

Implementing Scheduling Algorithms

Real-Time and Embedded Systems (M)

Lecture 9

Lecture Outline

- Implementing real time systems
 - Key concepts and constraints
 - System architectures:
 - Cyclic executive
 - Microkernel with priority scheduler
- Implementing scheduling algorithms
 - Jobs, tasks, and threads
 - Priority scheduling of periodic tasks
 - Rate monotonic
 - Earliest deadline first
 - Priority scheduling of aperiodic and sporadic tasks

Implementing Real Time Systems

- Key fact from scheduler theory: *need predictable behaviour*
 - Raw performance less critical than consistent and predictable performance; hence focus on scheduling algorithms, schedulability tests
 - Don't want to fairly share resources – be unfair to ensure deadlines met
- Need to run on a wide range of – often custom – hardware
 - Often resource constrained:
 - limited memory, CPU, power consumption, size, weight, budget
 - Embedded and may be difficult to upgrade
 - Closed set of applications, trusted code
 - Strong reliability requirements – may be safety critical
 - How to upgrade software in a car engine? A DVD player? After you shipped millions of devices?

Implications on Operating Systems

- General purpose operating systems not well suited for real time
 - Assume plentiful resources, fairly shared amongst untrusted users
 - Exactly the opposite of an RTOS!
 - Instead want an operating system that is:
 - Small and light on resources
 - Predictable
 - Customisable, modular and extensible
 - Reliable
- ...and that can be *demonstrated* or *proven* to be so

Implications on Operating Systems

- Real-time operating systems typically either *cyclic executive* or *microkernel* designs, rather than a traditional monolithic kernel
 - Limited and well defined functionality
 - Easier to demonstrate correctness
 - Easier to customise
- Provide rich scheduling primitives
- Provide rich support for concurrency
- Expose low-level system details to the applications
 - Control of scheduling
 - Power awareness
 - Interaction with hardware devices

Cyclic Executive

- The simplest real-time systems use a “nanokernel” design
 - Provides a minimal time service: scheduled clock pulse with fixed period
 - No tasking, virtual memory/memory protection, etc.
 - Allows implementation of a static cyclic schedule, provided:
 - Tasks can be scheduled in a frame-based manner
 - All interactions with hardware to be done on a polled basis
- Operating system becomes a single task cyclic executive

```
setup timer
c = 0;
while (1) {
    suspend until timer expires
    c++;
    do tasks due every cycle
    if ((c+0) % 2) == 0) do tasks due every 2nd cycle
    if ((c+1) % 3) == 0) {
        do tasks due every 3rd cycle, with phase 1
    }
    ...
}
```

Microkernel Architecture

- Cyclic executive widely used in low-end embedded devices
 - 8 bit processors with kilobytes of memory
 - Often programmed in C via cross-compiler, or assembler
 - Simple hardware interactions
 - Fixed, simple, and static task set to execute
 - Clock driven scheduler
- But... many real-time embedded systems more complex, need a sophisticated operating system with priority scheduling
- Common approach: a *microkernel* with priority scheduler
 - Configurable and robust, since architected around interactions between cooperating system servers, rather than a monolithic kernel with ad-hoc interactions

Microkernel Architecture

- A microkernel RTOS typically provides a number of features:
 - Scheduling
 - Timing services, interrupt handling, support for hardware interaction
 - System calls with predictable timing behaviour
 - Messaging, signals and events
 - Synchronization and locking
 - Memory protection
- These features often differ from non-RTOS environments
 - This lecture discussing scheduler implementation
 - Next few lectures discuss programming APIs and other features

Scheduler Implementation

- Clock driven scheduling trivial to implement via cyclic executive
- Other scheduling algorithms need operating system support:
 - System calls to create, destroy, suspend and resume tasks
 - Implement tasks as either *threads* or *processes*
 - Processes (with separate address space and memory protection) not always supported by the hardware, and often *not useful*
 - Scheduler with multiple priority levels, range of periodic task scheduling algorithms, support for aperiodic tasks, support for sporadic tasks with acceptance tests, etc.

Jobs, Tasks and Threads

- A system comprises a set of *tasks*, each task is a series of *jobs*
 - Tasks are typed, have various parameters (ϕ, p, e, D), react to events, etc.
 - Acceptance test performed before admitting new tasks
- A *thread* is the basic unit of work handled by the scheduler
 - Threads are the instantiation of tasks that have been admitted to the system
 - [If separate address space, discuss *processes*, but no scheduler changes]
- How are tasks and jobs mapped onto threads and managed by the scheduler?

Periodic Tasks

- Real time tasks defined to execute periodically

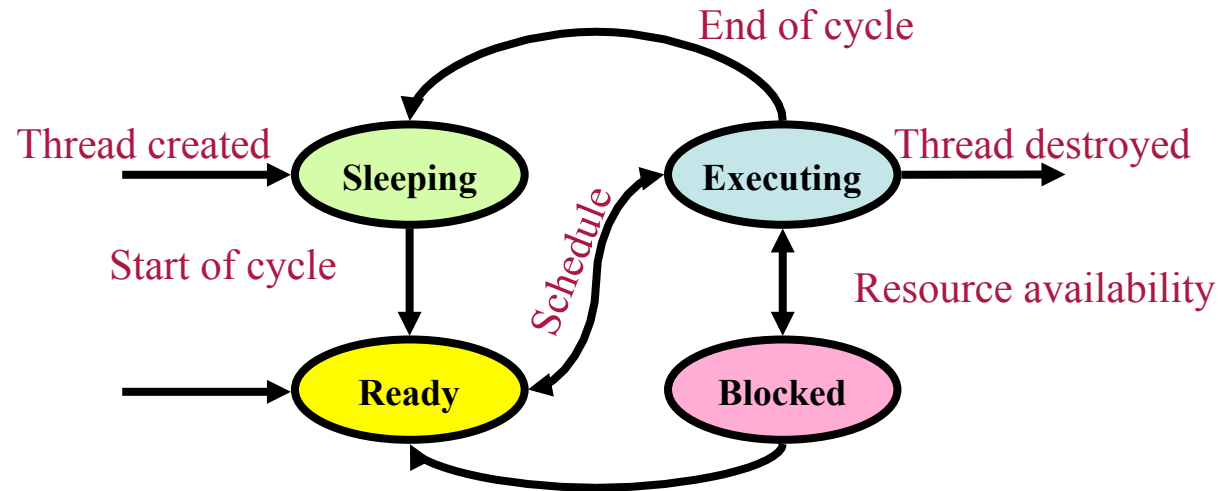
$$T = (\phi, p, e, D)$$

- Two implementation strategies:
 - Thread instantiated by system each period, runs single job
 - A periodic thread \Rightarrow supported by some RTOS
 - Clean abstraction:
 - A function that runs periodically
 - System handles timing
 - High overhead due to repeated thread instantiation
 - Thread pools can mitigate overhead
 - Thread instantiated once, performs job, sleeps until next period, repeats
 - Lower overhead, but relies on programmer to handle timing
 - Pushes conceptual burden of handling timing onto programmer
 - Hard to avoid timing drift due to sleep overruns
 - Most common approach

Sporadic and Aperiodic Tasks

- Event list triggers sporadic and aperiodic tasks
 - Might be external (hardware) interrupts
 - Might be signalled by another task
- Several implementation strategies:
 - Job runs as interrupt/signal handler
 - Correctness problems; discussed in lecture 7
 - Handler often used to instantiate sporadic thread or queue job for server task
 - Thread instantiated by system when job released
 - Not well supported for user-level jobs, often used within the kernel
 - E.g. for device drivers; network processing
 - Requires scheduler assistance; high overheads unless thread pool used
 - Job queued for server task
 - A background server (simple, widely implemented)
 - A bandwidth preserving server (useful, but hard to implement)

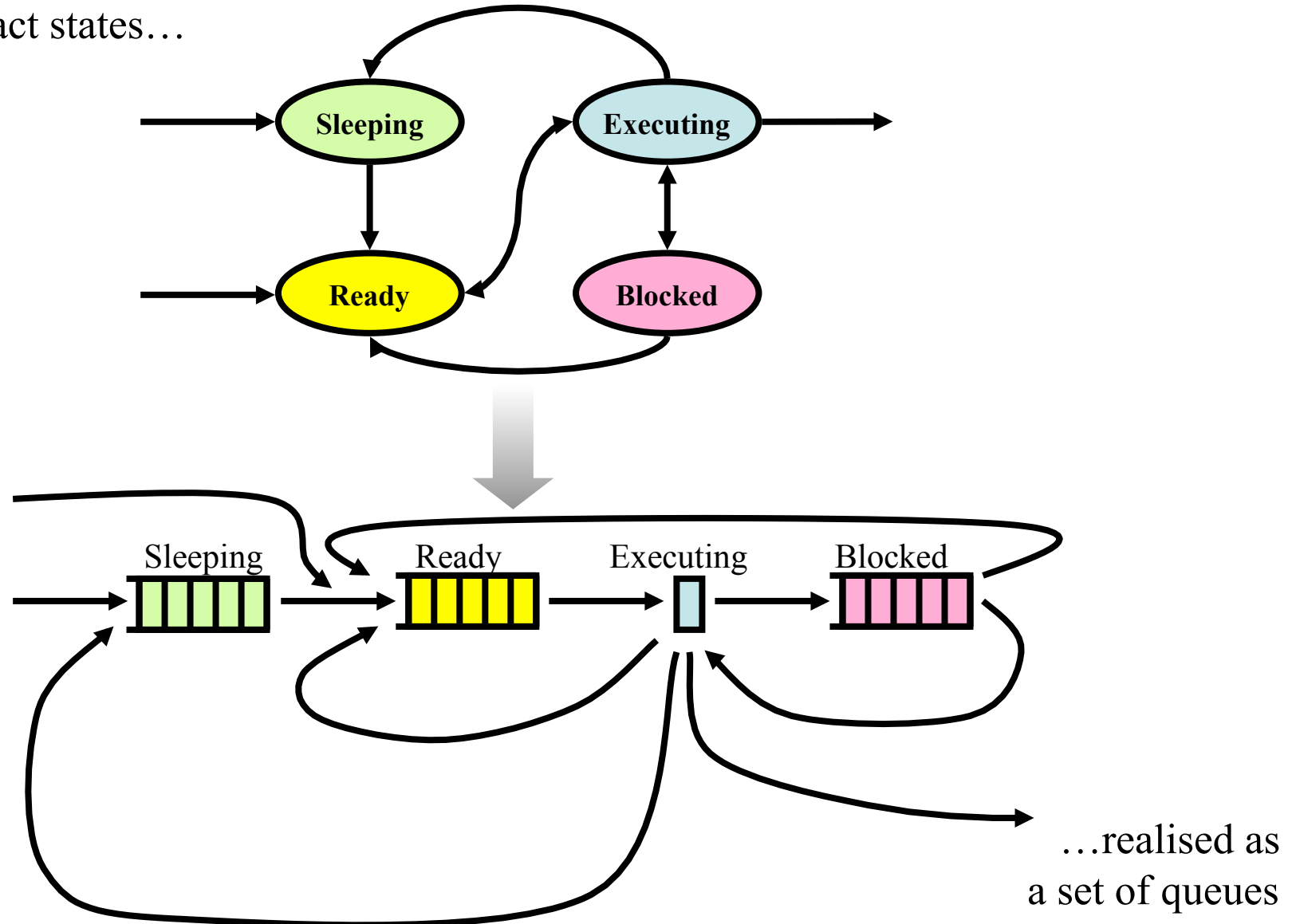
Thread States and Transitions



- States represent evolution of thread execution:
 - Sleeping ⇒ Periodic thread queued between cycles
 - Ready ⇒ Queued at some priority, waiting to run
 - Executing ⇒ Running on a processor
 - Blocked ⇒ Queued waiting for a resource
- Transitions happen according to scheduling policy, resource access, external events

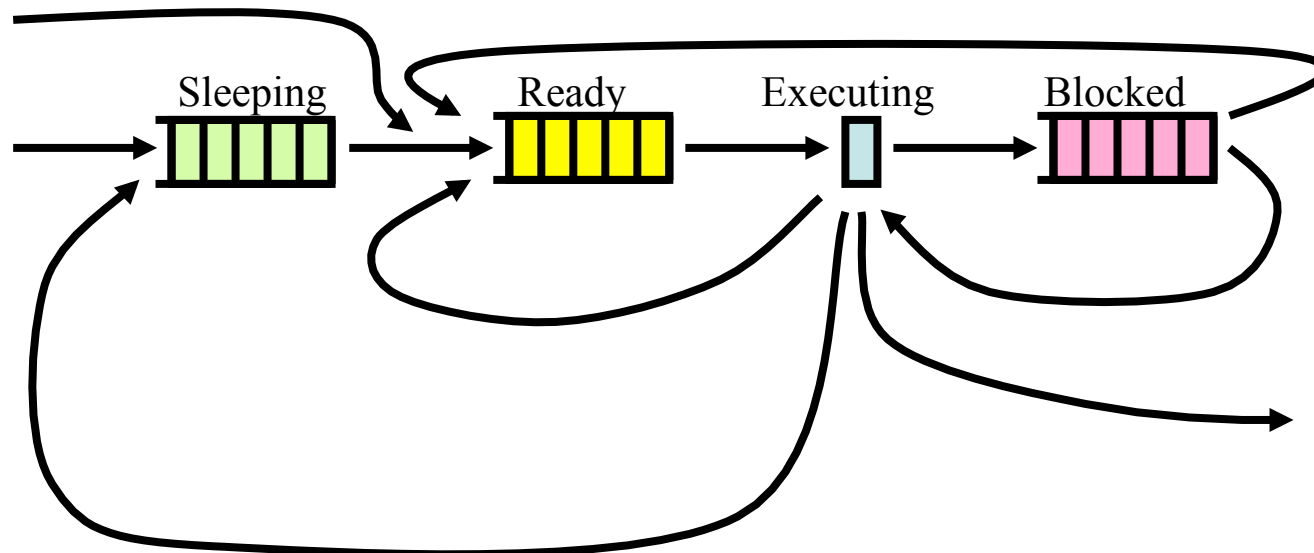
Mapping States onto Queues

Abstract states...



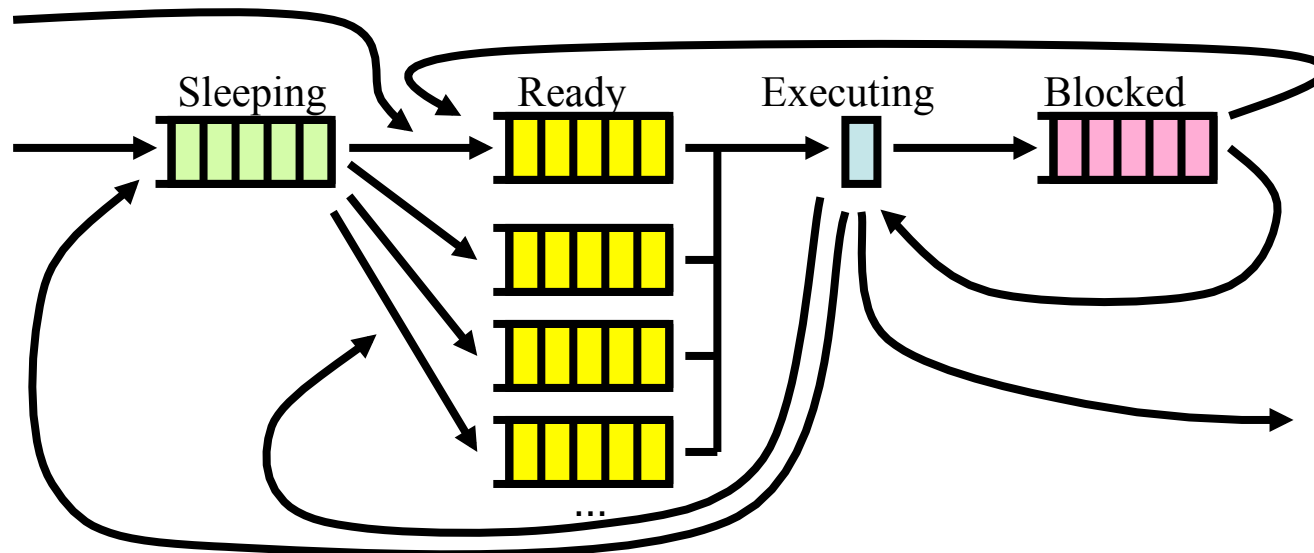
Building a Priority Scheduler

- How to schedule...
 - Periodic fixed priority tasks (RM and DM)?
 - Periodic dynamic priority tasks (EDF and LST)?
 - Sporadic and aperiodic tasks?
- Vary number of queues, the queue selection policy, service discipline
 - How to decide which queue holds a newly released thread?
 - How are the queues ordered?
 - From which queue is the next job to execute taken?



Fixed Priority Scheduling

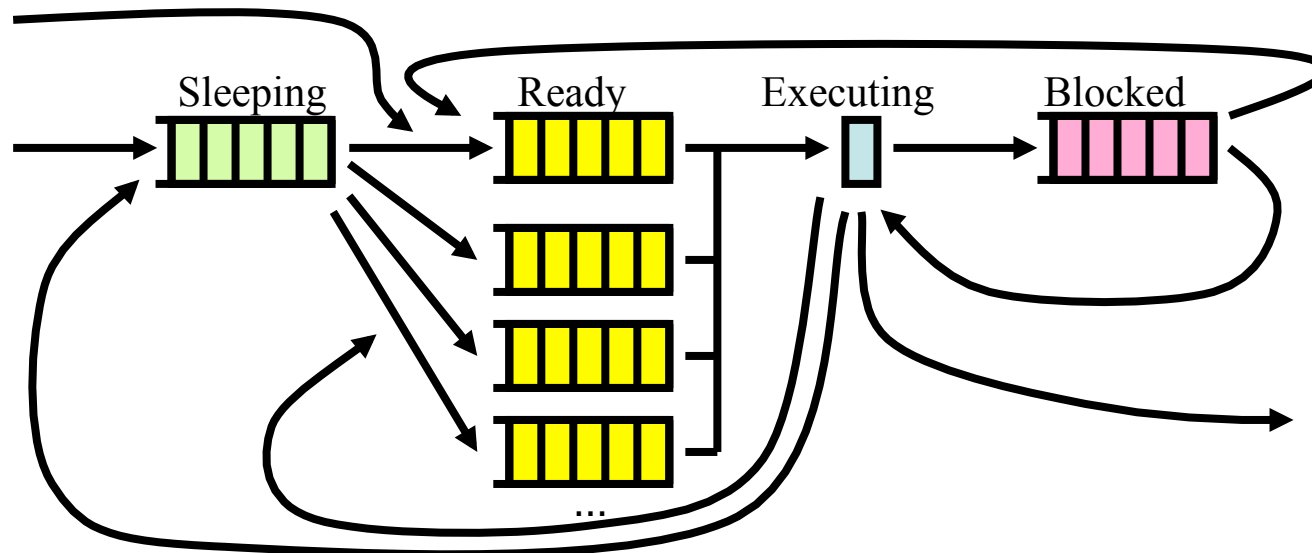
- Provide several ready queues, each representing a priority level:
 - Tasks inserted according to priority
 - FIFO or round-robin servicing
 - RR task budget depleted on each clock interrupt; yield when budget exhausted
 - FIFO tasks run until sleep, block or yield
 - Run task at the head of highest priority queue with ready tasks
- Used to implement rate monotonic or deadline monotonic



Fixed Priority Scheduling: Rate Monotonic

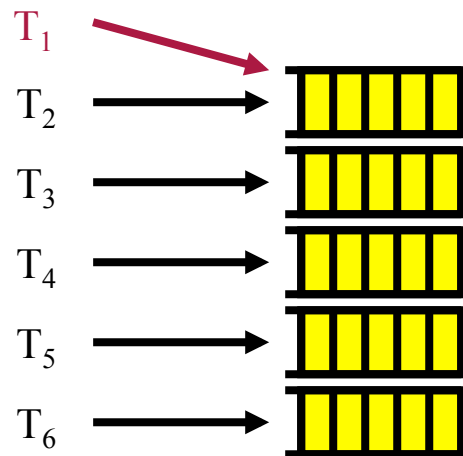
- Assign fixed priorities to tasks based on their period, p
 - short period \Rightarrow higher priority
- Implementation:
 - Task resides in sleep queue until released at phase, ϕ
 - When released, task inserted into a FIFO ready queue
 - One ready queue for each distinct priority
 - Run task at the head of the highest priority queue with ready tasks

Deadline monotonic scheduler similar



Practical Considerations: Limited Queues

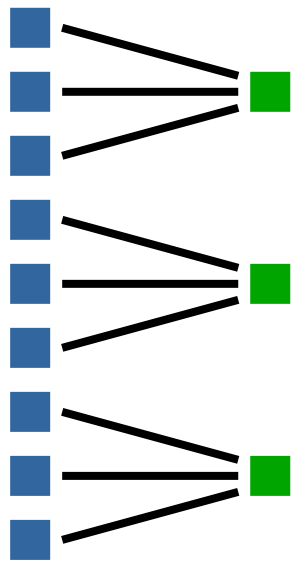
- When building a rate monotonic system, ensure there are as many ready queues as priority levels
- May be limited by the operating system if present, and need more priority levels than there are queues provided



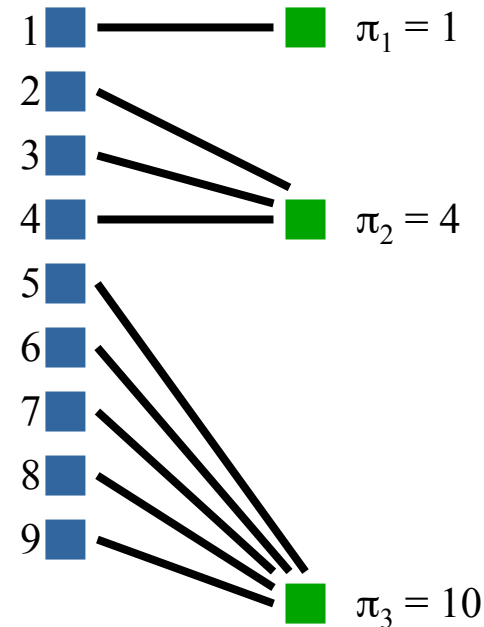
- Implication: non-distinct priorities
- Some tasks will be delayed relative to the “correct” schedule
 - A set of tasks $T_E(i)$ is mapped to the same priority queue as task T_i
 - This may delay T_i up to $\sum_{T_k \in T_E(i)} e_k$
- Schedulable utilization of system will be reduced

Practical Considerations: Limited Queues

- How to map a set of tasks needing Ω_n priorities onto a set of Ω_s priority levels, where $\Omega_s < \Omega_n$?



Uniform mapping
 $Q = \lceil \Omega_n / \Omega_s \rceil$
 tasks map onto each
 system priority level



Constant Ratio mapping
 $k = (\pi_{i-1} + 1) / \pi_i$
 tasks where k is a constant map to
 each system priority with weight, π_i

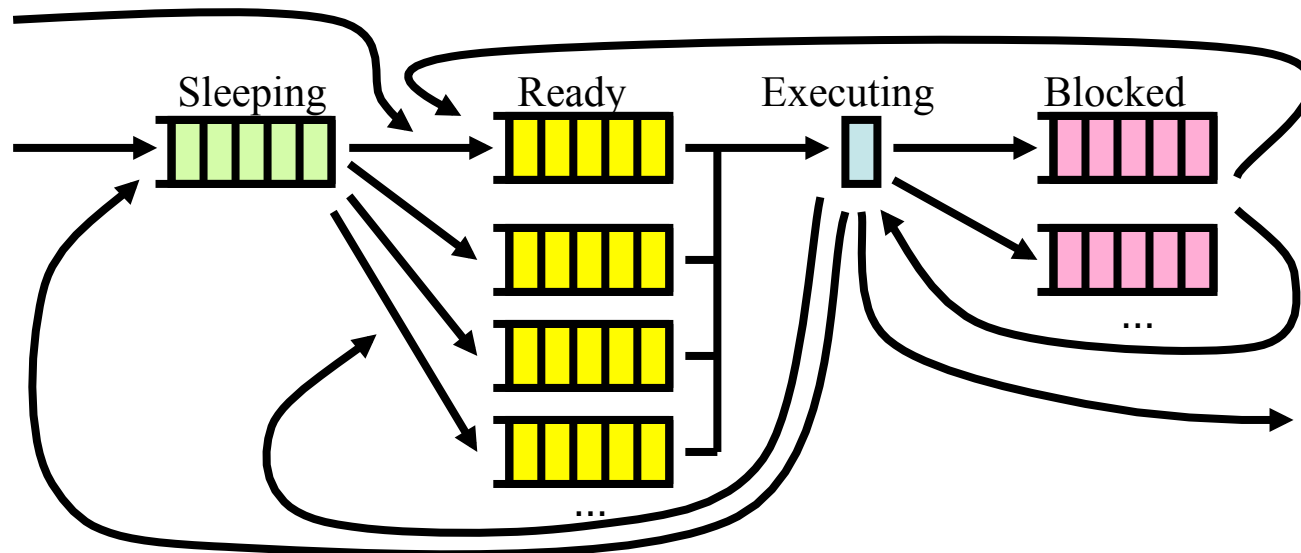
Constant ratio mapping better preserves execution times of high priority jobs

Blocking on Multiple Events

- Typically there are several reasons why tasks may block
 - Disk I/O, network, inter-process communication, ...

⇒ Use multiple blocked queues

- This is a typical priority scheduler provided by most RTOS





Dynamic Priority Scheduling

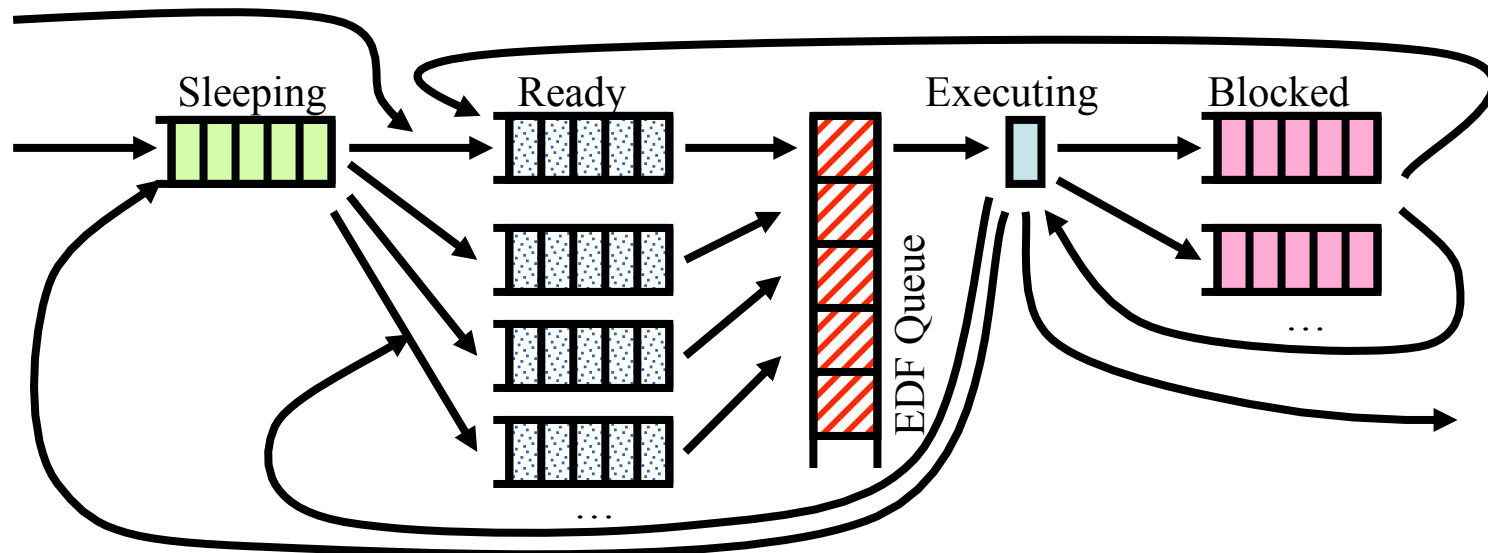
- Thread priority can change during execution
- Implies that threads move between ready queues
 - Search through the ready queues to find the thread changing it's priority
 - Remove from the ready queue
 - Calculate new priority
 - Insert at end of new ready queue
- Expensive operation:
 - $O(N)$ where N is the number of tasks
 - Suitable for system reconfiguration or priority inheritance when the rate of change of priorities is slow
 - Naïve implementation of EDF or LST scheduling inefficient, since require frequent priority changes
 - Too computationally expensive
 - Alternative implementation strategies possible...

Earliest Deadline First Scheduling

- To directly support EDF scheduling:
 - When each thread is created, its relative deadline is specified
 - When a thread is released, its absolute deadline is calculated from it's relative deadline and release time
- Could maintain a single ready queue:
 - Conceptually simple, threads ordered by absolute deadline
 - Inefficient if many active threads, since scheduling decision involves walking the queue of N tasks

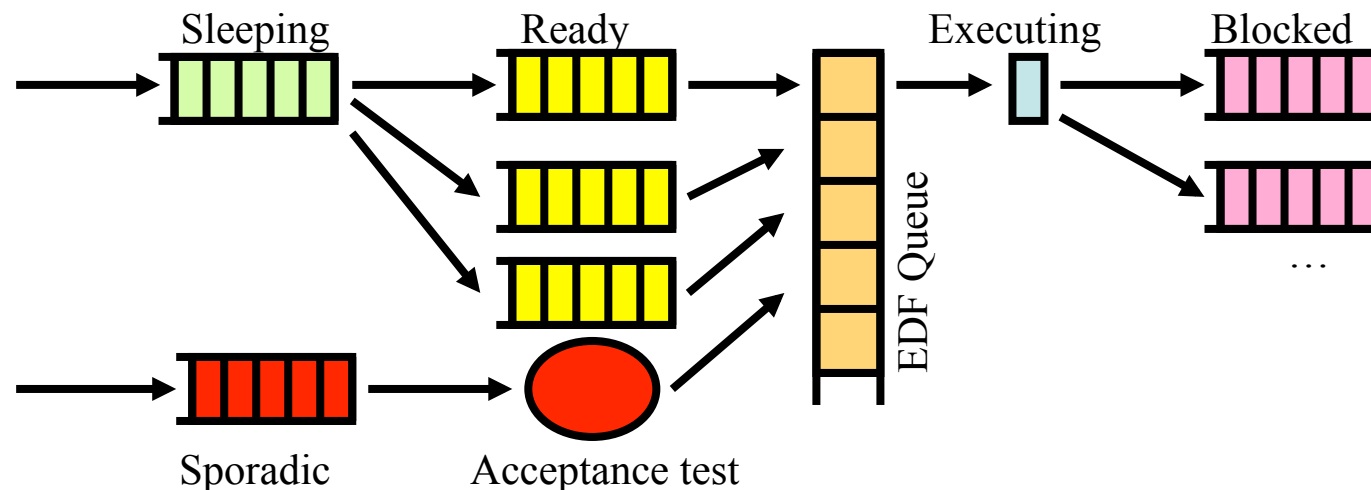
Earliest Deadline First Scheduling

- Maintain a ready queue for each *relative* deadline 
 - Tasks enter these queues in order of release
 - $\Omega' < N$ queues
- Maintain a queue, sorted by *absolute* deadline, pointing to tasks at the head of each ready queue 
 - Updated when tasks complete; when tasks added to empty ready queue
 - Always execute the task at the head of this queue
 - More efficient, since only perform a linear scan through active tasks



Scheduling Sporadic Tasks

- Straight-forward to schedule using EDF:
 - Add to separate queue of ready sporadic tasks on release
 - Perform acceptance test
 - If accepted, insert into the EDF queue according to deadline
- Difficult if using fixed priority scheduling:
 - Need a bandwidth preserving server



Scheduling Aperiodic Tasks

- Trivial to implement in as a background server, using a single lowest priority queue
 - All the problems described in lecture 7:
 - Excessive delay of aperiodic jobs
 - Potential for priority inversion if the aperiodic jobs use resources
 - Most operating systems have exactly this issue with idle-priority jobs
 - Better to use a bandwidth preserving server

Bandwidth Preserving Servers

- Server scheduled as a periodic task, with some priority
 - When ready and selected to execute, given scheduling quantum equal to the current budget
 - Runs until pre-empted or blocked; or
 - Runs until the quantum expires, sleeps until replenished
 - At each scheduling event in the system
 - Update budget consumption considering:
 - time for which the BP server has executed
 - time for which other tasks have executed
 - algorithm depends on BP server type
 - Replenish budget if necessary
 - Keep remaining budget in the thread control block
 - Fairly complex calculations, e.g. for sporadic server
- Not widely supported... typically have to use background server

Summary

- Implementing real time systems
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 - Jobs, tasks, and threads
 - Priority scheduling of periodic tasks
 - Rate monotonic
 - Earliest deadline first
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- Next lecture: practical real time operating systems and languages