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IEEE Standard for VHDL Language Reference Manual

IEEE Computer Society

Developed by the
Design Automation Standards Committee

IEEE Std 1076™-2019
(Revision of IEEE Std 1076-2008)

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IEEE SA Standards Board

Abstract: VHSIC Hardware Description Language (VHDL) is defined. VHDL is a formal notation intended for use in all phases of the creation of electronic systems. Because it is both machine readable and human readable, it supports the development, verification, synthesis, and testing of hardware designs; the communication of hardware design data; and the maintenance, modification, and procurement of hardware. Its primary audiences are the implementors of tools supporting the language and the advanced users of the language.

Keywords: computer languages, electronic systems, hardware, hardware design, IEEE 1076™, VHDL

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of IEEE Std 1076-2019, IEEE Standard for VHDL Language Reference Manual.

The VHSIC Hardware Description Language (VHDL) is a formal notation intended for use in all phases of the creation of electronic systems. Because it is both machine readable and human readable, it supports the development, verification, synthesis, and testing of hardware designs; the communication of hardware design data; and the maintenance, modification, and procurement of hardware.

This document, IEEE Std 1076-2019, is a revision of IEEE Std 1076-2008. The IEEE VHDL Analysis and Standardization Group (VASG), otherwise known as the 1076 Working Group, gathered the requirements, developed language extensions, and completed a draft of this revised Language Reference Manual. That draft was returned to IEEE for final revision and approval, resulting in this document. This revision incorporates numerous enhancements, both major and minor, to previously existing language features and several new language features. The changes are summarized in Annex E. In addition, several VHDL library packages that were previously defined in separate standards are now defined in this standard, ensuring that they are treated as integral parts of the language. Finally, this revision incorporates the IEEE Property Specification Language (PSL) as part of VHDL. The combination of these changes significantly improves VHDL as a language for specification, design, and verification of complex electronic systems.

The maintenance of the VHDL language standard is an ongoing process. The chair of the VHDL Analysis and Standardization Group extends his gratitude to all who have participated in this revision and encourages the participation of all interested parties in future language revisions.[1]

Acknowledgments

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[1]If interested in participating, please contact the VASG at vhdl-200x@LISTSERV.IEEE.ORG or http://www.eda-twiki.org/cgi-bin/view.cgi/P1076/WebHome.

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IEEE Standard for VHDL Language Reference Manual

1. Overview

1.1 Scope

This standard defines the syntax and semantics of the VHSIC Hardware Description Language (VHDL). The acronym VHSIC (Very High Speed Integrated Circuits) in the language's name comes from the U.S. government program that funded early work on the standard.

1.2 Purpose

VHDL is a formal notation intended for use in all phases of the creation of electronic systems. Since it is both machine and human readable, it supports the design, development, verification, synthesis, and testing of hardware designs; the communication of hardware design data; and the maintenance, modification, and procurement of hardware. This document is intended for the implementers of tools supporting the language and for advanced users of the language.

1.3 Structure and terminology of this standard

1.3.1 General

This standard is organized into clauses, each of which focuses on some particular area of the language. Within each clause, individual constructs or concepts are discussed in each subclause.

Each subclause describing a specific construct begins with an introductory paragraph. Next, the syntax of the construct is described using one or more grammatical *productions*.

A set of paragraphs describing the meaning and restrictions of the construct in narrative form then follow.

In this document, the word *shall* is used to indicate a mandatory requirement. The word *should* is used to indicate a recommendation. The word *may* is used to indicate a permissible action. The word *can* is used for statements of possibility and capability.

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