

AELO Swiss Academy has built a reputation around practical pilot training, and part of that practical edge is its Boeing 737 NG simulator used for advanced IFR and APS MCC training. The simulator sits inside a broader training environment in Switzerland, with main operations tied to Locarno and Gordola in Ticino. AELO describes itself as an Approved Training Organisation, with the public approval code CH.ATO.0311, and it has been training pilots since 1985.

For trainees, the attraction of a 737 NG simulator is obvious, even before they step inside: it is an aircraft they expect to hear about constantly in airline hiring conversations, and it is a platform that pushes them toward the kind of discipline airline flying demands. But the real value is quieter. It is not just exposure to a specific type. It is the way the simulator forces preparation, decision-making under time pressure, and procedural habits that are easy to overlook when training stays too theoretical.

In this piece, I want to focus on what “advanced preparation” actually means in this simulator context, why IFR and APS MCC matter, what trainees typically struggle with, and how to approach the session so it turns into measurable progress rather than another block of seat time.

Why a 737 NG simulator changes the training tone

There are simulators, and then there are training environments where the simulator becomes a discipline machine. AELO’s Boeing 737 NG simulator is positioned by the academy for advanced IFR and APS MCC training. That matters, because IFR and multi-crew settings are where good intentions tend to fail.

IFR training is not only about getting a clearance and flying a route. It is about managing automation while protecting fundamental flying skills, maintaining situational awareness when visual references disappear, and staying stable when something deviates from the plan. In a teaching environment aimed at aviation competence, this is where trainees learn to treat procedures as a living system. Not a script. A system.

APS MCC adds another layer. While IFR often tests how well a single pilot can follow procedures, MCC work highlights how crews coordinate. Communication, callouts, challenge and response, role discipline, and the ability to recover without losing the bigger picture all become critical. A 737 NG context helps because it is closely aligned with the kind of aircraft and cockpit culture trainees expect to transition into later.

Even before the first scenario, trainees sense the shift. The 737 NG simulator setting tends to push people out of “practice mode” and into “aircraft mode.” You can feel it in the way pre-briefs get tighter, checklists get cleaner, and crews start talking like they expect to be heard.

IFR readiness is procedural, but it’s also psychological

Advanced IFR is where the training hits the hard parts of the job: uncertainty. Weather and runway conditions may not behave like perfect textbook conditions. ATC instructions may require quick rearrangement of priorities. Systems and modes can tempt a trainee into complacency, especially if the aircraft has been stable in earlier training stages.

In a simulator prepared for advanced IFR, the learning objective is not only “fly the approach.” It is “stay in control of the process.” That process has a few dependable elements:

- Interpreting clearances and amendments correctly
- Managing aircraft configuration and energy throughout the profile
- Maintaining cross-check discipline when workload climbs

- Staying calm enough to notice early cues

The psychological part is what most trainees underestimate. If you are anxious, you skip steps. If you are rushed, you believe you remember. If you are confident, you stop reading certain cues as carefully. Advanced IFR tends to punish those habits quickly, because the margin for sloppy thinking gets thinner as scenarios become less gentle.

This is also why simulator sessions should never be approached like “I’ll just try it once.” The best results tend to come from treating the first attempt as reconnaissance. What matters most is not whether the flight looks perfect on the first run, but whether the trainee can identify what the aircraft demanded and what the crew decided.

APS MCC training: coordination is a skill, not a vibe

If IFR is about procedure and stability, APS MCC is about how two pilots share a cockpit without stepping on each other. In airline operations, the cockpit is not a solo performance with a silent partner. It is a coordinated workflow where responsibilities are clear, and communication is precise enough to prevent errors from turning into surprises.

AELO explicitly positions the 737 NG simulator for advanced IFR and APS MCC training. That combination is meaningful. You cannot separate “flying by instruments” from “flying with a crew,” because real crew coordination shows up during complex phases: entering holds, managing deviations, stabilizing for approach, and handling unexpected changes.

The common failure pattern in MCC scenarios is not a lack of knowledge. It is breakdown in rhythm.

Trainees sometimes brief like it’s a formality, then they communicate like it’s a discussion. Or they exchange callouts too late because they assume the other pilot “must already be on it.” Another classic issue is role confusion during transitions, for example when automation configuration changes and responsibilities shift.

Advanced APS MCC training helps trainees experience those moments in a controlled environment. The goal is not to create robotic crews. The goal is to create crews who can recover quickly when something does not go as planned, because the recovery procedure depends on both technical and human factors.

When APS MCC is done well, communication becomes efficient. You stop using extra words. You start using the right words at the right time.

What “advanced preparation” looks like before you ever enter the simulator

Trainees often want to know what to do ahead of time. The uncomfortable truth is that simulator performance is largely determined by preparation habits, not by how long the simulator can run scenarios.

At AELO, the academy offers two main public training paths: an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a pathway described as involving job guarantee or placement. Regardless of which path a trainee follows, the advanced IFR and APS MCC simulator use calls for the same foundation: crisp mental models of standard procedures and a willingness to rehearse how you will communicate.

Before training day, advanced preparation usually comes down to three practical behaviors:

First, know what you will do when something changes. Not “memorize every possible thing,” but commit to the process: read the clearance, identify the change, update the plan, brief any critical items, then execute with disciplined cross-check.

Second, practice your callout structure so it is not improvised. In a crew setting, improvised callouts tend to be late, incomplete, or overly verbose under stress. Training callouts should reflect the flow of tasks, not the flow of your anxiety.

Third, review the specific scenario type you are likely to face and align it with your personal weak points. Many trainees think weak points are purely technical. In reality, a weak point is often timing. You can know the correct action and still apply it late because you were overloading yourself with unnecessary analysis.



The simulator then becomes an environment where those preparation behaviors get tested, corrected, and reinforced.

The trade-offs trainees feel in a 737 NG simulator environment

A 737 NG simulator is compelling, but it is also unforgiving in the right ways. That creates trade-offs that trainees should understand early.

One trade-off is automation comfort versus automation complacency. In simulator work, trainees can become too dependent on the automation to “save” them. They might execute the right checklist steps without actively monitoring what the aircraft is doing. Advanced IFR makes that risk visible because profiles and mode changes require constant interpretation.

Another trade-off is procedural neatness versus situational awareness. Some trainees respond to high workload by becoming meticulous. That’s good, until it becomes tunnel vision. In IFR, being perfect on one small step can still fail if the aircraft energy state and the approach picture drift off in parallel.

A third trade-off is communication quality versus communication quantity. In MCC contexts, it is easy to talk more to feel safer. The result is clutter: callouts lose meaning, and important challenge and response moments get buried in unnecessary chatter.



A skilled instructor team can guide trainees out of these traps, but the trainee has to meet the guidance halfway. Advanced preparation is partly learning to notice your own pattern when workload rises.

How the training environment at AELO supports progression

AELO's training approach includes active airline pilots as instructors, according to the academy's public materials. That detail matters because the instructor's mindset tends to be closer to operational reality than purely academic training. In aviation training, that difference shows up in the way scenarios are debriefed. It is not only "what was wrong," but "what would you do differently in the real world, under time constraints, with real stakes."

AELO's public materials also describe that graduates have gone on to airlines such as Swiss, Ryanair, Lufthansa, Adria, Etihad, and Emirates. Those are examples the academy itself points to. For a trainee deciding how seriously to take advanced simulator training, the takeaway is not that a simulator magically guarantees a job. The takeaway is that the training culture is designed to align with airline expectations.

AELO also claims a graduate job placement statistic of 96% within six months, described as self-reported. Whether a trainee interprets that as a strong indicator or as a marketing claim, it still reflects the academy's emphasis on performance outcomes. The Boeing 737 NG simulator work for advanced IFR and APS MCC fits that emphasis because those are exactly the skills airlines care about: stable instrument flying and effective crew coordination.

A practical approach to getting maximum value from each simulator session

You do not get maximum learning value by simply showing up and flying the scenarios. You get it by turning each session into a feedback loop with clear targets.

Here is a short way to structure your mindset for the session. It is deliberately simple because complex plans tend to collapse under workload.

- Arrive with your plan for the first briefing flow, including how you will confirm approach and automation setup.
- Commit to a callout pattern you can maintain even when stressed, then stick to it.
- Treat the first scenario as diagnosis, not as performance perfection.
- During debrief, write down one behavior change you will apply immediately in the next run.

Notice what is missing. It is missing “memorize everything.” Instead, it prioritizes behavior change and crew workflow. That is exactly what advanced IFR and APS MCC training are really testing.

Also, avoid the urge to argue with the instructor after the fact. In these training sessions, the debrief is not punishment. It is the fastest route to correct habits. If you feel defensive, you miss the actual lesson.

Common trainee issues in advanced IFR and APS MCC, and what to do about them

Different trainees struggle for different reasons, and the simulator is good at revealing why. Some issues are technical: mismanagement of modes, https://www.instagram.com/aelo_swiss_academy/ unstable energy profiles, or late configuration changes. Others are human factors: delayed callouts, ambiguous handoffs, overconfidence, or reluctance to challenge a crew partner.

In advanced IFR, one frequent issue is “late recognition.” A trainee will fly the aircraft correctly for a while, then only realize a deviation from expectation when it becomes expensive. That is where disciplined monitoring habits matter. The fix is not only learning what the correct action should be, but learning when you should notice the drift.

In APS MCC, a frequent issue is role drift. Crews can start with clear intent and then slide into habits that blur responsibilities. That is where brevity and structure help. If you have a shared understanding of who sets what, who monitors what, and how you challenge, you reduce uncertainty and prevent silent conflict.

There is also a scenario management issue that shows up when trainees try to handle everything at once. Advanced simulator runs often include multiple tasks in sequence. If you try to solve each task as though it stands alone, you end up late on the second one. The fix is to treat tasks as a pipeline. Brief, set, monitor, and only then refine.

The best trainees are the ones who accept that recovery matters. The simulator is a place to practice recovery without fear. Real flying is unforgiving, but it also rewards good recovery discipline.

Where this training fits into AELO’s broader programs

AELO publicly describes two main training tracks: an 18-month ATPL Integrated Program and a SkyAlps Airlines MPL Program with a job guarantee or placement pathway described by the academy. Both are training routes under the AELO Swiss Academy umbrella, and both are built around preparing pilots for airline environments.

The Boeing 737 NG simulator for advanced IFR and APS MCC is not an isolated gimmick. It is positioned as part of advanced training resources the academy offers. That suggests the simulator is used when trainees have already built enough foundation to benefit from more complex, crew-based instrument work.

For a trainee, this means you should think of the simulator as a stage in progression. You will get more from it if you treat earlier phases as preparation rather than completion. If your basic procedural discipline is shaky, the advanced sessions will expose it. If your communication rhythm is inconsistent, advanced MCC scenarios will make it obvious.

The good news is that exposure is the point. Advanced IFR and APS MCC training is designed to build capability by confronting the scenarios that reveal weak habits.

The value that lasts after the session ends

A simulator session can feel like a discrete event. You go in, you train, you leave. But the real value is what stays in your head and your hands.

After advanced IFR and APS MCC training, trainees typically carry three enduring lessons.

First, the aircraft is not the real challenge. The real challenge is decision-making under uncertainty, where the right action depends on correct interpretation and timely communication.

Second, stability is a mindset. In instrument flying, stable does not mean “easy.” It means “predictable,” “monitored,” and “under control,” with configuration and energy managed intentionally.

Third, crews do not just share tasks, they share time. In APS MCC, the timing of callouts and challenge matters as much as the technical correctness of the action.

Those lessons then transfer beyond the simulator. Into checklists. Into briefing habits. Into how trainees approach their next steps, whether they are continuing through an integrated pathway or through a program designed around an airline placement narrative.

AELO’s investment in a Boeing 737 NG simulator for advanced IFR and APS MCC is a practical response to a simple reality: airlines hire people who can fly instruments calmly and coordinate in a way that prevents mistakes. Simulator training is where that capability gets built, one disciplined run at a time.