

**Standard Code of Governance and Management Required for HSE Reference  
Research Ethics Committees**

**Table 2 – Differentiating research from other processes (as per the National Review of Clinical Audit 2019)**

	<b>Research</b>	<b>Clinical Audit</b>	<b>Registry</b>	<b>Service Evaluation</b>
<b>Definition</b>	Research is designed and conducted to generate new generalizable or transferrable knowledge. It includes both quantitative and qualitative studies that aim to generate new hypotheses as well as studies that aim to test existing or new hypotheses.	Clinical audit is a clinically led quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and acting to improve care when standards are not met.	Registries are systems which collect a defined minimum dataset from patients with a particular disease, undergoing a particular procedure or therapy, or using a healthcare resource.	Service evaluation seeks to assess how well a service is achieving its intended aims. It is undertaken to benefit the people using a particular healthcare service and is designed and conducted with the sole purpose of defining or judging the current service.
<b>Answers Questions</b>	Research demonstrates what should be done.	Clinical audit demonstrates whether a predetermined standard is being met.	Registries show the details of certain patient groups. They can be used to answer both clinical audit and research questions.	Service evaluation tells how well a service is working.
<b>Purpose</b>	To generate new knowledge and find out what treatments, interventions or practices are the most effective	To find out if best practice is being practised for quality assurance and improvement purposes	To monitor a patient population or healthcare process. A registry may have an improvement aim, a cost focus or form an epidemiological database used for research	To evaluate current practices for information purposes. The information can inform management decisions.
<b>Context</b>	Local or national level	Local or national level	National level only	Local level only
<b>Methods</b>	Has a systematic, quantitative, or qualitative approach to investigation	Measures practice against evidence-based clinical standards	Carries out data collection and analysis	Measures current service without comparison against standards
<b>Requirement for REC Review</b>	Yes	No, but ethical considerations should still be considered	Yes, if for the purposes of research	No, but ethical considerations should still be considered