

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

VFS Global Services PLC v. sharma rickey  
Case No. D2025-3355

### **1. The Parties**

Complainant is VFS Global Services PLC, United Kingdom, represented by Aditya & Associates, India.

Respondent is sharma rickey, India.

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <vfsstudy.com> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on August 20, 2025. On August 21, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On August 22, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response, disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Domain Admin) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to Complainant on August 22, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. Complainant filed an amended Complaint on August 22, 2025. Respondent sent an email communication to the Center on August 26, 2025.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on August 29, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was September 18, 2025. Respondent sent an email communication to the Center on September 15, 2025. The Center proceeded with the Commencement of Panel Appointment Process on September 19, 2025.

The Center appointed Georges Nahitchevansky as the sole panelist in this matter on September 29, 2025. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

#### **4. Factual Background**

Complainant, VFS Global Services PLC, is a United Kingdom company with headquarters in London. Complainant offers specialized technological and logistics support services to various foreign embassies and diplomatic services worldwide, including visa application services. Complainant operates 3,995 Visa Application Centers around the globe through which individual applicants can file applications, and has successfully processed more than 499 million visa applications. Complainant owns and uses the domain name <vfglobal.com> for a website concerning Complainant and its services and to provide online visa application services and information for a wide range of countries.

Complainant's wholly owned subsidiary, VFS Global Education Services, provides educational and related services for international students seeking global academic or career opportunities and owns and uses the domain name <vfglobalacademy.com> for a website providing information concerning such services.

Complainant owns and uses several marks that consist of VFS or VFS GLOBAL in connection with its services, and owns a number of trademark registrations for its marks in jurisdictions around the globe. Of particular relevance in these proceedings, Complainant owns many registrations that contain VFS in India. These include, inter alia, registrations for the VFS mark (Registration Nos. 1126304 and 1255698, the earliest of which issued to registration on August 14, 2002) and VFS GLOBAL (Registration Nos. 1555892, 1555893, 1726901, the earliest of which issued to registration on May 7, 2007).

Respondent appears to be based in India. Respondent registered the disputed domain name on April 23, 2025. At some point thereafter, Respondent began using the disputed domain name for a website that used the name and title "VFS Overseas Education Consultants" and which featured the promotional explanation "Easy & Simple Visa Processing Agency". Currently, the disputed domain name redirects to what appears to be the same website now at the domain name <visa4student.com>.

#### **5. Parties' Contentions**

##### **A. Complainant**

Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, Complainant contends that it has a global reputation, is present in over 150 countries and that as a result the VFS and VFS GLOBAL marks are well known in connection with Complainant's visa application, technological, educational and related services.

Complainant asserts that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to its VFS mark as it fully incorporates the distinctive VFS mark as a dominant element of the disputed domain name with the term "study" which is "intrinsically linked to overseas education and student visa services".

Complainant maintains that Respondent does not have legitimate interests in the disputed domain name as Respondent (i) has no license of authorization from Complainant to use Complainant's VFS mark, (ii) is not known by the VFS name and mark, (iii) does not own any rights in the VFS mark, and (iv) has not made a bona fide or legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. In that regard, Complainant notes that Respondent has used the disputed domain name to attract and redirect consumers to its website to offer services similar to those of Complainant.

Lastly, Complainant contends that Respondent has registered and used the disputed domain name in bad faith to offer services similar to Complainant and/or to secure the personal information of unsuspecting web users. Complainant argues that Respondent must have been aware of Complainant when it registered the disputed domain name for use with a misleading website that offered services similar to Complainant under its VFS mark. Complainant further notes that given the notoriety of the VFS mark in connection with Complainant's services, Respondent's adoption of the confusingly similar disputed domain name constitutes bad faith in and of itself.

## **B. Respondent**

Respondent did not substantively reply to Complainant's contentions. Respondent did, however, send an email communication to the Center on August 26, 2025, shortly after Complainant had filed its Amended Complaint and before the proceedings were formally commenced by the Center. In that email communication, Respondent requested an "additional 2 week's for provide all relevant doc's".

The Center formally commenced the proceedings on August 29, 2025, and Respondent was given until September 18, 2025, to file a Response. Respondent did not file a Response, but on September 15, 2025, sent another email communication to the Center that simply stated, in part, "from our side domain has been deactivated and will not be used in future".

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, to succeed Complainant must satisfy the Panel that:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which Complainant has rights;
- (ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

### **A. Identical or Confusingly Similar**

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7.

Complainant has shown rights in its VFS and VFS GLOBAL marks for purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1. Here, the VFS mark is fully incorporated at the head of the disputed domain name. Although the addition of the word "study" in the disputed domain name may bear on the assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such word does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the VFS mark for purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

### **B. Rights or Legitimate Interests**

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task

of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds Complainant has established a prima facie case that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. Respondent has not rebutted Complainant's prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name is clearly based on the VFS mark and does not seem coincidental. Needless to say, the composition of the disputed domain name underscores Respondent's intent of taking unfair advantage of the likely association between the disputed domain name and Complainant, particularly in view of the visa application and related services that Respondent purports to offer on its website and the highlighting of VFS on Respondent's website. As such, because the disputed domain name and associated website are likely to be seen by consumers (mistakenly) as related to, competing with or subsumed within Complainant's visa application and educational services, it is hard to see how Respondent could have any rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established

### **C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

The Panel notes that, for purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In view of Respondent's actions and the continued use of the disputed domain name as a redirect to a website that promotes visa application and related services, it is easy to infer that Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name, which is clearly based on Complainant's VFS mark, has been done opportunistically and in bad faith for the benefit or profit of Respondent. The disputed domain name along with its use suggests a connection to Complainant and its visa application and related services, and was registered well after Complainant had established rights in its VFS mark. Given that Respondent has used the disputed domain name in connection with a website that offers services similar to Complainant, it appears more likely than not that Respondent was fully aware of Complainant and its VFS name and mark when it registered the disputed domain name for Respondent's benefit.

The Panel thus finds that Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

## **7. Decision**

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <vfsstudy.com> be transferred to Complainant.

*/Georges Nahichevansky/*

**Georges Nahichevansky**

Sole Panelist

Date: October 13, 2025