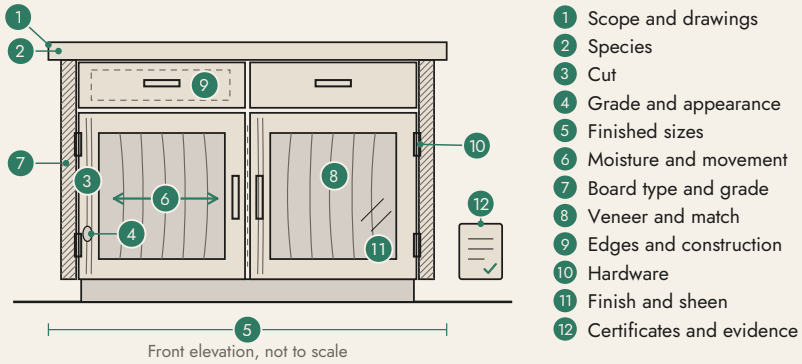
A joinery specification that *cannot be priced down*

Twelve clauses to close in a joinery or timber specification, and wording to paste in.

AT A GLANCE

Clause	State exactly	If left loose, a tenderer can	Close it with
1 Scope and drawings	Drawing numbers and revisions; what is in or out; who surveys.	Price an old revision, omit items, assume someone else surveys.	A drawing schedule with revision letters.
2 Species	Botanical and common name; origin if it matters.	Offer a cheaper species or origin that fits the common name.	A labelled sample board.
3 Cut	Through-and-through, plain, quarter or rift sawn.	Choose the cut that yields most from the log.	A control sample showing the cut.
4 Grade and appearance	Allowed knots, sapwood, colour range and grain direction.	Include features the design never intended.	An approved sample and a written limit per feature.
5 Finished sizes	Finished, not nominal, thicknesses and widths.	Price nominal sizes that plane down smaller.	"Finished size" on every drawing.
6 Moisture and movement	Moisture content at dispatch and the room it must suit.	Use timber that keeps moving after fitting.	A recorded reading at dispatch.
7 Board type and grade	Family, standard, grade, thickness, balancing, fire class.	Use a lower grade, a thinner board or no balancing.	The board datasheet or declaration of performance.
8 Veneer and match	Species, cut, grade, thickness, match, sequence, backing.	Use a plainer cut, a random match or a thinner leaf.	An approved veneer sample and layout drawing.
9 Edges and construction	Edge, carcase joint, drawer box, back panel.	Pick the cheapest edge, joint or box that holds.	A construction sample or detail drawing.
10 Hardware	Reference, type, size, finish, quantity, load rating.	Fit a lighter fitting "to suit".	A hardware sample and its data sheet.
11 Finish and sheen	System, coats, sheen, colour reference, all faces.	Cut the coats, change the system, skip the insides.	A finish sample on the same species and cut.
12 Certificates and evidence	Timber claim, fire or emission evidence, handover documents.	Quote without the paperwork, then charge it as an extra.	A certificate number checked against the delivery note.

Numbers match the markers on the drawing. Square brackets in the wording are example values to replace.



The twelve clauses marked on a bespoke sideboard. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

SCOPE, APPROVALS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Applies to the joinery on drawings [numbers], revision [letter]. Dimensions verified on site by [party] before production. All sizes finished unless marked nominal. Shop drawings and samples [S-01 to S-05] approved before production. No substitution without written approval from [designer] before tender return; any alternative offered separately with its data sheet and a sample. Changes after approval by written variation (price and programme).

SOLID TIMBER

Species [European oak (Quercus robur or Q. petraea)], cut [quarter sawn], appearance to match control sample [S-01]; sapwood [not permitted on visible faces]; knots [none on visible faces]. Moisture content [ ]% at dispatch, [heated] interior. Certification [FSC 100% / FSC Mix / PEFC] on [named items]; certificate number and claim on the delivery note.

BOARDS AND VENEER

Boards: [type, standard, grade], [18] mm finished, [fire or emission class]; datasheet or declaration of performance for each. Veneered panels balanced on the reverse. Veneer: [species], [cut], [grade], [thickness] mm, [book matched, sequence matched from one flitch across the run]; layout drawing and flitch leaf approved before pressing [S-03].

CONSTRUCTION AND HARDWARE

Edges [solid lipping / veneered] as sample [S-04]. Carcase joint [type]. Drawer boxes [material, thickness, joint] on [runner type and reference], [load] rated, soft-close. Hinges: [number] per door, [type and reference], [finish], for [weight] doors. Handles [reference, material, finish], [length] centres. Match sample [S-05].

FINISH

[System] on [species and cut], [number] coats over [primer or grain filler], to all faces including insides, edges and backs. Sheen and colour [reference] to match finish sample [S-02], made on the same species and cut. [Performance test and class where required.] Samples viewed in [the lighting conditions of the room].

TERMS USED

Prescriptive specification
States exactly what products, materials and workmanship are required. Design responsibility stays with the design team.

Descriptive specification
States the result required and leaves a specialist or contractor to design how. Design responsibility generally passes with it.

Nominal size
The size timber is sold as before planing. The finished size is smaller, by an amount that varies by supplier.

Control sample
The approved sample the maker keeps as the benchmark for production, labelled, dated and signed.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- NBS: RIBA Plan of Work 2020 and specification: prescriptive and descriptive specification (page read 5 Nov 2026).
- FSC UK: Choose FSC and Is it FSC? buyer guides: delivery-document checks and claim types (page dated 7 Jul 2026).
- BS EN 942:2007 Timber in joinery. General requirements: appearance classification (BSI listing read; standard not read).
- BS EN 1313-2:1999 Sawn timber, permitted deviations and sizes (hardwood): BSI listing read; values not read.
- BS EN 622-5:2009 Fibreboards. Requirements for dry process boards (MDF): BSI listing read; standard not read.
- Make Bespoke Studio journal: How to specify bespoke joinery: the longer guide to briefing a package.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/specification-that-cannot-be-priced-down. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.