### Queue

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#### **Definitions**

- A queue is a linear data structure such that insertions are made at one end, called the rear, and removals are made at the other end, called the front.
- Operations performed on queues on first-in first-out (FIFO) principle.

insert() □ Queue □ delete()

The two basic operations are:

- insert(): adds an element to the rear of the queue.
- <u>Delete()</u>: removes and returns the element at the front of the queue.

### **Applications**

- Shared resources management (system programming)
  - Access to the processor
  - Access to the peripherals such as disks and printers
- Application programs
  - Simulations



#### Linear Queue

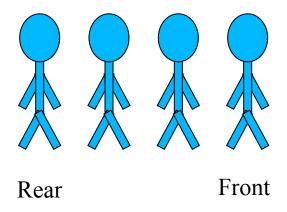
Circular Queue

Double-Ended Queue(Deque)

**Priority Queue** 

## The Queue Operations

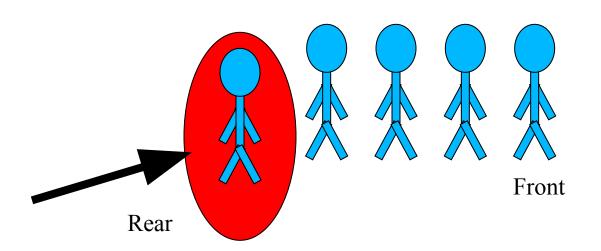
 A queue is like a line of people waiting for a bank teller. The queue has a <u>front</u> and a <u>rear</u>.





## The Queue Operations

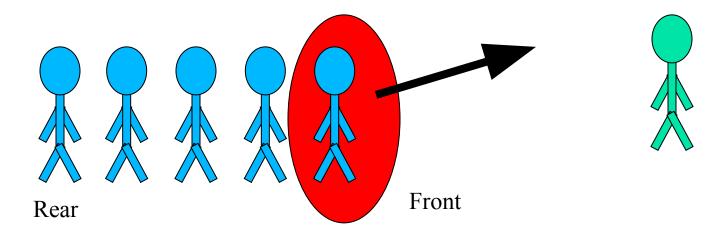
- New item must enter the queue at the rear end.
- This operation is called as insert operation.





## The Queue Operations

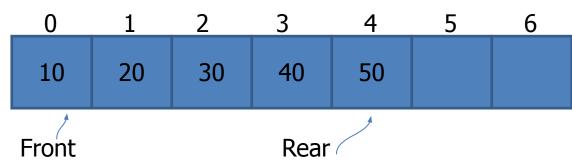
- When an item is taken from the queue, it always comes from the front end.
- It is usually called a delete operation.

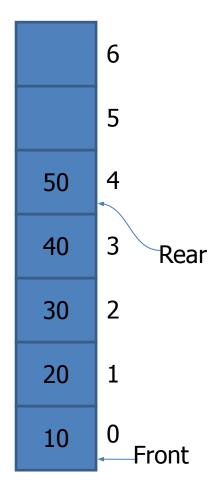


### **Array Implementation**

#### Queue (Linear Queue)

- A linear data structure consisting of list of items.
- Data elements are added at one end, called the *rear* and removed from another end, called the *front* of the list.
- Two basic operations are associated with queue:
  - "Insert" operation is used to insert an element into a queue.
  - "Delete" operation is used to delete an element from a queue.
- FIFO list
- Example: Queue: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50





### Insertion(ENQUEUE) Operation

**ALGORITHM:** Q\_INSERT(QUEUE,MAX,FRONT,REAR, ITEM)

**Input:** QUEUE is the linear array with maximum size MAX.FRONT and REAR are the pointer variables pointing to Front end and Rear end.

**Output:** This algorithm inserts an element ITEM on to the queue QUEUE.

**Step 1:** If REAR=MAX-1, then Print "Queue Overflow" and Exit.

**Step 2:** If FRONT=-1 and REAR=-1,then Set FRONT=0 and REAR=0 Else

Set REAR=REAR+1

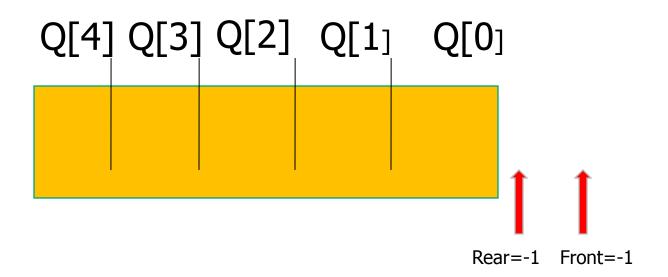


**Step 3:** [Insert an element in to the Queue]

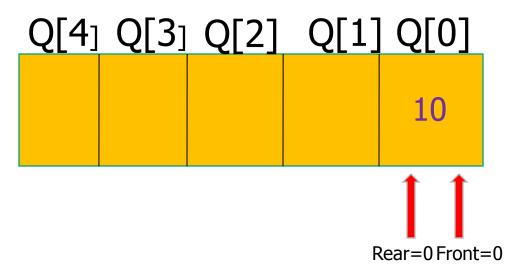
Set QUEUE[REAR]=ITEM

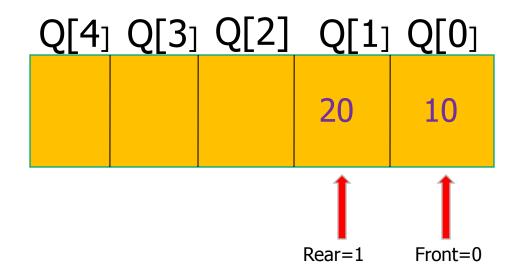
Step 4: Exit

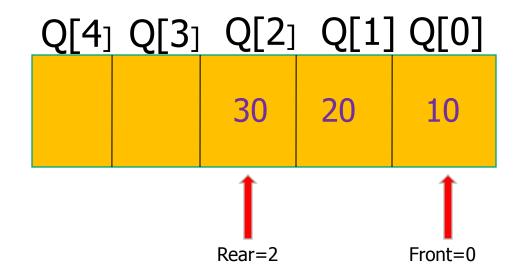
•Max=5, Front=-1, Rear=-1

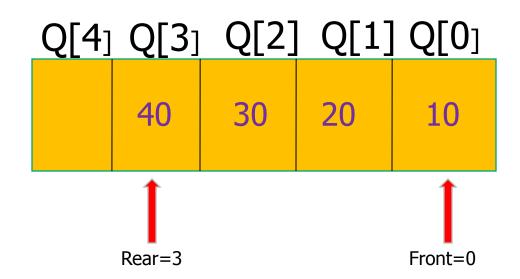


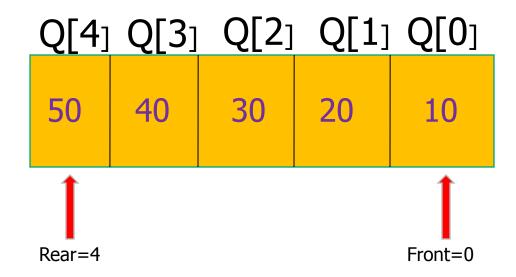






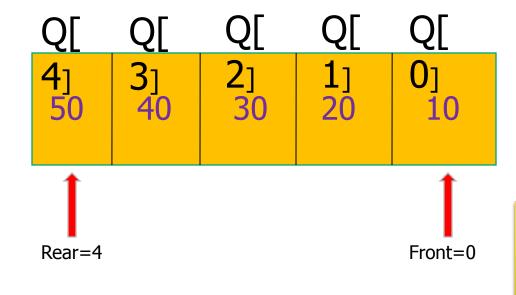






Insert 60

Rear=Max-1 (Rear=4)



Queue Overflow



**ALGORITHM:** Q\_DELETE(QUEUE,MAX,FRONT,REAR, ITEM)

**Input:** QUEUE is the linear array with maximum size MAX.FRONT and REAR are the pointer variables pointing to Front end and Rear end respectively.

**Output:** This algorithm deletes an element from the queue QUEUE and stores it in the variable ITEM.

**Step 1:** If FRONT=-1 and REAR=-1, then Print "Queue Underflow" and Exit.

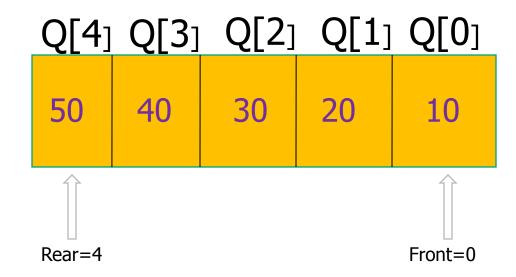
**Step 2:** [Delete an element from the Queue]

Set ITEM=QUEUE[FRONT]

```
Step 3: If FRONT= REAR , then
    Set FRONT=-1 and REAR=-1
    Else
    Set FRONT=FRONT+1
Step 4: Exit
```

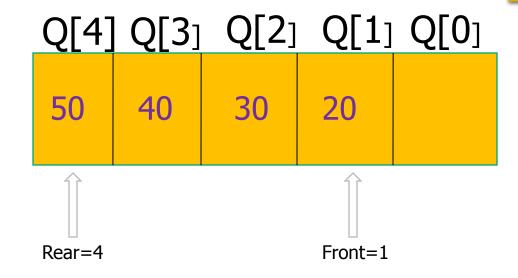


Delete



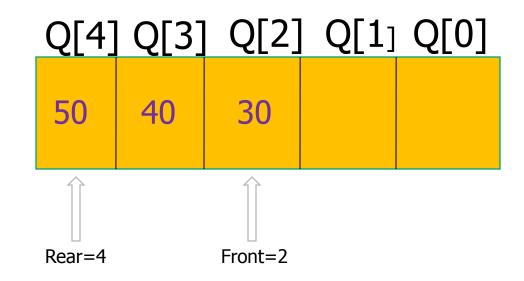


#### Delete



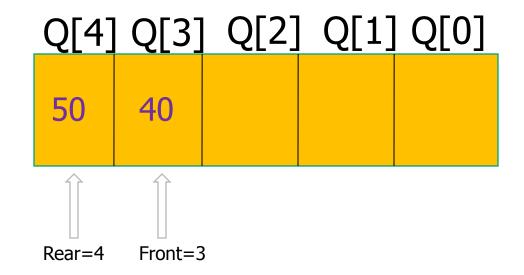


Delete





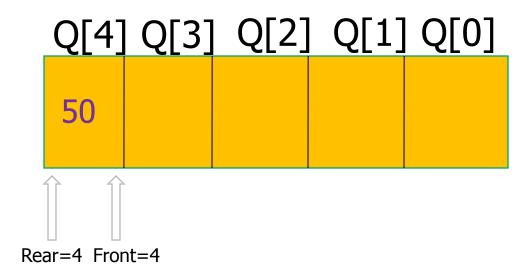
Delete



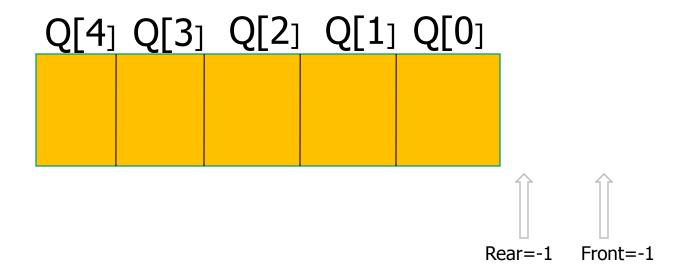
## DELETION(DEQUEUE)

Operation

Delete



#### Delete



### Array Implementation: Example

Example: Consider the following queue (linear queue).

Rear = 3 and Front = 0 and N = 7

10	50	30	40			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

(1) Insert 20. Now Rear = 4 and Front = 0

10	50	30	40	20		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

(2) Delete Front Element. Now Rear = 4 and Front = 1

	50	30	40	20			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

(3) Delete Front Element. Now Rear = 4 and Front = 2

		30	40	20		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

(4) Insert 60. Now Rear = 5 and Front = 2

		30	40	20	60	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

### **Queue Operations**

#define SIZE 50

```
int rear = -1, front = 0;
int q[SIZE];
void insert(int x) {
    if (rear == MAX - 1)
        printf("Queue Overflow \n");
    else {
        rear = rear + 1;
        q[rear] = x;
```

## Queue Operations

```
delete() {
    int x
    if (rear < front)</pre>
        printf("Queue Underflow \n");
    else
        x = q[front];
        front = front + 1;
void display() {
    int i;
    if (rear < front)
        printf("Queue is empty \n");
    else {
```

## Implemetation of Queue

```
#include <stdio.h>
                                               switch (choice) {
#define MAX 50
                                                   case 1:
void insert();
                                                        insert();
void Delete();
                                                        break;
void display();
                                                  case 2:
int que[MAX];
                                                        Delete();
int rear = -1;
                                                        break;
int front = -1;
                                                   case 3:
int main() {
                                                        display();
   int choice;
                                                        break;
  do {
                                                  case 4:
      printf("1.Insert \n");
                                                        break;
      printf("2.Delete \n");
                                                   default:
     printf("3.Display \n");
                                                        printf("Wrong choice \n");
      printf("4.Quit \n");
      printf("Enter your choice : ");
                                            }while(choice != 4);
     scanf("%d", &choice);
```

# Implemetation of Queue void delete() {

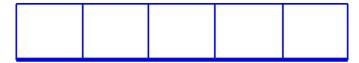
```
void insert() {
   int item;
   if (rear == MAX-1)
    printf("Queue Overflow \n");
   else {
     if (front == -1)
         front = 0;
     printf("Insert the element in
              queue: ");
     scanf("%d", &item);
     rear = rear + 1;
     que[rear] = item;
```

```
if (front == -1 || front > rear) {
      printf("Queue Underflow \n");
     return;
  else {
      printf("Element: %d\n", que[front]);
     front = front + 1;
void display() {
  int i;
  if(front == -1)
      printf("Queue is empty \n");
  else {
      printf("Queue is : \n");
     for (i = front; i <= rear; i++)
        printf("%d ", que[i]);
      printf("\n");
```

## Drawbacks of Linear Queue

- when an element added into Queue, rear pointer is increased by 1
- but when an element is removed front pointer is increased by 1
- Array implementation of queue may cause problems
- Consider operations performed on a Queue (with SIZE = 5) as follows:

1. Initially Queue is empty: front = 0 and rear = -1

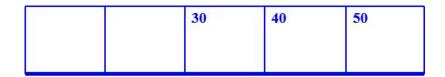


2. When 5 elements are added to queue, the state of the queue becomes as follows with front = 0 and rear = 4.

10	20	30	40	50
				_

## Drawbacks of Linear Queue

3. Now suppose two elements are deleted from Queue then, the state of the Queue becomes as follows, with front = 2 and rear = 4



4. Now, actually two elements are deleted from queue so, there should be space for another 2 elements in the queue, but as rear pointer is pointing at last position and Queue overflow condition (Rear == SIZE-1) is true, new element cannot be inserted in the queue even if it has empty spaces.

To overcome this problem there is another variation of queue called <u>circular queue</u>.

### Circular Queue

- Queues, implemented wrapping around, are called Circular Queues.
- Both the front and the rear pointers wrap around to the beginning of the array.
- It is also called as "Ring buffer".

### Circular Queue

The structure of circular queue is shown in following figure:

In circular queue, once the Queue is full the "First" element of the Queue becomes the "Rear" most element, if and only if the "Front" has moved forward. otherwise it will again be a "Queue overflow" state.

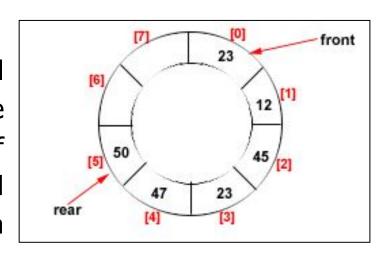


Figure: Circular Queue having Rear = 5 and Front = 0

#### **INSERTION**

**ALGORITHM:** C\_Q\_INSERT(C\_QUEUE,MAX,FRONT,REAR, ITEM)

**Input:** C\_QUEUE is the Circular Queue with maximum size MAX.FRONT and REAR are the pointer variables pointing to Front end and Rear end respectively.

**Output:** This algorithm inserts an element ITEM on to the circular queue C\_QUEUE.

**Step 1:** If FRONT=(REAR+1)%MAX, then Print "Circular Queue Overflow" and Exit.

**Step 2:** If FRONT=-1 and REAR=-1,then Set FRONT=0 and REAR=0 Else

Set REAR=(REAR+1) % MAX

### **INSERTION**

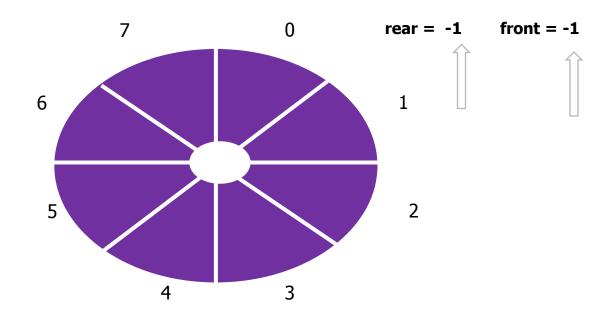
Step 3: [Insert an element in to the Queue]

Set C\_QUEUE[REAR]=ITEM

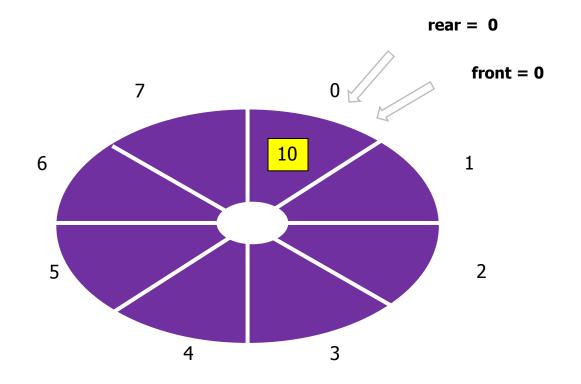
Step 4: Exit

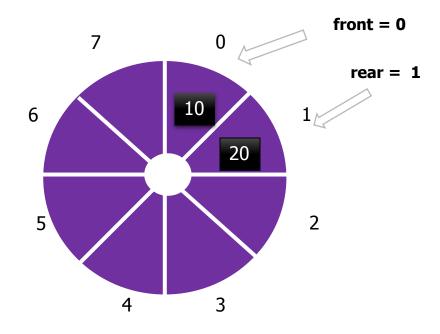


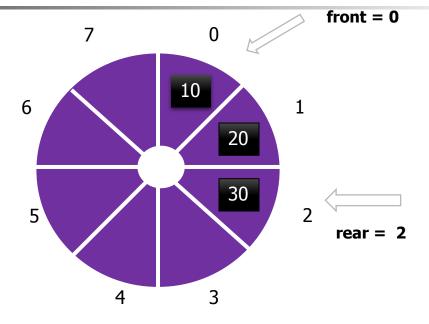
#### C\_Queue

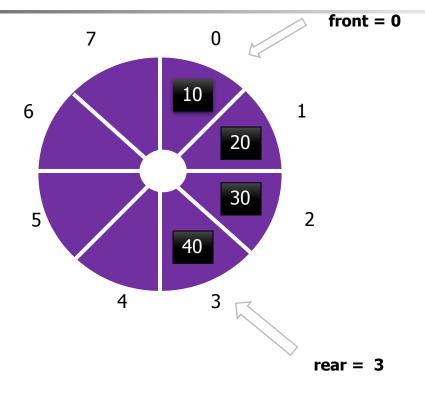


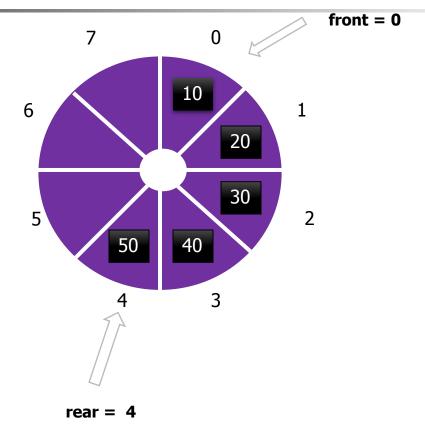
Insert 10 C\_Queue

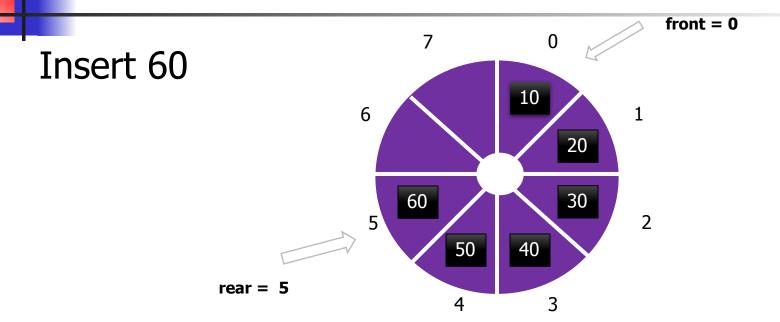


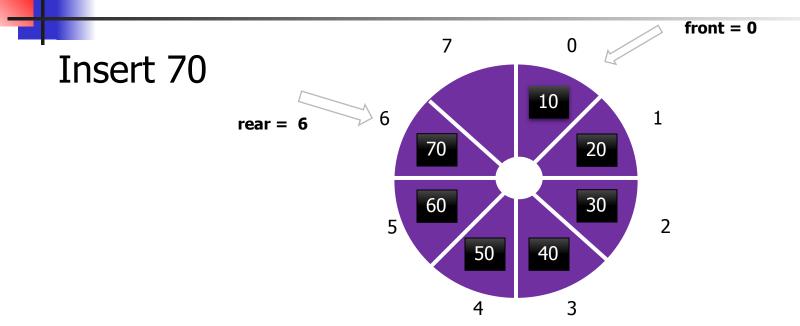


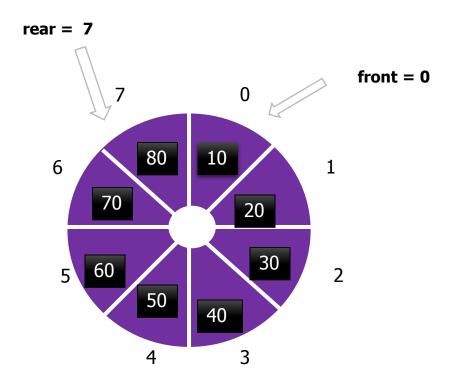








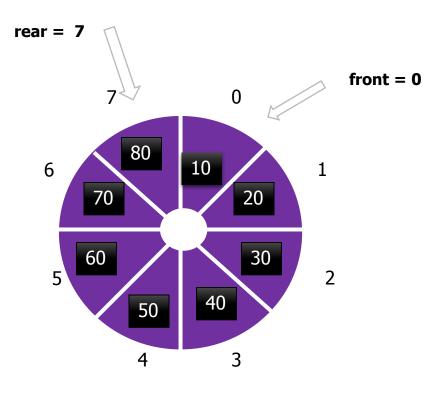




Insert 90

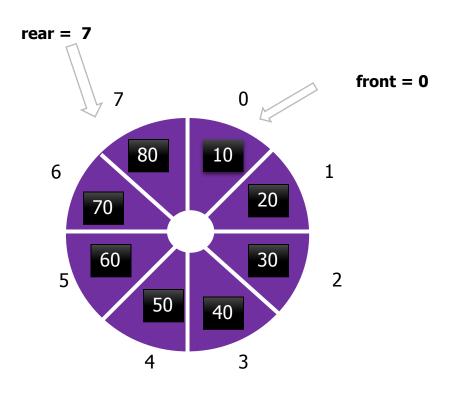
Front =(rear+1)%max

Queue Overflow

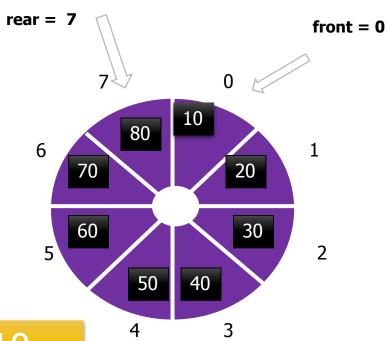


- **ALGORITHM: C**\_Q\_DELETE(C\_QUEUE,MAX,FRONT,REAR, ITEM)
- **Input:** C\_QUEUE is the Circular Queue with maximum size MAX. FRONT and REAR are the pointer variables pointing to Front end and Rear end respectively.
- **Output:** This algorithm deletes an element from the Circular Queue C\_QUEUE and stores it in the variable ITEM.
- **Step 1:** If FRONT=-1 and REAR=-1, then Print "Circular Queue Underflow" and Exit.
- **Step 2:** [Delete an element from the Queue] Set ITEM=C\_QUEUE[FRONT]

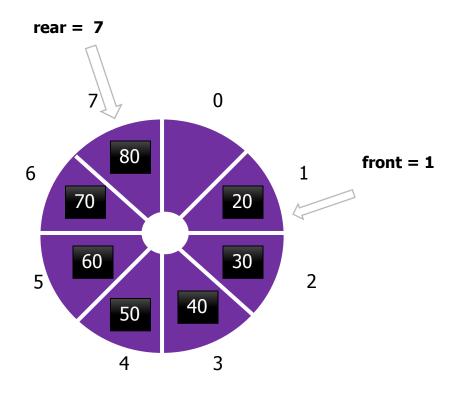
```
Step 3: If FRONT= REAR, then
Set FRONT=-1 and REAR=-1
Else
Set FRONT=(FRONT+1)%MAX
Step 4: Exit
```

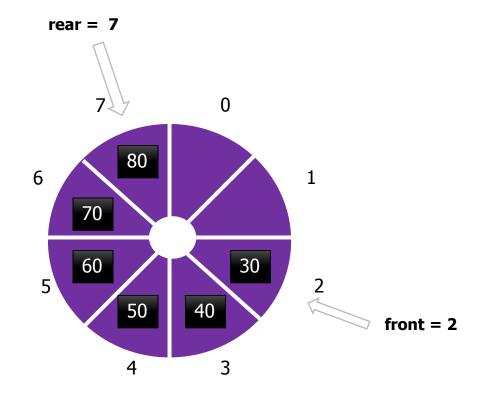


Delete

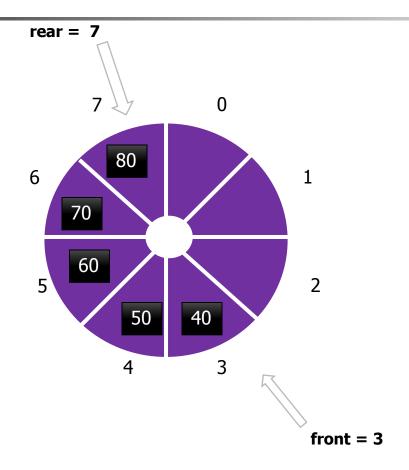


Deleted Element = 10



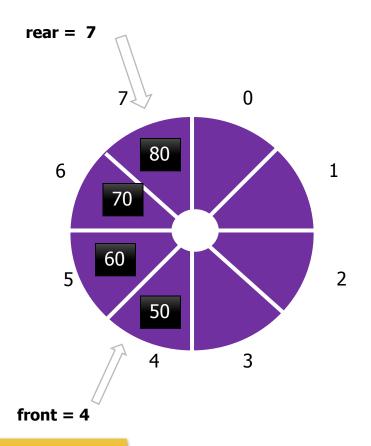


#### Delete

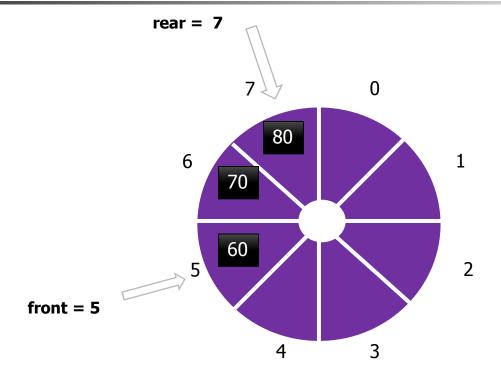


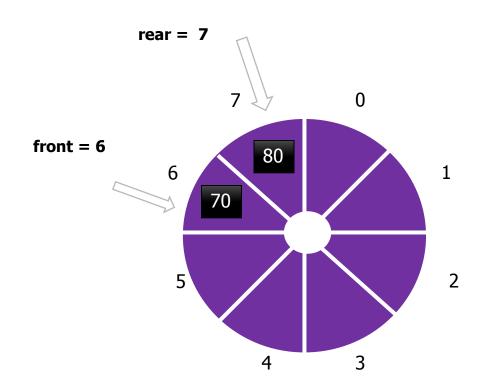
Deleted Element =40

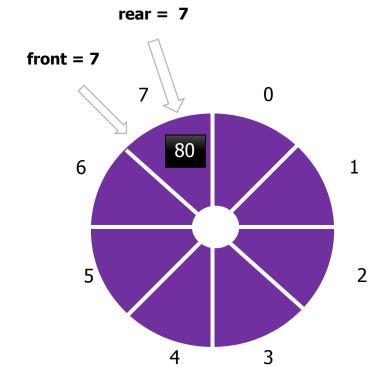
#### Delete



Deleted Element = 50

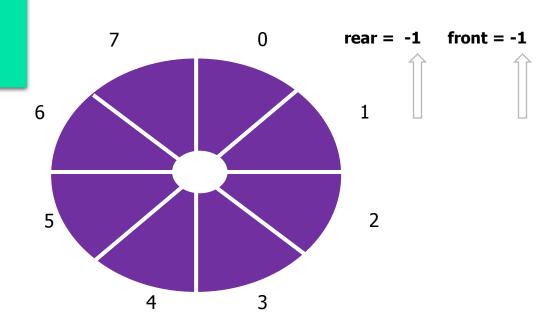






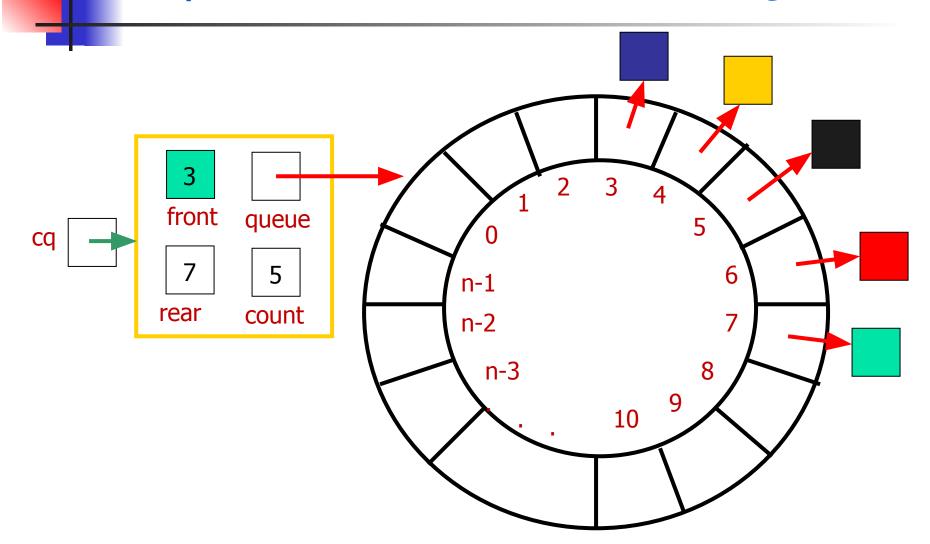


Front=-1 and rear=-1

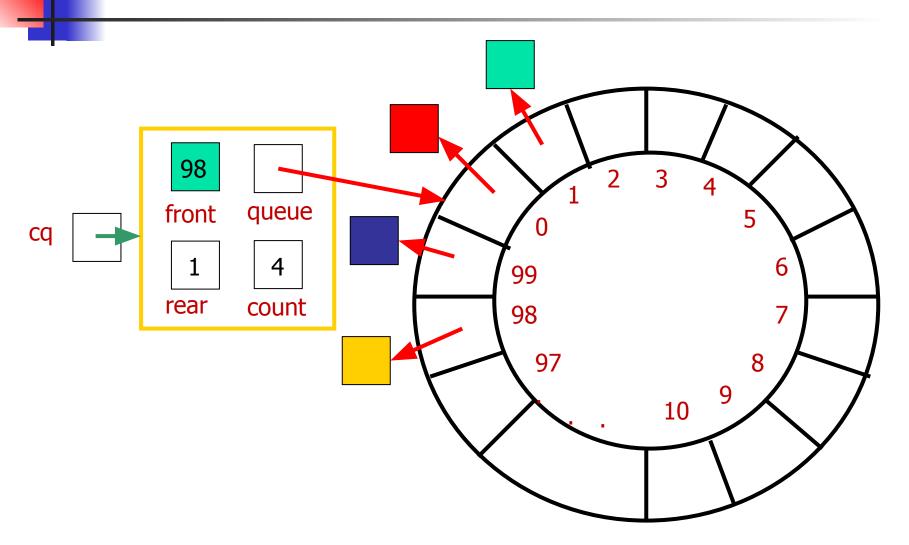


Queue Underflow

#### Implementation of a Circular Queue



## Insertion at End of a Circular Queue



# Algorithm for Insert Operation in Circular Queue

#### Insert-Circular-Q(CQueue, Rear, Front, N, Item)

- CQueue is a circular queue where to store data.
- Rear represents the location in which the data element is to be inserted and Front represents the location from which the data element is to be removed.
- N is the size of CQueue and finally, Item is the new item to be added. Initailly Rear = -1 and Front = -1.

```
    If (Front == (Rear+1)%MAX)
    Print "circular queue over
```

- 2. Print "circular queue overflow"
- 3. Return
- 4. Rear = (Rear+1)%MAX
- **5.** CQueue[Rear] = Item;
- 6. If (Front == -1)
- 7. Front = 0;

# Algorithm for Delete Operation in Circular Queue

#### Delete-Circular-Q(CQueue, Front, Rear, Item)

- CQueue is the place where data are stored.
- Rear represents the location in which the data element is to be inserted and Front represents the location from which the data element is to be removed.

```
    if ((Front == Rear) && (Rear == -1))
    Print "Circular Queue underflow"
    Return
    Item = CQueue[Front]
    If (Front == Rear)
    Front=Rear = -1
    Else
    Front = (Front + 1) % MAX
```

- Simple implementation
- The size of the queue must be determined when it is declared
- Space is wasted if less elements are used
- "insert" cannot be performed for more elements than the array can hold

```
#include<stdio.h>
#define SIZE 5
typedef struct queue {
     int cque[SIZE];
     int rear;
     int front;
{}CQueue;
void insert(CQueue *cq) {
     int item;
     if(cq->front == (cq->rear+1) \% MAX) 
          printf("CQueue Overflow...\n");
         return;
     printf("Enter the item : ");
     scanf("%d", &item);
```

```
if(cq->front == -1) {
          cq->front = 0;
          cq->rear = 0;
}
else
          cq->rear = (cq->rear+1) % SIZE;
cq->cque[cq->rear] = item;
```

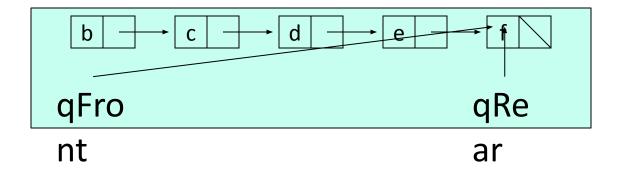
```
void del(CQueue *cq) {
                                                    void display(CQueue cq) {
    if(cq->front == -1) {
                                                         int i;
                                                         if(cq.front == -1) {
          printf("CQueue Underflow...\n");
                                                              printf("CQueue is Empty...\n");
          return;
                                                              return;
     printf("Item : %d\n", cq->cque[cq->front]);
     if(cq->front == cq->rear) {
                                                         printf("Front -> %d\n", cq.front);
          cq->front = -1;
                                                         printf("Elements -> ");
          cq->rear = -1;
                                                         for(i = cq.front; i != cq.rear; i = (i+1) %
                                                                                           SIZE)
     else
                                                              printf("%d ", cq.cque[i]);
          cq->front = (cq->front+1) % SIZE;
                                                         printf("%d\n", cq.cque[i]);
                                                         printf("Rear -> %d\n", cq.rear);
```

```
int main() {
    CQueue cq;
    int choice;
    cq.rear = cq.front = -1;
    do {
        printf("1.Insert\n");
        printf("2.Delete\n");
        printf("3.Display\n");
        printf("4.Quit\n");
        printf("Enter your choice : ");
        scanf("%d", &choice);
```

```
switch(choice) {
          case 1:
               insert(&cq);
               break;
          case 2:
               del(\&cq);
               break;
          case 3:
               display(cq);
               break;
          case 4:
               break;
          default:
               printf("Wrong choice\n");
}while(choice!=4);
return 0;
```

## Implementing queues using linked lists

- Allocate memory for each new element dynamically
- Link the queue elements together
- Use two pointers, qFront and qRear, to mark the front and rear of the queue



# Implementing queues using linked lists: Declaration and Initialization

Structure of the Node

```
struct Node {
    int data;
    struct Node* next;
}*rear, *front;

void create() {
    front = rear = NULL;
}
```

# Implementing queues using linked lists: Insert Function

```
void Insert(int val) {
   struct Node *newNode;
   newNode=(struct Node *)malloc(sizeof(struct Node));
   newNode->data=val;
   newNode->next = NULL;
   if(front == NULL && rear == NULL) {
       front = rear = newNode;
       return;
   rear->next = newNode;
   rear = newNode;
```

# Implementing queues using linked lists: Delete Function

```
void Delete() {
   struct Node* temp = front;
    if(front == NULL) {
        printf("Queue is Empty");
        return;
    if(front == rear) {
        front = rear = NULL;
   else {
        front = front->next;
    free(temp);
```

#### Implementing Queue using Stacks

Method 1: (By making insert() operation costly)

- This method makes sure that first element inserted is always at the top of stack 1
- So that delete() operation just pops from stack1
- To put the element at top of stack1, stack2 is used.

#### Implementing Queue using Stacks

#### insert(q, x):

- While stack1 is not empty, push everything from stack1 to stack2.
- Push x to stack1 (assuming size of stacks is unlimited).
- Push everything back to stack1.
- Here time complexity will be O(n)

#### delete(q):

- If stack1 is empty then error
- Pop an item from stack1 and return it
- Here time complexity will be O(1)

# Implementing Queue using Stacks

```
void insert(int x) {
                                          int delete() {
    // Move all elements from s1 to s2
                                              // if first stack is empty
                                              if (empty(s1)) {
    while (!empty(s1)) {
                                                  printf("Queue is Empty");
        push(s2, top(s1));
        pop(s1);
                                                   return;
     // Push item into s1
                                               // Return top of s1
     push(s1, x);
                                               int x = top(s1);
     // Push everything back to s1
                                                pop(s1);
     while (!empty(s2)) {
        push(s1, top(s2));
                                                return x;
        pop(s2);
```

## Implementing Stack using Queues

```
void push(int x) {
    int item;
    // move all elements in q1 to q2
    while(!isEmpty(q1)) {
         item = Delete(q1);
         insert(q2, temp);
    }
    // push the element into Stack
    insert(q1, x);
    // move back all elements back to Q1
                      from Q2
    while(!isEmpty(q2)) {
         item = Delete(q2);
         insert(q1, item);
```

```
int pop() {
    // if first stack is empty
    if (empty(q1)) {
         printf("Empty Stack");
         return;
    return Delete(q1);
```

#### Implementing Stack using Deque

```
void push(int x) {
    int item;
    // push the element into Stack
    insertAtFront(q, x);
}
```

```
int pop() {
    // if first stack is empty
    if (empty(q1)) {
        printf("Empty Stack");
        return;
      }
    return deleteAtFront(q);
}
```

#### Deques

- A deque is a <u>d</u>ouble-<u>e</u>nded <u>que</u>ue
- Insertions and deletions can occur at either end
- Implementation is similar to that for queues
- Deques are not heavily used

#### Deques

There are four basic operations in Deque:

- Insertion at rear end
- Insertion at front end
- Deletion at front end
- Deletion at rear end

#### Algorithm for Insertion at rear end

```
Step-1: [Check for overflow]
        if(rear = = MAX-1)
            Print("Queue is Overflow");
            return;
Step-2: [Insert Element]
        else
            rear=rear+1;
            q[rear]=item;
        [Set rear and front pointer]
        if front=-1
            front=0;
Step-3: return
```

#### Algorithm for Insertion at front end

```
Step-1 : [Check for the front position]
    if(front<=0)
        Print("Cannot add item at the front");
        return;
Step-2 : [Insert at front]
        else
            front=front-1;
            q[front]=item;
Step-3 : Return</pre>
```

# Algorithm for Deletion from front end

```
Step-1 [ Check for front pointer]
         if front==-1
             print(" Queue is Underflow");
             return;
 Step-2 [Perform deletion]
         else
             item=q[front];
             print("Deleted element is", item);
         [Set front and rear pointer]
         if front = rear
             front=-1;
             rear=-1;
         else
             front=front+1;
 Step-3: Return
```

# Algorithm for Deletion from rear end

```
Step-1: [Check for the rear pointer]
         if rear==-1
             print("Cannot delete value at rear end");
             return;
 Step-2: [ perform deletion]
         else
             item=q[rear];
             [Check for the front and rear pointer]
         if front==rear
             front=-1;
             rear=-1;
         else
             rear=rear-1;
             print("Deleted element is", item);
 Step-3: Return
```

### Deques

#### Types of Deque:

- Input restricted deque
- Output restricted deque
- An input restricted deque is a deque, which allows
  - insertion at only one end, i.e. rear end,
  - but deletion at both ends, rear and front end of the lists.
- An output-restricted deque is a deque, which allows
  - deletion at only one end, i.e. front end,
  - but insertion at both ends, rear and front ends, of the lists

```
#include <stdio.h>
#define MAX 5
int deque[MAX];
int rear =-1;
int front = -1;
void insertAtFront();
void insertAtRear();
void deleteAtFront();
void deleteAtRear();
void display();
int main() {
     int option;
     do {
          printf("\n\n DEQUE");
          printf("\n 1. Insert at front");
```

```
printf("\n 2. Insert at rear");
printf("\n 3. Delete from front");
printf("\n 4. Delete from rear");
printf("\n 5. Display");
printf("\n 6. Quit");
printf("\n Enter your option : ");
scanf("%d", &option);
switch (option) {
     case 1:
          insertAtFront();
          break;
     case 2.
          insertAtRear();
          break;
     case 3:
          deleteAtFront();
          break;
```

```
case 4:
                     deleteAtRear();
                     break;
               case 5:
                    display();
                     break;
               case 6:
                     break;
               default:
                    printf("Wrong Choice
... \n");
     } while (option!=6);
     return 0;
```

```
void insertAtFront() {
     int item;
     if(front == (rear+1) \% MAX) {
          printf("Deque Overflow...\n");
          return; }
     printf("\n Enter the value: ");
     scanf("%d", &item);
     if(front == -1) {
          front = 0;
          rear = 0;
     else if(front == 0)
          front=MAX-1;
     else
          front = front-1;
     deque[front] = item;
```

```
void insertAtRear() {
                                                void deleteAtFront() {
                                                     if (front == -1) {
    int item;
                                                          printf("\nDeque Underflow...\n");
     if(front == (rear+1) \% MAX) 
          printf("Deque Overflow...\n");
                                                          return;
         return;
                                                     printf("\nElement is : %d", deque[front]);
     printf("\n Enter the value: ");
                                                     if(front == rear) {
                                                          front = -1;
     scanf("%d", &item);
     if(front == -1) {
                                                          rear = -1;
          front = 0;
         rear = 0;
                                                     else
                                                          front = (front+1) \% MAX;
     else
          rear = (rear+1) \% MAX;
     deque[rear] = item;
```

```
void display() {
                                                    int f = front, r = rear;
void deleteAtRear() {
                                                    if (front == -1) {
    if (front == -1) {
                                                         printf("\n Empty Deque...\n");
          printf("\nDeque Underflow...\n");
                                                         return;
                                                    printf("\nThe elements of the Deque are :
          return;
                                                    if(f \le r)
    printf("\nElement is : %d", deque[rear]);
                                                         while(f \le r) {
                                                               printf("%d ", deque[f]);
     if(front == rear) {
                                                               f++:
          front = -1;
          rear = -1;
                                                    else
                                                         while(f \le MAX-1) {
                                                               printf("%d ", deque[f]);
     else if(rear == 0)
                                                              f++:
          rear = MAX-1;
     else
                                                         while (f \le r)
          rear = rear-1;
                                                               printf("%d ", deque[f]);
                                                               f++:
```

# Implementing deque using linked lists: Declaration and Initialization

Structure of the Node

```
struct Node {
    int data;
    struct Node* next;
}*rear, *front;

void create() {
    front = rear = NULL;
}
```

# Implementing deque using linked lists: Insert Functions

```
void InsertAtRear(int val) {
   struct Node *newNode;
   newNode=(struct Node *)
     malloc(sizeof(struct Node));
   newNode->data=val;
   newNode->next = NULL;
   if(front == NULL)
           front = newNode;
   else
       rear->next = newNode;
   rear = newNode;
```

```
void InsertAtFront(int val) {
   struct Node *newNode;
   newNode=(struct Node *)
         malloc(sizeof(struct
Node));
   newNode->data=val;
   newNode->next = NULL;
   if(front == NULL)
       front = rear = newNode;
   else {
       newNode->next = front;
       front = newNode;
```

# Implementing deque using linked lists: Delete Functions

```
int delqAtRear(){
                                  struct Node *temp , *rleft=NULL, *q ;
int delqAtFront(){
                                    int item;
   struct Node *temp = front;
                                  temp = front;
   int item;
                                  if(rear == NULL ){
   if (temp == NULL)
                                      printf ( "Empty Queue" );
    printf ( "Empty Queue ");
                                      return 0; }
   return 0; }
                                  else {
   else {
                                      while(temp != rear ){
    item = temp -> data;
                                        rleft = temp;
    front = temp -> next;
                                        temp = temp->next; }
    free (temp);
                                      q = rear; item = q->data; free ( q );
    if(front == NULL )
                                rear = rleft;
       rear = NULL;
                                      if(rear != NULL) rear -> next = NULL;
    return ( item ); }
                                      if ( rear == NULL ) front = NULL;
                                     return ( item ); }
```

#### **Priority Queues**

- More specialized data structure than Queue
- Priority queue has same method but with a major difference.
  - In Priority queue items are ordered by key value so that item with the lowest value of key is at front and item with the highest value of key is at rear or vice versa.
  - priority is assigned to items based on their key value
  - Lower the value, higher the priority
- Following are the principal methods of a Priority Queue:
  - insert / enqueue: add an item to the rear of the queue.
  - <u>remove / dequeue</u>: remove an item from the front of the queue.

```
pQue[i+1] = item;
          count++;
     else
          printf("Priority Queue
Overflow...\n");
int del(){
     if(count != 0)
          return pQue[--count];
     else
          printf("Priority Queue
Underflow...\n");
```

### **Priority Queues**

```
void insert() {
     int i = 0;
     int item;
     if(!isFull()){
          printf("Enter the item: ");
          scanf("%d", &item);
          if(count == 0)
               pQue[count++] = item;
          else {
               for(i=count-1; i \ge 0; i--) {
                     // if data is larger, shift existing item to
right end
                     if(item > pQue[i])
                          pQue[i+1] = pQue[i];
                     else
```

break;

#### **Application of Queues**

Queue is used when things don't have to be processed immediatly, but have to be processed in <u>First In First Out</u> order. This property of Queue makes it useful in following kind of scenarios.

- When a resource is shared among multiple consumers.
  - Examples include <u>CPU scheduling</u>, <u>Disk Scheduling</u>.
- When <u>data</u> is transferred asynchronously (<u>data not necessarily</u> received at same rate as sent) between two processes.
  - Examples include I/O Buffers, pipes, file IO, etc.