The present research aims at analyzing the policies for vocational education in Brazil and Germany, with a view to apprehending its characteristics and, mainly, to whom they are designed. Hence, we seek to outline the socioeconomic profile of the students of Federal Institutes Of Education, Science and Technology (IF) in Brazil and of one German vocational education institution located in the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The central hypothesis is based on the premise that despite distinct historical and socioeconomic trajectories and the differentiated insertion of both countries into the global economy, according to the international division of labor, the policies for vocational education in both countries, Germany and Brazil, is aimed primarily at the popular strata of society which, in turn, seek social mobility through education. The methodological delineation of the research associates the documentary, quantitative and qualitative research, respectively analysis of statistical data and institutional documents in Brazil and Germany; application of an electronic questionnaire to the students in both countries; and, semi-structured interviews with students (Brazil), teachers and specialists of the Brazilian and German Institutions.