

Position Profile
Scientific Director

**Banff International Research Station for Mathematical Innovation and
Discovery (BIRS)**

The Scientific Director of BIRS is a mathematical scientist of international stature responsible for providing and overseeing the overall vision and direction of the Station so as to fulfill its international mission of operating at the highest possible level of scientific and operational excellence. The Scientific Director works closely with the BIRS Deputy Director, BIRS staff housed at UBC and at Banff, the BIRS Board of Directors, the BIRS Scientific Advisory Board, as well as hundreds of program organizers and participants.

While the Scientific Director can be drawn from any academic institution, there is an expectation that the chosen candidate will spend significant time at the BIRS head office and at the Banff Centre in Banff Alberta, where the Station has its main facilities and runs its programs.

Scientific Leadership:

First and foremost, the Scientific Director is responsible for the scientific excellence and the overall reputation and integrity of the Station. The Director will:

- Oversee the annual international solicitation for workshop proposals across all fields of the mathematical sciences.
- Solicit reviews of proposals from arms-length experts. In 2019 more than 1,250 reviewers will contribute to reviewing the BIRS proposals for its 2021 programme.
- Chair the Scientific Advisory Board, responsible for advising on the selection of programming both at the Banff Station and at affiliated stations (Casa Matematica Oaxaca in Mexico – CMO and IAS-Hangzhou in China)
- Chair the Program Committee, responsible for the final selection of the scientific programme hosted at Banff, CMO, and IAS-Hangzhou. This committee also advises the Scientific Director on the balance of activities between research workshops, conferences, opportunities for research in teams, programs for education, industrial workshops, and other activities which may arise from time to time.
- Evaluate more immediate proposals, especially in emerging areas, and decide which may be hosted at the Station.

With the Institute receiving about three proposals for every one that is selected, the Scientific Director plays a critical role in the final programming at BIRS. As such, the Director must exhibit exceptional judgement in the choice of scientific activities including recognizing and appreciating emerging scientific trends; appreciating excellence across scientific fields; identifying scientists capable of mounting exceptional programs; and proactively soliciting proposals from a broad and diverse group of scientists. Breadth of intellectual interests, willingness to become informed about unfamiliar areas, and ability to take a national and international perspective are all critical factors for success.

Operational Management:

The Scientific Director acts as the CEO of the Station, responsible for all aspects of BIRS operations. As such, the Director has considerable latitude for ensuring the organizational structure of the Institute aligns with the Station's mission and strategic direction. All staff at BIRS report to the Director, either directly or indirectly. The Director must have the ability to listen to visitors to the Station, show tact and respect at all times, and make sound judgements whenever needed. The ability to multi-task and act decisively are all critical attributes of the Director. The Director will also act as the chief liaison between the Institute and the BIRS Board of Directors.

The Scientific Director will be the chief spokesperson for the Institute across all stakeholder communities. As such the Scientific Director will ensure the integrity and reputation of the Station is maintained at all times. The Director is also the chief development officer of the Institute responsible for seeking continued operational funding for the Station.

Partnerships:

The Director is the lead on establishing, maintaining, and enhancing partnerships including, but not limited to:

- Government funding agencies which provide the bulk of funding to BIRS. The Scientific Director will maintain strong relationships with such agencies. The Director will also lead applications for funding from these agencies as needed.
- CMO and IAS-Hangzhou are affiliated stations of BIRS. The Scientific Director will maintain open communications with these stations and ensure that they are operating at a level consistent with the scientific and operational excellence at BIRS.
- The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity hosts the BIRS research Station. As such, the relationship between BIRS and the Banff Centre is critical for success and the Scientific Director acts as the main liaison with the Banff Centre. The Scientific Director is responsible for negotiating the contract with the Banff Centre and for identifying and leveraging opportunities for partnerships with the Banff Centre.
- The University of British Columbia currently acts as the headquarters of BIRS and provides substantial infrastructure and financial resources to BIRS. As such it is critical for the Scientific Director to maintain strong working relationships with the university.