



ICA-XFG-203

ACTION PROFILES, SELECTORS AND TRAFFIC DISTRIBUTION

COURSE PROSPECTUS

ICA-XFG-203 is 2-unit advanced, instructor-led course module that offers detailed exploration of the Tofino Native Architecture (TNA) facilities that are used to implement multi-path traffic distribution mechanisms such as Link Aggregation Groups (LAG), Equal-Cost Multi-Path (ECMP), Weighted-Cost Multi-Path (WCMP) and similar.

This course is recommended to all data and control plane designers tasked with implementing LAG, ECMP, WCMP, Load Balancing and other similar features in their systems as well as to anyone interested in learning TNA in depth.

ICA-XFG-203 is a part of Intel® Connectivity Academy XFG course series and can be taken either in-person or online.

COURSE GOALS

The course introduces the participants to several important, generic mechanisms, such as action profiles, action selectors, hash calculations, etc., that can be used in a variety of situations, well beyond traffic distribution per se, including table resource optimization, control plane speedup, etc. The rest of the course is dedicated to demonstrating how these simple mechanisms can be used to not only to build flexible traffic distribution algorithms with functionalities greatly exceeding those prescribed by the well-known standards.

Upon the completion of the course, the students will:

1. Understand the concept of action indirection and how it can be efficiently implemented using the `ActionProfile()` TNA extern.
2. Understand the principles of hash calculation, including `Hash()` and `CRCPolynomial()` externs.
3. Understand the algorithm of action selection employed by the `ActionSelector()` extern.
4. Understand the resilient hashing implementation.
5. Understand how to implement stateful hashing, such as spraying and flowlet hashing.
6. Learn how to write P416/TNA programs that perform traffic distribution.
7. Learn how to control the abovementioned TNA externs using Barefoot Runtime Interface

DETAILED SCHEDULE

Each unit consists of a 2-hour-long lecture (presentation) with one break and is followed by the hands-on labs.

In online format, each unit is conducted on a separate day – please consult the [P4ica Calendar](#) for details. Both morning and evening (Pacific Time) sessions might be offered to accommodate students from different time zones.

When conducted in-person, each 8-hour day constitutes 2 units.

UNIT 1

- Introduction
- The principle of action indirection and its practical usage
- Using `ActionProfile()` extern to optimize action indirection.
- Basic principles of traffic distribution
- Using `ActionSelector()` with `ActionProfile()` and `Hash()` externs to implement traditional LAG, ECMP and WCMP

UNIT 2

- Understanding Tofino hashing implementation
- Implementing random and round-robin spraying
- Implementing symmetric hashing
- APIs and mechanisms for resilient Hashing
- Traffic distribution in the multicast environment

TARGET AUDIENCE

This course is most suitable for data plane designers tasked with implementing P4 programs on Intel Tofino™ ASIC family devices.

PRE-REQUISITES

- Successful completion of ICA-XFG-101
- Good understanding of standard network protocols, including Ethernet, IPv4, IPv6, etc.
- Basic understanding of linear algebra (matrix multiplication) and computations in $GF(2^n)$
- Knowledge of Python language
- General understanding of Linux and ability to use it as a development system.
- When taken online, good and reliable Internet access for both online lectures and VM access is a must.
- When taken in-person, each participant is expected to have a laptop with a standard browser. No other software is required.

HOW TO REGISTER

Class dates and times are announced on the [P4ica Calendar Page](#) ahead of time and you can register right on the site using the credit card or PayPal to pay for the tickets. The tickets can also be purchased through our partner, [STORDIS](#), who provide additional services such as convenient invoicing or lodging booking for in-person courses. Please, contact your STORDIS sales representative for more details.

Please, note that most courses require all the participants to have a valid NDA and SLA (SLACA for academic and research organizations) in place. Their existence will be verified after the purchase, and you will be notified if additional steps are required, or the ticket will be refunded.

LOGISTICS

ONLINE COURSES

To attend an online presentation, you will need to create a **free Zoom account, associated with your work email address**. Upon the registration, you will receive a link to the online event. You will also receive invitations to establish accounts on Slack and the [P4ica Support Portal](#) for lab support and materials access, also **associated with your work email address**.

A high-speed internet connection is required to attend the online presentation. Call-in numbers for higher voice quality might be provided, depending on the region. Please, connect to the online meeting 5-10 minutes before the start to work out all potential connection problems.

All necessary materials, including the presentation PDFs and lab exercises will be available through the [P4ica Support Portal](#) a day before the start of the class. We highly recommend that you print the presentation PDFs and use them to take notes. Alternatively, these presentations can be loaded on a tablet, where the notes can be taken with an electronic pen.

The information about the lab Virtual Machines will be provided at the end of the first lecture. VMs will be kept running throughout the duration of the course and shut down 48 hours after the end of the last class. Additional time can be purchased as a ticket add-on.

IN-PERSON COURSES

The location address and the arrival time can be found on the registration site and will be emailed to you as well. You are responsible for your own lodging and transportation; Academy staff will be happy to provide some recommendations.

You will receive invitations to establish accounts on Slack and the [Academy Support Portal](#) for lab support and materials access, also **associated with your work email address**.

All necessary materials will be printed for you and are yours to take notes and take them back home. You will also get a lifetime access to the updated versions of these materials on the Academy Support Portal.

The information about the lab Virtual Machines will be provided at the end of the lecture. VMs will be kept running throughout the duration of the course and shut down 48 hours after the end of the last class. Additional time can be purchased as a ticket add-on.

CONTACT

For more information, please contact academy@p4ica.com.

IMPORTANT NOTES

P4ica, LTD is an independent training and consulting company. It delivers Intel Connectivity Academy classes under the special license from Intel, using approved materials and lab exercises. It also acts as a custodian for the Academy archives, thereby providing the alumni lifetime access to the class materials.

Intel® P4 Studio SDE is a software product, developed independently from the software, available via p4.org. Some components of the SDE were contributed by Intel to p4.org, others rely on the code from p4.org, but the goals of the projects, the tools, and the workflows are different. P4.org software is a community-supported project with many resources freely available. This class covers Intel® P4 Studio SDE and **not** p4.org software. Specifically, not covered are the Behavioral Model (BMv2), v1 model and PSA P4₁₆ architectures and neither is P4Runtime protocol.

P4₁₆ compiler for Intel® Tofino™ and Intel® Switch Runtime Interface APIs are in active development as is the course module material. While Intel® Connectivity Academy team strives to introduce Intel customers to the leading-edge software, bugs, errors, and omissions may occur. The later versions of these course modules might significantly differ from the earlier ones.

The course module material covers both Tofino and Tofino2 devices. Relevant enhancements and differences are emphasized and discussed whenever applicable.

The availability of each course is announced separately. Please, visit [P4ica Calendar Page](#) for more information.

The online presentations may be recorded and may be published, in whole or in part, in various media, including print, audio and video formats without further notice. If you do not want to participate, you may choose to either keep your audio and video connections muted or turned off or leave the call. By choosing to remain, you are consenting to the recording of the session.