

Sara Kirk

Finalist

Canadian Association for Graduate Studies
Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentorship
2018

Sara Kirk is an outstanding graduate student mentor. A Professor of Health Promotion in the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University, and former Canada Research Chair in Health Services Research, she has supervised 35 Master's, Ph.D., and postdoctoral researchers.

Dr. Kirk is known for encouraging, inspiring, and supporting students to reach their full potential, and to become the next generation of health researchers. "She is masterful at creating an environment where creativity and innovative thinking are constantly encouraged," writes a former graduate student. "Dr. Kirk would continually challenge me to think critically and more deeply about my work, creating a sense of ownership and pride in the research I was conducting." She works closely with students on their projects, and provides timely and positive feedback as they proceed through their programs. In addition to research skills, Dr. Kirk also encourages students to hone their professional and pedagogical abilities. A dedicated proponent of experiential learning, her teaching and supervision philosophy is influenced by a Chinese proverb that states, "I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand." She frequently offers her graduate students opportunities to co-teach, and includes them in research projects and meetings with policymakers. The success of her mentoring style is evident by the fact that one hundred per cent of her graduate students have completed their programs.

"Dr. Kirk encourages traits in her graduate students that cannot be taught in a research seminar or lecture," reflects a former student, now a Canada Research Chair. "Her students come to know the relevance and real-world impact of their work, which in turn creates commitment and passion."



Sara Kirk is a Professor of Health Promotion in the Faculty of Health, and Scientific Director of the Healthy Populations Institute, Dalhousie University. She is cross-appointed with Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University, and holds adjunct appointments with Mount Saint Vincent University and the IWK Health Centre.

