

Orpheus Conference 2019

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**The Irish Survey of Student Engagement
(ISSE) for Postgraduate Researchers(PGR):
*Progress to date and future plans***

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On behalf of the ISSE PGR Working
Group

HEA IUA THEA USI



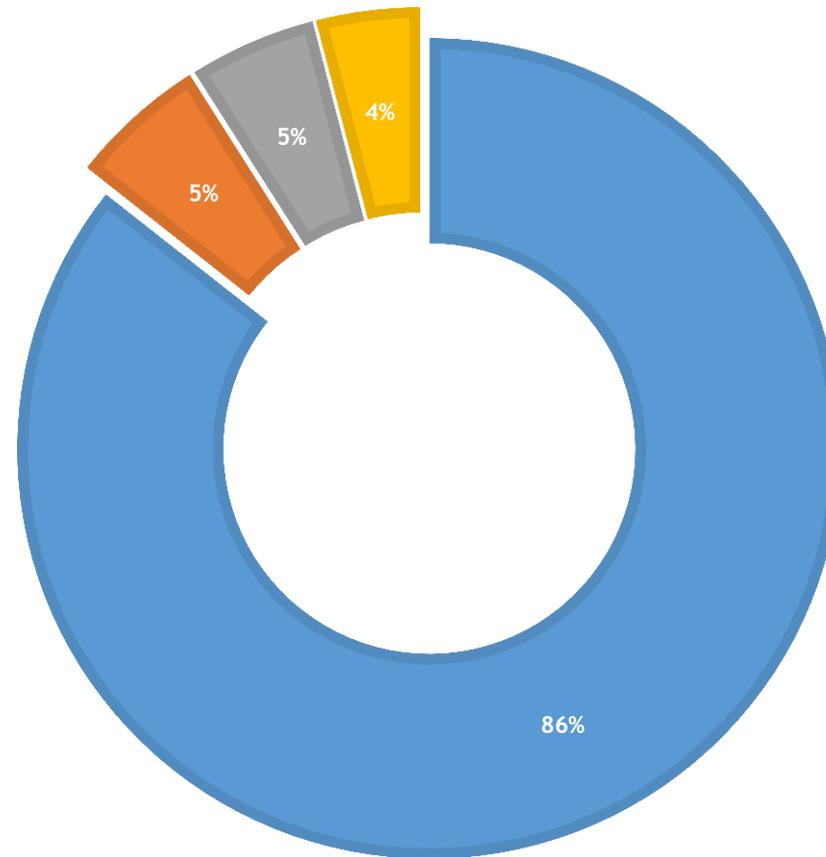
Where Research Students are:

- ▶ 7 Universities
- ▶ 1 Technological University
- ▶ 13 Institutes of Technology
- ▶ Smaller Colleges
- ▶ Private Higher Education providers



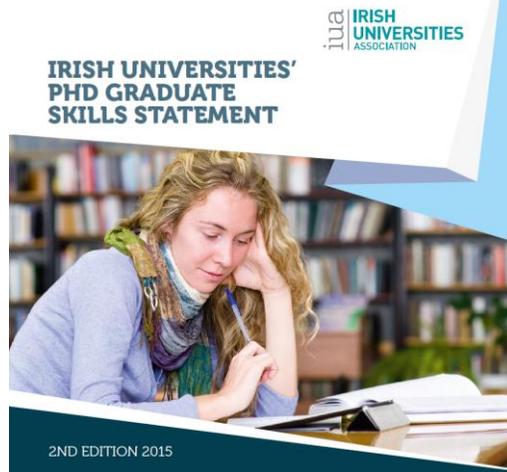
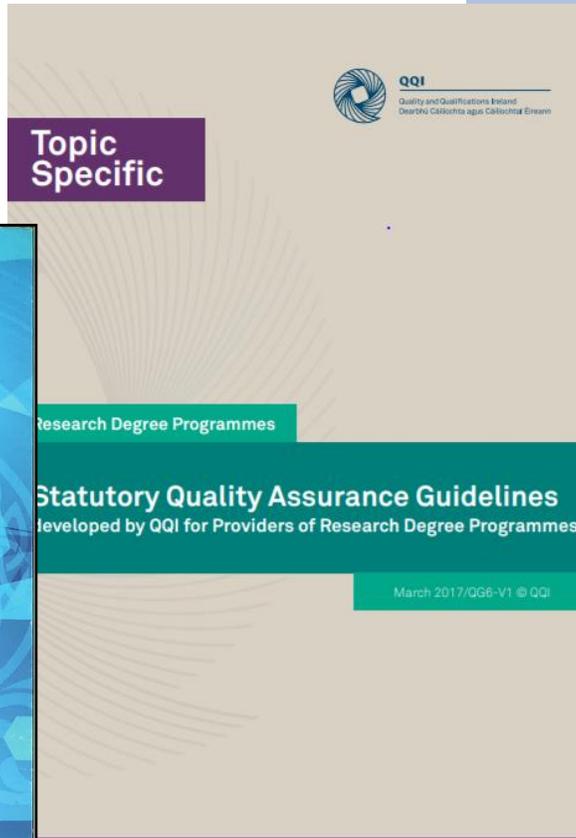
RESEARCH STUDENT ENROLMENTS 2016/17

- Universities
- Technological University
- Institutes of Technology
- Colleges



The National Context

National Strategy
for Higher Education
to 2030



Background

- Taught ISSE began in 2013 *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Dept of Education and Skills, 2011)
- Research Degree Programme student were not included because pre-testing highlighted that questions were only appropriate to students on taught programmes.

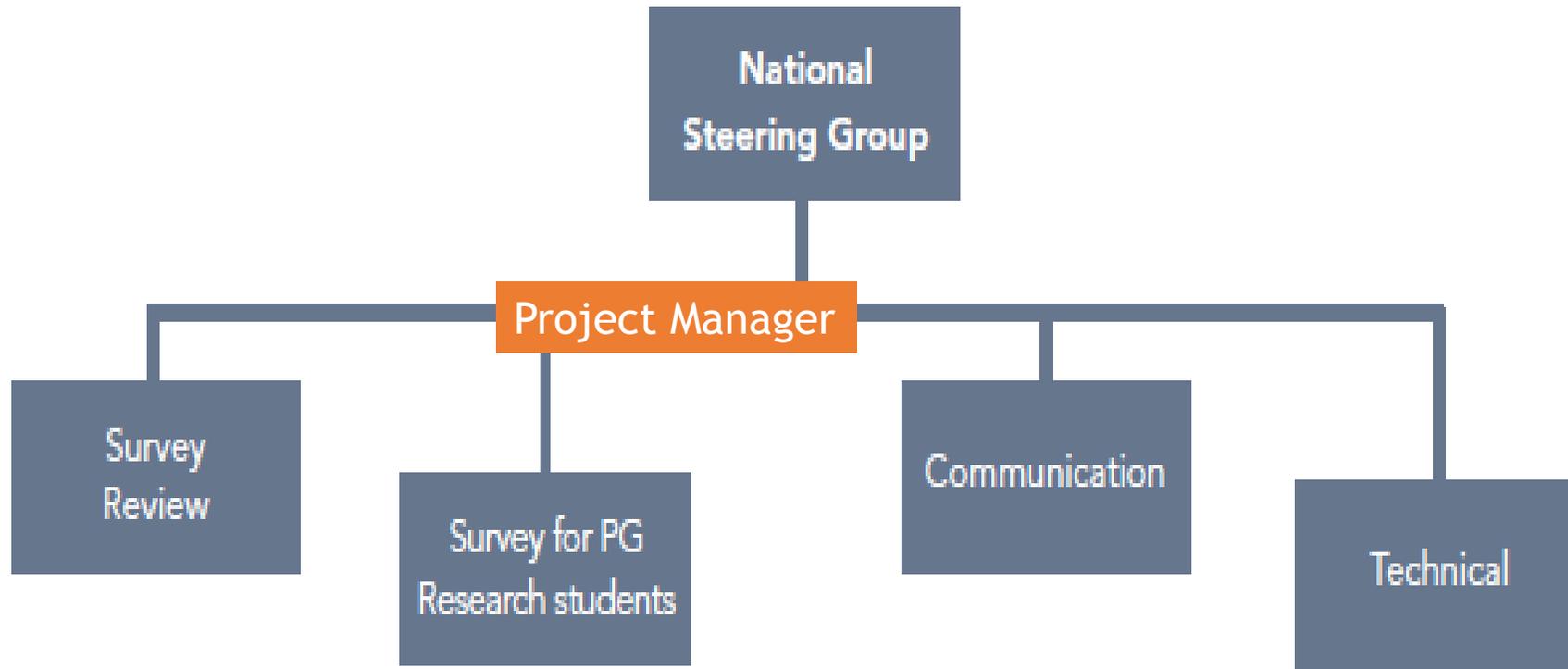
National Collaborative Partnership

In 2017, a National Steering Group set up a specific working group to develop a suitable survey to measure Research student engagement and experiences across the Irish state-funded education sector.

- Higher Education Authority (HEA) 
- Irish Universities Association (IUA) 
- Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) 
- Union of Students in Ireland (USI) 

The partnership approach in place is an important feature of the project. The national collaboration has achieved a more comprehensive and embedded approach than any individual actor could.

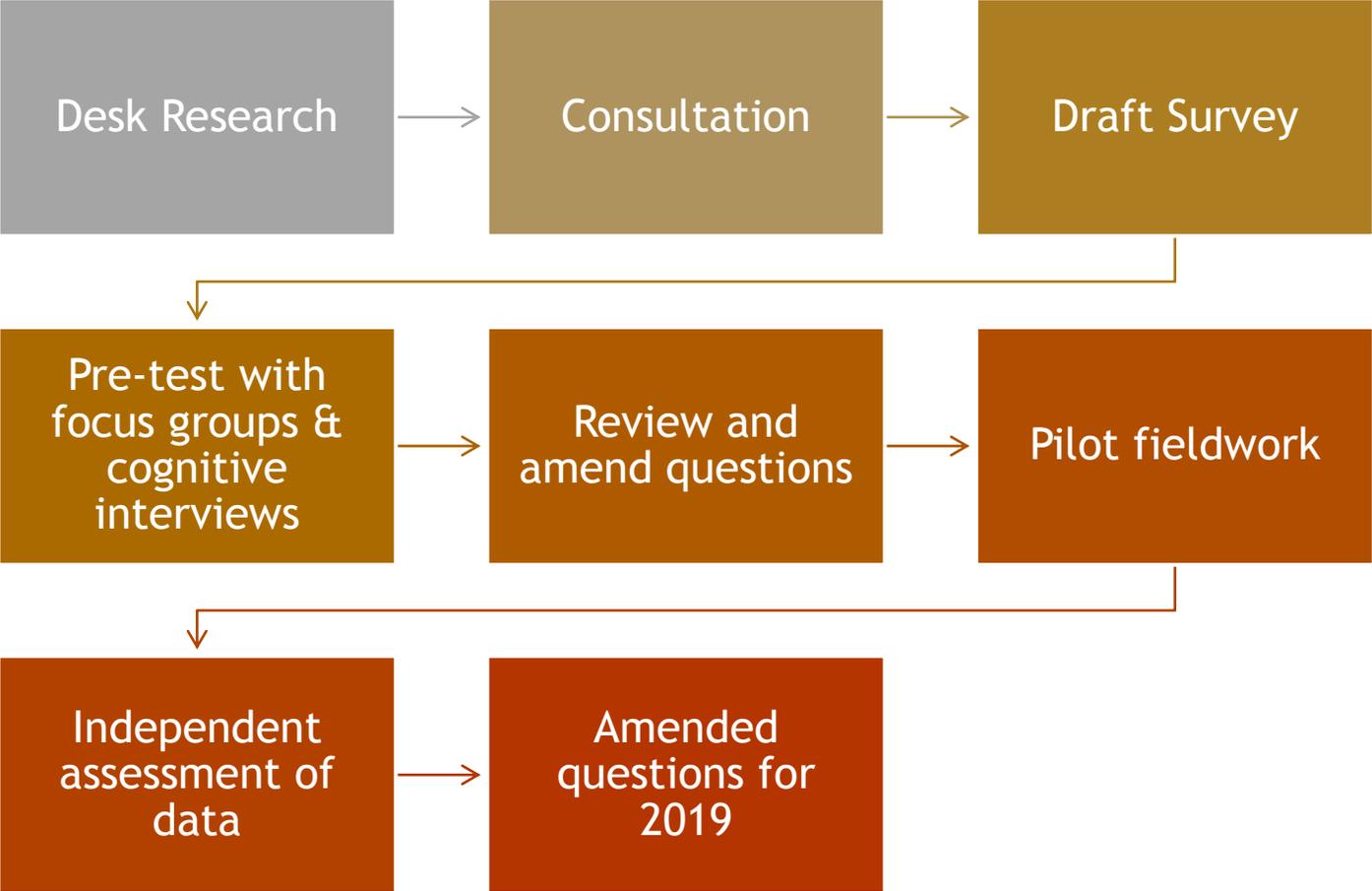
Collaborative Partnership



Rationale

- **Transparency** in relation to the student experience
- **Direct student input** on levels of engagement
- Identify **good practice** that enhances the student experience
- **Assist institutions** to identify issues and challenges
- **A tool for continual enhancement** of institutions research environment
- Enable **year on year comparisons**

Pilot ISSE PGR Process



Research



Postgraduate
Research
Experience
Survey



The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers



Decision to use UK PRES as baseline

- ▶ Student engagement rather than satisfaction
- ▶ Most subject areas of interest covered including Administration & Professional Development
- ▶ Comparator data available from equivalent international HE systems
- ▶ Surveys students within the programme
- ▶ Easily adaptable to our needs



ISSE PGR Survey Pilot

Section Titles
Supervision
Research Infrastructure and Facilities
Research Culture
Progress and Assessment
Research Skills Attainment
Other Transferable Skills
Responsibilities and Support
Motivations
Overall Experience

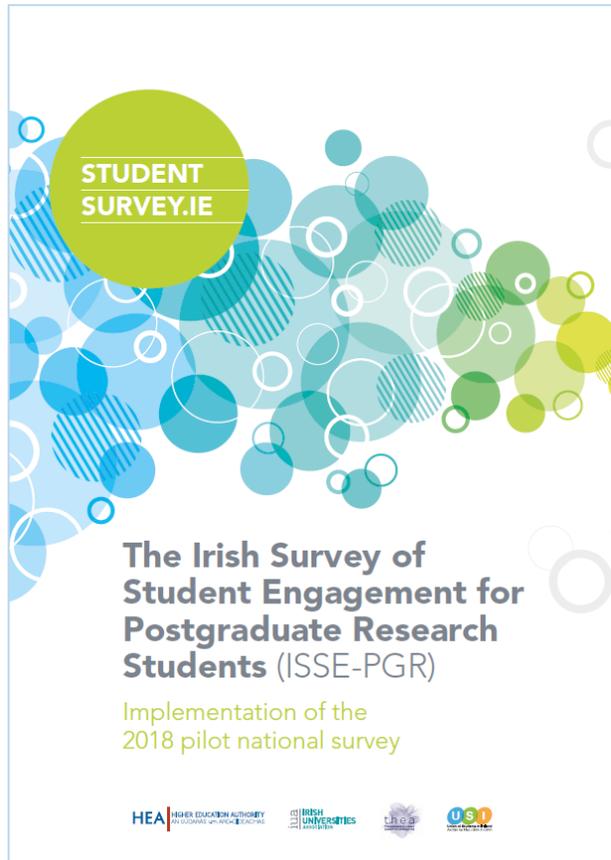
Implementation of Pilot Survey

- Working with ISSE Taught teams



- Positively received with c.33% response rate nationally starting the survey and 30% answering the final questions

Implementation Report



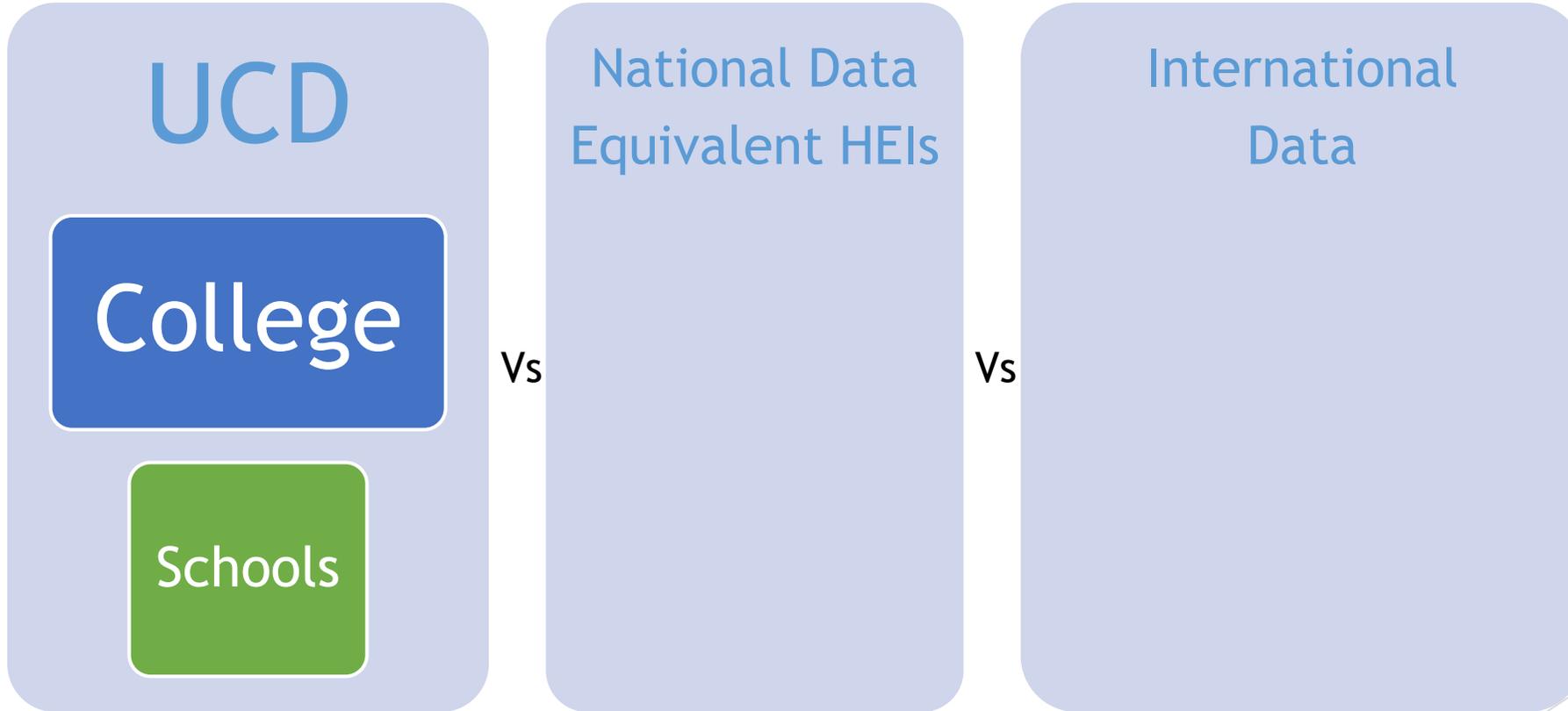
<http://studentsurvey.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ISSE-PGR-Report-2018final.pdf>



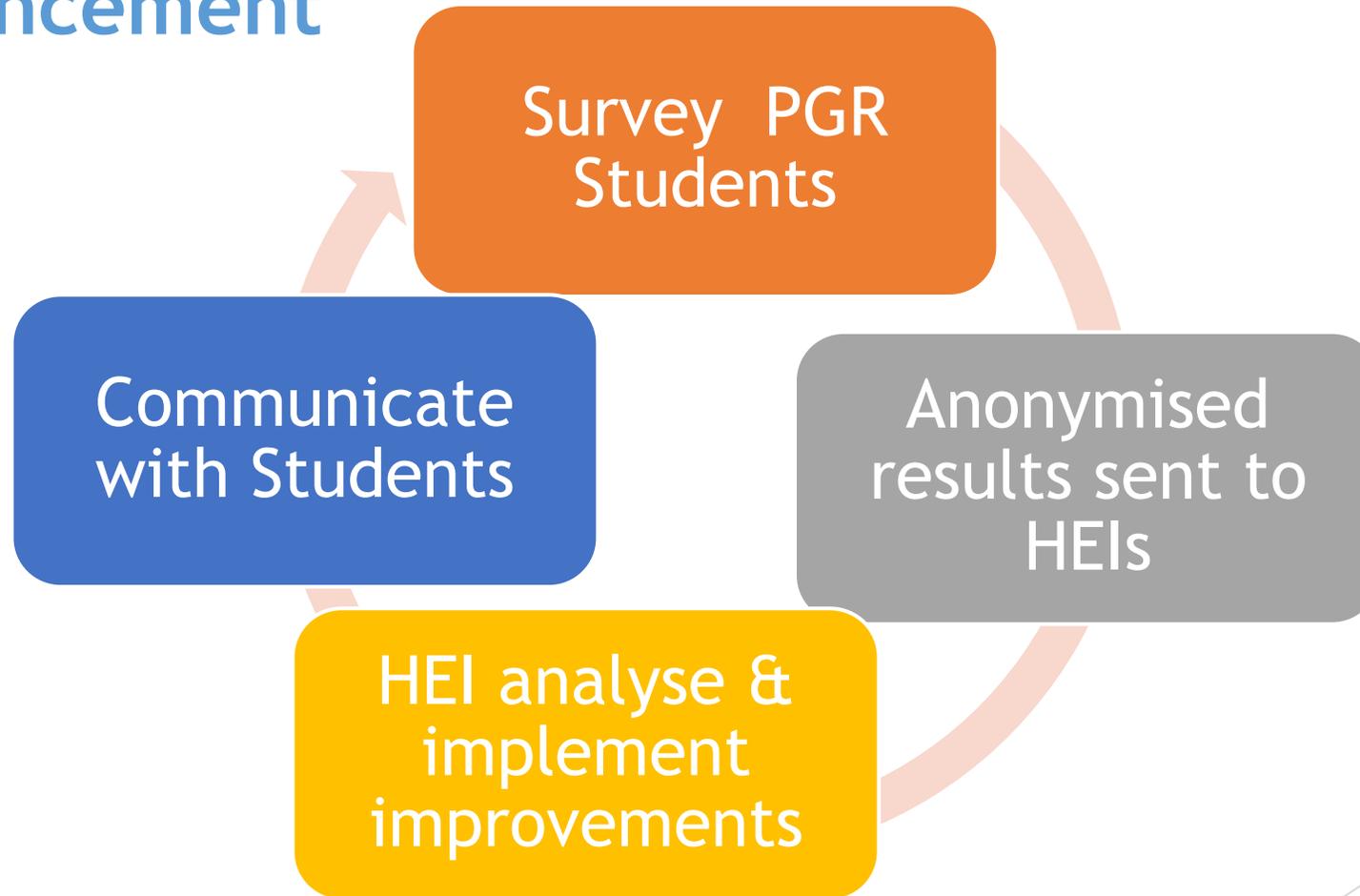
UCD ISSE-PGR Pilot Results

Section Titles	Themes coming through in UCD
Supervision	Supervisor Training request /identifying Training & Dev needs
Research Infrastructure and Facilities	Communication/ PT
Research Culture	Requesting PGR dedicated spaces
Progress and Assessment	Induction needs improvement and more prep for viva
Research Skills Attainment	Individual Professional Development planning
Other Transferable Skills	Good awareness
Responsibilities and Support	Student Voice
Motivations	Career aspiration: Academia:Other (60:40)
Overall Experience	Good to Excellent

Next Steps



Quality Agenda: Inform and Support Quality Enhancement



Next Steps

- 2019 data will be available in June 2019
- Key to informing strategic decision-making to Improve the PGR Experience in out HEIs
- Leveraging tool for resourcing in specific areas.

