

If you spend any time around flight training, you quickly learn that “how many students” is only half the story. The other half is how those students move through the program, what keeps the flow steady, and what causes bottlenecks when the calendar gets busy.

With AELO Swiss Academy, there is also an extra layer of context: the school is the rebranded successor to Aero Locarno, and it recently shifted into a renovated setup at Locarno Airport. That matters, because capacity, staffing, and scheduling decisions are never abstract. They show up in the day-to-day student experience, in how quickly people progress, and in how consistently the program can run year after year.



Below is a practical way to understand AELO’s training scale and student flow, grounded in the figures that have been publicly reported, plus the operational logic that typically sits behind them.

The setting: Locarno Airport and a new operational home

AELO Swiss Academy is based in Locarno, in Ticino, Switzerland, operating around Locarno Airport. That’s not a minor detail. For flight schools, the airport environment is part of the product. The location affects the pace of training, the scheduling possibilities, and how reliably training flights can be slotted into the week.

In the recent reporting about AELO, the school is described as having inaugurated a new site at Locarno Airport. The operation included renovating a dedicated hangar, with an investment reported as more than CHF 3 million. When a school invests at this scale, it is usually because it expects to sustain training operations at a meaningful volume, and it wants facilities that match the workflow of both aircraft and instructors.

AELO is also tied to a rebranding timeline. Aero Locarno rebranded itself as AELO Swiss Academy in February 2024. So if you are trying to understand “training right now,” it helps to separate what the academy claims about its programs and approvals from what existed under the former identity, while remembering that the underlying training organization and people may have continuity even when branding changes.

Annual training numbers: the scale you can actually picture

One of the most useful data points reported is the number of future airline pilots trained annually. At the new site in Locarno, AELO is described as training about 200 future airline pilots per year.

There is also a wider annual number that includes overall training activity, not only the new-site count. AELO director Stefano Buratti is reported as saying roughly 250 students are in training annually overall.

Those two figures can feel slightly conflicting until you think in terms of scope. “About 200 per year at the new site” suggests that the majority of core training might be centered there, while “roughly 250 students in training annually overall” implies additional training activity beyond that specific subset. It could be other program lines, or it could simply mean the total enrolled across a broader picture than the new-site operations. The reporting does not spell out the breakdown, so the careful interpretation is: the academy’s annual throughput is on the order of a couple hundred students, with about one fifth more overall than the new-site figure.

Either way, these are not “small cohort” numbers. Training at that volume has a specific rhythm. It means the academy must keep schedules tight, maintain a predictable pipeline of lesson blocks, and manage aircraft and instructors like a system rather than as a collection of independent flights.

What “in training annually” really means for student flow

When someone says “roughly 250 students are in training annually overall,” they are usually describing an active enrollment state rather than a graduation number. Put differently, students can be “in training” for months at a time, so the number in training at any given period is tied to both intake and duration.

That is why program length matters. AELO’s website lists an 18-month ATPL integrated program. It also lists a **aelo swiss academy** SkyAlps Airlines MPL program with a job guarantee. From a student-flow perspective, an 18-month program creates a long tail. Even if intake changes, the academy’s total “in training” count won’t jump overnight, because students already inside the system keep progressing through the pipeline.



So when you look at annual numbers, it helps to think of three layers:

1. Intake (how many start within a time window).
2. Residency time (how long students typically spend in the system).
3. Active population (how many are still progressing during that year).

A program duration like 18 months pushes the active population up, because you are always carrying multiple “waves” of students at different stages.

Programs that shape the pipeline

AELO is described as an Approved Training Organization, with an approval code listed as CH.ATO.0311. The approved status and a listed code matter operationally because it signals that the academy is operating within a defined regulatory framework for training delivery.

Program-wise, AELO's website lists at least two major pathways: an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a job guarantee. Those program formats matter for how student flow behaves, even if the details of each step are not spelled out in the reporting you have here.

It also helps to look at training beyond "cadet airline pipeline." AELO's LinkedIn presence describes ab-initio and instructor training, including FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI. LinkedIn also says AELO is Switzerland's leading provider of Sphair courses.

I am careful with interpretation here, because "leading provider" is a promotional claim. What you can safely infer from the list of instructor course types is that the academy is not only sending students to airlines, it is also training instructors and keeping capability in-house. That tends to stabilize the workforce side of training, and it influences how reliably the academy can staff practical training and check flights.

Here is a simple way to visualize the program mix as it relates to flow:

- Some parts of the pipeline are centered on getting future airline pilots through a structured pathway.
- Other parts of the pipeline are centered on producing instructors and specialist training capability.

That division matters because instructor and specialist training often consumes capacity that might otherwise be used purely for ab-initio or ATPL training flights. At the same time, it can protect the ab-initio pipeline by ensuring the academy can staff classes without relying entirely on outside instructors.

A quick map of the main AELO offerings mentioned publicly

| Program / training area mentioned | What the public information says | |---|---| | ATPL Integrated Program | 18-month program listed by AELO | | SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program | Listed with a job guarantee | | Approved Training Organization | Approval code listed as CH.ATO.0311 | | Instructor training | Ab-initio and instructor training including FI, CRI, STI, IRI, MCCI | | Sphair courses | Claim that AELO is Switzerland's leading provider |

How annual numbers connect to the 18-month timeline

Let's ground the thinking with the 18-month ATPL integrated program. An 18-month program does not mean every student experiences the exact same timeline, but it does mean the academy has a standard "track" length.

Now take the reported scale: about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, and roughly 250 students in training annually overall.

A school with an 18-month integrated program typically has multiple cohorts running simultaneously. Even without knowing exact intake numbers, you can reason about the active population.

If a program is 18 months long, then at steady state, the number of students in training at any given time is roughly proportional to intake per month times 18. Over a year, that means you could easily have two cohorts overlapping, plus partial overlap depending on when intakes happen.

So when you see "roughly 250 students in training annually," it is consistent with a structure where multiple intake groups are moving through different phases of training at the same time. It also implies the academy has designed scheduling to keep the "middle" phases from starving because the earlier phases took too long.

That is the practical challenge at any flight school: small delays compound. One missing check flight day, one aircraft maintenance event that slips, one weather-heavy week, and you feel it later in the schedule. At higher throughput, the system needs buffers that do not waste resources, but also do not stall too many students at once.

AELO's investment in a renovated dedicated hangar at the new site points in the direction of building those operational buffers, because hangar availability is one of the levers you control directly.

Where student flow can change fast, even when the numbers look stable

Public numbers tend to flatten the reality of student experience. "About 200 pilots per year" and "roughly 250 students in training annually" are useful for understanding scale, but they do not reveal where students cluster in the program.

Student flow is often uneven across time. Early phases might have different constraints than later phases. For example, the practical flight components, and the check and completion activities, tend to be the places where demand and availability collide.

Even without going beyond the verified information, you can still map the general pattern that schools face:

- Some stages are more instructor-driven (classroom briefings and supervision).
- Some stages are more aircraft-driven (flight hours, scheduling windows).
- Some stages are more weather-driven (day-of-flight variability).
- Some stages are more assessment-driven (check requirements and readiness).

This is why active "in training" numbers can remain fairly stable even while student satisfaction can swing. A system can stay at throughput level while still creating uneven delays for specific cohorts.

So if you are trying to predict how your timeline might feel, annual throughput numbers are a starting point, not a guarantee. The most dependable way to understand your personal flow is to focus on where you will enter the pipeline and what the program's cadence looks like for that cohort.

Career outcomes: what the academy says graduates go on to

Another point that helps interpret student flow is the destination story. AELO director Stefano Buratti is reported as saying that graduates often go on to airlines such as KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss.

That list gives you a reality check: the school is not training for a single end employer. It is training for the broader European airline environment, which again implies that the academy's pipeline is built to match common industry expectations around integrated or MPL-style development.

At the same time, the word "often" matters. It suggests the academy does not guarantee a single universal outcome for every student. That is consistent with what you would expect from a real training environment: individual performance, timing, and selection cycles at airlines can all shift.

The SkyAlps MPL program is listed with a job guarantee, at least per AELO's own website. A "job guarantee" claim typically raises expectations, but because the reporting here does not describe the exact conditions, the safest interpretation is: AELO publicly markets a job guarantee associated with that program, and prospective students should read the details carefully during application and enrollment.

Training at scale needs more than aircraft and schedules

When you hear “roughly 250 students in training annually,” it is tempting to reduce the operation to flight hours. In practice, training at this scale is also about continuity of instruction quality and the ability to staff the program as cohorts progress.

This is one reason instructor training categories like FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI matter. If a school builds the instructor pipeline internally, it is less exposed to external staffing shortages. It can also standardize teaching methods across cohorts.

It is also why specialized course offerings, like the Sphair courses mentioned on AELO’s LinkedIn, can contribute to overall capability. Even if you are not personally taking a Sphair course, a school’s ability to run such programs often correlates with having dedicated training expertise and internal processes.

None of that means everything runs smoothly all the time. It just means the academy has reason to invest in people and systems, not only in aircraft.

Practical ways to think about “annual throughput” and “your position”

If you are considering a pathway at AELO or you are comparing training schools, the annual number is helpful, but you still need a method to translate it into expectations.

Here is a small mental checklist I’ve used when looking at any flight training academy’s output and student flow. I am keeping it light because the details vary by country, program type, and the exact stage you would join.

- Ask what portion of training is centered at the Locarno Airport site versus other activities, since “new site” and “overall” numbers can differ.
- Anchor your expectations to the program duration, like the 18-month ATPL integrated program, because time-in-system drives how many students are active at once.
- Separate “trained per year” from “in training annually,” because active enrollment and graduation cadence do not match perfectly.
- Confirm how instructor and specialist training capacity (FI, CRI, STI, IRI, MCCI, plus any Sphair activity) could affect scheduling at your stage.
- Treat marketing outcomes like “job guarantee” as a starting claim and focus on the conditions during enrollment discussions.

What the AELO numbers suggest about capacity planning

Even with limited public detail, the combination of facts points to a capacity planning approach that aims for stable flow.

AELO’s new site included renovation of a dedicated hangar with an investment reported as more than CHF 3 million. That suggests a commitment to sustained operations. Then, the reported yearly student totals, about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site and roughly 250 students in training annually overall, imply the academy is already running multiple parallel training streams or at least carrying enough active cohorts to maintain those totals.

The presence of an Approved Training Organization status and an approval code adds another layer. Approved training organizations typically operate with documentation, training syllabi, and ongoing compliance

mechanisms. That framework tends to make scheduling more predictable compared with an ad hoc setup.

In human terms, what you want is an operation where a student is not constantly renegotiating the timetable because the underlying system cannot keep pace. You do not need perfection to deliver a good outcome, but you do need repeatability.

The trade-offs hidden behind “about” and “roughly”

One thing the figures here do not give you is precision. “About 200” and “roughly 250” are intentionally approximate. In real training, that approximation is often the difference between:

- exact intake dates that slip by weeks,
- variations in time between stages,
- and the reality that training completion can bunch up or spread out depending on operational conditions.

So if you are expecting a calendar that behaves like a factory line, flight training will disappoint you a little. Even with a well-run academy, weather, aircraft availability, and assessment scheduling can create variability.

But the approximation also suggests something reassuring: despite variation, the academy’s overall throughput stays within a predictable band. If it were chaotic, you would see much wider swings in the reported totals from year to year.

A realistic mental picture of “student flow” at AELO

Putting the verified facts together, you can picture AELO’s student flow as a system that carries multiple cohorts through an 18-month ATPL integrated pathway, alongside an MPL program that AELO describes as a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a job guarantee.

The academy is also training instructors and running other specialized training offerings, including Sphair courses. That means the academy is not solely “consuming” capacity, it is also regenerating capacity by developing instructors who can keep the practical parts running.



So student flow is not just students moving through aircraft hours. It is a set of relationships: aircraft scheduling, instructor staffing, training supervision, and assessment readiness, all operating within the approved training organization framework (as indicated by the listed approval code).

At the scale implied by the yearly figures, those relationships have to be managed as a continuous process.

What to ask if you want a personal timeline estimate

If you're talking to AELO about joining the training, you will get the most useful clarity by asking questions that connect your stage to the system's cadence, without demanding a false promise.

Since the public information here does not include step-by-step scheduling details, the most defensible approach is to ask about how they plan around variability. For example:

- How do they handle stage-to-stage timing when aircraft availability shifts?
- What does "18-month integrated" look like for different entry points and cohort starts?
- How do instructor training and ab-initio plus instructor track scheduling affect practical availability during your phase?
- For the SkyAlps MPL Program, what are the operational requirements behind the job guarantee claim?

Those questions are good because they force a discussion about process rather than just outcomes.

And that is what "understanding student flow" ultimately means: not memorizing numbers, but understanding how the system manages constraints while keeping cohorts moving.

The bottom line from the numbers we do have

AELO Swiss Academy is operating in Locarno, around Locarno Airport, and it has invested in a renovated dedicated hangar at a new site, with investment reported as more than CHF 3 million. The academy rebranded from Aero Locarno in February 2024.

Public reporting describes training about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, and roughly 250 students in training annually overall. Those figures are consistent with a multi-cohort, pipeline-driven operation, especially given that AELO lists an 18-month ATPL integrated program.

The academy also positions itself as an Approved Training Organization with approval code CH.ATO.0311, and it offers an 18-month ATPL integrated program plus a SkyAlps Airlines MPL program with a job guarantee. Beyond that, it provides instructor training categories including FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI, and it markets itself as Switzerland's leading provider of Sphair courses.

Taken together, the annual throughput and the program structure suggest an operation built to keep cohorts moving steadily through a long training timeline, while maintaining instructor capability to sustain the flow. The exact experience for any individual student still depends on timing, readiness, and operational variability, but the overall scale and the training durations give you a solid foundation for expectations.

If you want, tell me what pathway you are considering (ATPL integrated or SkyAlps MPL) and roughly when you would aim to start. I can map a more tailored "where you likely sit in the flow" explanation using only the program durations and the annual training numbers available here.