

There are places that feel built for pilots, even before you step inside. Locarno and Gordola on the Swiss side of the Alps have that kind of energy. The lake air, the mountains that change the sky's mood by the hour, and the steady rhythm of aviation bring a certain **aeloswiss.com** discipline to everything around them. So when AELO Swiss Academy opened a new site at Locarno Airport, it did not just add buildings to the map. It sharpened the promise the school is making to airline candidates: train them here, keep the process tight, and prepare them to move on to airline operations.

AELO Swiss Academy is a Swiss aviation training organization based in Locarno and Gordola, publicly presenting itself as an Approved Training Organization (ATO) with approval code CH.ATO.0311. The organization traces its history in Switzerland back to 1985, and it presents nearly four decades of pilot training experience. In February 2024, Aero Locarno rebranded itself as AELO Swiss Academy. AELO is described as the new global brand name for the former Aero Locarno flight training group. That rebrand matters because it signals more than a logo change. It aligns the training story across locations under one name, and it makes the Locarno campus feel like a visible point on a wider network.

Now AELO's new Locarno site sits at the airport with an unmistakable training focus. Local reporting in Switzerland described the opening of the new site at Locarno Airport and stated an annual training volume of about 200 future airline pilots. That same reporting also described a projected fleet exceeding 30 aircraft and mentioned two simulators, including a Boeing 737 simulator. Those are not vague ambitions. They are the kind of scale numbers you can feel when you picture training throughput, scheduling complexity, and the everyday grind of getting students through required phases on time.

Even the training capacity details give a clearer picture of what AELO is trying to do at this location. In the same local reporting, AELO director Stefano Buratti was quoted describing training roughly 110 to 120 airline pilot candidates per year, with about 250 students total annually, and with many graduates reportedly going on to airlines including KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss. That range and those totals are important because they suggest the academy is not only thinking about "airline training" as a marketing phrase. It is managing an actual student pipeline, mixing airline-track ambitions with the realities of training numbers, time, and the mix of programs.

Why the new site in Locarno changes the training experience

When a training organization adds a dedicated site at the airport, it affects more than convenience. It influences how schedules hold together. It reduces the friction between classroom learning, ground preparation, and getting into aircraft or simulator sessions. For airline pilot training, that continuity matters because the job is not one skill. It is a stack of skills that must stay coherent over weeks and months, including procedures, communication discipline, threat awareness, and the ability to integrate performance with briefing and debriefing.

The local reporting that described the new AELO site included two simulators and specifically called out a Boeing 737 simulator. That detail matters because it tells you the academy is not trying to "approximate" airline training with generic systems-only practice. A 737 simulator implies a heavy emphasis on multi-crew airline workflows, standardized procedures, and the rhythm of training sessions that match what students will eventually experience in airline contexts.

At the same time, the reporting described the fleet projected to exceed 30 aircraft. A fleet of that scale, even in a projected form, changes the way training can be paced. More aircraft generally means fewer bottlenecks when weather or maintenance affects availability. It also means the academy can keep cadences tighter between

training elements. Airline pilot candidates do not just need flight time. They need quality repetitions and a system that can absorb variance without derailing progress.

It helps, too, that AELO is not presented as a single isolated flight school. It is part of Diamond Aircraft's global Diamond Authorized Training Center network. While the context does not list what that means for every training module, it does place AELO within a broader authorized ecosystem, which typically comes with standardized training expectations and a network mindset.

The training tracks AELO puts on offer, and how the site supports them

AELO's public materials state it offers an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and an MPL program with SkyAlps Airlines, including a job-guarantee claim for the MPL pathway. These are distinct pathways, but they share a common core: structured training toward airline readiness.

An ATPL Integrated Program is typically built to run in a planned sequence, where students progress through phases with a strong instructor-led framework. An 18-month timeline signals the kind of commitment students and training organizations both accept when they say, "We will carry you through the full process in a defined window."

An MPL program, especially one associated with an airline partner like SkyAlps Airlines as AELO states, is inherently about airline operational mindset. It focuses on training outcomes that align with airline requirements and operating environments, rather than treating pilot development as purely a general aviation progression. In AELO's case, the public claim includes a job-guarantee for the MPL pathway.

What the new Locarno site seems to support, based on the verified details, is the ability to handle these pathways at scale and with the right training mix. Two simulators with an airline-relevant simulator capability, plus a fleet projected to exceed 30 aircraft, supports a training design where students can move between ground preparation, simulator sessions, and flight phases without the whole system losing cohesion.

Local reporting also noted the academy trains roughly 110 to 120 airline pilot candidates per year and about 250 students total annually. That suggests AELO is managing multiple training cohorts and likely different stage groups at once. A purpose-built site at the airport is the kind of infrastructure that helps keep those groups from colliding into scheduling chaos.

In training, chaos is rarely dramatic. It looks like missed timings, compressed briefings, rushed debriefs, or students waiting around because something upstream slipped. An upgraded site does not magically remove all constraints, but it can make the constraints more predictable. Predictability is what students feel, even if they cannot name it.

Numbers tell a story, but they do not tell everything

The figures reported for AELO's Locarno operation are striking: about 200 future airline pilots annually, a fleet projected to exceed 30 aircraft, and two simulators including a Boeing 737 simulator. Local reporting also gave another perspective: around 110 to 120 airline candidates per year and about 250 students total annually.

If you are the type of person who pays attention to operational details, you start asking sensible questions: How do those totals relate? Are they counting different student categories, different time windows, or different program definitions? The verified context does not allow firm resolution of that discrepancy, and it would be irresponsible to force a single answer.

What you can say, safely, is this: AELO is operating at a scale that requires careful planning. Even if you treat the numbers as ranges and category variations rather than exact equivalents, the message remains consistent. The

academy is training a meaningful volume of students, and it is doing so with simulator capability that goes beyond a minimal setup.



Scale also changes student experience in subtle ways. In larger operations, standardized training processes usually become more important. In smaller ones, instructors can sometimes tailor everything more freely. AELO's mix, based on the public information provided here, suggests a deliberate attempt to balance real instruction with operational throughput. That balance often becomes visible in how consistently training elements are delivered and how quickly students can move through stages.

The daily reality: where “designed for airline training” becomes tangible

It is easy to say “designed for airline pilot training.” It is harder to show how that phrase turns into day-by-day reality. At the AELO Locarno site, the reality shows up through training infrastructure and program structure, both of which are supported by the verified details.

Start with the simulators. Having two simulators at the new site, including a Boeing 737 simulator as described in local reporting, changes the texture of training. It means simulator sessions can be scheduled with more options, and it allows more targeted repetition. That matters for learning tasks that do not fully transfer on the first try, especially when students are still building mental models of standard flows, crew communication, and automation management.

Then consider the aircraft scale. A projected fleet exceeding 30 aircraft gives the academy room to keep student schedules stable when maintenance or weather affects availability. Weather variability is a constant in aviation, and in a region with mountains and a shifting climate, the ability to adjust without breaking the training plan is not a “nice to have.” It is a central requirement.

Finally, consider the program commitments. AELO publicly states an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps-linked MPL program with a job-guarantee claim. Those are not casual promises. They imply a training pipeline that is meant to be sustained, not improvised. A new site at the airport is one of the most practical ways to make sustained pipelines more realistic, because it reduces the logistical gap between learning and practice.

I have always found that aviation training systems are easiest to judge by how they handle stress points: the moments when a student is tired, weather shifts, a simulator slot gets tight, or a sequence of lessons needs to keep stacking correctly. Infrastructure does not guarantee good training. But the right infrastructure reduces the number of obstacles that can turn training into frustration.

The bigger context: rebrand, global network, and fairness standards

The AELO story in Locarno is not only about buildings and equipment. The February 2024 rebrand from Aero Locarno to AELO Swiss Academy as a global brand name adds a layer of institutional identity. When a school consolidates under a global brand, it often signals that training philosophy and standards are meant to be recognizable across regions.

AELO also states it maintains equal opportunity standards and prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, religion, age, or national origin. That matters in pilot training environments because the path to becoming an airline pilot can be psychologically demanding. Students are already managing performance pressure, study load, and confidence swings. A training culture that emphasizes equal opportunity and explicitly prohibits discrimination helps keep the focus where it belongs: learning, safety, and professional growth.

The Diamond Authorized Training Center network aspect places AELO inside a broader organizational relationship. Again, the verified context does not spell out every operational detail of that network. Still, it supports the idea that AELO is not operating as an isolated island. It is plugged into recognized structures that tend to come with standardization and accountability.

What “adventurous” looks like in a training campus

Adventurous does not mean reckless, not in aviation training. It means students are given real chances to build competence through a structured process, with enough resources that they can experience learning variety without losing continuity.

Locarno itself can feel like the perfect place to practice the discipline of flight. Mountains train your attention. Weather reminds you that the sky is not a static backdrop. A lake environment adds its own flavors of visibility changes and wind effects. When training is grounded in that real landscape, students often develop a more instinctive respect for briefing and planning.

And still, the key is that the adventure is wrapped inside a system. The verified details show AELO’s ATO status with approval code CH.ATO.0311. That approval framework is about ensuring the organization meets regulatory expectations for training delivery. It is the difference between “a school with aircraft” and “a training organization that can reliably deliver an approved training pathway.”

A quick look at the resources AELO says the new site includes

Based on the verified context describing AELO’s new Locarno site, the standout elements are simulator capacity and fleet projection.

Here is what local reporting specifically highlighted about the new site:



- Two simulators, including a Boeing 737 simulator
- Annual training volume of about 200 future airline pilots (stated figure)
- Fleet projected to exceed 30 aircraft

Those are headline operational indicators. They point to a setup meant to handle airline oriented training at a meaningful volume, rather than serving only small cohorts.

The trade-offs: what you get, and what still needs scrutiny

Any student or parent considering pilot training wants a straightforward answer: “Will this feel smooth?” The honest truth is that no training operation can eliminate all friction, especially in aviation. Even with a new site, you still face variability, scheduling constraints, and the reality that students progress at different rates.

So if you are evaluating an airline training campus like AELO’s new Locarno facility, it helps to ask questions that match how training systems work in practice:

You want clarity on how simulator and aircraft availability is managed across the training plan. You also want to understand how AELO aligns the ATPL Integrated Program and the MPL pathway with the operational rhythm that students will experience. The verified context confirms AELO offers both an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines linked MPL program with a job-guarantee claim, but it does not provide all the sequencing details. That means any deeper “how exactly” would require direct, program-specific information from the academy.

You also want to consider that the reported numbers, like 200 future airline pilots annually and 110 to 120 airline candidates per year, may reflect different program accounting or different definitions of “airline pilots” versus “airline candidates.” The safe approach is to treat these as indicators of scale, not as a single precise promise.

The good news is that the scale indicators and the simulator detail give you enough to conclude AELO is building the kind of environment airline training needs: enough capacity, enough training hardware, and a location that supports steady training movement.

Why candidates care about the Locarno base specifically

When you hear about airline careers, you might be tempted to focus only on flight hours, certificates, or classroom content. But the location where training happens shapes your experience more than people expect.

A base at or next to the airport is not a luxury. It is a structural advantage, because it allows the training day to compress. It reduces travel time between learning environments and supports frequent touchpoints between instructors and students. Over weeks, that adds up. It can also reduce stress for students who are already balancing academic progress, performance standards, and the emotional roller coaster that pilot training can bring.

AELO's location in Locarno and Gordola, as publicly presented, positions the training organization in a place that can serve as both a study hub and an operational hub. The new site at Locarno Airport, described locally, reinforces that idea by anchoring the training footprint in the aviation environment itself.

The ambition behind the facility

The rebrand to AELO Swiss Academy, the ATO approval status, the stated program offerings, and the new Locarno site all point in one direction: building an airline oriented pathway with visible capacity.

The annual student numbers cited in local reporting, including around 250 total students annually, show that AELO's planning is not limited to a small classroom. It is meant to run continuously with cohorts. For training organizations, that is where quality can either stabilize or drift. The infrastructure and simulator emphasis described for the new site are the kind of signals that aim to stabilize the training experience at scale.

It is also worth noting that the verified context says AELO has nearly four decades of pilot training history since 1985. Long history does not automatically guarantee excellence, but it does mean the organization has had decades to learn what fails, what holds, and what students need most when they are under pressure.

In pilot training, under pressure is not an exception. It is part of the learning environment.

One final look: what to watch next if you are tracking AELO

If you are following AELO Swiss Academy and its Locarno expansion, the most practical indicators to watch are the ones already visible in the verified context.

The new site includes simulator capacity, including a Boeing 737 simulator. The fleet is projected to exceed 30 aircraft. Training volumes are described both as about 200 future airline pilots annually and as 110 to 120 airline pilot candidates per year, with about 250 students total annually. The programs include an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and an MPL program linked with SkyAlps Airlines, with AELO publicly mentioning a job-guarantee claim for the MPL pathway. And the organization maintains ATO approval with code CH.ATO.0311 and states equal opportunity standards with explicit non discrimination based on gender, race, religion, age, or national origin.

Those elements, taken together, frame the new Locarno site as more than a local upgrade. It is a statement of intent about training scale, airline relevance, and structured development in Switzerland.

If you like the idea of an aviation campus where the mountains remind you that preparation matters, where the training hardware suggests airline realism, and where the operational footprint indicates the academy has built for real throughput, AELO Swiss Academy's new Locarno site is exactly the kind of place that invites both ambition and respect for the process.