

# Package: Qest (via r-universe)

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**Type** Package

**Title** Quantile-Based Estimator

**Version** 1.0.1

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**Description** Quantile-based estimators (Q-estimators) can be used to fit any parametric distribution, using its quantile function. Q-estimators are usually more robust than standard maximum likelihood estimators. The method is described in: Sottile G. and Frumento P. (2022). Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>.

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Qest-package	<i>Quantile-Based Estimator</i>
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## Description

Quantile-based estimators (Q-estimators) can be used to fit any parametric distribution, using its quantile function. Q-estimators are usually more robust than standard maximum likelihood estimators. The method is described in: Sottile G. and Frumento P. (2022). Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>.

## Details

Package: Qest  
 Type: Package  
 Version: 1.0.1  
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 License: GPL-2

The DESCRIPTION file:

```
Package:      Qest
Type:        Package
Title:       Quantile-Based Estimator
Version:     1.0.1
Authors@R:   c(person("Gianluca", "Sottile", role=c("aut", "cre"), email = "gianluca.sottile@unipa.it"), person("Paolo", "Frumento", role="aut", email = "paolo.frumento@unipa.it"))
Author:      Gianluca Sottile [aut, cre], Paolo Frumento [aut]
Maintainer:  Gianluca Sottile <gianluca.sottile@unipa.it>
Description: Quantile-based estimators (Q-estimators) can be used to fit any parametric distribution, using its quantile function.
Depends:     pch, survival, matrixStats, methods, utils
URL:         https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167947322000512
License:     GPL (>= 2)
Encoding:    UTF-8
```

Index of help topics:

Qcoxph	Q-Estimation of Proportional Hazards Regression Models
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Qest	Q-Estimation
Qest-package	Quantile-Based Estimator
Qest.control	Auxiliary for Controlling Qest Fitting
Qfamily	Family Objects for Qest
Qlm	Q-Estimation of Linear Regression Models
Qlm.fit	Fitter Functions for Quantile-based Linear Models
invQ	Inverse of Quantile Function
summary.Qest	Summarizing Q-estimators
wtrunc	Weighting Function for 'Qest', 'Qlm', and 'Qcoxph'.

### Author(s)

Gianluca Sottile [aut, cre], Paolo Frumento [aut]  
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### References

Sottile G, and Frumento P (2022). *Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions*. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>

### See Also

[Qest](#), [Qlm](#), [Qcoxph](#)

### Examples

```
## Not run:
Qest(y ~ x, Q, start) # General-purpose Q-estimator
Qlm(y ~ x) # Q-estimation of linear models
Qcoxph(Surv(time, event) ~ x) # Q-estimation of proportional hazards models

## End(Not run)
```

---

invQ

*Inverse of Quantile Function*

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### Description

Auxiliary function to compute cumulative distribution function (CDF) by inverting a quantile function.

### Usage

```
invQ(Q, theta, y, data, n.it = 17)
```

**Arguments**

Q	any parametric quantile function of the form $Q(\text{theta}, \text{tau}, \text{data})$ .
theta	a vector of model parameters.
y	vector of observations to evaluate the CDF.
data	data frame containing the variables used in the $Q()$ function.
n.it	the number of iterations (see “details”).

**Details**

Given a parametric quantile function  $Q(\tau|\theta)$ , the CDF is defined as  $F(y|\theta) = Q^{-1}(y|\theta)$ . Alternatively,  $F(y|\theta)$  corresponds to the value  $\tau^*$  such that  $Q(\tau^*|\theta) = y$ . Starting from  $\tau = 0.5$ , a bisection algorithm is used to evaluate numerically  $\tau^*$ . The maximum error is given by  $1/2^{(n.it + 1)}$ .

**Value**

a vector of CDF values.

**Author(s)**

Maintainer: Gianluca Sottile <gianluca.sottile@unipa.it>

**See Also**

[Qest](#)

**Examples**

```
# Ex. 1 Normal model

# Quantile function of a linear model.
Qlinmod <- function(theta, tau, data){
  sigma <- exp(theta[1])
  beta <- theta[-1]
  X <- model.matrix(~ x1 + x2, data = data)
  qnorm(tau, X %*% beta, sigma)
}

n <- 100
x1 <- rnorm(n)
x2 <- runif(n,0,3)
theta <- c(1,4,1,2)

# generate the data
U <- runif(n)
y <- Qlinmod(theta, U, data.frame(x1,x2))

# Given y and theta, evaluate U = F(y)
invQ(Qlinmod, theta, y, data.frame(x1,x2))
```

**Description**

Fit proportional hazards regression models using Q-estimation.

**Usage**

```
Qcoxph(formula, weights, start, data, knots, wtau = NULL,
        control = Qcoxph.control(), ...)
```

**Arguments**

formula	an object of class “formula” (or one that can be coerced to that class): a symbolic description of the model to be fitted. Use <code>Surv(time, event) ~ x</code> , if the data are right-censored, and <code>Surv(time, time2, event) ~ x</code> , if the data are right-censored and left-truncated ( <code>time &lt; time2</code> , <code>time</code> can be <code>-Inf</code> ).
weights	an optional vector of weights to be used in the fitting process. The weights will always be normalized to sum to the sample size. This implies that, for example, using double weights will <i>not</i> halve the standard errors.
start	optional starting values for the coefficients of the linear predictor.
data	an optional data frame, list or environment (or object coercible by <code>as.data.frame</code> to a data frame) containing the variables in the model. If not found in data, the variables are taken from <code>environment(formula)</code> , typically the environment from which <code>Qcoxph</code> is called.
knots	knots to create the basis of a piecewise linear function. If <code>knots</code> is a vector of at least two elements, it is used to identify the exact position of <i>all</i> knots, including boundaries. If <code>knots</code> is a scalar, its value is used to determine the number of internal knots ( <code>knots = 0</code> is allowed, and fits an Exponential model). If <code>knots</code> is missing, by default <code>max(1, min(floor(n.events/30), 3))</code> internal knots are used. Unless a vector of knots is provided by the user, the “optimal” position of the knots will be identified using the method described in Muggeo (2008). If this fails, the knots are positioned at the empirical quantiles of the observed events.
wtau	an optional function that assigns a different weight to each quantile. By default, all quantiles in $(0,1)$ have the same weight. Please check the documentation of <a href="#">wtrunc</a> for built-in weighting functions.
control	a list of operational parameters. This is usually passed through <code>Qcoxph.control</code> .
...	additional arguments for <code>wtau</code> .

## Details

This function estimates a proportional hazards model, allowing for right-censored and left-truncated data. The syntax and output of `Qcoxph` are almost identical to those of `coxph`, but the parameters are estimated using Q-estimation (Sottile and Frumento, 2020). This method can be used to obtain outlier-robust estimators of the regression coefficients.

The quantile function of a proportional hazards model is given by

$$Q(\tau|x) = H0^{-1}(-exp-x'\beta log(1 - \tau))$$

where  $H0$  is the baseline cumulative hazard function. In `Qcoxph`,  $H0$  is parametrized by a piecewise linear function identified by the provided knots. As the number of knots increases, the baseline hazard becomes arbitrarily flexible.

Estimation is carried out by finding the zeroes of a set of integrals equation. The optional argument `wtau` permits assigning a different weight to each quantile in  $(0,1)$ . It is possible to choose `wtau` to be a discontinuous function (e.g., `wtau = function(tau){tau < 0.95}`). However, this may occasionally result in poorly estimated of the standard errors.

The estimation algorithm is briefly described in the documentation of `Qcoxph.control`.

## Value

an object of classes “`Qcoxph`”, “`coxph`”, and “`Qest`”. See `coxph.object` for details. All the S3 methods that are available for “`coxph`” objects will also work with a “`Qcoxph`” object.

An object of class “`Qcoxph`” is a list containing at least the following components:

<code>coefficients</code>	a named vector of coefficients.
<code>var</code>	the covariance matrix of the coefficients.
<code>iter</code>	number of iterations used.
<code>linear.predictors</code>	the vector of linear predictors, one per subject. Note that this vector has not been centered, see <code>predict.coxph</code> for details.
<code>residuals</code>	the martingale residuals.
<code>means</code>	vector of column means of the X matrix. Subsequent survival curves are adjusted to this value.
<code>n</code>	the number of observations used in the fit.
<code>nevent</code>	the number of events used in the fit.
<code>concordance</code>	a vector of length 6, containing the number of pairs that are concordant, discordant, tied on x, tied on y, and tied on both, followed by the standard error of the concordance statistic.
<code>terms, assign, formula, call, y</code>	other objects used for prediction.
<code>obj.function</code>	the objective function of the model. Please, interpret with care: read the note in the documentation of <code>Qest</code> .
<code>internal</code>	internal objects.

**Author(s)**

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**References**

Sottile G, and Frumento P (2022). *Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions*. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>

Muggeo VMR (2008). *Segmented: an R package to fit regression models with broken-line relationships*. R News 8/1, 20–25.

**See Also**

[Qest](#), for general Q-estimation, and [Qlm](#), for Q-estimation of linear models.

**Examples**

```
# A proportional-hazards Weibull model

n <- 100
x <- runif(n,0,3)
shape <- 2
t <- rweibull(n, shape = shape, scale = (1/exp(2 + 2*x))^(1/shape)) # time-to-event
c <- runif(n,0,1) # censoring variable
y <- pmin(t,c) # observed response
d <- (t <= c) # event indicator

require(survival)
m1 <- coxph(Surv(y,d) ~ x) # standard Cox model
m2 <- Qcoxph(Surv(y,d) ~ x) # Q-estimator
```

---

Qcoxph.control

*Auxiliary for Controlling Qcoxph Fitting*

---

**Description**

Auxiliary function for controlling Qcoxph fitting. Estimation proceeds in three steps: (i) evaluation of starting points; (ii) stochastic gradient-based optimization (iib) standard gradient-based optimization; and (iii) Newton-Raphson. Step (i) is based on a preliminary fit of a Cox model via coxph. Steps (ii) and (iib) find an approximate solution, and make sure that the Jacobian matrix is well-defined. Finally, step (iii) finds a more precise solution.

**Usage**

```
Qcoxph.control(tol = 1e-8, maxit, safeit, alpha0, display = FALSE)
```

**Arguments**

<code>tol</code>	tolerance for convergence of Newton-Raphson algorithm, default is 1e-8.
<code>maxit</code>	maximum number of iterations of Newton-Raphson algorithm. If not provided, a default is computed as $50 + 25 \times \text{npar}$ , where <code>npar</code> is the total number of parameters.
<code>safeit</code>	maximum number of iterations of gradient-search algorithm. If not provided, a default is computed as $10 + 5 \times \text{npar}$ , where <code>npar</code> is the total number of parameters.
<code>alpha0</code>	step size for the preliminary gradient-based iterations. If estimation fails, you can try choosing a small value of <code>alpha0</code> . If <code>alpha0</code> is missing, an adaptive choice will be made internally.
<code>display</code>	Logical. If TRUE, tracing information on the progress of the optimization is printed on screen. Default is FALSE.

**Details**

If called with no arguments, `Qcoxph.control()` returns a list with the current settings of these parameters. Any arguments included in the call sets those parameters to the new values, and then silently returns.

**Value**

A list with named elements as in the argument list

**Author(s)**

Gianluca Sottile <gianluca.sottile@unipa.it> Paolo Frumento <paolo.frumento@unipi.it>

**See Also**

[Qcoxph](#)

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Qest

*Q-Estimation*

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**Description**

An implementation of the quantile-based estimators described in Sottile and Frumento (2022).

**Usage**

```
Qest(formula, Q, weights, start, data, ntau = 199, wtau = NULL,
      control = Qest.control(), ...)
```



**Arguments**

formula	a two-sided formula of the form $y \sim x$ . Note that the parametric model is identified through <code>Q</code> , and not through <code>formula</code> , that only identifies the response and the predictors. Use <code>Surv(time, event)</code> , if the data are right-censored, and <code>Surv(start, stop, event)</code> , if the data are right-censored and left-truncated ( $\text{start} < \text{stop}$ , <code>start</code> can be <code>-Inf</code> ).
Q	a parametric quantile function of the form <code>Q(theta, tau, data)</code> . Alternatively, a character string naming a <code>Qfamily</code> function, a <code>Qfamily</code> function itself, or the result of a call to a <code>Qfamily</code> function. See <a href="#">Qfamily</a> for details.
weights	an optional vector of weights to be used in the fitting process. The weights will always be normalized to sum to the sample size. This implies that, for example, using double weights will <i>not</i> halve the standard errors.
start	a vector of starting values. NAs are allowed, but will be internally replaced by zeroes. Make sure that the quantile function is well-defined at $\text{theta} = \text{start}$ . The size of <code>start</code> is also used to identify the number of parameters in the model. You <i>must</i> supply starting points, unless you are fitting a model defined by a <code>Qfamily</code> .
data	an optional data frame, list or environment (or object coercible by <code>as.data.frame</code> to a data frame) containing the variables in the model. If not found in <code>data</code> , the variables are taken from <code>environment(formula)</code> , typically the environment from which <code>Qest</code> is called.
ntau	the number of points for numerical integration (see “Details”). Default <code>ntau = 199</code> .
wtau	an optional function that assigns a different weight to each quantile. By default, all quantiles in $(0,1)$ have the same weight. Please check the documentation of <a href="#">wtrunc</a> for built-in weighting functions.
control	a list of operational parameters. This is usually passed through <code>Qest.control</code> .
...	additional arguments for <code>wtau</code> and <code>Q</code> .

**Details**

A parametric model,  $Q(\tau|\theta, x)$ , is used to describe the conditional quantile function of an outcome  $Y$ , given a vector  $x$  of covariates. The model parameters,  $\theta$ , are estimated by minimizing the (weighted) integral, with respect to  $\tau$ , of the loss function of standard quantile regression. If the data are censored or truncated,  $\theta$  is estimated by solving a set of estimating equations. In either case, numerical integration is required to calculate the objective function: a grid of `ntau` points in  $(0, 1)$  is used. The estimation algorithm is briefly described in the documentation of [Qest.control](#).

The optional argument `wtau` can be used to attribute a different weight to each quantile. Although it is possible to choose `wtau` to be a discontinuous function (e.g., `wtau = function(tau){tau < 0.95}`), this may occasionally result in poorly estimated standard errors.

The quantile function `Q` must have at least the following three arguments: `theta`, `tau`, `data`, in this order. The first argument, `theta`, is a vector (not a matrix) of parameters' values. The second argument, `tau`, is the order of the quantile. When `Q` receives a  $n \times \text{ntau}$  matrix of `tau` values, it must return a  $n \times \text{ntau}$  matrix of quantiles. The third argument, `data`, is a data frame that includes the predictors used by `Q`.

If  $Q$  is identified by one [Qfamily](#), everything becomes much simpler. It is not necessary to implement your own quantile function, and the starting points are not required. Note that `ntau` is ignored if  $Q = Q_{\text{norm}}$  or  $Q = Q_{\text{unif}}$ .

Please check the documentation of [Qfamily](#) to see the available built-in distributions. A convenient  $Q$ -based implementation of the standard linear regression model is offered by [Qlm](#). Proportional hazards models are implemented in [Qcoxph](#).

## Value

a list with the following elements:

<code>coefficients</code>	a named vector of coefficients.
<code>std.errs</code>	a named vector of estimated standard errors.
<code>covar</code>	the estimated covariance matrix of the estimators.
<code>obj.function</code>	the value of the minimized loss function. If the data are censored or truncated, a meaningful loss function which, however, is not the function being minimized (see “Note”).
<code>ee</code>	the values of the estimating equations at the solution. If the data are neither censored nor truncated, the partial derivatives of the loss function.
<code>jacobian</code>	the jacobian at the solution. If the data are neither censored nor truncated, the matrix of second derivatives of the loss function.
<code>CDF, PDF</code>	the fitted values of the cumulative distribution function (CDF) and the probability density function (PDF).
<code>converged</code>	logical. The convergence status.
<code>n.it</code>	the number of iterations.
<code>internal</code>	internal elements.
<code>call</code>	the matched call.

## Note

NOTE 1. If the data are censored or truncated, estimation is carried out by solving estimating equations, and no associated loss is present. In this case, a meaningful value of `obj.function` is the integrated loss [equation 1 of Sottile and Frumento (2022)] in which the indicator function  $I(y \leq Q(\tau|\theta, x))$  has been replaced with one of the expressions presented in equations 6 and 7 of the paper. The resulting loss, however, is not the function being minimized.

NOTE 2. To prevent computational problems, avoid situations in which some of the estimated parameters are expected to be very small or very large. For example, standardize the predictors, and normalize the response. Avoid as much as possible parameters with bounded support. For example, model a variance/rate/shape parameter on the log scale, e.g.,  $\sigma = \exp(\theta)$ . Carefully select the starting points, and make sure that  $Q(\text{start}, \dots)$  is well-defined. If  $Q$  is identified by one [Qfamily](#), all these recommendations can be ignored.

NOTE 3. You should *not* use `Qest` to fit parametric models describing discrete distributions, where the quantile function is piecewise constant. You can try, but the optimization algorithm will most likely fail. The predefined family `Qpois` allows to fit a Poisson distribution by using a continuous version of its quantile function (see [Qfamily](#)).

**Author(s)**

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**References**

Sottile G, and Frumento P (2022). *Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions*. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>

**See Also**

[Qest.control](#), for operational parameters, and [summary.Qest](#), for model summary. [Qfamily](#), for the available built-in distributions. [wtrunc](#) for built-in weighting functions (wtau argument). [Qlm](#), for Q-estimation of the standard normal (linear) regression model; [Qcoxph](#), for proportional hazards models.

**Examples**

```
# Ex1. Normal model

# Quantile function of a linear model
Qlinmod <- function(theta, tau, data){
  sigma <- exp(theta[1])
  beta <- theta[-1]
  X <- model.matrix(~ x1 + x2, data = data)
  qnorm(tau, X %*% beta, sigma)
}

n <- 100
x1 <- rnorm(n)
x2 <- runif(n,0,3)
theta <- c(1,4,1,2)
y <- Qlinmod(theta, runif(n), data.frame(x1,x2)) # generate the data

m1 <- Qest(y ~ x1 + x2, Q = Qlinmod, start = c(NA,NA,NA,NA)) # User-defined quantile function
summary(m1)

m2 <- Qest(y ~ x1 + x2, Q = Qnorm) # Qfamily
summary(m2)

m3 <- Qlm(y ~ x1 + x2)
summary(m3) # using 'Qlm' is much simpler and faster, with identical results

# Ex2. Weibull model with proportional hazards

# Quantile function
QWeibPH <- function(theta, tau, data){
  shape <- exp(theta[1])
```

```

    beta <- theta[-1]
    X <- model.matrix(~ x1 + x2, data = data)
    qweibull(tau, shape = shape, scale = (1/exp(X %*% beta))^(1/shape))
  }

n <- 100
x1 <- rbinom(n,1,0.5)
x2 <- runif(n,0,3)
theta <- c(2,-0.5,1,1)

t <- QWeibPH(theta, runif(n), data.frame(x1,x2)) # time-to-event
c <- runif(n,0.5,1.5) # censoring variable
y <- pmin(t,c) # observed response
d <- (t <= c) # event indicator

m1 <- Qest(Surv(y,d) ~ x1 + x2, Q = QWeibPH, start = c(NA,NA,NA,NA))
summary(m1)

m2 <- Qcoxph(Surv(y,d) ~ x1 + x2)
summary(m2) # using 'Qcoxph' is much simpler and faster (but not identical)

# Ex3. A Gamma model

# Quantile function
Qgm <- function(theta, tau, data){
  a <- exp(theta[1])
  b <- exp(theta[2])
  qgamma(tau, shape = a, scale = b)
}
n <- 100
theta <- c(2,-1)
y <- rgamma(n, shape = exp(theta[1]), scale = exp(theta[2]))

m1 <- Qest(y ~ 1, Q = Qgm, start = c(NA, NA)) # User-defined quantile function
m2 <- Qest(y ~ 1, Q = Qgamma) # Qfamily
m3 <- Qest(y ~ 1, Q = Qgamma, wtau = function(tau, h) dnorm((tau - 0.5)/h), h = 0.2)
# In m3, more weight is assigned to quantiles around the median

# Ex4. A Poisson model

# Quantile function
n <- 100
x1 <- runif(n)
x2 <- rbinom(n,1,0.5)
y <- rpois(n, exp(1.5 - 0.5*x1 + x2))
m1 <- Qest(y ~ x1 + x2, Q = Qpois) # Use a Qfamily! See "Note"
m2 <- Qest(y + runif(n) ~ x1 + x2, Q = Qpois) # Use jittering! See the documentation of "Qfamily"

```

---

Qest.control

*Auxiliary for Controlling Qest Fitting*


---

### Description

Auxiliary function for controlling Qest fitting. Estimation proceeds in three steps: (i) evaluation of starting points; (ii) stochastic gradient-based optimization (iib) standard gradient-based optimization; and (iii) Newton-Raphson. Step (i) is initialized at the provided starting values (the `start` argument of `Qest`), and utilizes a preliminary flexible model, estimated with `pchreg`, to generate a cheap guess of the model parameters. If you have good starting points, you can skip step (i) by setting `restart = FALSE`. Steps (ii) and (iib) find an approximate solution, and make sure that the Jacobian matrix is well-defined. Finally, step (iii) finds a more precise solution.

### Usage

```
Qest.control(tol = 1e-8, maxit, safeit, alpha0, display = FALSE, restart = FALSE)
```

### Arguments

<code>tol</code>	tolerance for convergence of Newton-Raphson algorithm, default is 1e-8.
<code>maxit</code>	maximum number of iterations of Newton-Raphson algorithm. If not provided, a default is computed as $50 + 25 \times \text{npar}$ , where <code>npar</code> is the number of parameters.
<code>safeit</code>	maximum number of iterations of gradient-search algorithm. If not provided, a default is computed as $10 + 5 \times \text{npar}$ , where <code>npar</code> is the number of parameters.
<code>alpha0</code>	step size for the preliminary gradient-based iterations. If estimation fails, you can try choosing a small value of <code>alpha0</code> . If <code>alpha0</code> is missing, an adaptive choice will be made internally.
<code>display</code>	Logical. If <code>TRUE</code> , tracing information on the progress of the optimization is printed on screen. Default is <code>FALSE</code> .
<code>restart</code>	Logical. If <code>FALSE</code> (the default), step (i) is not performed, and the provided starting points are directly passed to step (ii). This may save you some time, but is not recommended unless you are confident about your choice of initial values. When <code>restart = TRUE</code> , the provided starting points are used to initialize step (i).

### Details

If called with no arguments, `Qest.control()` returns a list with the current settings of these parameters. Any arguments included in the call sets those parameters to the new values, and then silently returns.

### Value

A list with named elements as in the argument list

**Note**

Step (i) is not performed, and `restart` is ignored, if the quantile function is one of the available [Qfamily](#).

**Author(s)**

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**See Also**

[Qest](#) and [Qlm](#)

---

Qfamily

*Family Objects for Qest*

---

**Description**

Family objects are used to specify the model to be fitted by [Qest](#).

**Usage**

```
Qnorm()
Qgamma()
Qpois(offset = NULL)
Qunif(min = TRUE)
```

**Arguments**

<code>offset</code>	an optional vector of offsets for a Poisson model.
<code>min</code>	logical. If TRUE, fit a $U(a, b)$ distribution. If FALSE, fit a $U(0, b)$ distribution.

**Details**

A `Qfamily` object can be used to identify a certain type of distribution within a call to `Qest`. You can supply either the name of the family, or the function itself, or a call to it. For example, the following are equivalent: `Qest(formula, "Qpois")`, `Qest(formula, Qpois)`, and `Qest(formula, Qpois())`. The latter syntax can be used to pass additional arguments, if any.

The `Qnorm` family fits a normal homoskedastic model in which the mean is described by a linear predictor. The parameters are:  $\log(\text{sigma})$ ,  $\text{beta}$ . `Qest(formula, Qnorm)` is equivalent to `Qlm(formula)`, but returns a very basic output. However, `Qest` allows for censored and truncated data, while `Qlm` does not.

The `Qgamma` family fits a Gamma distribution in which the log-scale is modeled by a linear predictor. The model parameters are:  $\log(\text{shape})$ ,  $\text{beta}$ .

The `Qpois` family fits a Poisson distribution in which the log-rate is modeled by a linear predictor. In reality, to obtain a continuous quantile function, `qpois` is replaced by the inverse, *with respect*

to  $y$ , of the upper regularized gamma function,  $Q(y, \lambda)$ . It is recommended to apply `Qpois` to a jittered response (i.e.,  $y + \text{runif}(n)$ ).

The `Qunif` family fits a Uniform distribution  $U(a, b)$  in which both  $a$  and  $b$  are modeled by linear predictors. The design matrix, however, is the same for  $a$  and  $b$ . Use `Qunif(min = FALSE)` to fit a  $U(0, b)$  model. The parameters are: `beta_a`, `beta_b`, or only `beta_b` if `min = FALSE`.

The families `Qnorm` and `Qgamma` can be used when the data are censored or truncated, while `Qpois` and `Qunif` cannot. All families can be estimated without covariates, using `formula = ~ 1`.

## Value

An object of class "Qfamily" that contains all the necessary information to be passed to `Qest`.

## Author(s)

Gianluca Sottile <gianluca.sottile@unipa.it>, Paolo Frumento <paolo.frumento@unipi.it>

## See Also

[Qest](#).

## Examples

```
n <- 250
x <- runif(n)
eta <- 1 + 2*x # linear predictor

# Normal model
y <- rnorm(n, eta, exp(1))
m1 <- Qest(y ~ x, Qnorm)
# Use Qlm(y ~ x) instead!

# Gamma model
y <- rgamma(n, shape = exp(1), scale = exp(eta))
m2 <- Qest(y ~ x, Qgamma)

# Poisson model
y <- rpois(n, exp(eta))
m3 <- Qest(y ~ x, Qpois)
m4 <- Qest(y + runif(n) ~ x, Qpois) # Jittering is recommended

# Uniform model
y <- runif(n, 0, eta)
m5 <- Qest(y ~ x, Qunif(min = TRUE)) # U(a,b)
m6 <- Qest(y ~ x, Qunif(min = FALSE)) # U(0,b)
```

Qlm

*Q-Estimation of Linear Regression Models***Description**

Use Q-estimation to fit a Normal model in which the mean is a linear function of the predictors, and the variance is constant.

**Usage**

```
Qlm(formula, data, subset, weights, na.action, start = NULL, contrasts = NULL,
     wtau = NULL, control = Qest.control(), ...)
```

**Arguments**

formula	an object of class “formula” (or one that can be coerced to that class): a symbolic description of the model to be fitted.
data	an optional data frame, list or environment (or object coercible by <code>as.data.frame</code> to a data frame) containing the variables in the model. If not found in data, the variables are taken from <code>environment(formula)</code> , typically the environment from which <code>Qlm</code> is called.
subset	an optional vector specifying a subset of observations to be used in the fitting process.
weights	an optional vector of weights to be used in the fitting process. The weights will always be normalized to sum to the sample size. This implies that, for example, using double weights will <i>not</i> halve the standard errors.
na.action	a function which indicates what should happen when the data contain NAs. See <a href="#">lm</a> .
start	optional starting values for the regression coefficients.
contrasts	an optional list. See the <code>contrasts.arg</code> of <code>model.matrix.default</code> .
wtau	an optional function that assigns a different weight to each quantile. By default, all quantiles in (0,1) have the same weight. Please check the documentation of <a href="#">wtrunc</a> for built-in weighting functions.
control	a list of operational parameters. See <code>Qest.control</code> for details.
...	additional arguments for <code>wtau</code> .

**Details**

This function is used exactly as [lm](#), but estimates the model parameters as in [Qest](#). Using Q-estimation allows to obtain outlier-robust estimators of the regression coefficients. The optional argument `wtau` permits assigning a different weight to each quantile in (0,1). It is possible to choose `wtau` to be a discontinuous function (e.g., `wtau = function(tau){tau < 0.95}`). However, this may occasionally result in poorly estimated of the standard errors.

Note that `Qlm`, like `lm`, does not support censored or truncated data.



**Value**

Qlm returns an object of classes “Qlm”, “lm”, and “Qest”. The generic accessor functions `summary`, `coefficients`, `fitted.values`, and `residuals` can be used to extract information from a “Qlm” object.

An object of class “Qlm” is a list containing at least the following elements:

<code>coefficients</code>	a named vector of coefficients.
<code>std.errs</code>	a named vector of standard errors.
<code>covar</code>	the estimated covariance matrix of the estimators.
<code>dispersion</code>	the estimated dispersion parameter (residual variance).
<code>residuals</code>	the working residuals.
<code>rank</code>	the estimated degrees of freedom.
<code>fitted.values</code>	the fitted values.
<code>df.residual</code>	the residual degrees of freedom.
<code>obj.function</code>	the value of the minimized loss function.
<code>gradient</code>	the first derivatives of the minimized loss function.
<code>hessian</code>	the matrix of second derivatives of the minimized loss function.
<code>convergence</code>	logical. The convergence status.
<code>n.it</code>	the number of iterations.
<code>control</code>	control parameters.
<code>xlevels</code>	(only where relevant) a record of the levels of the factors used in fitting.
<code>call</code>	the matched call.
<code>terms</code>	the “terms” object used.
<code>model</code>	if requested (the default), the model frame used.

**Author(s)**

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**References**

Sottile G, and Frumento P (2022). *Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions*. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis. <[doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471)>

**See Also**

[Qest](#), for general Q-estimation.

**Examples**

```

set.seed(1234)
n <- 100
x1 <- rnorm(n)
x2 <- runif(n,0,3)
theta <- c(1,4,1,2)
y <- rnorm(n, 4 + x1 + 2*x2, 1)

m1 <- Qlm(y ~ x1 + x2)
summary(m1)

```

---

Qlm.fit

*Fitter Functions for Quantile-based Linear Models*


---

**Description**

This is the basic computing engine called by “Qlm” used to fit quantile-based linear models. This function should only be used directly by experienced users.

**Usage**

```

Qlm.fit(y, X, w = rep(1, nobs), start = NULL, wtau = NULL,
        control = Qest.control(), ...)

```

**Arguments**

y	vector of observations of length n.
X	design matrix of dimension n * p.
w	an optional vector of weights to be used in the fitting process.
start	starting values for the parameters in the linear predictor.
wtau	an optional function that assigns a different weight to each quantile. By default, all quantiles in (0,1) have the same weight.
control	a list of operational parameters. This is usually passed through <a href="#">Qest.control</a> .
...	additional arguments for wtau.

**Value**

a “list” with components

coefficients	p vector
std.errs	p vector
covar	p x p matrix
dispersion	estimated dispersion parameter
residuals	n vector

rank	integer, giving the rank
fitted.values	n vector
qr	the QR decomposition, see “qr”
df.residual	degrees of freedom of residuals
obj.function	the minimized loss function
gradient	p vector
hessian	p x p matrix
convergence	logical. The convergence status
n.it	the number of iterations
control	control elements

**Author(s)**

Gianluca Sottile <gianluca.sottile@unipa.it>, Paolo Frumento <paolo.frumento@unipi.it>

**References**

Sottile G, and Frumento P (2022). *Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions*. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>

**See Also**

[Qlm](#)

**Examples**

```
# Ex. 1 Normal model

set.seed(1234)
n <- 100
x1 <- rnorm(n)
x2 <- runif(n,0,3)
y <- rnorm(n, 4 + x1 + 2*x2, 1)
X <- cbind(1, x1, x2)
w <- rep.int(1, n)

m <- Qlm.fit(y = y, X = X, w = w, control = Qest.control(display = TRUE))
```

summary.Qest

*Summarizing Q-estimators***Description**

Summary method for class “Qest”.

**Usage**

```
## S3 method for class 'Qest'
summary(object, covar = FALSE, ...)
```

**Arguments**

object	an object of class “Qest”.
covar	logical; if TRUE, the variance covariance matrix of the estimated parameters is returned.
...	for future methods.

**Details**

This function returns a summary of the most relevant information on model parameters, standard errors, and convergence status.

**Value**

The function `summary.Qest` computes and returns a list of summary statistics of the fitted model given in `object`, using the “call” and “terms” from its argument, plus

coefficients	a matrix with 4 columns reporting the estimated coefficients, the estimated standard errors, the corresponding z-values (coef/se), and the two-sided p-values.
obj.function	the value of the minimized loss function (see <a href="#">Qest</a> for details).
n	the number of observations.
npar	the number of free parameters.
iter	the number of iterations.
covar	only if <code>covar = TRUE</code> , the estimated covariance matrix.
call	the matched call.
type	a character string defined as follows: “c” for right-censored data; “ct” for left-truncated, right-censored data; and “u” otherwise.

**Author(s)**

Gianluca Sottile <gianluca.sottile@unipa.it>

## References

Sottile G, and Frumento P (2022). *Robust estimation and regression with parametric quantile functions*. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis. <doi:10.1016/j.csda.2022.107471>

## See Also

[Qest](#), for model fitting.

## Examples

```
# Quantile function of an Exponential model
Qexp <- function(theta, tau, data){
  qexp(tau, exp(theta))
}

y <- rexp(100, exp(1))
m1 <- Qest(y ~ 1, Q = Qexp, start = NA)
summary(m1)
summary(m1, covar = TRUE)
```

---

wtrunc

*Weighting Function for Qest, Qlm, and Qcoxph.*


---

## Description

This function can be used within a call to `Qest`, `Qlm`, or `Qcoxph` to assign a different weight to each quantile.

## Usage

```
wtrunc(tau, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0.05, smooth = FALSE, sigma = 0.01)
```

## Arguments

<code>tau</code>	a vector of quantiles.
<code>delta.left</code> , <code>delta.right</code>	proportion of quantiles to be removed from the left and right tail. The weighting function is 1 in the interval $(\text{delta.left}, 1 - \text{delta.right})$ , and zero elsewhere. Default is <code>delta.left = 0.05</code> and <code>delta.right = 0.05</code> . When a weighting function is used to counteract the effect of extreme observations, <code>delta.left</code> is a guess for the proportion of outliers on the left tail; and <code>delta.right</code> is a guess for the proportion of outliers on the right tail.
<code>smooth</code>	if <code>smooth = TRUE</code> the indicator functions used to construct <code>wtrunc(tau)</code> are replaced by integrated Gaussian kernels. Default <code>smooth = FALSE</code> .
<code>sigma</code>	the bandwidth of a Gaussian kernel. This parameter controls the smoothness of the weighting function, and is ignored if <code>smooth = FALSE</code> . Default <code>sigma = 0.01</code> .

## Details

Within a call to `Qest`, `Qlm`, or `Qcoxph`, one may want to assign a different weight to each quantile through the optional argument `wtau`. This can be done for reasons of efficiency, or to counteract the presence of outliers. While `wtau` can be any user-defined function, one can use `wtrunc` as a shortcut to construct a weighting function that truncates a certain subset of quantiles in the tails of the distribution. For instance, the estimator defined by `Qest(..., wtau = wtrunc, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0.1)` only uses quantiles in the interval (0.05, 0.90) to fit the model. In this example, `delta.left = 0.05` is a guess for the proportion of outliers on the left tail; and `delta.right` is a guess for the proportion of outliers on the right tail. Use `smooth = TRUE` to replace the indicator functions involved in `wtrunc` with smooth functions. Introducing a weighting function that only assigns a positive weight to the quantiles that correspond to the “healthy” part of the distribution allows to deal with any level of contamination by outliers.

## Value

A vector of weights assigned to each quantile.

## Author(s)

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## See Also

[Qest](#), [Qlm](#), [Qcoxph](#).

## Examples

```
## Not run:
taus <- seq(0, 1, length.out = 1000)

### zero weight to quantiles above 0.95
plot(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0, delta.right = 0.05),
     type = "l", lwd = 1.5)
# smooth counterpart
lines(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0, delta.right = 0.05,
                  smooth = TRUE, sigma = .01), col = 2, lwd = 1.5)
lines(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0, delta.right = 0.05,
                  smooth = TRUE, sigma = .05), col = 3, lwd = 1.5)

### zero weight to quantiles below 0.05
plot(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0),
     type = "l", lwd = 1.5)
# smooth counterpart
lines(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0,
                  smooth = TRUE, sigma = .01), col = 2, lwd = 1.5)
lines(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0,
                  smooth = TRUE, sigma = .05), col = 3, lwd = 1.5)

### zero weight to quantiles below 0.05 and above 0.90
plot(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0.10),
```

```
    type = "l", lwd = 1.5)
# smooth counterpart
lines(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0.10,
  smooth = TRUE, sigma = .01), col = 2, lwd = 1.5)
lines(taus, wtrunc(taus, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0.10,
  smooth = TRUE, sigma = .05), col = 3, lwd = 1.5)

### Use wtrunc in Qest, Qlm, Qcoxph
# Qest(..., wtau = wtrunc, delta.left = 0.05, delta.right = 0.1)

## End(Not run)
```

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