

# Verification of RISC-V Processor beyond RV32I ISA

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**Abstract**— The RISC-V processor's open-source architecture provides designers with flexibility in implementing the architecture for a variety of applications. The same advantage, however, makes the verification process difficult because all variations must be verified. The proposed project will create a verification environment for the extended RISC V architecture. RISC-V supports both the "M" standard extension for integer multiplication and division and the "Zicsr" standard extension for control and status register instructions. The above-mentioned ISA classes will be tested using the RV32I ISA-based DUT with a UVM environment around the DUT to verify the M and Zicsr functionalities. The M and Zicsr type ISA were verified with a 95% functional coverage. The UVM framework created can be re-used to verify other Instruction Set Architecture.

**Index Terms** – RISC-V processor, Universal Verification Methodology, RV32I based DUT, M and Zicsr type ISA, Instruction Set Architecture

## I. INTRODUCTION

The RISC-V, an open standard instruction set architecture developed on the principles of the Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC), is an open-source architecture. As being freely accessible to the industry and academia, it provides developers with the flexibility of developing various variations of the standard design. The RISC-V ISA was developed at University of California, Berkeley.

The Instruction Set Architecture is the zone where "hardware meets software". In the hierarchy of developing and programming a system, ISA is at a proximity to the compiler. It is accessible to programmer as well as the writer of the compiler.

The RISC-V ISA is the base Integer ISA. Additional extensions to this base ISA are present. As abundant variations of RISC-V ISA along with its extensions are possible, it is a requirement that a flexible verification environment be developed which can be easily reused for multiple variations of the above-mentioned architecture. Universal Verification Methodology is a standard and reusable methodology which can be effectively used for the above purpose. This framework has been built with the help of System Verilog classes and the concepts of Object-Oriented programming.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The Universal Verification Methodology (UVM), basically derived from Open Verification Methodology (OVM) is an open-source methodology which is compatible with many commercial simulation tools such as the tools provided by Cadence, Aldec, Synopsys and Mentor Graphics. UVM provides an efficient standardized methodology to design verification environments to verify various IC designs. As UVM is primarily based on Object Oriented Programming, UVM has the advantages of such verification environments being reusable. Hence, the reuse methodology decreases the delay for redesigning the whole environment again for every design. Also, the methodology helps in development of self-generating stimuli and self-testing testbenches which not only increase the verification efficiency of the environment, but also help in speeding up the overall verification process of the design.

### A. UVM Class Hierarchy

As discussed above, UVM is primarily based on Object Oriented Programming (OOP). The OOP's nature of UVM leads to an increase in reusability of various verification components, which can be very useful. A UVM library consists of a set of base classes, from which various components can be derived. The UVM base classes consist of common methods which are used on data. Thus, thanks to OOP, various kinds of components can be derived from the UVM base classes and the methods in the UVM base classes can be further customized as per the requirement. The `uvm_object` class is the base class (parent class) from which the other classes are derived. The `uvm_transaction`

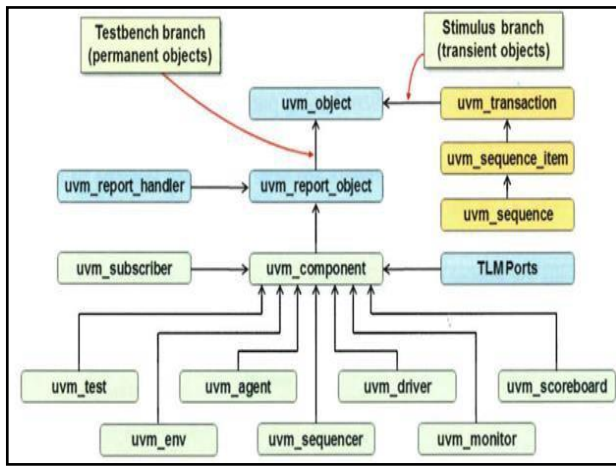


Figure 1. UVM hierarchy

and `uvm_component` classes built from `uvm_object` class. Figure 1 briefly explains the UVM hierarchy [5].

### B. UVM Object

All the UVM data that flows through the design extend from the UVM object base class. For common operations that are executed over data, the UVM object consists of a set of methods for the same purpose. The methods include – compare, create, copy and print. From `uvm_object` mainly two types of child classes are created.

The `uvm_transaction` object does not have any UVM phases. The classes derived from `uvm_transaction` class will not be active until the end of the simulation. The UVM objects are created when needed and destroyed after use. The `uvm_sequence_item` and `uvm_sequence` classes derived from the UVM object class. The classes under the `uvm_transaction` class forms the stimulus branch.

The inputs to be driven into the DUT and the outputs driven out of the DUT is the sequence items. The `uvm_sequence_item` class is generally used to declare the inputs and outputs to the DUT. The sequence packets driven to the DUT are of sequence item class.

The stimuli driven to the DUT is contained in the sequence class and stimuli is called as sequences. The `uvm_sequence` class is used to write all possible stimuli which needs to be driven into the DUT to verify the functionality.

### C. UVM Component

The `uvm_component` class is derived from `uvm_object` class. The `uvm_component` class has UVM phase mechanism, and it will be active till the end of the simulation. The `uvm_component` has a reporting mechanism and phase mechanism to synchronize between different verification components. The classes derived from the `uvm_component` class forms the testbench branch.

Test is the topmost UVM component in the UVM hierarchy. The test classes are derived from the `uvm_test` base class. The test component can contain environment components, agents, and other components below in the hierarchy. The sequence is started by connecting to the

sequencer in the test component. The test component also has phase objections which is raised during the start of the simulation and dropped after the simulation is completed.

Environment is a user defined component derived from `uvm_env`. Environment is higher than the agent in the hierarchy of the UVM Testbench. UVM environment is a container of the agents, the scoreboards, and the monitors. In the connect phase of the `uvm_env` component the connections between the different components are established.

An agent is usually protocol specific. The agent is a container which holds the required components for a particular protocol. A driver, monitor and a sequencer might be contained in a typical UVM agent. Agent can be active or passive in nature.

The scoreboard is a user defined `uvm_component`. The scoreboard is extended from the `uvm_scoreboard`. In general, a scoreboard takes in the transactions from the monitors, and checks for the correctness of the DUT.

The purpose of the monitor is to convert the pin level activity on the interface of the design to transaction level. The monitor component captures the data on the interface of the design and send the data as packets to the scoreboards and other components using Transaction Level Modelling (TLM) protocols.

The driver receives the transactions from the sequencer and drives the transactions into the DUT. The data packages are driven to the DUT through the interface by the `uvm_driver` component. The driver methods can also send a response to the sequence to trigger the next sequence.

A transaction to the driver is passed by the sequencer. A transaction or a protocol is a packet of data known as sequences. The flow of the sequences is controlled by the sequencer. Sequencer holds the sequences in pipeline and co-ordinates the protocol between the driver and the sequence classes.

The subscriber class is present in the UVM environment derived from the `uvm_component` class. The subscriber class calculates the functional coverage in the UVM testbench and the cover groups.

## III. DESIGN UNDER TEST (DUT)

A design under test (DUT) is required to test the verification environment built. In the project, RV32I with M and Zicsr extension is used as the DUT. The core is a RISC V 32-bit pipelined processor with 5 stages and each stage is separated by pipelined registers. Figure 2 gives an overview of the RISC-V processor. The design has a top-level module which acts a wrapper for the core, data memory and instruction memory. The instructions are initially loaded into the instruction memory and the core starts executing the instructions from the instruction pointed by the program counter (PC).

## IV. VERIFICATION PLAN

The main objective of the project is to verify the M-type Instruction Set Architecture and the Z-type Instruction Set

Architecture. A good verification strategy is to cover the corner cases using the constraint random verification

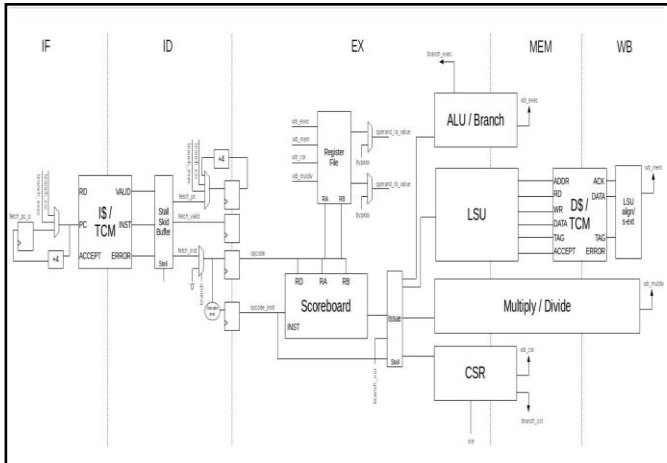


Figure 2. Overview of a RISC-V processor

methodology. The test cases include some scenarios to verify the basic functionality and some scenarios to verify the corner cases. The complete verification is carried out in UVM environment. The following subsections discuss the verification approach in detail.

#### A. M-Type – Multiplication

The M-type ISA for multiplication has 4 different variations. The detailed explanation of the different multiplication variations is given in the RISC-V chapter. To verify the M-type ISA the instructions were given through the uvm\_sequence. The component riscv\_seq generated 40 different sequences to cover all the scenarios across the 4 variations. The scenarios covered while verifying the M-type ISA are as follows:

- The basic multiplication functionality across all the 4 variations.
- Signed numbers multiplication in MUL and MULHU variations. (Here the signed number gets converted to a positive number and then multiplication is performed).

#### B. M-type – Division

The M-type ISA has 4 different variations across division and remainder functionality. The detailed explanation of the different division variations is given in the RISC-V chapter. To verify the M-type (division and remainder) The DUT is a RISC-V processor which has been designed using the RV32I specification. The design implements the R/I/S/U instruction formats along with the instructions present in the ‘M’ extension and the ‘Zicsr’ extension. The instruction types of formats conform to the 4 bytes

functionality) ISA, the instructions were given through the uvm\_sequence component. The component riscv\_seq generated 40 different sequences to cover all the scenarios across the 4 variations. The scenarios covered while verifying the M-type ISA areas follows:

- The basic division and the remainder functionality.
- Signed division and signed remainder functionality with all possible combinations of signed and unsigned dividend and divisors.
- Signed dividend and signed divisors for unsigned division and remainder functionality.
- Division and remainder functionality when divided by 0.
- Overflow condition by dividing the most negative integer by -1.

#### C. Z – type

The Zicsr-type ISA focusing on the control and status registers (CSR) has 6 different variations in user mode.

To verify the Zicsr-type ISA the instructions were given through the uvm\_sequence component. The component riscv\_seq generated 15 different sequences to cover all the scenarios across the 4 variations. The scenarios covered while verifying the Zicsr-type ISA are as follows:

The basic atomic read and write, set and clear CSR functionality.

Trying to write to a read-only control and status register.

- Zicsr CSRRW instructions with destination register as 0. (Here CSR read functionality will not happen).
- Zicsr CSRRS and CSRRC instructions with source register as 0. (Here CSR write functionality will not happen).

### V. RESULTS

A RISC-V processor along with ‘M’ extension and ‘Zicsr’ extension is developed using a base RV32I ISA. In order to verify the M and Zicsr ISA, a reusable verification environment has been build using UVM methodology. Using UVM framework, the DUT has been successfully verified against the RISC-V ISA specification. The following subsections gives the details of the result snapshots.

#### A. DUT Waveform

memory size boundary. Register size of width 32 bits has been defined for RV32I. Figure 3 showcases the waveform with the inputs to the DUT and the corresponding outputs to the specified instructions can be seen.



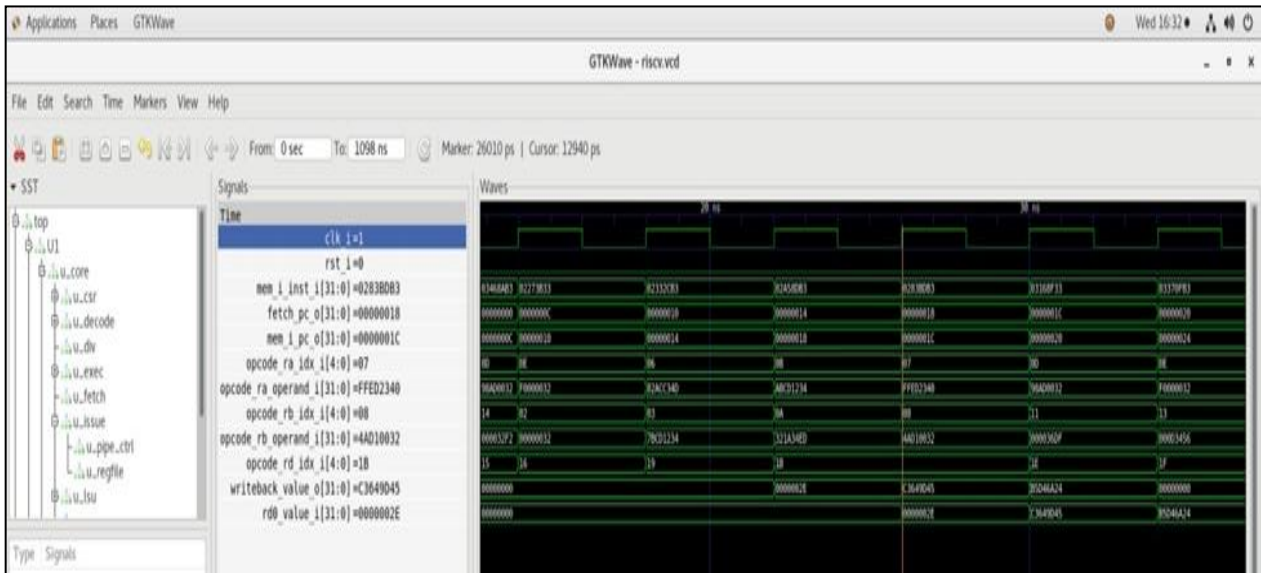


Figure 3. DUT Waveform

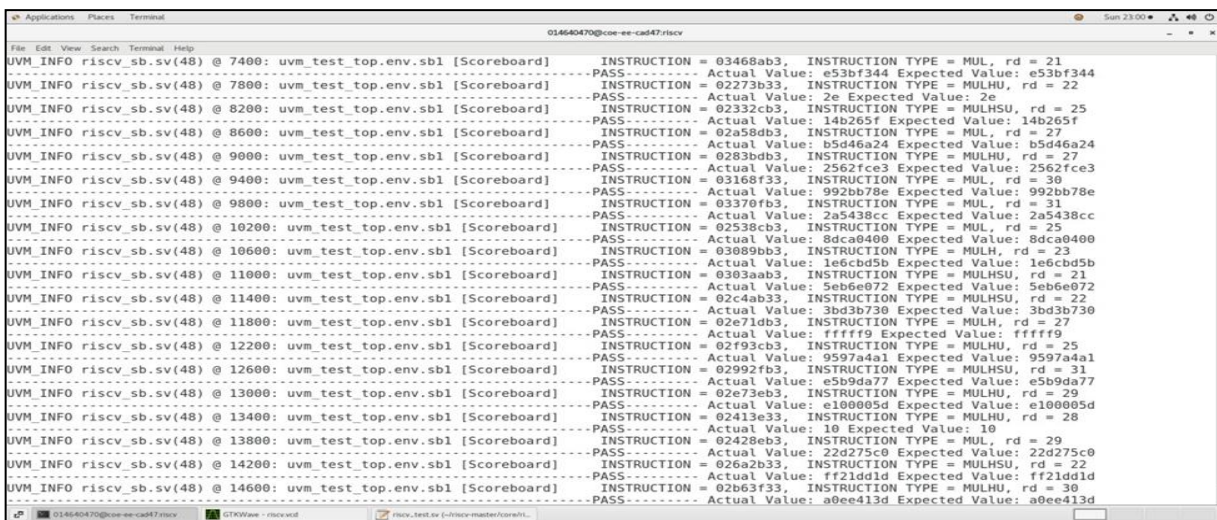


Figure 4. M type Multiplication results

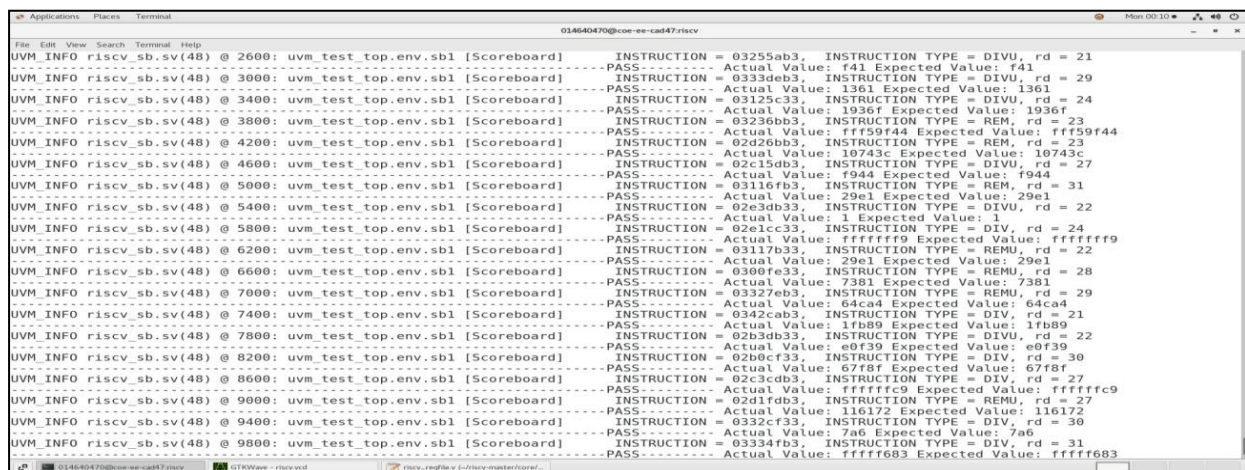


Figure 5. M type Division results

```

014640470@coe-ee-cad47/riscv
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 5400: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 34011cf3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRWR, rd = 25
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 54320032 Expected Value: 54320032
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 54320032 Expected Value: 54320032
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 8200: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 3054daf3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRIW, rd = 21
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 9 Expected Value: 9
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 9 Expected Value: 9
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 11800: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 3059db73, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRIW, rd = 22
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 1 Expected Value: 1
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 1 Expected Value: 1
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 13800: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 34122e73, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRS, rd = 28
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 17 Expected Value: 17
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 18 Expected Value: 18
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 16600: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 3412af73, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRS, rd = 30
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 9 Expected Value: 9
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: a Expected Value: a
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 19400: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 34146b73, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRSI, rd = 22
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 9 Expected Value: 9
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: a Expected Value: a
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 22200: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 34156f73, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRSI, rd = 24
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: b Expected Value: b
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: c Expected Value: c
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 25000: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 3422bd73, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRC, rd = 27
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: ffffffff Expected Value: ffffffff
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 80000006 Expected Value: 80000006
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 27800: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 34223df3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRC, rd = 27
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: ffffffff Expected Value: ffffffff
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 80000008 Expected Value: 80000008
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 30600: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 3426df3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRCI, rd = 27
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: ffffffff Expected Value: ffffffff
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 80000001 Expected Value: 80000001
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 33400: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 3426df3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRRCI, rd = 27
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: ffffffff Expected Value: ffffffff
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 80000001 Expected Value: 80000001
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 36200: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = f1409bf3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRWR, rd = 23
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 764a0016 Expected Value: 764a0016
-----PASS-CSR-READ-DATA----- Actual Value: 0 Expected Value: 0
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(58) @ 39000: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 34009073, INSTRUCTION TYPE = CSRWR, rd = 0
-----PASS-CSR-WRITE-DATA----- Actual Value: 764a0016 Expected Value: 764a0016

```

Figure 6. Zicsr Results

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014640470@coe-ee-cad47/riscv
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(71) @ 44200: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 0331ecb3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = REM, rd = 25
-----PASS----- Actual Value: 16 Expected Value: 16
108308
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(71) @ 44600: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 02c26fb3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = REM, rd = 31
-----PASS----- Actual Value: 1a714 Expected Value: 1a714
4071408111
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(71) @ 45000: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 03414cb3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = DIV, rd = 25
-----PASS----- Actual Value: f2acc1ef Expected Value: f2acc1ef
4071408111
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(71) @ 45400: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 02e36db3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = REM, rd = 27
-----PASS----- Actual Value: f2acc1ef Expected Value: f2acc1ef
4071408111
UVM INFO riscv_sb.sv(71) @ 45800: uvm_test_top.env.sb1 [Scoreboard] INSTRUCTION = 02e36db3, INSTRUCTION TYPE = REM, rd = 27
-----PASS----- Actual Value: f2acc1ef Expected Value: f2acc1ef
UVM INFO /home/morris/uvm-1.2/src/base/uvm_objection.svh(1270) @ 45800: reporter [TEST_DONE] 'run' phase is ready to proceed to the 'extract' phase
UVM INFO /home/morris/uvm-1.2/src/base/uvm_report_server.svh(847) @ 45800: reporter [UVM/REPORT/SERVER]
--- UVM Report Summary ---

** Report counts by severity
UVM INFO : 115
UVM WARNING : 0
UVM ERROR : 0
UVM FATAL : 0
** Report counts by id
[RNTST] 1
[Scoreboard] 112
[TEST DONE] 1
[UVM/RELNOTES] 1

$finish called from file "/home/morris/uvm-1.2/src/base/uvm_root.svh", line 517.
$finish at simulation time 45800
VCS Simulation Report
Time: 458000 ps
CPU Time: 0.410 seconds; Data structure size: 0.2Mb
Wed Nov 3 13:08:33 2021
[014640470@coe-ee-cad47 riscv]$

```

Figure 7. UVM Report Summary

### B. M-Type Results

The UVM log in the following Figure 4 and Figure 5 gives a detailed view into the ‘M’ extension instructions. It specifically lists out the instruction opcode, whether the Read Write, CSR set or CSR clear instruction, the expected value as calculated by the riscv\_ref\_sb.sv and the actual DUT outcome. The comparison takes place in riscv\_sb.sv module which then, gives out the result of whether the test instruction is a multiplication or a division, the expected value as calculated by the riscv\_ref\_sb.sv and the actual DUT output. The comparison takes place in riscv\_sb.sv module which then, gives out the result of whether the test has passed or failed.

### C. ZICSR RESULTS

The UVM log in the following Figure 6 gives a detailed view into the ‘Zicsr’ extension instructions. It specifically lists out the instruction opcode, the instruction type – CSR Read Write, CSR set or CSR clear instruction, the expected value as calculated by the riscv\_ref\_sb.sv and the actual DUT outcome. The comparison takes place in riscv\_sb.sv module which then, gives out the result of whether the test has passed or failed.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this project was the development of a 32-bit RISC-V processor along with the development of UVM based Verification environment to efficiently test the ISA specification of RISC-V processors. 'M' extension and 'Zicsr' extension was verified. The verification environment was created on the principles of Object-Oriented Programming to make the environment efficiently scalable and reusable that can be easily accommodated for various variations of RISC-V.

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