

# Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

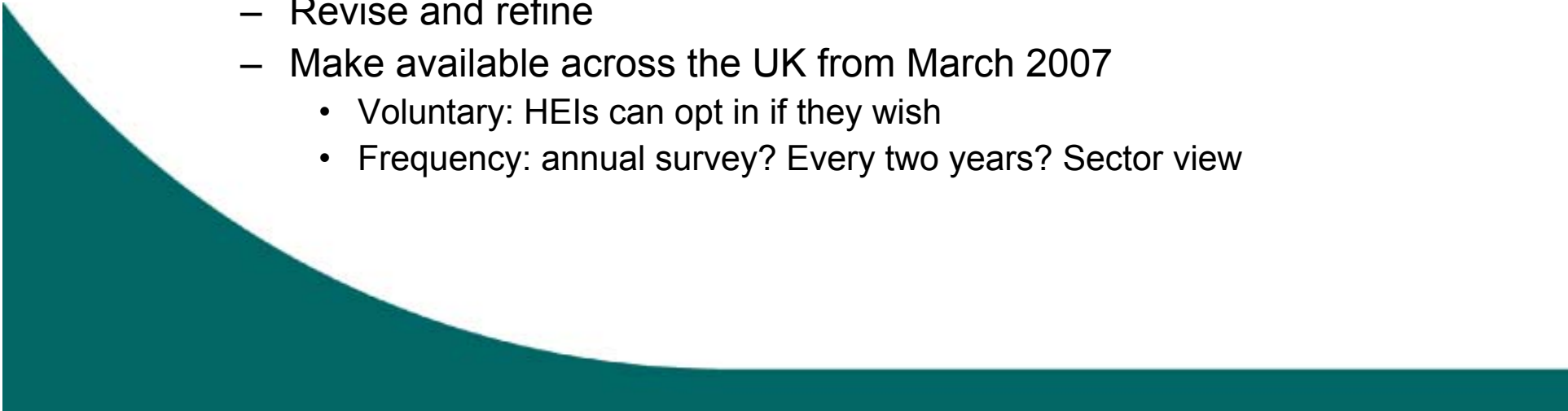
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The logo for The Higher Education Academy, featuring a teal circle with the text "The Higher Education Academy" inside. The text is white, with "The" and "Academy" in a larger font than "Higher Education".

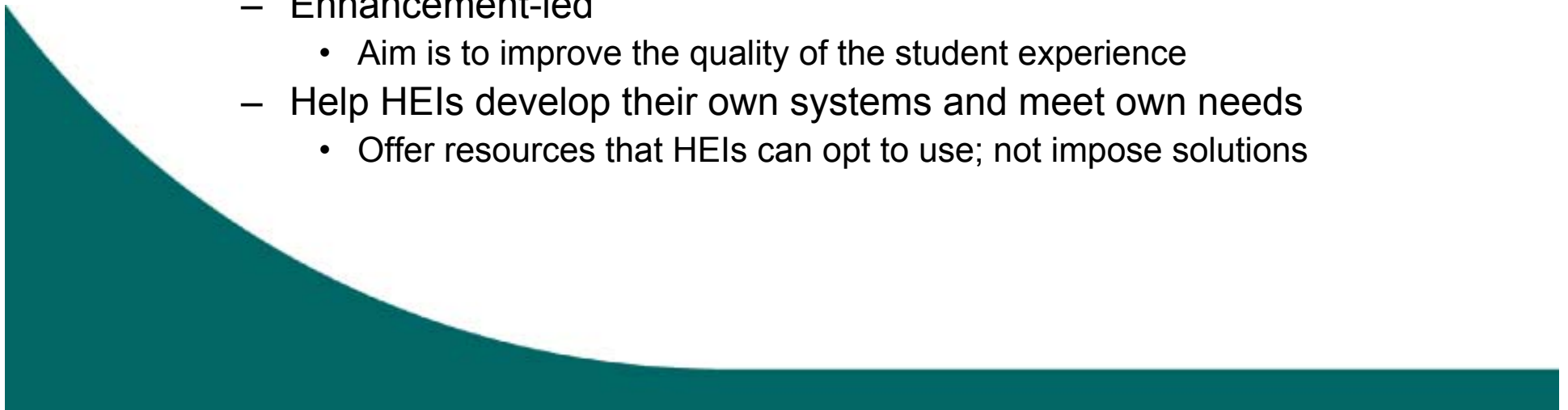
**The**  
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## PRES - origins and evolution

- 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

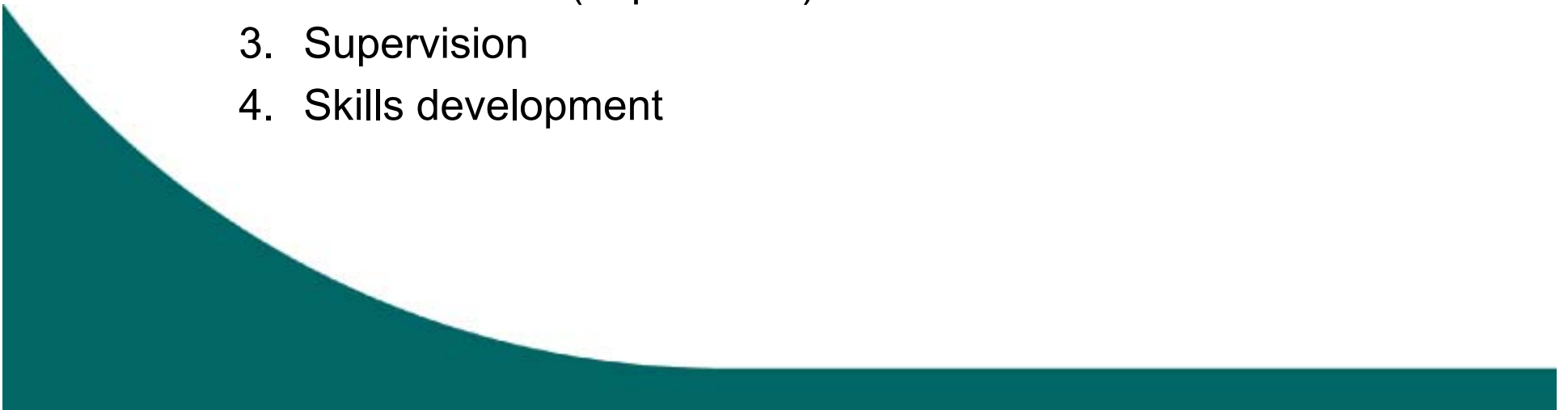


# What is PRES?

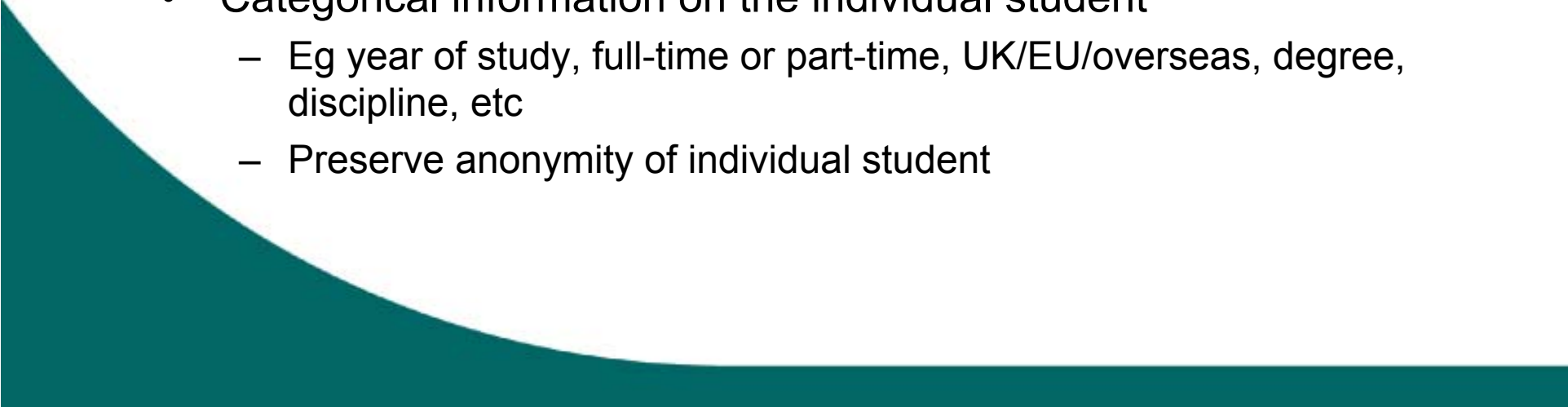
- Questionnaire survey
  - Based on student responses to a set of questions
  - Focus on the research student experience
    - NOT a student satisfaction survey
- Format
  - Different to normal institutional questionnaires
    - Series of standard questions
      - Groups questions together under themes (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

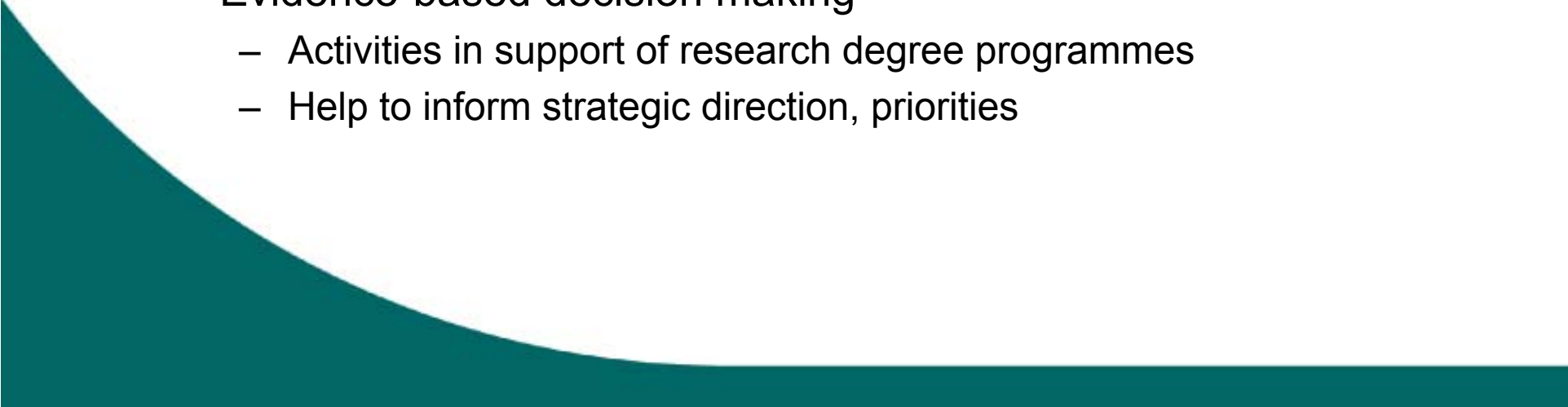
- Groups of questions grouped by theme
  - Defined empirically in Australia (factor analysis)
  - Robust and stable between HEIs
    - Confirmed by Oxford University pilot
- Four broad themes relating to student experience
  1. Intellectual climate (department)
  2. Infrastructure (department)
  3. Supervision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