

If you followed European flight training at all through 2023, you probably noticed how brands and training setups were starting to feel less like standalone flying clubs and more like full pipeline academies. In February 2024, that story got a clean, local version in Ticino: Aero Locarno rebranded itself as **AELO Swiss Academy**. The name change was real, but what makes the 2024 shift worth talking about is that it came with a tangible move, a renewed training identity, and a clearer offer for people who are trying to map their way into airline employment.

AELO is based in **Locarno, Ticino**, operating around **Locarno Airport**. What changed in 2024 can be understood in layers: the rebrand, the new physical site and hangar work, and the training structure that AELO publicly describes, including program types and approvals. Below is a practical look at those changes, what they likely mean for applicants, and the trade-offs worth thinking through.

The rebrand itself: Aero Locarno becomes AELO Swiss Academy

The headline change in 2024 is simple: **Aero Locarno rebranded itself as AELO Swiss Academy in February 2024**. That fact matters because rebrands are not just marketing. In training environments, a new identity often signals that an organization is consolidating its processes, aligning its facilities to its programs, and communicating with a wider group of prospective students and partners.

AELO is described as a successor to Aero Locarno, and the transition is tied to leadership continuity. RSI reported that AELO director **Stefano Buratti** said the organization began when he and **Daniele Dellea** decided to take over the old AeroLocarno flying club. In other words, this is not a company that appeared out of thin air. The roots were local, and the 2024 rebrand looks like a formalization of that evolution.

A useful way to think about the rebrand is this: as soon as you move from being “a place people fly” to being “an academy that trains future airline pilots,” your customers start comparing you more like a supplier. They look for approvals, program lengths, and partner pathways. In training, those are the things that reduce uncertainty.

The new site at Locarno Airport, and why it matters more than a logo

Rebranding alone can be quick. Facility changes take longer, and they reveal priorities. In 2024, RSI reported that **AELO inaugurated a new site at Locarno Airport**, including the renovation of a **dedicated hangar**. The investment was reported as **more than CHF 3 million**.

That kind of figure does not prove quality by itself, but it does tell you where the organization is putting weight. A dedicated hangar renovation is especially meaningful in flight training because it touches the practical side of operations: aircraft handling, readiness, storage, and the day-to-day friction between “we trained today” and “we trained efficiently.”

When you talk to people who have been through multiple training locations, you hear the same underlying theme: the experience is shaped as much by logistics as by curriculum. Hangar space, the ability to keep operations organized, and the physical layout of a training base can reduce the amount of time students lose to avoidable bottlenecks. It also impacts how instructors and planners schedule lessons. Even if two academies offer similar program labels, the real differences often show up on busy weeks.

Capacity signals: how many students the new site supports

Another concrete change in 2024 is the way AELO describes its scale at the new location. RSI reported that AELO trains **about 200 future airline pilots per year** at the new site, and that roughly **250 students** are in training

annually overall.

Those numbers are useful for applicants in a very down-to-earth way. Training pipelines live or die by throughput and supervision. A larger training flow can mean more instructors, more scheduling flexibility, and more aircraft utilization. It can also mean higher scheduling pressure during peak periods.

With 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, AELO is not positioning itself as an ultra-small, boutique operation. It reads more like an academy designed to run a steady volume. For students, that can translate to consistent training rhythms if the operation is well managed. For instructors and management, it translates to a stronger need for standardized procedures and reliable planning.

What AELO is approved to do

In a training world that is heavy on terminology, approvals matter because they frame what the organization is authorized to provide. AELO's website says the academy is an **Approved Training Organization**, listing approval code **CH.ATO.0311**.

That is the kind of detail that prospective students often look for when comparing schools. It doesn't replace due diligence, but it does give you an anchor: you can verify that the training provider sits inside the regulatory structure for approved training activities.

When a school goes through a rebrand, one fear applicants sometimes have is that a new name might imply a new legal entity or unclear continuity. An approval code like this can help you check that continuity and clarity.

Programs on offer in 2024: ATPL Integrated and MPL with SkyAlps

What changed in 2024 is not just where AELO trains, but how it describes the training routes it offers.

AELO's website says it offers an **18-month ATPL Integrated Program**. It also lists a **SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program** with a **job guarantee**.

That combination is important because it signals that AELO is aiming at both ends of the prospective student spectrum:

- Some people want the most straightforward path toward ATPL through an integrated approach and can accommodate an 18-month structure as stated publicly.
- Others are specifically looking for an airline-aligned route and are drawn to an MPL-style pathway tied to SkyAlps, at least as described by the academy's marketing materials.

Now, here is where good judgment comes in. A job guarantee statement is exactly the sort of phrase that people should treat carefully and verify in detail. "Guarantee" can mean different things in training agreements depending on conditions, eligibility, and what happens if a candidate does not meet performance or medical requirements. I cannot fill those blanks from the information provided here, so the responsible approach is to ask what the guarantee depends on, how it is structured contractually, and what happens outside the ideal scenario.

But even before you debate the guarantee wording, the existence of these two named programs tells you AELO in 2024 is positioning itself as a pipeline school with airline orientation, not only a general flight training provider.



Where graduates go: airline outcomes referenced by AELO leadership

RSI reported that AELO director Stefano Buratti said graduates often go on to airlines such as **KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss.**

That statement gives applicants a realistic sense of destination brands that people connect to EU and Swiss aviation careers. It also sets expectations about the standard of preparation required for those outcomes. Without turning it into hype, you can take it as a directional signal: AELO leadership is thinking in airline terms and talking about airline destinations, not just certificates.

Outcomes are always more complicated than any single quote, and they vary by student circumstances. Still, when a school names multiple carriers publicly, it suggests they want prospective students to imagine their own path leaving the academy and stepping into a larger airline world.

Training identity: from flying club roots to an academy with course specialization

AELO's LinkedIn presence adds another layer to what changed in 2024. It says the organization provides **ab-initio and instructor training**, including training roles such as **FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI**. It also states that AELO is **Switzerland's leading provider of Sphair courses.**

A few caveats are worth keeping in mind. "Leading provider" is a marketing-style claim, not a regulator's classification. But the useful part here is the direction: AELO is not only training first-time students to airline tracks, it is also training instructors and offering specialized type of courses (Sphair) aimed at the training ecosystem.

When a company expands into instructor training and specialized courses, it usually means it is investing in standardization and in teaching capability beyond student flying. That can improve overall internal quality because the school builds a community of instructors who follow defined methods.

A clearer picture of "what changed" for applicants

If you are standing where a lot of applicants stand, the practical question is not "what name is on the gate." It is "what should I expect to feel different in the process?"

Based on the verified changes in 2024, here are the main shifts that are easiest to connect to applicant experience:

- 1) **A stronger airline-focused identity.** The rebrand to AELO Swiss Academy and the public mention of training routes like ATPL integrated and the SkyAlps MPL pathway point to a more explicit career pipeline. If you are choosing between schools, a clearer identity helps you compare your personal plan against the school's plan.
- 2) **More dedicated infrastructure.** A renovated dedicated hangar and a new site inauguration at Locarno Airport implies that the school is investing in the operational side that students feel as consistency and organization.
- 3) **A more defined training footprint in numbers.** With about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site and roughly 250 students in training annually overall, AELO suggests it can run at scale. That can be a positive if the operation stays disciplined, but you should still ask how scheduling works when demand spikes.
- 4) **More explicit course and training-role offerings.** The public list of instructor training roles and the claim around Sphair courses suggests AELO is building out internal training capability and course variety, which can affect how training quality is maintained across different tracks.

The trade-offs to watch when a school grows or formalizes

A relaxed, realistic view of changes in 2024 has to include trade-offs. Growth and formalization can create benefits, but they also introduce edge cases that applicants should ask about rather than hope for.

At [flight training](#) larger academies, for example, the student experience can be more standardized, which is good. But you might have fewer chances to shape your schedule around preferences, especially if the school runs many cohorts and aims to keep utilization high. In smaller setups, students sometimes get more personalized flexibility, at the cost of fewer training slots and less specialization.

With that in mind, the rebrand and the new site investment raise a reasonable question: how does AELO manage the pace so students do not feel like they are being processed? When training capacity grows to hundreds of students annually, maintaining a calm, supportive learning environment depends on instructor quality, feedback cadence, [aelo](#) and internal communication.

I cannot tell you how AELO executes on that day-to-day from the provided facts. What I can say is that the growth signals are real, and they deserve the kinds of questions that keep you in control of your own expectations.

Questions worth asking before you commit (2024 edition)

Here are a few high-value questions that map directly to the changes AELO made public in 2024. They are simple, but they often uncover the real operational truth behind the glossy story.

- What does the ATPL Integrated 18-month timeline include, and what situations can extend it?
- For the SkyAlps MPL program, what exactly is meant by "job guarantee," and what conditions must be met?
- With about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site, how does scheduling flexibility work for weather and operational delays?
- What support is provided for instructor training and advanced roles like FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI, if you are also looking at a longer career in training?

If you ask questions like these, you will quickly learn whether the academy's growth translates into clarity for students, or whether it creates confusion that you then have to fight your way through.

What the new hangar investment changes in lived training terms

A dedicated hangar renovation sounds like a facilities detail, but it affects everyday life in ways people tend to notice only after they have trained somewhere with poor infrastructure.

Think about your first week: orientation, aircraft briefings, ground time, and the constant balancing act between weather, aircraft availability, and instructor time. When you are working from a well-organized dedicated hangar, you often get fewer small disruptions that add up. Those disruptions can be minor in isolation, but training is cumulative. A small delay here and there can distort the pace you were expecting, especially if you are trying to keep a consistent study schedule alongside flying.

Also, a dedicated hangar suggests the academy cares about separating training aircraft operations from general airport clutter. That can reduce uncertainty around aircraft status, cleaning and maintenance coordination, and readiness checks. Again, I cannot claim how AELO has implemented these operational routines, but a renovated, dedicated hangar is the kind of investment that usually targets exactly those pain points.

The numbers behind “training throughput” and what they imply

“About 200 future airline pilots per year” is not just trivia. Throughput affects everything from aircraft planning to instructor deployment.

At a practical level, a school with consistent throughput needs to run more predictably. Students benefit when training milestones are paced so you can plan your own study and progression. You also want to know whether a cohort runs continuously through the year or if there are peaks that affect scheduling.

Because AELO reports about 250 students in training annually overall, the organization is not operating as a single tight class. It likely runs overlapping processes. That can be good because it helps prevent long idle stretches. It can also mean that when something unexpected happens, the knock-on effects can be complex. A reliable academy will have contingency routines for those moments.

If you are evaluating 2024 changes versus earlier years, ask how the new site and rebrand affected how they plan training flows across the year. The physical changes are concrete, but the operational planning is where students actually feel it.

A note on timelines and claims you should verify directly

AELO’s website includes the stated program details, including the **18-month ATPL Integrated Program** and the **SkyAlps MPL program with a job guarantee**. The organization also lists approval code **CH.ATO.0311**, and the LinkedIn page describes instructor training roles and its Sphair course position.

Separately, AELO’s website says it was established in Switzerland in 1985, but the provided context warns that this is a self-published claim and should be treated cautiously unless independently verified. That does not mean the claim is false, but it does mean you should not build your decision solely on a single origin year printed by the organization.

When you are choosing a training provider, it is better to anchor your decision in concrete, verifiable details like the approval code, the structure of the program, what is included in timelines, and how the academy handles the real constraints of aviation training like weather and aircraft availability.

Why 2024 feels like a pivot year, not just a name change

Putting the verified facts together, 2024 looks like a pivot year for AELO. The rebrand in February 2024 marks a shift in public identity from Aero Locarno to AELO Swiss Academy. The inauguration of a new site at Locarno Airport and renovation of a dedicated hangar with investment of more than CHF 3 million signals commitment to building a training environment, not only maintaining one.

At the same time, AELO communicates its training offer in a more structured way: an Approved Training Organization with code CH.ATO.0311, an 18-month ATPL integrated program, and a SkyAlps MPL program described with a job guarantee. RSI's reporting about throughput, including training around 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site and about 250 students annually overall, shows the academy is ready to run meaningful volume. And leadership comments about graduates reaching airlines such as KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss add a recognizable airline-facing narrative.

For students, that combination changes the decision-making process. You are not only asking where you will train. You are asking how the academy is engineered to deliver a career pathway at scale, with facilities that support consistent operations and programs that connect to airline structures.

If you are comparing "then" and "now," 2024 is the year where the academy stopped feeling like a local name and started presenting itself like a regional airline pipeline with the infrastructure to match.

What to do if you are considering AELO right now

Since the real difference is operational and programmatic, your best next step is to align your personal requirements with the public structure AELO presents.

If you want, tell me what route you are considering, ATPL integrated versus MPL, and what kind of timeline you are working toward. I can help you translate AELO's public 2024 information into the specific questions to ask during an inquiry so you get clarity on schedule, conditions, and what "guarantee" would mean in practice.