Here is how I solved this problem.
 https://github.com/argallmr/IDLlib/blob/master/file_utils/mr file_read_ascii.pro

At the top, there is a helper function called "MrFile_Read_Ascii_Header". It reads each line of the file 1-by-1 until it has read five consecutive lines with the same number of columns. All lines with mismatched number of columns are considered the header. Additionally, the first line of data is parsed to determine its formatting. The output can then be passed to Read_Ascii in the form of a template.

The main program, "MrFile_Read_Ascii", is a wrapper for the Ascii_Template and Read_Ascii procedures and is based off of a program from Mike Galloy.

Hope this helps