

Locarno has always had a particular pull for people who want aviation to feel practical, close to the weather, and real enough that you can smell it in the hangar. When AELO Swiss Academy reappeared under its new name and then moved forward with a dedicated new site at Locarno Airport, the story became more than branding and scheduling. It became about how a training operation shapes daily life for students and instructors, and how a modern program needs space, process, and continuity to keep the training tempo steady.

AELO Swiss Academy is a Swiss flight-training school operating at the Locarno Airport area. It is the rebranded successor to Aero Locarno, with the change reported as happening in February 2024. Around the same time, the academy inaugurated a new site at Locarno Airport, including the renovation of a dedicated hangar, with an investment of more than CHF 3 million. The director, Stefano Buratti, has also described how the organization began when he and Daniele Dellea decided to take over the old Aero Locarno flying club. Taken together, you can see the arc: a community-rooted operation that grows into a structured academy, and then upgrades its physical footprint to match the training load.

From a flying club to an academy mindset

There is a difference between learning to fly because you are part of a group and learning to fly because the school is running a pipeline. A flying club often teaches through relationship and repetition: the same aircraft, the same people, the same rhythms, and you progress because you are around. An academy, on the other hand, has to protect continuity. It has to coordinate aircraft availability, instructor time, scheduling windows, documentation, and assessments across multiple student cohorts.

AELO's story carries that shift in its background. The rebranding from Aero Locarno to AELO Swiss Academy in February 2024 signals a move toward an identity that is more outward-facing, more structured, and more aligned with airline pathways. The new site inauguration with a renovated hangar reinforces the practical side of that transition. When an operation invests more than CHF 3 million in a dedicated hangar, it is usually because the school wants fewer compromises in day-to-day training, even if the student experience still has to feel straightforward and manageable.

It also matters that the operation is not small. RSI reported that AELO trains about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, and Buratti said roughly 250 students are in training annually overall. Those numbers alone imply an environment where the training team must manage a flow, not just run isolated lessons. More students means more scheduling pressure. More scheduling pressure means you start to feel the limits of space, organization, and logistics, especially when weather changes and flight days thin out.

That is why the "new site" angle is not just a press detail. It directly connects to how training can remain consistent in the moments when everything else becomes unpredictable.

What a new hangar really changes

A hangar sounds like a simple thing, until you watch how much of training depends on what happens around it. Hangar space is where you can keep equipment arranged, paperwork moving, briefings and debriefings organized, and daily readiness checks realistic rather than rushed. It is also where an operation can protect continuity when something goes wrong, because access and turnaround time become less of a gamble.

RSI reported that AELO's new site included renovating a dedicated hangar at Locarno Airport with investment of more than CHF 3 million. If you have ever worked within a training environment, you know what that kind of investment often signals: the school is trying to remove bottlenecks. Bottlenecks are the hidden reason some

training schedules slip even when instructors are available. They show up as waiting, last-minute changes, and avoidable downtime.

This is also where the academy model becomes visible. With around 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, the hangar is part of the system that makes the numbers plausible. You do not need to assume specific layouts or capacities to understand the logic. Renovating a dedicated hangar implies that the school expects higher throughput and wants the facility to match the operational tempo.

There is a second effect that is less obvious but just as important: morale and clarity. Students and instructors tend to relax when the environment is organized. You can feel it in the way people brief, the way checklists get handled, and the way issues get surfaced early instead of late. A dedicated, renovated space gives the training organization a “home base” that can support a repeatable routine across different phases of training.

The training pathway AELO is building around

A training center can talk about pilot supply all day, but what people actually want to know is what route from initial training to airline readiness looks like. AELO’s own material describes an Approved Training Organization status, with approval code CH.ATO.0311 listed on its website. It also describes specific programs, including an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a job guarantee.

Even without getting into the mechanics of each stage, those program labels tell you the academy is aiming at recognizable, structured pathways. “Integrated” programs typically bundle training into a coherent sequence, rather than leaving students to stitch phases together themselves. An 18-month timeline is also a statement of intent. It suggests the school plans for progression under a defined schedule, which in turn requires aircraft and instructor allocation that can sustain momentum.

The MPL angle is different in emphasis. AELO also lists a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a job guarantee. You do not need to know every internal detail to understand why that language matters for how students plan their commitment. Job guarantees change the emotional math. They turn the question from “Will I manage to finish?” to “Will the school and program deliver outcomes under real-world conditions?” That makes operational stability even more valuable, and it makes the physical upgrades at Locarno easier to interpret.

AELO’s LinkedIn presence also indicates that the academy offers instructor training including FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI, and mentions Switzerland’s leading provider of Sphair courses. Those elements matter because the long-term health of a training operation depends on developing its own instructors and maintaining standardized training approaches. In practice, a school that invests in instructor development is not only training students, it is also building resilience into its capability to expand.

How the numbers connect to daily reality

Training about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site means you are looking at a steady pipeline. If you also accept Buratti’s statement that roughly 250 students are in training annually overall, <https://epst.nl/en/aelo-swiss-academy/> then the new site is clearly a central pillar of capacity, not a marketing annex.

Those numbers have real consequences for what a student’s day feels like. When throughput is high, schools tend to become more disciplined about standardization. Briefings become more structured. Debrief notes become more consistent. Training tracking becomes more than a paper trail, because it has to support decisions about scheduling and progression across many students at once.

It is also where trade-offs show up. More throughput can mean less flexibility for individual edge cases. For example, if a student’s training pace is slightly behind due to weather or health, the scheduling system has to

absorb that difference without letting the overall calendar collapse. In a tightly run operation, that can lead to careful but firm decisions. Students may find themselves waiting for a specific slot, or they may get alternative tasks scheduled in the meantime, such as ground training or assessments that do not require immediate flight time.

The alternative is chaos, and chaos rarely benefits learning. So while a high-volume training operation has pressure baked in, it also pushes the school toward systems that keep instruction consistent. A renovated hangar and a defined academy identity are two signals that AELO is choosing systems over improvisation.

A realistic look at the “airline pilot” goal

One thing people often underestimate is how “airline pilot” is not a single skill you acquire and then carry unchanged through your career. It is a bundle of competencies: disciplined training, stable procedural habits, and the ability to learn efficiently under supervision. AELO’s reported context points to a pathway that connects learning at Locarno to airline destinations, with graduates going on to airlines such as KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss.



That doesn’t mean every student’s journey looks identical, but it does indicate that the academy’s output is aligned with airline recruitment expectations. Airlines generally look for evidence that training is systematic and that pilots can adapt. A structured integrated program with a timeline, and an MPL option tied to a specific airline context with a job guarantee, both support that alignment.

It is also worth thinking about why the Locarno environment matters. While the verified facts here focus on the school and its site, not on meteorological or airspace specifics, any flight training location has to handle weather variation. When the air can be less predictable, the scheduling and the training systems become even more important. That is another reason the new hangar and new site make sense. Facilities do not prevent weather, but they help an operation manage the time around it.

What students and instructors experience after a site upgrade

When a school upgrades its facilities, it is easy for messaging to focus on what the building looks like. The more meaningful effects show up in how teaching and learning get paced.

Consider the rhythm of training. Students move through phases that combine flight lessons, ground briefing, performance review, and assessments. In a busy academy, the ground side cannot be treated like an optional

buffer. It has to be part of the same progression. A dedicated, renovated hangar supports that because it can anchor the daily flow, from equipment preparation to debrief documentation. Instructors also benefit, because they can run consistent routines when they are not constantly accommodating logistical friction.

There is another subtle benefit: the ability to manage instructor and aircraft readiness with fewer last-minute disruptions. Even if the academy's training standards are excellent already, readiness bottlenecks are what turn an excellent standard into missed opportunities. When you invest in infrastructure, you invest in reducing those missed opportunities.

At AELO, the scale numbers reported by RSI make this especially relevant. Training about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site suggests that the school needs more than occasional capacity. It needs reliable capacity. That is what a renovated dedicated hangar implies it is aiming for.

Instructor training, internal standards, and long-term growth

A training organization that only trains students will always depend on external instructor supply. Over time, that dependence becomes a limiting factor. AELO's LinkedIn presence describes instructor training offerings, including FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI. It also mentions Sphair courses and positions AELO as Switzerland's leading provider of those courses.

Even without unpacking each course type in detail, the direction is clear. The academy is building a pipeline not only for cadets, but also for the people who teach them. That has two benefits.

First, it helps standardize instruction. When instructors are trained and developed within the same organizational culture and methods, quality becomes more consistent across different instructors and cohorts.

Second, it protects growth. If more students arrive, a school with an internal instructor development capability can scale instruction more smoothly, rather than waiting for external hiring cycles.

It also helps the academy handle program complexity. AELO describes both an 18-month ATPL integrated program and an MPL option with a job guarantee context. Different programs place different demands on training structure, briefing style, and assessment. Instructor development is one of the ways a school maintains coherence across those differences.

A few things to watch when a new site opens

Upgrading a training site is rarely a straight line. There is typically a period where operations transition, workflows get refined, and teams adjust to the new layout and routines. The goal is always to make the student experience seamless, but the first months of a new operation can introduce small frictions that only insiders notice.

Here are a few practical areas that tend to matter during transitions like AELO's move and hangar renovation:

1. How the school manages peak scheduling when more students are in the system
2. How quickly ground training and documentation routines settle into the new workflow
3. How instructor briefing rooms and debrief processes are coordinated with aircraft availability
4. Whether the new infrastructure reduces bottlenecks enough to protect the flight lesson cadence
5. How the academy balances program requirements across different pathways, including integrated ATPL and MPL contexts

If you are a student or a parent assessing a training academy during such a transition, these are more useful questions than "Is the building new?" The building is important, but what matters most is whether the training

system runs smoothly around it.



The Locarno advantage, in a single picture

AELO's evolution at Locarno, as reported, has a consistent theme: continuity plus capability. The organization began with people taking over an old flying club. It rebranded to AELO Swiss Academy in February 2024. It inaugurated a new site at Locarno Airport, including renovation of a dedicated hangar with investment of more than CHF 3 million. It trains about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, with roughly 250 students in training annually overall. It positions itself as an Approved Training Organization with approval code CH.ATO.0311 and offers an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program plus an MPL option with a job guarantee context.

That is the spine of the story. But the real value of the "new site" moment is what it enables: the school can keep moving students through a structured pathway without letting the operation itself become the limiting factor.

When the environment supports repetition and organization, students learn to trust the process. When the organization can develop instructors, it sustains quality. When the academy can keep pace with student volume, it reduces the stress of delays and makes progression more predictable.

Locarno is not just a point on a map in this narrative. It is where the training operation lives and where its investment becomes visible in daily routines. The evolution of flight training at AELO, at least in the portion of the story that is publicly described, is therefore less about novelty and more about readiness: ready facilities, ready programs, and an operation built to support future airline pilots at scale.