If you're trying to estimate how many airline-ready pilots AELO Swiss Academy produces in a year, the cleanest starting point is how the academy describes its training throughput in connection with its Locarno Airport operations.

From recent reporting, AELO trains about **200 future airline pilots per year** at its new site in Locarno. In the same context, the academy director, Stefano Buratti, also gave a broader annual picture: **roughly 250 students are in training annually overall**.

So the short answer is not a single magic number. It depends on whether you mean the capacity at the new Locarno site specifically, or the full annual training population across the academy's overall operations.

Below, I'll unpack what those numbers likely mean in practical terms, what you can and cannot infer from them, and how the training mix fits into the bigger picture of pilot development.

The numbers AELO associates with yearly training

The reporting around AELO's setup is tightly tied to the Locarno Airport area and the academy's newly inaugurated site. The key figures are:

- **About 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site** in Locarno.

- **Roughly 250 students in training annually overall**, as described by AELO director Stefano Buratti.

Those two statements are easy to read as either "two separate counts" or "one count plus a bit more," and in real-world training operations, both interpretations can be reasonable. A single site can be responsible for most of the throughput, while other parts of the operation still add students year-round, such as class intakes, scheduling differences, or parallel programs.

What matters is that both numbers come from the same reporting context and are attributed directly to the academy's leadership framing. If you're doing a capacity estimate, you can treat **200 per year** as the best "at the Locarno site" figure, and **250 per year** as the broader "students under training overall annually" figure.

Why the yearly figure can look different depending on how it's counted

People often ask "how many pilots does a school train each year" as if training output is like a factory line. In flight training, it's more fluid. Here are the main reasons yearly numbers can shift depending on the way they're described.

First, the phrase "future airline pilots" is not always the same thing as "students in training." Some students may be in early stages of training that do not yet map cleanly to an "airline pilot" label at the time you count them. Others may be in phases that are clearly part of a career path but still not equal to final graduation.

Second, schools can scale in ways that are less visible than people expect. A site can be "new" and still not be the only place training happens. Even if most training is concentrated, intakes can be staggered, aircraft availability can influence class schedules, and training blocks can overlap months in ways that make "per calendar year" totals look different than "per cohort."

Third, AELO's identity changed recently. The school is the rebranded successor to Aero Locarno, with Aero Locarno reportedly rebranding to AELO Swiss Academy in **Aelo Swiss** February 2024. Rebranding often comes with new facilities, new marketing, and sometimes program restructuring. When a new site opens, capacity claims may refer specifically to that site while leadership statements may refer to the full organization's training activity.

So when you see two different numbers, it's not necessarily a contradiction. It can be a matter of the counting lens: **site throughput** versus **overall training population**.

Where AELO operates, and why that matters for capacity

AELO Swiss Academy is a Swiss flight-training school based in Locarno, in Ticino, Switzerland, operating at or around **Locarno Airport**. Reporting also notes that 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**.

That kind of infrastructure detail matters because it's the physical foundation for how many training activities can be supported at once. Even without going into aircraft counts or training schedules, a dedicated hangar renovation is the sort of move that usually enables more consistent operations, smoother logistics, and better resilience when training calendars get busy.

In that same local context, the "about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site" figure fits naturally. If the site is newly set up to support training, it's reasonable that reporting would tie throughput claims to that specific site rather than to the academy's historical footprint.

How AELO frames its training programs

To understand what "250 students annually overall" might include, it helps to look at the types of programs the academy says it offers.

AELO's website describes the academy as an **Approved Training Organization**, listing approval code **CH.ATO.0311**. It also indicates that AELO offers an **18-month ATPL Integrated Program** and a **SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program**, with a job guarantee claim associated with that MPL program.

Separately, AELO's LinkedIn presence indicates instructor training offerings, including FI (Flight Instructor), CRI (Class Rating Instructor), STI (Skill Training Instructor), IRI (Integrated Rating Instructor), and MCCI (Multi Crew Cooperation Instructor). It also states that AELO is Switzerland's leading provider of Sphair courses, in its own positioning.

Those program types are helpful for interpreting the yearly numbers because different program tracks can inflate "students in training" figures in ways that may not line up with "future airline pilots" output.

For example, instructor training is still aviation training, but it does not always map to the same kind of "airline pilot per year" outcome as an integrated student career path. Meanwhile, integrated airline pathways like ATPL and MPL can be designed with different structures and durations, and AELO's own program length statement for the ATPL integrated program gives you a clue about how long a cohort might occupy training time.

The takeaway is that AELO's yearly counts depend on what you choose to label as "pilots" versus "students." Leadership might talk about "future airline pilots" in one breath and about "students in training annually overall" in another, simply because those are two different ways of summarizing the pipeline.

So, how many pilots does AELO train each year?

With the verified figures in hand, the most defensible answer is:

- **About 200 future airline pilots per year** at the new Locarno site.
- **Roughly 250 students in training annually overall** across AELO's operations.

If your goal is to estimate how many people AELO can feed into airline pathways from the Locarno site year to year, the "200 per year" figure is the most direct match.

If your goal is to understand the academy's annual training load in terms of people actively going through training blocks, then "roughly 250 students in training annually overall" is the better framing.

In day-to-day terms, that difference is exactly what you'd expect from a training organization that has multiple program types and multiple phases running at once. A school might have a pipeline that produces airline-bound graduates while also supporting other categories of students, including instruction-related training that keeps a portion of the training capacity busy even when those trainees are not being counted as "future airline pilots" in the narrow sense.

What those numbers imply about training throughput (without pretending we know the internals)

It's tempting to convert "250 students in training annually" into a precise number of instructors, aircraft, or training slots. But there are not enough verified details here to do that safely, and it would be easy to invent assumptions.

What you can say responsibly is more general: a figure like 250 students in training annually signals that AELO's operations are large enough to keep multiple training phases running in parallel. Pilot training is not a single-step event, and even if we focus only on the airline-track programs AELO advertises, the training duration and scheduling mean that "students in training" will include multiple cohort stages at any given time.

Meanwhile, "about 200 future airline pilots per year at the new site" suggests that the Locarno site alone is handling a substantial share of the airline pipeline.

If you've ever watched how training capacity behaves, you know the pattern. Early training phases and later skill-building phases do not compress arbitrarily without consequences. Aircraft availability, instructor availability, and weather impacts can all introduce variability. Yet reporting still gives a stable, rounded throughput figure, which usually indicates that the academy has reached a level of operational consistency where leadership feels comfortable quoting yearly totals.

The rebrand and the new site: why February 2024 matters for this question

AELO is not just a new brand name with the same underlying operation. Reporting notes that **Aero Locarno rebranded itself as AELO Swiss Academy in February 2024**. Around the same time frame, RSI reported that AELO inaugurated a new site at Locarno Airport and renovated a dedicated hangar with an investment of more than CHF 3 million.

Those details matter because when you ask "how many pilots does AELO train each year," you might be implicitly asking about current capacity, not legacy capacity under the Aero Locarno brand.

The fact that the "about 200 future airline pilots per year" figure is tied to the new site in Locarno makes it highly relevant to your question. It's effectively the present-tense snapshot of throughput, not a retroactive estimate from the time before the rebrand and site renovation.

A realistic way to use these numbers

If you're evaluating AELO as part of an airline pilot pipeline, or you're just trying to understand the scale, I'd approach it like this in practice:

1) Decide whether you care about the count of people going through training in total, or the count of airline-track outcomes tied to "future airline pilots." 2) Use "200 per year" as the Locarno site throughput estimate. 3) Use "roughly 250" as the overall annual training population figure.

That approach avoids the common mistake of treating the numbers like they must be identical. They are answering different questions, and AELO itself frames them that way.

What AELO graduates do next (and why it supports the “airline pilot” framing)

The reporting also notes that AELO graduates often go on to airlines including **KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, and Swiss**.

That doesn’t change the numeric yearly training figures, but it helps explain why the “future airline pilots” language is used. It indicates the pipeline is recognized as airline-oriented, not just general aviation training.

This matters because “students in training” could include tracks that are not airline-bound in the strictest sense, while “future airline pilots” is a narrower label that aligns with the documented downstream destinations.

In other words, AELO’s “future airline pilots per year” claim is not floating free from outcomes. At least in the reported context, graduates are tied to major European airlines, which makes the airline pipeline framing more concrete.

Where “instructor training” fits into the annual student count

A final nuance worth addressing is the instructor training track mentioned in AELO’s LinkedIn presence, including roles like FI, CRI, STI, IRI, and MCCI, plus Sphair courses.

Because we do not have a verified breakdown of how many instructor-trainees are included within the “roughly 250 students in training annually overall” figure, the safest approach is to treat it as a blended annual count across programs.

But even without a breakdown, you can understand why overall annual student counts might exceed “future airline pilots” counts. Instructor training can consume training capacity and add trainees, while the “future airline pilots” label focuses on the airline career track.

That difference is exactly why your interpretation should hinge on what definition of “pilots” you’re using.

A quick reality check on uncertainty and rounding

You may notice both numbers are rounded: “about 200” and “roughly 250.” That’s normal for yearly training throughput figures in aviation training contexts. It suggests the academy is reporting a scale estimate rather than an audited headcount by training stage.

So rather than chasing a false sense of precision, it’s better to accept that AELO’s annual output is on the order of a couple hundred airline-bound trainees per year, with total training populations landing somewhat higher.

If someone tells you they know the exact number down to the unit for a given calendar year, but the underlying reporting uses “about” and “roughly,” I’d treat that precision as suspicious. Training organizations can be variable due to scheduling, intake timing, and the nature of training phases.

Rounded numbers are often the most truthful numbers you can reliably communicate.

One practical takeaway if you’re asking this for planning

If you're using AELO's scale for any planning purpose, like estimating pipeline volume or comparing with other training organizations, the most defensible summary based on verified reporting is:

- **Locarno site:** about **200** future airline pilots per year.
- **Overall academy training load:** about **250** students in training annually.

That gives you a workable range for understanding both output and operational size, without inventing breakdowns that aren't supported here.

What I would ask next if you want a deeper number

The yearly throughput figures are already useful, but if you want to tighten the answer further, you'd need information that isn't part of the verified context here. For example, how many of the 250 students are in airline-track programs versus instructor training, and how training stages align with the "calendar year" reporting window.

If you're able to ask AELO directly, it would be reasonable to request a breakdown by track, or clarify whether the "200 future airline pilots" refers to annual graduation, annual enrollment into airline programs, or annual throughput through a defined stage. The phrasing used in the reported statements suggests it is an annual training output oriented around future airline pilots, but the exact operational definition would still matter for precision.

For now, though, the clean answer grounded in verified reporting remains the same: **around 200 future airline pilots per year at the new Locarno site, and roughly 250 students in training annually overall.**