

CPU Scheduling Policies

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OS scheduler

- OS scheduler schedules process on CPU
 - One process at a time per core
 - Multiple processes can run in parallel on multiple cores
- **Scheduling policy**: which one of the ready/runnable processes should be run next on a given CPU core?
 - Mechanism of context switching (save context of old process in its kernel stack/PCB and restore context of new process) is independent of policy
- Simple scheduling policies have good theoretical guarantees, but not practical for real operating systems
 - Real-life schedulers are very complex, involve many heuristics

Preemptive vs. non preemptive schedulers

- When is the OS scheduler invoked to trigger a context switch?
 - Only when a process is in kernel mode for a trap, but not on every trap
- **Non-preemptive scheduler** performs only **voluntary** context switches
 - Process makes blocking system call
 - Process has exited or has been terminated
- **Preemptive scheduler** performs **involuntary** context switches also
 - Process can be context switched out even if process is still runnable/ready
 - OS can ensure that no process runs for too long on CPU, starving others
- Modern systems use preemptive schedulers
 - Process can be context switched out any time in its execution

Timer interrupts

- Scheduler (OS) can run only when process is in kernel mode
- What if process never goes to kernel mode? How to perform pre-emptive scheduling?
- Timer interrupts: special interrupts that go off periodically
- Used by OS to get back in control periodically
 - Increment clock ticks, do other book keeping
 - Run scheduling algorithm if required to do involuntary context switch of currently running process
- Hardware support in the form of timer interrupts essential to implementing pre-emptive scheduling policies

Goals of CPU scheduling policy

- Maximize **utilization**: efficient use of CPU hardware
- Minimize **completion time / turnaround time** of a process = time from process creation to completion
- Minimize **response time** of a process = time from process creation to first time it is run (important for interactive processes)
- **Fairness**: all processes get a fair share of CPU (account for priorities also)
- Low **overhead** of scheduling policy
 - Scheduler does not take too long to make a decision (even with large #processes)
 - Scheduler does not cause too many context switches (~1 microsecond to switch)

Simplest policy: First In First Out

- Newly created processes are put in a **FIFO queue**, scheduler runs them one after another from queue
- **Non-preemptive**: process allowed to run till it terminates or blocks
 - When process unblocks, the next run is separate “job”, added to queue again
 - That is, if a process comes back after I/O wait, it counts as a fresh CPU burst (**CPU burst** = the CPU time used by a process in a continuous stretch)
- Example schedule: P1 (1-5), P2 (6-8), P3 (9 to 10)

Process	CPU time needed (units)	Arrives at end of time unit	Execution time slots
P1	5	0	1-5
P2	3	1	6-8
P3	2	3	9-10

Problem with FIFO

- Example: three processes arrive at $t=0$ in the order A,B,C
- Problem: convoy effect (small processes get stuck behind long processes)
- Average turnaround times tend to be high

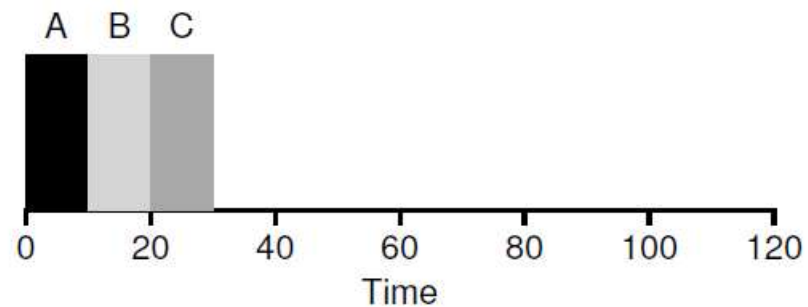


Figure 7.1: FIFO Simple Example

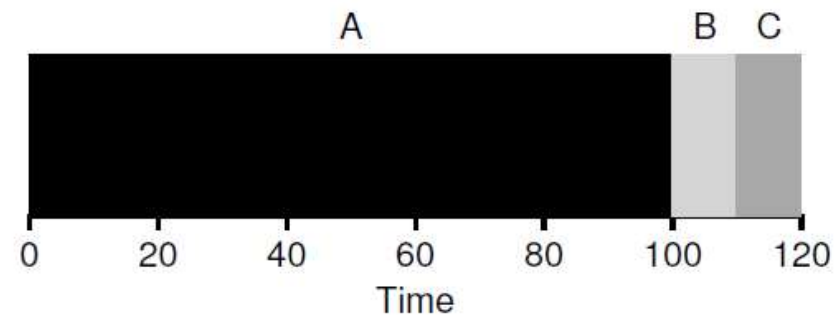


Figure 7.2: Why FIFO Is Not That Great

Shortest Job First (SJF)

- Assume **CPU burst** of a process (amount of time a process runs on CPU until termination/blocking) is known apriori
- Pick process with smallest CPU burst to run next, non-preemptive
 - Store PCBs in a heap-like data structure, extract process with min CPU burst
- Example schedule: P1 (1-5), P3 (6-7), P2 (8-10)

Process	CPU burst	Arrival time	Execution time slots
P1	5	0	1-5
P2	3	1	8-10
P3	2	3	6-7

Problem with SJF

- Provably optimal when all processes arrive together
 - Theoretically guaranteed to have the lowest average turnaround time across all policies (under certain assumptions)
- SJF is non-preemptive, so short jobs can still get stuck behind long ones.

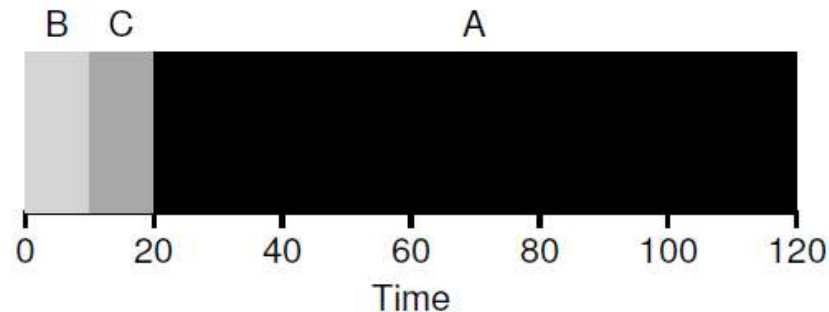


Figure 7.3: SJF Simple Example

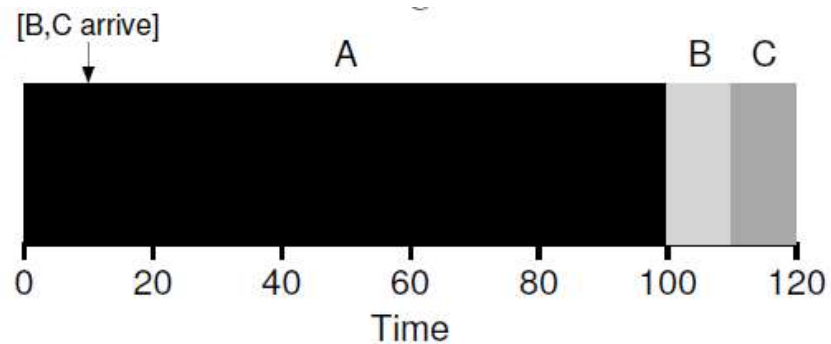


Figure 7.4: SJF With Late Arrivals From B and C

Shortest Remaining Time First (SRTF)

- Preemptive version of SJF
- A newly arrived process can preempt a running process, if CPU burst of new process is shorter than remaining time of running process
 - Avoids problem of short process getting stuck behind long one
- Example schedule: P1 runs for 1 unit, P2 (2-4), P3 (5-6), P1 (7-10)

Process	CPU burst	Arrival time	Execution time slots
P1	5	0	1, preempted , then 7-10
P2	3	1	2-4
P3	2	3	5-6

Round Robin (RR)

- Every process executes for a fixed quantum slice
 - Slice not too small (to amortize cost of context switch)
 - Slice not too big (to provide good responsiveness)
- Preemptive policy
 - Timer interrupt used to enforce periodic scheduling
- Good for response time, fairness
- Bad for turnaround time
- xv6 is a simple RR scheduler

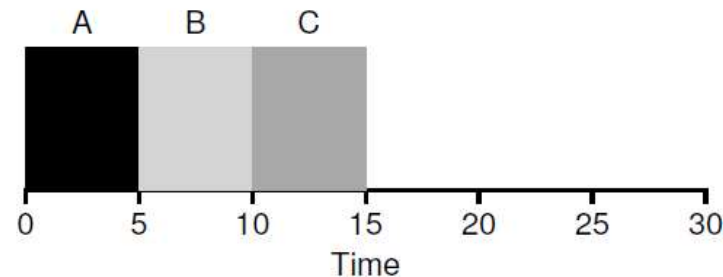


Figure 7.6: SJF Again (Bad for Response Time)

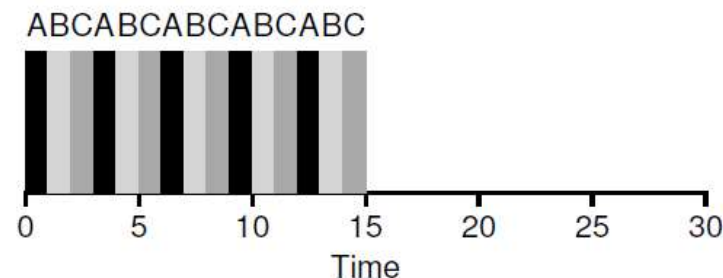


Figure 7.7: Round Robin (Good for Response Time)

Weighted Fair Queueing (WFQ)

- Round robin with different **weights** or **priorities** to processes
 - Decided by scheduler or can be set by users
 - Time slice will be in proportion to the weight or priority
- Real life schedulers may not be able to enforce time slice exactly
 - What if timer interrupt is not exactly aligned with time slice?
 - What if process blocks before its time slice?
- Practical modification: keep track of run time of process, schedule process that has used least fraction of its fair share
 - Compensate excess/deficit running time in future time slices
- **Linux scheduler** is a variant of weighted fair queueing
 - CFS (completely fair scheduler) uses red-black trees to keep track of the fair share run time of processes, schedules the one with least run time

Multi-level feedback queue (MLFQ)

- Another practical algorithm, with realistic assumptions
- What problem does it solve?
- Ideally, we want to optimize for turnaround time like SJF, give priority to shorter jobs (less time on CPU, more time on I/O)
 - But we do not know running time beforehand
- Also ensure low response time like round robin
- How to optimize for both turnaround time and response time without knowing job size apriori?

Overview of MLFQ

- Multiple queues, one for each priority level
 - Schedule processes from highest priority queue to lowest
 - Use round robin scheduling for processes within same priority level
- What is priority? Set by user but decays with age. Why?

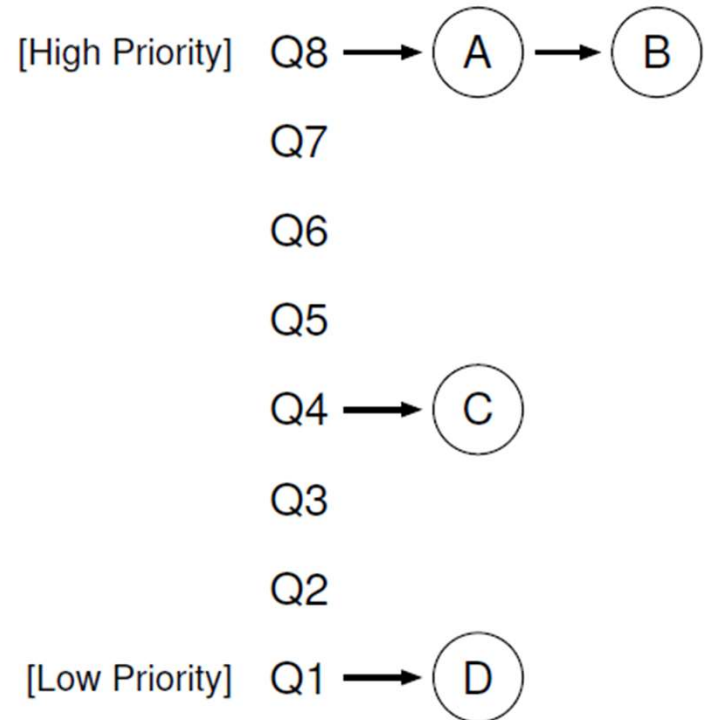


Figure 8.1: MLFQ Example

Priority decays with age

- Job that uses up its time slice at a priority level goes to lower priority
- Why? Ensures short I/O-bound processes get priority over long CPU-bound processes, but without knowing CPU burst apriori

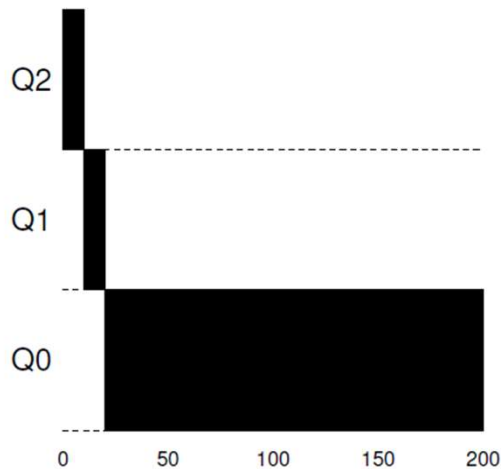


Figure 8.2: Long-running Job Over Time

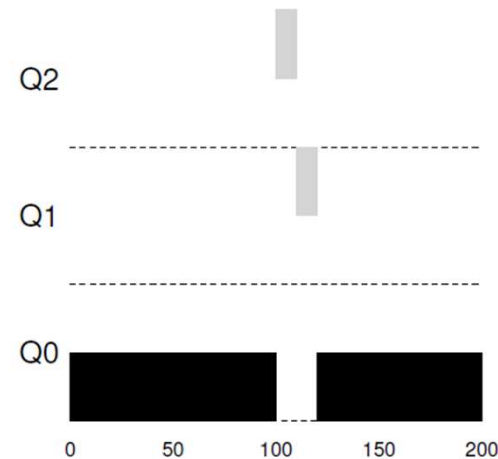


Figure 8.3: Along Came An Interactive Job

Image credit: OSTEP

Avoiding starvation

- Periodically reset all processes to highest priority level to avoid starvation of low priority or CPU-bound processes

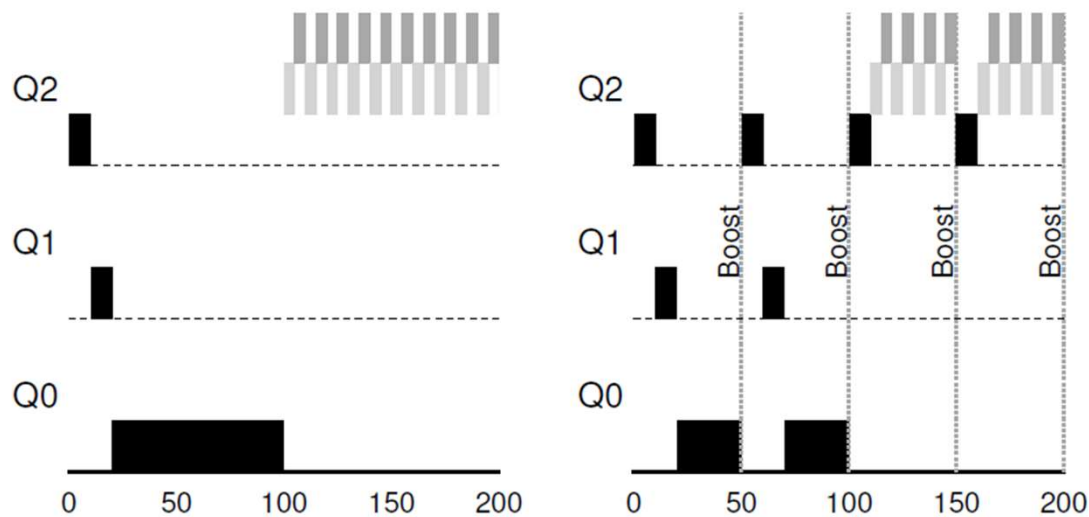


Figure 8.5: Without (Left) and With (Right) Priority Boost

Other considerations

- What if a job always gives up CPU just before its time slice ends? Do we keep it always at highest priority?
- We can consider total time spent by a job at a given priority level, not time in just one execution
- Time slice can vary with priority level
 - Longer time slice for lower priority long running jobs
- How to parameterize? How many priority levels? What is time slice?
 - No easy answers, must be tuned based on workload
 - Every OS comes with some default parameters

MLFQ summary

- **Rule 1:** If $\text{Priority}(A) > \text{Priority}(B)$, A runs (B doesn't).
- **Rule 2:** If $\text{Priority}(A) = \text{Priority}(B)$, A & B run in RR.
- **Rule 3:** When a job enters the system, it is placed at the highest priority (the topmost queue).
- **Rule 4:** Once a job uses up its time allotment at a given level (regardless of how many times it has given up the CPU), its priority is reduced (i.e., it moves down one queue).
- **Rule 5:** After some time period S , move all the jobs in the system to the topmost queue.

So, what have we achieved with MLFQ?

- Prioritize short, I/O bound processes over long, CPU bound processes
- Why? System works best when short processes don't have to wait for too long behind longer processes (that's why SJF is optimal!)
- How is this done? I/O bound processes will stay at highest priority level
- We do this without knowing the run times apriori, so practical to work in real life scenarios
- Real life schedulers cannot make assumptions on knowing run times etc, but still try to achieve good properties of theoretically optimal schedulers

Multicore scheduling

- Scheduling decision needs to be made separately for each core
- Do we bind a process to a particular CPU core always, or do we let a process run on any CPU core that is free?
- Ensuring a process runs on the same core as far as possible is better
 - Avoids coordination overheads across cores, better CPU cache performance
- But, we must be flexible too
 - If CPU core overloaded, some of its processes must move to another core
 - Load balancing across cores to ensure uniform workload distribution