

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

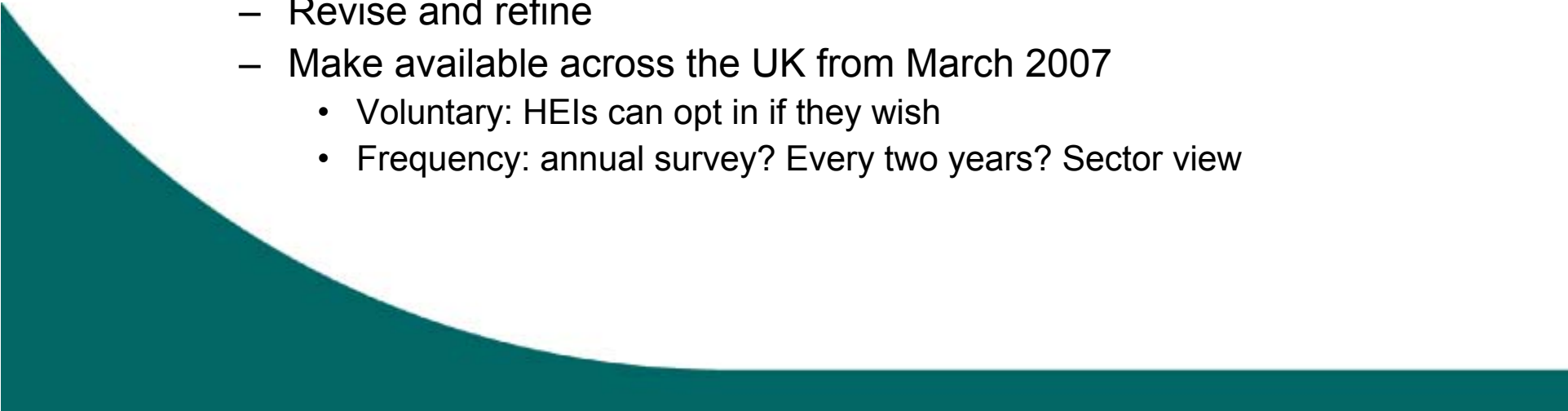
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The logo for The Higher Education Academy, featuring a teal circle with the text "The Higher Education Academy" inside. The word "The" is at the top, "Higher Education" is in the middle, and "Academy" is at the bottom, all in white text.

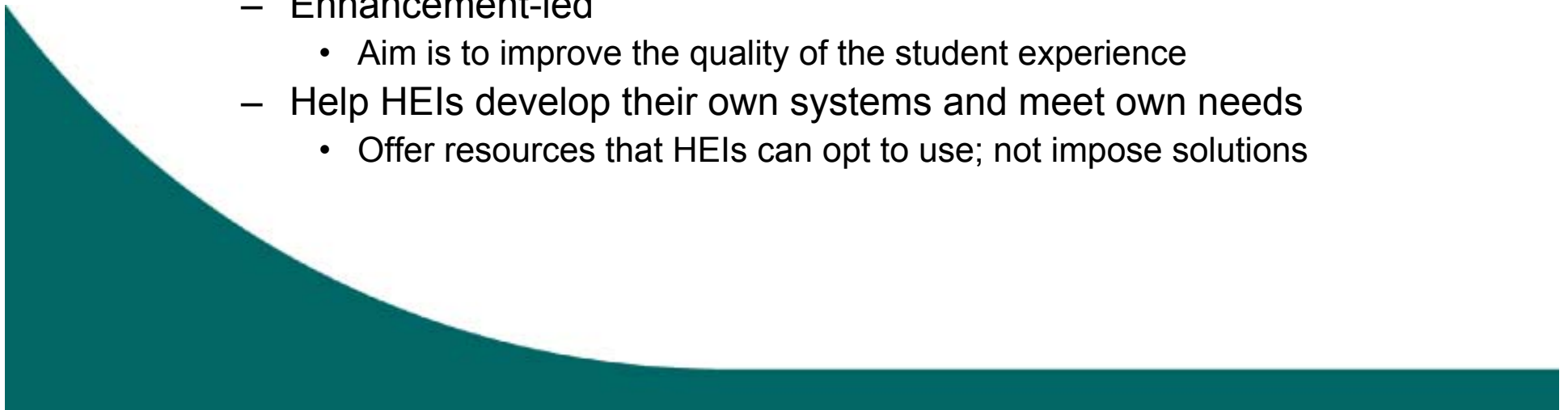
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PRES - origins and evolution

- Developed and used in Australia – PREQ [Questionnaire]
 - 1998 pilot study; revised version
 - National survey, individual HEIs
 - Scope for adoption in the UK
 - University of Oxford, 2004 pilot, 2006 survey
 - Rugby Team strategy paper (recommendation 5)
 - HEA strategy
 - Pilot project (6 volunteer HEIs), summer 2006
 - Revise and refine
 - Make available across the UK from March 2007
 - Voluntary: HEIs can opt in if they wish
 - Frequency: annual survey? Every two years? Sector view
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Why the HEA?

- Neutral
 - Not involved in quality assurance, performance measurement, funding etc
- National (UK)
 - Help to see what's happening across the sector
 - Help to identify and share good practice across the sector
- Mission
 - To serve and benefit the sector
 - Enhancement-led
 - Aim is to improve the quality of the student experience
 - Help HEIs develop their own systems and meet own needs
 - Offer resources that HEIs can opt to use; not impose solutions

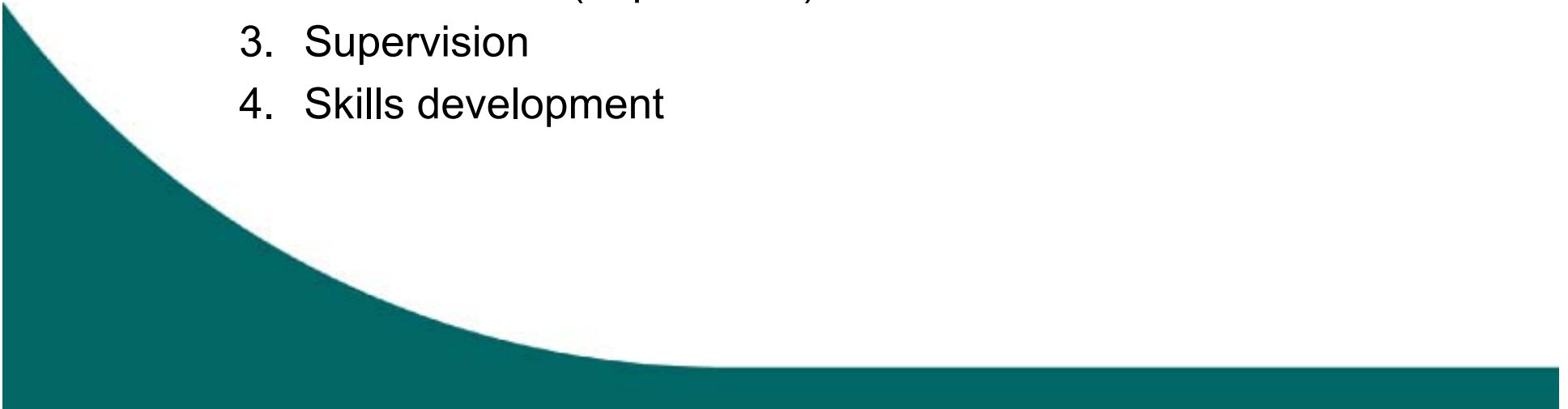


What is PRES?

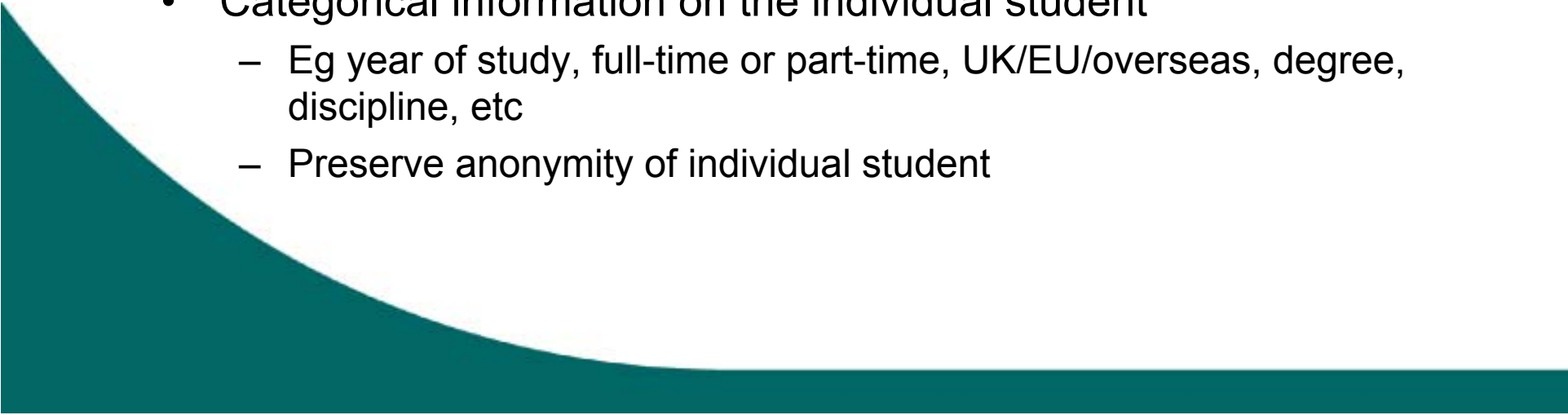
- Questionnaire survey
 - Based on student responses to a set of questions
 - Focus on the research student experience
 - NOT a student satisfaction survey
- Format
 - Different to normal institutional questionnaires
 - Series of standard questions
 - Groups questions together under themes (scales)
 - Scope to add extra questions, and text boxes
 - Online questionnaire (BOS/CROS)
- Instrument
 - Flexible (allows additional HEI-specific questions)
 - Sophisticated (allows detailed statistical analysis)
 - Comparative (allows HEI to compare results with sector average, and collect longitudinal data)

Scales

- Groups of questions grouped by theme
 - Defined empirically in Australia (factor analysis)
 - Robust and stable between HEIs
 - Confirmed by Oxford University pilot
- Four broad themes relating to student experience
 1. Intellectual climate (department)
 2. Infrastructure (department)
 3. Supervision
 4. Skills development



Scope for HEI to add extra questions


- Option to include extra questions
 - Eg overall satisfaction, institutional infrastructure
 - Tailor questions to specific groups
 - Eg year of study, discipline, degree registered for
 - Institution-specific questions
 - Eg local issues, specific support services
 - Continuity with previous institutional surveys
 - Categorical information on the individual student
 - Eg year of study, full-time or part-time, UK/EU/overseas, degree, discipline, etc
 - Preserve anonymity of individual student
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Applications - HEIs

- Allow HEIs to collect feedback from their research students
 - Core set of questions and scales
 - Results confidential to the HEI
- Performance management
 - Benchmark (HEI vs national)
 - Longitudinal (change through time)
 - Cost-effectiveness (interventions)
- Evidence-based decision making
 - Activities in support of research degree programmes
 - Help to inform strategic direction, priorities



Applications – national agencies

- HEA
 - Overview of the national picture
 - Inform development of strategies to help HEIs
 - Enhancement-led approach
 - Other national agencies
 - QAA, HEFCE, RCUK, UK GRAD
 - Support HEIs to collect information on the student experience in a consistent way, and benchmark
 - NOT to publish KPIs or create league tables
 - Enhancement-led approach
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Next steps

- PRES Steering Group
 - Questionnaire: format and content
 - Survey instrument (BOS/CROS)
 - Promotion to and engagement of HEIs
 - Pilot
 - Evaluation and review
 - Consultation and promotion
 - Launch of national survey
 - Monitoring + consultation → review → improvement
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