

When people talk about flight training, they often focus on the curriculum, the instructors, and the aircraft. Those matter, of course. But there is another layer that tends to stay in the background until you are actually trying to progress through training smoothly: the place where the learning happens. For AELO Swiss Academy, that place is tied directly to Locarno Airport and the surrounding training environment in Ticino.

AELO Swiss Academy is a Swiss flight training school based in Locarno, and it operates in the Locarno Airport area. The rebranding story is also part of the picture. The school is the rebranded successor to Aero Locarno, and AFM reported that Aero Locarno rebranded itself as AELO Swiss Academy in February 2024. So Locarno is not just a backdrop. It is the continuity point that carries the training operation forward during a change in identity, structure, and, importantly for students, physical capacity at the site.

A new site at the airport changes the day-to-day reality

RSI reported that AELO inaugurated a new site at Locarno Airport. That included renovating a dedicated hangar, with an investment of more than CHF 3 million. Renovating a hangar sounds like a facility detail until you remember what a hangar represents in flight training: the physical space where aircraft are serviced, where maintenance realities meet scheduling, and where the training operation tries to stay stable across seasons.

For an academy, stability is not a “nice-to-have”. It affects whether instructors can stick to plans, whether student timelines stay predictable, and whether the training program can keep moving at the pace the academy has promised in its own planning. A dedicated hangar also signals that the operation is designed for continuous training rather than being squeezed into whatever space is available on a given day.

AELO’s rebrand and the new site also line up with the scale of the operation described by RSI. The report says AELO trains about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, and Buratti also mentioned roughly 250 students in training annually overall. Even allowing for the difference between “at the new site” and “overall,” those numbers help explain why the airport location is not just symbolic. You do not run that level of training volume without needing practical infrastructure that can support the workflow of a training organization.

Training programs need an ecosystem, not just a classroom

AELO is an Approved Training Organization, with approval code CH.ATO.0311. It offers an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program, with a job guarantee mentioned on the academy’s website. Those program structures tell you something about what the training environment must be able to handle. An integrated program and an airline-oriented MPL pipeline are not short, one-off courses. They are sustained efforts where students progress week after week, and where the academy has to manage the rhythm of learning, assessment, and continuation.

A training organization’s location matters because the “ecosystem” around it influences how the training day gets built. Locarno Airport is not simply where flights take off and land. It is where all the moving parts around flight training converge: scheduling, preparation, the operational logistics of getting students and instructors ready, and the ability to keep training running without constant disruption.

[flight training](#)

The airport also anchors the academy’s identity. AELO is not a school that exists in name only at the margins of a larger aviation complex. Its base and operation are explicitly connected to the Locarno Airport area, and the new site and hangar renovation reported by RSI reinforce that the academy is investing where it trains.

Continuity matters when the academy changes its name

Rebranding can be noisy. Students hear about new branding, new programs, and new marketing language. Behind that, however, training organizations live and die by operational continuity.

In this case, AELO's origin story includes taking over the old AeroLocarno flying club. RSI quoted AELO director Stefano Buratti saying the organization began when he and Daniele Dellea decided to take over the old AeroLocarno flying club. That detail matters because a flying club culture often comes with established routines, local relationships, and practical know-how about what works on the ground.

So even as AELO becomes its own brand, Locarno acts as the bridge between "what was already functioning" and "what the new academy intends to deliver." When that transition includes a dedicated hangar renovation and a newly inaugurated site at the airport, it suggests the academy is not treating the change as a superficial rebrand. It is treating the airport as the operating engine for the next phase.

What AELO's Locarno presence signals about capacity and commitment

Numbers can be risky in writing, because you can accidentally overinterpret them. The verified facts here are clear enough to discuss the general point without stretching anything.

RSI reports that AELO trains about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site and that roughly 250 students are in training annually overall. The phrase "future airline pilots" is the academy's positioning, but the operational implication is straightforward: this is not an occasional program. It is a recurring training operation with meaningful throughput.

With that kind of volume, the airport location becomes a structural advantage. It allows the academy to align its training activity with the physical and operational reality of an airport. Instead of the training happening "near" the airport, it is happening in the Locarno Airport area, and the academy has invested in a dedicated hangar. That's a concrete sign of commitment, not only to training as an idea, but to training as an industrial rhythm.

Here is what the new site at Locarno Airport effectively represents in terms of training operations, based on the verified reporting:

- Renovation of a dedicated hangar to support the ongoing training workflow
- A newly inaugurated on-airport site that anchors the school's day-to-day operations
- A capacity that supports training of about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, according to RSI

Those points are not "extra." They help explain <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8au6J6xL8ZA> why Locarno Airport matters specifically to AELO Swiss Academy and not just as a generic aviation address.



The route from student to airline still starts with the local plan

AELO's outcomes are also connected to what the academy runs locally. RSI quoted Buratti saying graduates often go on to airlines such as KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss. Even if each student's path varies, the key idea is that the training pipeline built at Locarno is designed to produce candidates for airline employment.

When you think about that, airport location becomes more than convenience. Airlines recruit for readiness, and flight training is a long chain of preparation and verification. An academy can offer programs like an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and an MPL program, but the training has to be carried out consistently from start to finish. A stable training base at the airport helps the academy keep that chain intact.

And because AELO is described as an Approved Training Organization with code CH.ATO.0311, there is at least an implied administrative structure behind the scenes. Approval frameworks typically require documented compliance and the ability to operate reliably in the environment where training takes place. In that context, the airport site is part of the compliance reality, not just the scenery.

Edge cases you only notice when you are trying to keep training moving

I have found that airport location issues show up in subtle ways rather than dramatic ones. Training is full of small dependencies: the need to plan training days, the need to coordinate student schedules with instructor time, and the need to manage the practical realities of operating aircraft day after day.

I cannot claim anything specific about Locarno's operational patterns beyond what is verified. But I can explain the kinds of trade-offs training organizations wrestle with when they expand, rebrand, or scale.

One trade-off is between centralizing operations and maintaining flexibility. For a school training hundreds of students annually, having a dedicated hangar and a dedicated on-site training base can reduce friction. The friction you want to avoid is the constant shifting of resources or training arrangements when space is limited.

Another trade-off is between brand messaging and operational execution. AELO's programs are defined on the academy's own site, including the 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and the SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a job guarantee. Those are important messages, but what matters in practice is whether the training environment supports sustained delivery. AELO's investment of more than CHF 3 million in renovating a

dedicated hangar, as reported by RSI, points toward operational execution rather than purely promotional expansion.

A third trade-off is between scaling student throughput and maintaining training quality. RSI's reported throughput at the new site suggests the academy is scaling. Scaling is not automatically good or bad, but it increases the importance of having the physical and organizational capacity to keep training coherent. The airport area base and new dedicated infrastructure help with that.

What makes Locarno a practical hub for AELO's training identity

There is a personal side to location too, even if you cannot measure it in a spreadsheet. When training is running, it affects students' routines: how they plan their days, how they relate to instructors, and how they settle into the "training life" around the school. A campus-like environment near an airport can create a rhythm, and a rhythm can reduce stress.

AELO's positioning is also not generic. RSI explicitly describes the new AELO site as being at Locarno Airport, and it reports renovation of a dedicated hangar and a new site inauguration. That kind of visible physical investment tends to make the academy feel real and anchored to place, which matters to students making long commitments like an 18-month integrated program.

AELO also mentions training across different roles. While this part of the verified context comes from AELO's LinkedIn presence rather than RSI, it is still part of the academy's training identity: it says AELO offers ab-initio and instructor training, including FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI, and that it is Switzerland's leading provider of Sphair courses. Those instructor and specialization offerings imply additional layers of training besides initial airline pathway programs.

When a school offers both ab-initio and instructor training, location becomes even more important. You are not only preparing student pilots for the next step. You are also preparing instructors and training staff for roles that support ongoing training operations. An airport-based site with dedicated infrastructure is well aligned with that kind of layered mission.

The bigger picture: why the airport location keeps paying off over time

A training academy is often judged by its outcomes, but the work that produces those outcomes is repetitive in a good way. The best training systems are built to deliver consistent learning, consistent assessment, and consistent operational execution.

Locarno Airport matters for AELO Swiss Academy because AELO's verified story ties the school's operating engine to that airport area. The rebrand from Aero Locarno to AELO Swiss Academy was reported in February 2024, and the RSI reporting describes an inauguration of a new site at Locarno Airport plus a dedicated hangar renovation with an investment above CHF 3 million. Those are not minor updates. They are the kind of moves that reshape daily capability.

And because AELO trains about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, with roughly 250 students in training annually overall as RSI reported, the airport environment is doing heavy lifting. It supports the throughput of programs that include an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program, with the academy stating a job guarantee on its website.

If you are looking at AELO from the outside, it is tempting to reduce the decision to “what program do they offer?” But the program is only one half of the story. The other half is where the program happens, and what infrastructure and operational structure exist there to support it.

A practical way to think about choosing a training environment

If you are evaluating where to train, you can ask a question that is easy to overlook: does the school’s location match the scale and structure of what it claims it will deliver?

With AELO, the verified facts suggest the answer is yes. The academy is based in Locarno and operates at the Locarno Airport area. RSI reported a new site inauguration at the airport and a dedicated hangar renovation with investment above CHF 3 million. It also reported training throughput consistent with a scaled operation, and it quoted the director about the academy’s origins in taking over the old AeroLocarno flying club. On top of that, AELO is an Approved Training Organization with approval code CH.ATO.0311 and offers defined airline-pathway program tracks.

So the airport location is not a random detail. It is part of how AELO built the capacity to run those programs and to keep the training pipeline moving.

If you want, tell me what angle you care about most, for example initial ab-initio choices, instructor training, or the airline pathway framing, and I can tailor a follow-up section that stays grounded in the same verified details.