Financial system changes will affect many

Experts who are involved in implementing KFS at the NWU are Ms Hanlie Venter, Ms Elmarie de Beer, Mr Erik Marx, Mr Johan Schoeman and Mr Francois Steyn.

The switch from Oracle to the Kuali Financial System (KFS) does not only affect people working in finance departments, but also those who only handle money occasionally.

Related NWU systems that integrate with the financial system (chart of accounts), such as those for student debtors (VSS), human capital (Oracle HR) or for the budget (IDU), will also be affected, and so will the people who work with these systems.

This is according to Ms Elmarie de Beer, the NWU's chief director for finance in the Institutional Office.

She says all staff members using the Oracle Financial System will be affected, as will some non-financial users whose business systems integrate with the financial system.

"Even if you are a secretary who only has to pay some bills from time to time or a manager who orders chemicals for your laboratory, you will be affected by the switch envisaged for the beginning of 2015," says Elmarie.

Staff can rest assured that everybody will undergo thorough training before the switch to KFS.

IS THE CHANGE COST EFFECTIVE?
The NWU switched over to Oracle in 2006 and now the university is changing again – isn't this a waste of money?

"No," says Elmarie. "After the merger the campuses all used different systems and we needed to pick one. Oracle was the best option.

"Had KFS been available at the time, it would probably have been our first choice, because it was developed by universities for universities. Oracle, on the other hand, was developed for all kinds of enterprises, meaning it was not custom made for higher education institutions, which constitute less than 1% of Oracle's client base. We also pay expensive annual licence fees to Oracle."

FOLLOW THE PROCESS

2012

August 2012
NWU core team (IT and Finance at the Institutional Office) looks into KFS.

2013

January 2013
Development project kicks off.

2014

February 2014
First workshop for intensive users on campuses takes place.

April 2014
Development project will be completed by the end of April.

July 2014
Expected date for finalising the integration of all related systems with KFS.

August 2014
End-user testing to obtain feedback and see whether users find the system acceptable.

November 2014
Training for users will be completed.

19 December 2014
Expected date for the transitional process to start.

2015

4 January 2015
Expected date for KFS to be fully functional.