MEDIA INFORMATION
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Technical University of Leoben unveils Focus Africa Programme to drive education collaboration and student mobility

- *Programme designed to enable students to pursue higher education in engineering and technology*
- *Engineering students from recognised universities across Ethiopia and Africa can apply*
- *Students will be provided with a one-year post study visa extension upon graduation*
- *Applications are being accepted for summer and winter intakes*

In a landmark event held in Addis Ababa, H.E. Dr. Simone Knapp, Austrian Ambassador to Ethiopia; representatives of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education; Prof. Thomas Prohaska, Vice Rector, Technical University of Leoben, Dr.-Ing. Susanne Feiel and Clemens Weihs, Lead Focus Africa Initiative; and senior representatives from VFS Education Services showcased the collaborative programme between Technical University of Leoben and Austrian ecosystem partners to boost Austria-Africa educational collaboration and mobility.

This landmark public-private partnership aims to support Austria-Africa mobility for skilled engineering and technology students. It is specifically designed for students from recognised colleges across Ethiopia and the wider African continent, providing them with access to quality higher education at Technical University of Leoben. Under this agreement, qualified Ethiopian and African engineering and technology graduates from recognised institutions will be able to pursue full-degree studies in Austria through structured pathways under the Focus Africa initiative.

The Focus Africa initiative will help to establish a transparent and long-term cooperation model that strengthens collaboration with Ethiopian and African universities and connects education, science, responsible mining, student mobility, industry and sustainable development.

H.E. Dr. Simone Knapp, Austrian Ambassador to Ethiopia, said, *"This new initiative by the Technical University of Leoben is a significant step in linking Africa's emerging talents with Austria's expertise in science, engineering, and sustainable technologies. It celebrates and deepens our long-standing academic and institutional partnerships."*

Prof. Thomas Prohaska, Vice Rector, Technical University of Leoben added, *"Building on the strong momentum created through the Austrian-Ethiopian Symposium on Sustainable Mining & Circular Engineering and recent high-level engagements, we are proud to advance the Focus Africa initiative as a long-term platform for cooperation. Together with our partners, we aim to connect education, research, industry and talent development, while creating concrete opportunities for students and institutions across Ethiopia and Africa.*

Dr.-Ing. Susanne Feiel and Clemens Weihs, Lead of the Focus Africa Initiative further elaborated, *"Focus Africa will change the way we approach international education by not only creating new opportunities and supporting talented Ethiopian and African students through structured pathways into Austrian higher education but also by connecting their pathway directly to the industry through placements, thereby creating immediate employability upon graduation."*

The programme comprises full-degree master's pathways, entailing both academic instruction and potential links with industry and applied research opportunities as part of the curriculum. The University will also support engagement with industry, academic collaboration and talent development opportunities.

As part of the academic programme, students will be eligible for a one-year post study visa extension upon graduation in Austria, or they will be guided through a structured career pathway with relevant companies and institutions in their home countries.

Pursuing a master's degree at a technical university in Austria offers a truly enriching academic and cultural experience. Known for its historic contributions to science, engineering, and innovation, Austria provides students with a unique blend of tradition and modern excellence. Cities like Leoben host globally respected technical institutions such as Technical University of Leoben, or Montanuniversität as it is known in German, and serve as hubs for sustainable mining, circular engineering and industrial innovation.

Eligible students interested in pursuing a master's degree at Austria's leading technical universities can submit their academic documents through structured application pathways supported by VFS Education Services. The selection process is comprehensive, evaluating candidates based on academic performance, English language proficiency, assessments, and document verification.

To ensure a seamless and student-centric experience, VFS Education Services has introduced a robust digital admissions portal with real-time data capture, enabling support to students right from initial outreach through to pre-departure guidance.

VFS Education Services employs advanced verification protocols, including blockchain-enabled academic authentication and interview-based English proficiency assessments. This approach helps to shortlist the most qualified and motivated students, ensuring a high-quality intake and a clear, supportive pathway for selected candidates.

About VFS Education Services

VFS Education Services is a wholly owned subsidiary of VFS Global, a globally recognised leader in trusted technology services, guided by the principles of integrity, transparency, and efficiency—values inherited from our Swiss heritage under the Kuoni Group, a key shareholder of VFS Global from its inception.

VFS Education Services has helped students and families seeking overseas education and upskilling, through several initiatives, endeavours and customised suite of solutions, across key markets such as Canada, Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Operating with the same values of integrity, transparency, and operational excellence that positioned VFS Global as a leader in trusted technology services, the company is dedicated to "Serving Students Globally" by simplifying access to international education, ensuring it is safer and more attainable for aspiring students.

About Technical University of Leoben

Technical University of Leoben, founded in 1840, is one of Austria's oldest technical universities and a small, highly specialized institution with a unique international reputation. Nestled in the scenic mountain landscape of Styria, it combines more than 185 years of academic tradition with close ties to industry and society. The university is globally recognized for its excellence in mining, mineral resources, metallurgy and circular engineering. Its interdisciplinary expertise spans the entire raw materials life cycle – from exploration and extraction to processing, materials development, recycling and resource recovery. Graduates of Technical University of Leoben are highly sought after worldwide and hold leading positions across the global resources, materials and manufacturing industries.

About Austria

Austria is a country of nine federal states in the center of Europe. Home to 9 million people it blends breathtaking alpine landscapes with historical cities and forward-thinking innovation in harmony. Austria is next to its renowned cultural heritage widely recognized as a technology-driven and innovation-oriented country with one of the highest R&D intensities in Europe. A large share of investment comes from industry, highlighting the strong cooperation between companies, universities and research institutions. Key strengths include engineering, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, energy systems and life sciences.

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