C ₋₁ [3:0] Bit 6,4,2,0 – Identical to bits 7,5,3,1 (due to Half Scrambling)	
3,11	Bit 3,1 – Phase 0,1: FS[5:4] Phase 2: $ C_{+1} $ [1:0] Bit 7,5 – Phase 0,1: LF[1:0] Phase 2: $ C_{+1} $ [3:2] Bit 6,4,2,0 – Identical to bits 7,5,3,1 (due to Half Scrambling)	
4,12	Bit 1 – Phase 0,1: LF[2] Phase 2: $ C_{+1} $ [4] Bit 7,5,3 – Phase 0,1: LF[5:3] Phase 2: $ C_{-2} $ [2:0] Bit 6,4,2,0 – Identical to bits 7,5,3,1 (due to Half Scrambling)	
5,13	Bit 7,5,3,1 – Phase 0,1: Preset [3:0] Phase 2:	







6,14	6,14 Bit 3,1 – Phase 2: $ C_0 $ [5:4] Bit 5 – Retimer Equalization Extend Bit 6,4,2,0 – Identical to bits 7,5,3,1 (due to Half Scrambling)	
7,15	If DC Balance adjustment is needed at start of TS0: 00h,02h,22h (Unscrambled)	

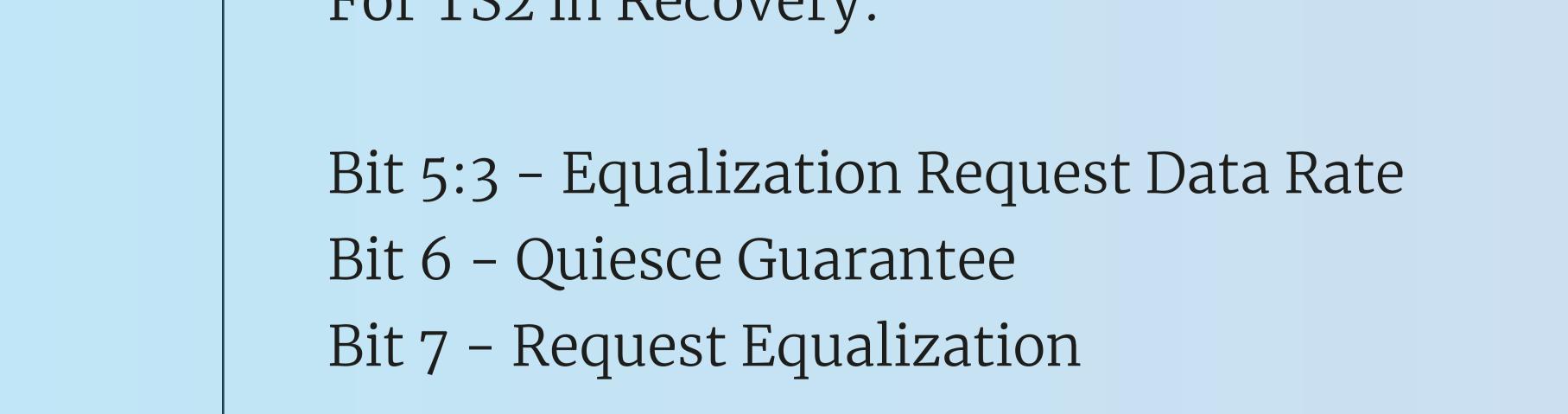


Bit 1,3,5,7 Half Scrambled Byte Level Even Parity Bit 6,4,2,0 – Identical to bits 7,5,3,1 (due to Half Scrambling)

TS1 or TS2 : Training Sequence 1 or Training Sequence 2

Else:

Symbol	Description
0,8	1Bh – TS1 Identifier 39h – TS2 Identifier
1,9	Configuration or Hot Reset state: Link Number
	For TS1 in Recovery and Loopback:
	Bit 1:0 – Equalization Control
	Bit 2 – Reset EIEOS Interval Count
	Bit 6:3 – Preset
	Bit 7 – Use Preset/Equalization Redo
	For TS2 in Recovery:





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2,10	For TS1 and TS2 : Configuration or Hot Reset state: Lane Number Recovery: Bit 5:0 - FS when EC=01b, otherwise C0 . Bit 6 - Transmitter Precoding on Bit 7 - Retimer Equalization Extend bit
3,11	For TS1 in Recovery: Bit 3:0 - $ C_{-1} $ [3:0] Bit 6:4 - $ C_{-2} $ [2:0] Bit 7 - Reject Coefficient Values For TS2 :Reserved
4,12	For TS1 in Recovery: Bit 4:0 - C ₊₁ [4:0] Bit 7:5 - Reserved For TS2 :Reserved
5,13	 For TS1 or TS2: Bit 0 - Reserved Bit 5:1 - Data Rates Supported: 11111b (2.5, 5.0, 8.0, 16.0, and 32.0 GT/s supported) 10111b (2.5, 5.0, 8.0, 16.0, 32.0 GT/s and 64.0 GT/s supported) Bit 6 - Autonomous Change / Selectable De-emphasis Bit 7 - Speed Change
6,14	For TS1 and TS2 : Bit 3:0 - 0000b : De assert 0001b : Assert Hot Reset

0010b : Assert Disable

0100b : Assert Loopback - the Follower Port at Receiver
(A or F) loops back to its Transmitter
0101b : Assert Loopback - the Pseudo-Port Receiver B or C
loops back to its Transmitter
0110b : Assert Loopback - the Pseudo-Port Receiver D or E
loops back to its Transmitter
1000b : Assert Compliance Receive Bit





	1100h · Accort I conhack and Compliance Deceive Dit
	1100b : Assert Loopback and Compliance Receive Bit Others : Reserved
	Bit 7:4 Reserved
7,15	If DC Balance needs adjustment at the start of the TS1 or TS2: DC Balance Symbol

else: Symbol 7 = Symbol 0 ^ Symbol 1 ^ ... Symbol 6 Symbol 15 = Symbol 8 ^ Symbol 9 ^ ... Symbol 14

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Our engineers have expertise with many high speed protocols and interfaces, including 1G, /10G/40G/100G Ethernet, PCIe(Gen1-Gen6), USB3.0/4.0, CPRI/ORAN, DisplayPort, ARINC818 etc.

The team also has deep expertise in Signal processing for wireless and Imaging based solution development, software-defined radio (SDR), as well as encryption, protocol compliance, signal generation, data analysis, IoT technology, and multiple image processing techniques.

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We have worked on RTL IP and sub-system design for Latest generation of PCIe and other high speed

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UVM and RTL-SW co-simulation. We also perform FPGA prototyping, validation, and testing with real

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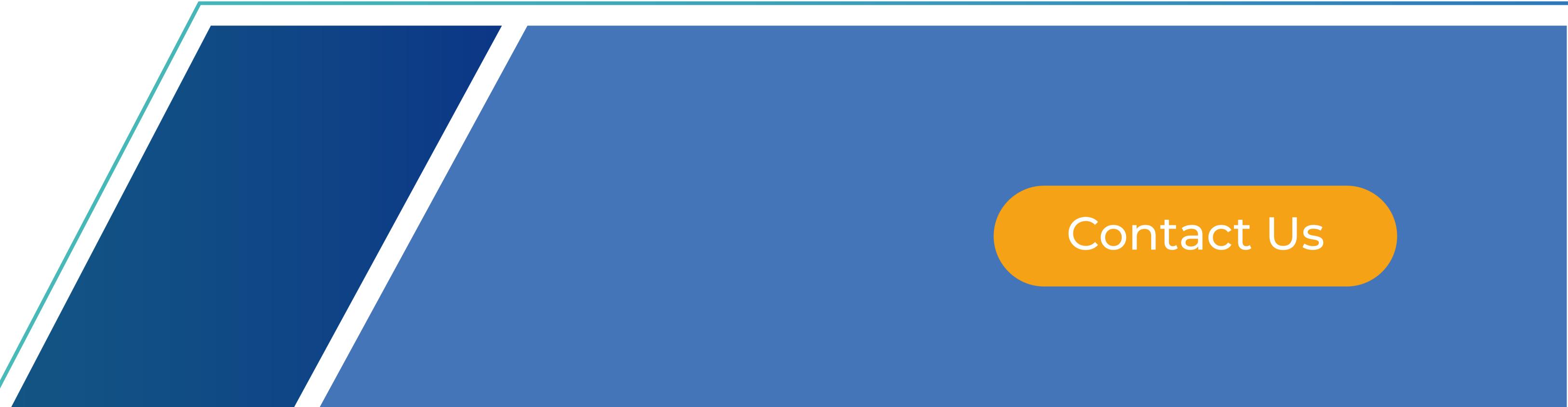






Thank You!

Does anyone have any questions?



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