**Activities that do not usually require ethical approval:**

* Research utilising information contained in publicly available judgments and decisions of courts and other recognised adjudicatory and enforcement bodies.
* Research utilising pre-existing datasets which were generated lawfully, and in accordance with any applicable ethical guidelines/requirements (such as the Declaration of Helsinki).
* Archival research utilising information contained in public repositories, that is in accordance with the applicable terms of use or access.
* Quality assurance studies – unless these are designed to produce generalisable and transferable findings, or if the outcome is to be published.
* Clinical Audit studies – unless designed to produce generalisable and transferable findings, or if the outcome is to be published.
* Service Evaluation studies – unless designed to produce generalisable and transferable findings, or if the outcome is to be published.

**There are exceptions to the examples given above**:

* Research utilising information obtained illegally, or from individuals under duress, or from individuals who were otherwise subject to infringement of their human rights.
* Research utilising images, voices or names of persons now deceased, which poses a risk of being culturally sensitive for some individuals and communities.

**Useful decision-making tool:**

The NHS's Health Research Authority in conjunction with the UK's Medical Research Council have developed a useful decision-making tool which may help determine whether an activity is a research project, clinical audit, evaluation study or usual practice.

<https://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html>

**Examples of activities that do not usually require ethical approval**:

* Systematic reviews/meta-analysis for which the data are obtained directly from published records.

**Note that activities that do not require ethical approval may be subject to the application of data protection law.**