



UNIVERSAL AVIATION BEGINS OPERATIONS AT DAMMAM'S NEW GENERAL AVIATION TERMINAL

News / Business aviation



Universal Aviation has officially begun operations at the new General Aviation Terminal (GAT)/FBO and dedicated hangar at King Fahd International Airport in Dammam (OEDF). Universal Aviation is the appointed manager and operator of the new GAT/FBO and is providing full-service ground handling through the facility. Developed in close partnership with MATARAT Holding and Dammam Airports Company (DACO), the facility represents the first dedicated General Aviation Terminal/FBO in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – a significant milestone for Dammam and for the continued development of the country's general aviation infrastructure.

Universal Aviation has also successfully handled its first flight through the new facility, marking the start of live operations at Dammam's new GAT/FBO. The opening reflects the broader vision being advanced under the leadership of His Excellency Abdulaziz Al-Duailej, President of the General Authority of Civil Aviation, to expand dedicated general aviation infrastructure and elevate Saudi Arabia's position as a world-class destination for business aviation under Vision 2030.

John Hewett, Global Vice President, Universal Aviation commented: "Bringing the new Dammam GAT to operational readiness required a tremendous amount of coordination across facility development, staffing, training, equipment, safety systems, regulatory approvals, and operating procedures. We have built an operation that supports clients well before the aircraft arrives, with proactive communication, clear advance information, and coordinated support through every stage

of the mission. On the ground, our team is ready to combine safety and operational discipline with the exceptional, hospitality-driven customer service operators expect from Universal Aviation.”

New 42,000 ft² Dammam facility was designed to provide business aircraft crews, passengers, and flight operations teams with a more private, efficient, and hospitality-focused experience – from pre-arrival communications and planning through arrival, ground operations, and departure. The facility includes two dedicated VIP lounges, a pilot’s lounge, a conference room, a food and beverage refreshment area, offices, showers, and onsite customs, immigration, and quarantine facilities. The facility also includes an approximately 20,000 ft² dedicated private aviation hangar. The hangar represents the first state-sponsored general aviation hangar in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and provides secure, climate-protected space for aircraft operating in the Eastern Province.

In a region where heat, humidity, dust, sand, and coastal environmental conditions can accelerate wear on aircraft exteriors and sensitive systems, the enclosed hangar provides operators with an important new option for aircraft protection, operational readiness, and long-term or seasonal basing.

The opening follows an extensive preparation and operational-readiness program that began after Universal Aviation was awarded the concession to manage the Dammam GAT in late 2025. Working closely with MATARAT Holding, DACO, GACA, and other key stakeholders, Universal Aviation progressed the facility from development and inauguration through regulatory approval and live operations.

Major milestones included the extensive buildout and operational fit-out of the facility, its formal inauguration in February 2026, the recruitment and training of a dedicated local team, the acquisition and deployment of new ground support equipment, and the completion of required safety, regulatory, and operational certification processes.

Universal Aviation also earned its GACAR Part 151 certification, the mandatory ground service provider certification issued by GACA. Dammam is the first of three Universal Aviation flagship locations planned for Saudi Arabia, with additional operations in Jeddah and Riyadh expected to open later this year.

At King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah (OEJN), Universal Aviation will manage a dedicated approximately 108,000 ft² private aviation hangar and provide a premium, full-service ground handling operation.

At King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh (OERK), Universal Aviation will open a Universal Aviation-exclusive private aviation lounge and provide full-service ground handling.

Together, the three gateway locations will give operators one accountable partner across the Kingdom’s primary business aviation markets, with common standards for safety, service, communication, and operational execution.

To support this network, Universal Aviation has established a centralized Operational Control Center for flights operating into, out of, and within Saudi Arabia. Staffed by professional English-speaking operations specialists, the OCC provides operators with a single point of contact for pre-arrival planning, advance operational intelligence, local procedures, service coordination, and questions regarding what crews and passengers should expect on the ground.

The OCC will also help coordinate multi-city itineraries, operational changes, and communications between Universal Aviation teams, airport authorities, and supporting service providers. Beyond

the three flagship locations, Universal Aviation is working to extend coordinated support to all airports across Saudi Arabia, allowing operators to maintain centralized communication even when missions extend beyond Dammam, Jeddah, and Riyadh.

With more than 75 locations across 20+ countries and more than 65 years of operational experience, Universal Aviation is bringing a proven global approach to Saudi Arabia, combining structured arrival and departure coordination, aircraft asset protection, proactive communication, and high-touch service for corporate flight departments, charter operators, and aircraft owners.

Greg Evans, Managing Principal, Evans Family Office, parent of Universal Aviation stated: "Today's opening is an important milestone, but it is only the beginning of our long-term vision for Saudi Arabia. We are proud to be working alongside MATARAT Holding, DACO, GACA, and other leaders across the Kingdom who share an ambitious vision for the future of general aviation. We are committed to investing in the Kingdom, developing Saudi talent, and helping elevate business aviation service standards. Our ambition is to help make Saudi Arabia a world-class destination for business aviation, with infrastructure, operational discipline, and hospitality that meet the highest global expectations and support the goals of Vision 2030."

Universal Aviation's expansion supports Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objectives by helping strengthen the Kingdom's aviation competitiveness, expand premium business aviation infrastructure, support private-sector participation, develop local aviation talent, and improve the experience for international investors, businesses, aircraft owners, and operators traveling throughout the country.

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