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Post nuclear expertise shared

COPING WITH the post-nuclear world was on the agenda for a high-level international conference held by the University of Abertay Dundee at Dudhope Castle yesterday.

Academics and experts from Abertay and other Scottish institutions were joined by a delegation of civic and business leaders from 10 cities in Russia fighting to cast off their secret past as bases for nuclear power and nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union.

The 15-strong Russian party, which includes three mayors and three industrial leaders plus business managers, local officials and interpreters, attended the Abertay conference as part of a week-long fact-finding mission to the UK.

The group has already visited Rosyth to inspect the technology park and Europark established to help cope with the impact of the closure of the Royal Navy Dockyard. At yesterday's conference, they met the team engaged in the £4 billion clean-up of the former experimental reactor establishment at Dounreay.

The conference also featured presentations from Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce & Industry on inward investment, as well Scottish Enterprise Tayside on the knowledge economy and Business Gateway, and Scottish Enterprise Fife on government's role in managing change.

The conference was organised by the Dundee Business School (DBS) at Abertay University. Jim Paterson of DBS said, "Russia as a whole is currently seeking to re-deploy around 40,000 people from nuclear weapons and power programmes that have been or are being phased out."

DBS has been working in the former Soviet Union for several years, on a commission from the UK Department of Trade & Industry (DTI). The DTI has funded the Russian visit to the UK, following a similar visit last year to Oxford and the former nuclear research and development establishment at Harwell.

Today the Russians will visit Abertay's IC CAVE digital entertainment research centre and the Angus Training Group in Arbroath.

