

There is a particular kind of comfort you feel when an airline academy runs like a well kept instrument: parts move in rhythm, scheduling is predictable, and day to day training flows without the constant friction that students hate and instructors cannot fully hide. At the AELO Swiss Academy, that reliability starts with a simple, tangible fact: the academy operates a modern fleet of 17 aircraft.

On paper, “17 aircraft” sounds like a headline number. In training, it becomes something more practical. It influences how often students get airborne, how smoothly skill progression can be paced, how instructors manage different training tracks at the same time, and how delays are absorbed when weather or maintenance takes a bite out of the day. For anyone considering an integrated path like AELO’s 18 month ATPL program, or a modular route like PPL and MPL, the fleet is not just background detail. It is part of the learning environment you will live inside.

This article looks at what a 17 aircraft fleet realistically means for training at AELO Swiss Academy, grounded in what the academy publicly states, and translated into the kinds of operational trade-offs that matter to students and families.

A fleet number with real operational weight

AELO Swiss Academy is based at Locarno Airport in Gordola, Switzerland, with a satellite base at Lugano Airport in Agno. With training spread across both locations, aircraft availability becomes a logistics puzzle that has to solve itself every day, not just on ideal-weather weeks.

The academy states it uses a modern fleet of 17 aircraft, including Sonaca S201, Tecnam P2008, Diamond DA40, Diamond DA42, and Extra 200. That mix matters because it typically covers different training needs across flight training and skill refinement, from lessons that build fundamental handling to stages that demand more energy, precision, or discipline in performance.

Even if you never learn the exact allocation of each type to each lesson plan, you can still understand the underlying logic. A fleet of 17 is large enough that the academy can distribute training across multiple cohorts and routes, rather than funneling everyone through a single bottleneck aircraft or a single training pattern. That matters when you are trying to keep a student’s momentum intact.

Momentum is everything in pilot training. The gap between “I understand the concept” and “I can reproduce it consistently under pressure” is rarely made by thinking harder. It is made by doing it often enough, in a steady cadence, with feedback close to the moment the skill was attempted. A larger fleet does not eliminate variability, but it gives the operation more room to absorb it.

What 17 aircraft can mean for scheduling and continuity

When students hear about a fleet, they are usually thinking about how many times they will fly. The honest answer is that flight frequency is also shaped by airspace, weather, instructor availability, and maintenance schedules. But fleet size is one of the variables that can prevent training from turning into a waiting game.

A 17 aircraft fleet gives AELO Swiss Academy flexibility in at least three ways, based on how training operations generally work:

First, it supports parallel training. AELO offers multiple pathways, including an Integrated ATPL program, PPL training, and MPL (with SkyAlps), plus an APC Mentored ATPL program. When more than one track is running at once, you need enough aircraft to avoid constant rescheduling between categories. With only a handful of

aircraft, every week becomes a balancing act. With a fleet of 17, the academy can generally keep more plates spinning without as many forced interruptions.

Second, it helps absorb maintenance and incidentals. Aircraft maintenance is not optional, and minor technical issues do not always follow a neat timeline. When the fleet is larger, the operation can route training around an aircraft that is unavailable, rather than halting progress for everyone.

Third, it reduces the “single point of failure” feeling. Students can tell when a school is running close to the edge. They feel it as uncertainty. A 17 aircraft fleet, particularly when combined with two training locations, tends to make the day to day experience steadier, because the academy has more options for pairing aircraft availability with instructor and student timetables.

That said, luxury training is not only about quantity of flying. It is also about the quality of the time between flights, the structure of briefings, and the clarity of feedback. The fleet supports those elements by reducing the chaos that forces instructors to rush.

The aircraft types and why variety can help learning

AELO Swiss Academy lists several aircraft types within its fleet: Sonaca S201, Tecnam P2008, Diamond DA40, Diamond DA42, and Extra 200. That variety is not a marketing flourish. Different airframes naturally encourage different teaching angles.

Diamond DA40 and DA42, for example, are widely recognized types in training environments, often used where the academy wants students to build solid fundamentals with a strong focus on procedural discipline. Tecnam P2008 can fit training philosophies that emphasize modern efficiency and effective instruction. Sonaca S201 and Extra 200 point to a broader capability set, with airframe characteristics that can support higher-performance handling and skills beyond basic pattern work.

You still need to be careful about what you assume. From the verified information, we cannot say how many of each type AELO has, nor which stage uses which exact aircraft. What you can say responsibly is that a fleet that includes both training oriented aircraft and performance oriented aircraft gives the academy the ability to structure training in a way that matches the learning objectives as students progress.

In an integrated ATPL program that AELO states is 18 months long, progression is the entire story. A pilot does not simply “learn to fly.” The pilot learns to think like a professional across systems, performance, operational decision-making, and a growing comfort with complexity. Aircraft variety helps keep that progression coherent rather than repetitive.

Integrated ATPL timing: what fleet size means over 18 months

AELO Swiss Academy states its ATPL integrated course is 18 months long and costs €104,950 inclusive of VAT and other items such as accommodation and landing fees. That price context matters because families and students should think of the program as a structured pipeline, not a collection of individual lessons that happen whenever the calendar permits.

Over 18 months, the cumulative impact of scheduling stability becomes enormous. A delay of a day here and there may not sound dramatic, but over months it changes how a student’s skills consolidate. It also changes how smoothly students can cycle through theory modules and simulator sessions, then bring that learning back into the air.

A fleet of 17 aircraft is one of the factors that allows an academy to keep training moving while students are simultaneously progressing through knowledge requirements. AELO also states it uses an MPS Boeing 737 NG simulator, and it offers training such as APS MCC, PBN certification, and UPRT. The simulator component matters because it reduces how much time has to be spent learning certain procedural or scenario based tasks in the air. Then, when students do fly, the time can be focused on what flight is uniquely good at: sight picture, feel, energy management, and real world decision-making.

In luxury terms, this is the difference between “we taught you the curriculum” and “we delivered the training experience as designed.” Fleet size supports delivery.

Simulator plus fleet: the balance between time in the air and time in the seat

AELO’s MPS Boeing 737 NG simulator is a key piece of the training ecosystem. Verified information also confirms that AELO offers training such as APS MCC, PBN certification, and UPRT.

Here is the practical value of combining a simulator program with a fleet of 17 aircraft. Simulator time can build procedural consistency and scenario discipline without the same constraints as flight scheduling. Then flight time can focus on the things you cannot simulate adequately: aircraft handling response, real weather cues, and the choreography of managing the cockpit while maintaining aircraft control.

But the balance has to be managed. If a school leans too heavily on simulation, students can feel disconnected from actual aircraft behavior. If it leans too heavily on flying, it can become difficult to keep the training timeline consistent. A fleet of 17 gives AELO the flexibility to correct that balance without making students wait weeks for an airborne slot.

This is where the “fleet” story becomes more than a number. It becomes an assurance of continuity. When students move between briefing, simulator sessions, and aircraft training, they need the curriculum to remain coherent. The fleet is part of the machinery that makes that coherence possible.

Two locations, one training rhythm

AELO Swiss Academy operates at Locarno Airport in Gordola and has a satellite base at Lugano Airport in Agno. That geographic spread can be beneficial, not because it is glamorous, but because it creates operational flexibility.

In flight training, the day is governed by constraints. Weather in one area can differ from another. Availability at one airport can be easier than another. Even when you cannot predict everything, having training sites increases the chance that “the plan survives contact with reality.”

Luxury training often gets described with words like comfort and choice. In training operations, those ideas show up as contingency options. With a fleet of 17 and two bases, AELO can more realistically keep training sessions on track even when conditions are imperfect.

Scale at AELO: 200 pilots per year, 250 students in training

A 2025 RSI report said AELO trains about 200 future airline pilots per year and has around 250 students in training annually. Those figures help you connect fleet size to real throughput.

If an academy is moving roughly 200 future airline pilots per year and maintaining around 250 students in training at any given time, it is not running a boutique operation where each cohort waits its turn on an almost

empty calendar. It is running a production system, with the human element and the safety requirements still in full control, but with enough volume that scheduling discipline becomes a daily necessity.

In that context, a fleet of 17 aircraft is the kind of capacity that supports continuous flow. It also suggests that aircraft utilization has to be carefully managed, not maximized for its own sake. A school can only protect quality if it protects the training environment from chaos. More aircraft helps, but it does not replace good operations.

Investment and capacity growth: the new Locarno site

RSI also reported that AELO opened a new site at Locarno Airport, adding 2,000 square meters of space with an investment of over 3 million Swiss francs. This is relevant to the fleet discussion because training is not only aircraft. It is classrooms, briefing areas, student facilities, and the physical space where instructors and students shape learning into measurable progress.

If an academy increases its facilities, it usually signals a desire to scale delivery without sacrificing comfort or structure. That kind of investment pairs naturally with a modern fleet and simulator capability. You can see the pieces as part of a single intention: build an environment where training can run at a consistent tempo.

Trade-offs the luxury traveler should actually care about

A fleet of 17 is a positive indicator, but it is not a guarantee of a frictionless journey. The real trade-offs show up in how the academy responds to constraints. There are a few realities worth naming clearly.

First, weather will always exist. Even with a larger fleet, certain days simply do not support certain training profiles. The advantage of a capable fleet and multiple bases is not that weather disappears, but that the academy can often shift activities or aircraft assignments so students do not lose too much momentum.

Second, fleet variety creates its own scheduling complexity. Different aircraft types may have different training suitability for particular stages and different maintenance schedules. More aircraft generally means more options, but it also means more planning.

Third, simulator time cannot fully replace flight time. Simulator sessions are valuable, and AELO states it uses a MPS Boeing 737 NG simulator and offers training such as APS MCC, PBN certification, and UPRT. Still, students develop certain instincts only in actual flight. The best operations use the simulator to strengthen what matters, then reserve aircraft time for what it uniquely teaches.

A luxury approach is not about promising perfection. It is about delivering a structured experience that stays intact despite variability.

Questions worth asking before you commit

If you are seriously evaluating AELO Swiss Academy, the fleet count is a useful starting point. What you want next is the operational reality behind it, especially for your specific program and timeline.

Here are a few sharp questions that can help you interpret what “17 aircraft” means for you personally:

- How does AELO schedule aircraft rotations across its different aircraft types during busy periods, so students do not sit idle?
- For an integrated ATPL student on an 18 month plan, how does the academy balance simulator sessions on the MPS Boeing 737 NG with airborne training to preserve progression?

- When training is affected by weather, what is the typical approach to rescheduling at Locarno and at the satellite base in Lugano?
- How does the academy manage aircraft availability alongside its other tracks, such as PPL, MPL (with SkyAlps), and APC Mentored ATPL?
- What is the practical meaning of training throughput, given the reported scale of about 200 future airline pilots per year and around 250 students annually?

You do not need dramatic answers. You need clear ones, the kind that reveal a well-run operation.

Where the AELO fleet story lands for your training experience

When you strip away the numbers, the fleet of 17 aircraft at AELO Swiss Academy points to one core idea: the academy is designed to deliver <https://epst.nl/en/aelo-swiss-academy/> training at a real tempo, not as a collection of last minute arrangements.

It supports multiple program types, including an 18 month integrated ATPL pathway and other routes like PPL and MPL. It sits alongside a simulator capability anchored by an MPS Boeing 737 NG, with training such as APS MCC, PBN certification, and UPRT. It operates from Locarno Airport with a satellite base at Lugano, which adds operational options when conditions change.

And it exists in a wider system. RSI reported AELO trains about 200 future airline pilots per year and has around 250 students in training annually. RSI also reported the academy opened a new Locarno site with 2,000 square meters and an investment of over 3 million Swiss francs. Diamond Aircraft later described AELO as training pilots since 1985 and headquartered at Locarno Airport, and it noted AELO's involvement with Diamond's DATC network.

Taken together, a fleet of 17 is not just about having enough airplanes. It is about having enough operational breathing room to keep training coherent across months, across aircraft types, and across different parts of the curriculum.

If you are paying for luxury, you are paying for certainty: that your training week feels planned, not improvised, that briefings and debriefings stay structured, and that your skills get repeated often enough for them to become second nature. In that sense, the AELO Swiss Academy fleet is one of the most concrete indicators of the experience you will end up living.

A quick perspective on “new” versus “proven”

Finally, it helps to hold two timeframes in your mind. RSI reported AELO was founded after Stefano Buratti and Daniele Dellea took over the former AeroLocarno operation about seven and a half years earlier. Diamond Aircraft described AELO as training pilots since 1985 and headquartered at Locarno Airport.

So even while the academy's current footprint reflects investment and expansion, the training context carries longer continuity. That combination, a proven local training legacy plus modern capability like a simulator and a modern fleet, is often what separates a school that feels polished from one that feels reliably polished week after week.



A fleet of 17 aircraft is a visible asset. The deeper value is what it allows AELO Swiss Academy to do with that asset: deliver training with continuity, manage multiple student cohorts and program types, and keep the learning process moving.

If you want, tell me which track you are considering at AELO Swiss Academy, and whether your priority is maximum flight time, airline focused procedures, or a faster path to a specific rating. I can translate the fleet and training mix into what you should expect day to day, without guessing beyond what is supported.